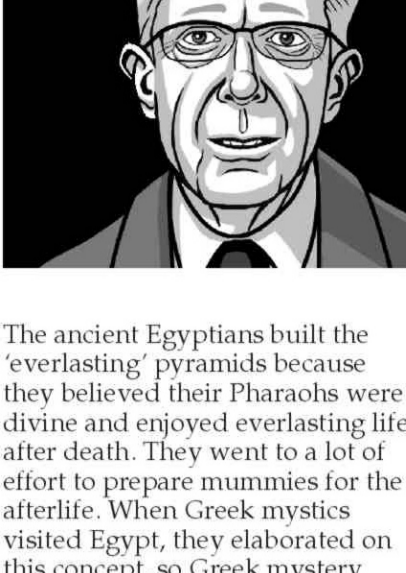
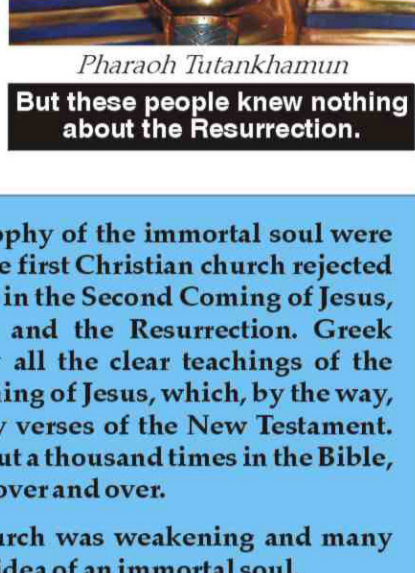


What follows **DEATH**? Are you **AFRAID** to ask?



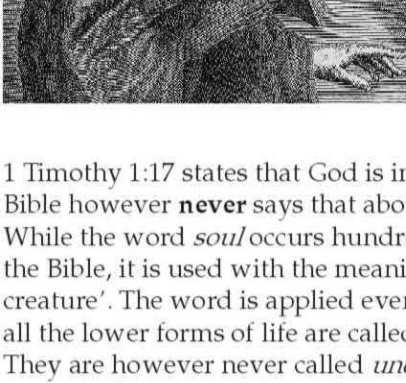
Today I'm going to ask some pastors from my church what happens to us **when we die**.
 It's a question everyone of us has to address at some point in our lives. If you don't have clarity in your mind about this important matter, I trust this short tract will help to give you some insight.

The ancient Egyptians built the 'everlasting' pyramids because they believed their Pharaohs were divine and enjoyed everlasting life after death. They went to a lot of effort to prepare mummies for the afterlife. When Greek mystics visited Egypt, they elaborated on this concept, so Greek mystery religions invented the idea that man has some part of him that's immortal, that can never die. They called it the *immortal soul*.



The chief teachers of this philosophy of the immortal soul were Plato and his mentor Socrates. The first Christian church rejected this false doctrine. They believed in the Second Coming of Jesus, and with Him Judgement Day and the Resurrection. Greek philosophy attempted to nullify all the clear teachings of the Bible concerning the Second Coming of Jesus, which, by the way, is mentioned once in every thirty verses of the New Testament. Judgement Day is mentioned about a thousand times in the Bible, and the Resurrection many times over and over.

But by the third century the Church was weakening and many believers had begun to accept the idea of an immortal soul.



Even St Augustine (left) subscribed to this false theory, and it reigned for over a thousand years, until the emergence of the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century. They correctly taught that death is a form of sleep.

The word *immortal*, by the way, occurs only once in the Bible and is there applied only to God.

1 Timothy 1:17 states that God is immortal. The Bible however **never** says that about human beings. While the word *soul* occurs hundreds of times in the Bible, it is used with the meaning 'a breathing creature'. The word is applied even to the animals: all the lower forms of life are called breathing souls. They are however never called *undying, immortal or eternal*.



