

Are the Dead Conscious?

Commentary for May 1, 2025 — ... While They Are Dead?

No, the dead are not conscious or “alive” in a different state of being. Believe the Scriptures. There is much to learn about “the state of the dead,” as theologians refer to the subject. Consider the following verses to be “a refresher course” on the state of the dead. Compare these passages from the Concordant Literal Version to translations that you prefer.

“For there is expectation for a tree: If it is cut down, then it MAY rejuvenate again, And its young shoots may not be halted. IF its roots grow old in the earth, And its trunk-base dies in the soil, At the scent of water it shall bud, And it will produce harvest branches like a plant.

Yet a master shall die and be laid defeated; A human [Hebrew *adam*] shall breathe his last, and where is he? As waters depart from a lake, And a stream is drained and dries up, So a man lies down and

- [1] **shall NOT rise; UNTIL [when?] THE HEAVENS FAIL,**
- [2] **they shall NOT awake,**
- [3] **NOR shall they be roused FROM THEIR SLEEP.”**

• **Job 14:7–12 CLV**

How did Job know these facts? We are not told. Yet we know Job had faith. He said that his redeemer lived (Job 19:25) when he spoke and later his words were written down.

John the apostle was later shown in vision that these resurrections from the “sleep” of death would occur after Christ’s return and after He has ruled for 1,000 years.

This will be the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11–15), an event when every human being from Adam and Eve, who were not believers in God or Christ at their death, will be raised from the dead in fleshly bodies to be judged for their deeds in life. This will not only involve reward for doing good and severe punishment for evil, but each person will be taught by Christ and those who were raised to glory, and be like Christ is now (1 John 3:2).

After the heavens (plural) and the earth are destroyed in fire, a new heavens and a new earth will be created (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; and Revelation 21:1).

Psalms of King David

“For in death there is NO REMEMBRANCE of You [YHWH]; In the unseen, who shall acclaim You [YHWH]?”

• **Psalm 6:5 CLV**

No one will remember or praise YHWH while they are dead. In a later psalm King David was being threatened by his enemies:

“What gain is there in my blood poured out, In my descending to the pit? Does soil acclaim You [YHWH]? Does it tell Your faithfulness?”

• **Psalm 30:9 CLV**

The dead cannot praise God, nor can they tell anyone about the value of trusting God.

“(For the ransom of his soul is too precious a price, And he shuns it for the eon),
[Why?] That he should live further, permanently, And not see the pit [the grave].

Yet he sees wise ones, even they die; The stupid one, together with the irrational one, they perish, And they leave their estate to others. Their tombs are their houses FOR THE EON, Their tabernacles for generation after generation, Those who had called their grounds after their names.

But the human [Hebrew, *adam*], in his self-esteem, is not understanding at all; He is comparable to the beasts that are dumb.”

• *Psalm 49:8–12 CLV*

“Would You [YHWH] perform marvelous works for the dead? [No!]

Or do Rephaim arise and acclaim You? [No!] — Interlude — [Hebrew, *Selah*]
Is Your benignity [Hebrew *chesed*, “lovingkindness”] recounted in the tomb [No!],
Your faithfulness in destruction [No!]?

Are Your marvelous works known in darkness [No!], And
[Is] Your righteousness in the land of oblivion [No!]?”

• *Psalm 88:10–12 CLV (written by Heman the Ezrahite)*

Solomon, On What the Dead Can and Cannot Do

“So I said IN MY HEART, ‘Since the destiny of the stupid man is also mine, and it shall befall me, To what advantage then have I been wise?’

Hence I spoke IN MY HEART, ‘This too is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise man or [by] the stupid man for the eon; In the days which are already coming everyone is forgotten; Alas, the wise man dies along with the stupid one!’”

• *Ecclesiastes 2:15–16 CLV*

“For THE LIVING KNOW that they shall die,
But THE DEAD KNOW NOTHING WHATSOEVER;

There is no further reward for them [in life]; Indeed remembrance [their memories] of them is forgotten. Both [1] their love and [2] their hate as well as [3] their jealousy have perished already, and there is no further portion for them FOR THE EON in all that is done under the sun.”

• *Ecclesiastes 9:5–6 CLV*

“All that your hand finds to do, do with your vigor,
For there is NO DOING or DEVISING or KNOWLEDGE or WISDOM
in the unseen [Hebrew, *sheol*]¹ where YOU ARE GOING.

• *Ecclesiastes 9:10 CLV*

“Indeed the unseen [again, *sheol*] cannot acclaim You [YHWH],

Nor can death praise You; And those who descend into a crypt cannot look forward to Your faithfulness.”

• *Isaiah 38:18 CLV by the prophet Isaiah*

The dead are not conscious UNTIL they are raised from death to judgment.

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¹ The word translated “unseen” is from *sheol* in Hebrew. Most English versions translate it as “hell.”