

BETWEEN DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION

The church throughout its history, has struggled with the concept of what is called the intermediate state (our position between the time we die and the resurrection). The most common view has been that, at death, the soul immediately goes to be with God and there is a continuity of personal existence. There is no interruption of life at the end of this life, but we continue to be alive in our personal souls upon death.

There are those however, who do not hold to this position just presented, they hold to a position that is cultic in its nature. A view called psychopannychia (soul sleep). The idea is that at death the soul goes into a state of suspended animation. It remains in an unconscious state, until it is awakened at the time of the great resurrection. The soul is still alive, but it is unconscious, so that there is no conscious awareness of the passing of time. I think that this conclusion is drawn improperly from the New Testament, because of the way scripture speaks of sleep.

Dr. Vine said, "In Paul's writings it is evident the word 'sleep', when applied to the departed Christians, is not intended to convey the idea that the spirit is unconscious."

The scriptural teaching concerning this matter, I think is clear. When the physical frame of the Christian is dissolved and returns to the dust, the spiritual part of his highly complex being, departs to be with Christ. He is absent from the body, but present with the Lord; and Paul says this is far better.

Scripture: King James Version: Luke 16:19-31; Romans 8:18-23; II Corinthians 5:1-8; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

By: Jerry W. Arnold
All Rights Reserved