We are told in Ezekiel 18:4: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Revelation 16:3 says during the seven last plagues 'every living soul died in the sea'. According to the Bible, **the soul is not immortal or eternal.**

Joshua 11:11 talks about souls that were 'smitten with the edges of swords and died'. Nowhere does the Bible teach that we have an immortal soul; instead, man is called mortal over and over again. Read the book of Job, read 1 Corinthians 15, read the book of Romans; repeatedly it is shown that we are mortal.

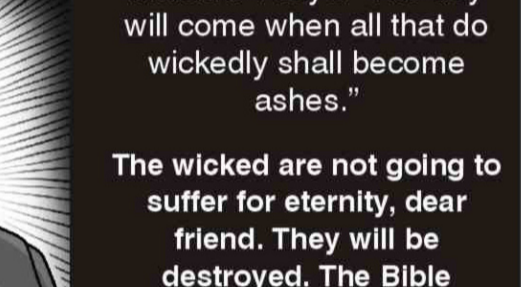
Our only hope is the Resurrection.

Our hope is the Resurrection in Jesus Christ, a historical fact witnessed by over 500 people who saw the risen Christ.



Now let me tell you something odd, something very tragic that crept into the Church's teachings: it's actually terrible. Once those folk had (wrongly) decided there was an everlasting soul, they had a problem. They had to decide what to do with the wicked; so what did they come up with? **They invented hell, eternal hellfire!** It's true that the word 'hell' occurs in the Bible, but it usually means the grave.

Yet in a few places in the New Testament the word 'hell' is a translation of the Greek name *Gehenna*, which was a rubbish dump outside Jerusalem where corpses were burnt to ashes, where rubbish was destroyed: a picture evoking the destruction of the wicked at the end of the world.



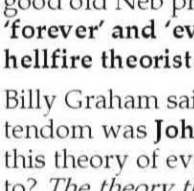
Hieronymus Bosch's famous portrayal of Hell



Malachi 4 says: "The day will come when all that do wickedly shall become ashes."
The wicked are not going to suffer for eternity, dear friend. They will be destroyed. The Bible confirms this over and over.

Only a single verse in the Bible seems to support the concept of eternal hellfire: The words 'everlasting fire' appear in Revelation 14.

Revelation is a vision God gave John the Apostle on the island of Patmos, revealing his plan for the last days. Chapter 20 talks about death being destroyed when the earth becomes a lake of fire, before the establishment of a new earth. In the next chapter, however, you will find there is no more curses, no more death, no more sighing, no more tears.
That's the world we Christians look forward to.



Dear Friend, the theory of the eternally burning hell is scary. Another of Augustine's teachings, it held sway for over a thousand years, until the arrival of the Anabaptists and Luther in the sixteenth century, who taught that death was only a sleep.



William Tyndale, Bible translator, likewise believed death was a sleep.

The seventh verse of the book of Jude says the wicked will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah, namely by 'everlasting fire'. This is symbolic; Sodom and Gomorrah are clearly not still burning!

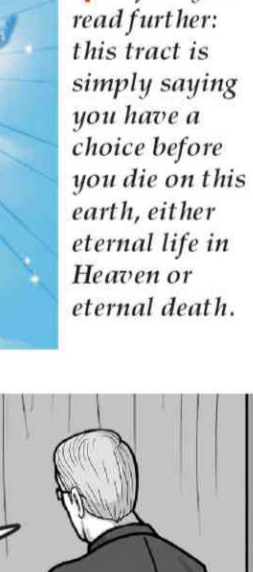
The terms *forever* and *everlasting* must always be explained in context. Jonah said he was in the big fish forever... but it was for a mere three days! Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar: "Live forever!" Nice thought, but good old Neb probably lasted no more than a decade or three! So **'forever' and 'everlasting' in the Bible don't have the dire meaning hellfire and eternally loving to give them.**

Billy Graham said the most trusted pastor in Christendom was **John Stott**. What did Stott say about this theory of everlasting hellfire that people cling to? *The theory that man has an eternal, immortal, imperishable soul?* He said you can't think of eternal hellfire for more than fifteen minutes without going mad. **He was right - you try it!**



God told us to love our enemies.
Those who teach the existence of an eternal Hell, or an everlasting burning and torture, are really saying that God will be doing what He tells us not to do. You cannot read the four Gospels without seeing that God is a God of love. You cannot read the Gospels and believe that God will burn us in hellfire forever.

