

Vicarious Sacrifice: Paul Introduces a New Doctrine for Those Who “Have no hope”; *Elpis* Is Translated “Hope,” but “Confidence” Is Better which the Doctrine of the Rapture Provides; Principles: The Metaphor “Asleep” Does Not Imply the Heresy of “Soul Sleep”; Passages that Distinguish Body & Soul/Human-Spirit Separation at Physical Death, Matt 27:52; 2 Cor 5:8; Luke 16:19–31; 2 Cor 12:2–4; Phil 1:23–24; 1 Pet 3:19; All Are Reunited at the Rapture in Resurrection Body

- (33) He makes the point that unbelievers do not have a personal relationship with God and therefore have no confidence regarding their eternal future regarding others or themselves.
- (34) The phrase used is “those who have no hope,” the word “hope” is *ἐλπίς* (*elpis*) and with the negative conjunction *μή* it means “no hope,” “no trust” or “no confidence” in someone.
- (35) That Someone is God with emphasis on His integrity as it is revealed in Scripture. These mental attitudes of trust and confidence are amplified in these definitions:

Hope is based on the divine promise and leaves behind it any uncertainty, venturing against all hope (Romans 4:18). Hope, by its very nature, is associated with not seeing. “Hope that sees is not hope” (Romans 8:24). Thus existence in hope demands patient expectation (Romans 8:25) of that which does not belong to the visible world. (p. 438)

This hope is supported by the divine predestination of the believer to salvation [the divine decree] and thus receives the greatest possible basis for security. Anyone who is not included has no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Such hope for the coming salvation is fulfilled in varied ways: Its object is the parousia of Jesus Christ (vv. 1:3, 10), Christ as the guarantee of the future of Christians (1 Corinthians 15:19).¹ (p. 438–39)

- (36) The principle that emerges from this verse is that knowledge of the Rapture of the Church provides comfort, confidence, and courage to every believer.
- (37) It provides peace of mind following the loss of loved ones and stability of soul in the face of one’s own physical death.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 - But I do not wish for you to be ignorant, fellow believers, concerning those who have been caused to lie down and sleep in the status of physical death, for the purpose that you should not be caused to grieve as others who have no confidence regarding eternal life. (EXT)

Principles:

1. The phrase “concerning those who have been caused to lie down and sleep in the status of physical death” makes reference to the body of corruption.
2. The body has been permanently separated from the soul and human spirit, the former in grave, urn, or at sea, the latter absent from the body and face-to-face with the Lord in the third heaven.
3. The word “sleep” is used to amplify the point that the believer’s physical death is temporary.
4. At the Rapture, the soul and human spirit return to the earth to the geographic coordinate where the body’s remains are located.

¹ Bernhard Mayer, “ἐλπίς,” in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 1:438–39.

5. At that location, the remains of our physical bodies are instantly exchanged for a resurrection body.
6. It is important to understand that although the body “sleeps” and will at some point be awakened at the resurrection, the souls and human spirits of believers are in heaven, functioning in interim bodies.
7. The idea of soul sleep is a heresy which can be documented by noting several passages of Scripture:

Matthew 27:52 - The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

2 Corinthians 5:8 - We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and be at home with [πρός (prós): **accusative of association: “in company with”;**² **“to see something face-to-face”**³] the Lord.

8. Luke 16:19–31 is the Lord’s elucidation of a historical event that took place in Hades in which both a poor man named Lazarus and a rich man unnamed had each died, the former now in Paradise and the latter in Torments, the two compartments separated by “a great chasm fixed.” Each man is in an interim body while their expired physical bodies remain on the surface of the earth.
9. Paul was stoned to death in Lystra in A.D. 43 and his soul and human spirit were taken into the third heaven while his body remained on earth. Fourteen years later—A.D. 57—he wrote 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 12:2 - I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

v. 3 - And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—

v. 4 - was caught up into Paradise⁴ and heard [ἀκούω (akouō): **to hear and to understand**] inexplicable words, which a man is not permitted to speak [**details about the third heaven are privileged information available only to those arriving following physical death**].

Philippians 1:23 - I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

Philippians 1:24 - yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

10. The Lord’s activities during the three days between burial and resurrection clearly indicate there is no such thing as “soul sleep” following death:

1 Peter 3:19 - He went and made proclamation to the spirits [**the rebellious demons of Genesis 6 that attacked the bloodline of Messiah**] now in prison [Tartarus].

² Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax* (Zondervan, 2000), 170.

³ Spiros Zodhiates, gen. ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 1225.

⁴ Already mentioned in context is the “third heaven.” The Paradise compartment of Hades was vacated at the ascension of the Lord when all Old-Testament saints were transferred to the third heaven. Consequently, the Hades compartment of Paradise is not the subject here. Instead, there is a New Paradise in the third heaven and this is where Paul’s soul and human spirit were taken.

11. At the Rapture, the souls and spirits of the departed saints of the Church Age will accompany the Lord at His arrival in the first heaven to execute the resurrection of all Church Age believers.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 -For if [1CC: and it is true that] we believe [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): transitive; what is believed is that Jesus did die & rise again] that Jesus died and rose [trichotomous separation at physical death followed by unification at resurrection] again, even so God will bring [predictive future active indicative of ἄγω (*ágō*): a prophetic future tense reporting what does occur at the Rapture] with Him those who have fallen asleep [Church Age believers will return with Jesus] in Jesus. (NASB)