Reverence Him, give Him the awe that's due to Him. Love Him, dear friend, because He loves you. And always will!



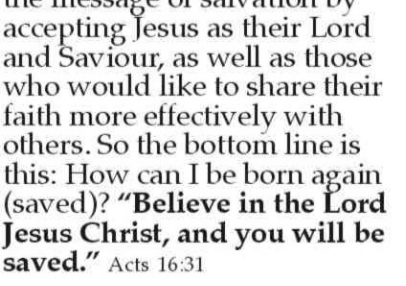
But if you believe in the words of Jesus in Mathew 10:28: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in Hell."



✳ Before you read further: this tract is simply saying you have a choice before you die on this earth, either eternal life in Heaven or eternal death.

Note: The Bible often translates 'soul' as 'life'.

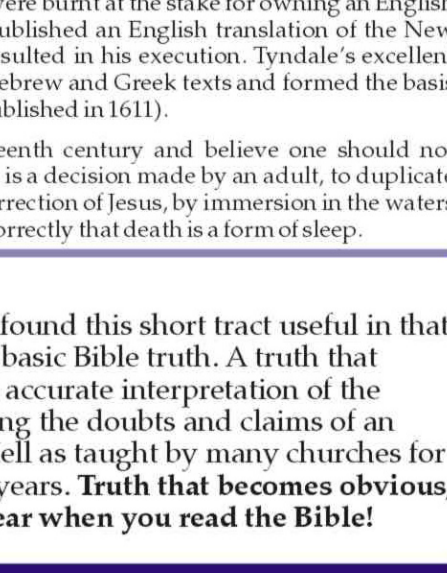
OK, Pastor, so far what you said makes sense, and I understand what you said about the soul. But what happens to me when I die?
 Note what Jesus says in John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."



John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." So to be blunt, death awaits the unrepentant sinner, yet for the believer there is the promise of eternal life.

Always remember the truth is in the Bible, and in the Bible only.

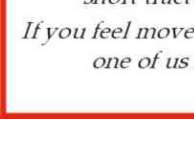
My dear Friend
 I intended this tract both for those who need to understand the message of salvation by accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, as well as those who would like to share their faith more effectively with others. So the bottom line is this: How can I be born again (saved)? **"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."** Acts 16:31



Two Brief Notes for clarification:

William Tyndale (1494-1536) was an English scholar who became a leading figure in the Protestant Reformation during the sixteenth century. Believing Christians should be able to read the Bible in their own language, he had to flee England, since in the reign of King Henry VIII people were burnt at the stake for owning an English Bible. Working in Germany, Tyndale published an English translation of the New Testament in 1525, which ultimately resulted in his execution. Tyndale's excellent translation was based on the original Hebrew and Greek texts and formed the basis of the renowned King James Version (published in 1611).

The Anabaptists emerged in the sixteenth century and believe one should not baptise infants. This is because baptism is a decision made by an adult, to duplicate in ritual form the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, by immersion in the waters and rising up. The Anabaptists taught correctly that death is a form of sleep.



We trust you found this short tract useful in that it discusses a basic Bible truth. A truth that represents an accurate interpretation of the Bible, removing the doubts and claims of an everlasting Hell as taught by many churches for almost 2 000 years. **Truth that becomes obvious, plain, and clear when you read the Bible!**

A definition of what is reliable is that which has never changed. That, my friend, can only be found in the Bible, the Word of God!

Dear friend, church member or fellow believer!
 May we invite you to get involved in spreading the Gospel and the true Word of God?
 Or perhaps you really want to know more of Bible truths, which are more than this short tract can explain.
 If you feel moved why not contact one of us listed here?

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