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The Pagan Immortal Soul and “Double Doctrine”

by – David Sielaff and Ernest L. Martin

The concept of the “immortality of the soul” is based on a lie. Modern believers in the immortality of the soul would be laughed to scorn by the philosophers of antiquity for believing that lie. Yet most theologians who claim to believe in the biblical revelation unknowingly derive many of their doctrinal beliefs from pagan philosophers of old (who purposely lied in the name of religion) and not from Holy Scripture. Those same lies continue to be taught in Christianity today.

The false doctrine of the immortal soul and its accompanying doctrine about an ever-burning hell were lies originating from pagan teaching. Early proponents of these doctrines even admitted to the lies. Most Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Protestant and evangelical Christian churches today derive their teachings of immortality and hell from those original lies. Some pagans told the truth about the origin of these lies. The term used to teach lies to one group while teaching the truth to another is called “Double Doctrine.”

The Greek historian Polybius (ca. 203–120 B.C.E.) tells us that the rulers of the Roman Republic deliberately lied to the common people to keep them from being unruly and difficult to manage. They lied to control the people under their rule. It was necessary for the good of the state! Polybius states it was clever and admirable for the rulers of the Roman Republic to blatantly lie to their own people.

The preferred method was for rulers to attain and maintain control without use of direct force by means of religious teaching. Religion was used to terrify the

common people by threatened punishments, and to soothe them with the prospect of a future reward in an afterlife beginning immediately after death. In a discussion of how the Roman Republic compares with other states, Polybius describes how Roman rulers maintained the cohesion of the Roman social structure.

The quality in which the Roman commonwealth is most distinctly superior is in my opinion the nature of their religious convictions. I believe that it is the very thing which among other peoples is an object of reproach, I mean superstition, which maintains the cohesion of the Roman State. ... They have adopted this course for the sake of the common people. It is a course which perhaps would not have been necessary had it been possible to form a state composed of wise men, but as every multitude is fickle, full of lawless desires, unreasoned passion, and violent anger, the multitude must be held in by invisible terrors and such-like pageantry. For this reason I think, not that the ancients acted rashly and at all haphazardly in introducing among the people notions concerning the gods and beliefs in the terrors of hell,¹ but that the moderns are most rash and foolish in banishing such beliefs.²

Polybius encouraged the lies, knowing that the teachings about the gods and terrors of punishment were

1. See Polybius, *Histories*, Shuckburgh; 1889 translation (London, New York: Macmillan, 1889. Reprint: Bloomington, 1962).
2. Polybius, *The Histories of Polybius*, 6.56, Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 1922–1927), fragments from chapter 6.

(see *PAGAN*, page 2623)

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- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
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PAGAN (continued from front page)

pure fiction. "Pageantry," by which he meant rituals, holidays, celebrations, games, displays, parades, speeches, etc., all played a role to keep the fickle, lawless, unreasoned and angry people docile and content, while inspiring in them the desire to sacrifice for the state. Polybius also thought that the educated and the rulers of his day should continue to promote those beliefs of the common people. Most rulers apparently took his advice. The ideas of an immortal soul coupled with the terrors of hell were effective over most people.

About 100 years later, a Roman orator, politician and defender of liberty in the Roman Republic named Cicero, agreed with the ideas of Polybius.³

Cicero wondered about the use of religion by politicians, but neither his contemporaries nor historians note that he ever spoke out publicly or condemned the practice.

Having the common people fearful of divine punishment for evils or sins was useful for keeping society stable and the masses under control. The people were told that the gods were both judges and witnesses to their actions. By manipulating these beliefs the leaders could rule the unruly and control the uncontrollable. The people were told wild and fabulous tales about the gods to deliberately confuse them and keep them in ignorance of the truth. The initiated, however, were told the truth by degrees, or at least some of the truth.

Cicero, Seneca, Panaetius, Polybius, Quintus Scaevola (The Pontifex Maximus), and Varro regarded religion as a device of statesmen to control the masses by mystery and terror. ...

[There was] one truth for the intellectual classes and one for the common people, the climax reached is the phrase, "It is expedient for the state [*i.e.*, the people] to be deceived in religion."⁴

3. Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, Book 1.42 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877).
4. James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics*, vol. 7 (New York: C. Scribner's & Sons, 1908), pp. 61, 63.

DOUBLE DOCTRINE

WAS IN ALL PHILOSOPHICAL SCHEMES

This method of controlling the people through religion did not originate with the Romans. It began much earlier. The lie about an immortal soul in each person was one story told to the common people. The truth that everyone who died had ceased to exist was made clear to those "in the know." This perpetuated and strengthened the control by those in power, because only they had the real truth in many areas of life. Such a practice was considered indispensable for the preservation of the state.⁵

The use of Double Doctrine came as early as the 6th century B.C.E. with the teachings of the philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras in Asia Minor, and later was practiced by all of the major Greek philosophical schools, and then to all of the philosophers of the 1st century B.C.E.⁶ While Pythagoras did not leave any written works, his philosophy was well known around the Roman Empire. The early Christian scholar Origen says of Pythagoras and his system:

He divided his disciples into classes, the one he called ESOTERIC, the other, the EXOTERIC. For to those [the former] he trusted the more perfect and sublime doctrines; to these [the latter] the more popular and vulgar.⁷

William Warburton, a bishop in the Anglican Church in the late 1700s wrote a 3-volume work called *Divine Legation of Moses* that was published in at least 10 editions.⁸ Warburton's purpose was to ►

5. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 63.
6. Ernest L. Martin, *Pagan Doctrine of the Soul*, The Good News, vol. 12, no. 3, March 1963 (Pasadena), pp. 5-6, 12:
"One of the most important observations to be made regarding the teachings of the pagan philosophers and/or theologians is that they ALL adhered to the 'double doctrine' method teaching. Pythagoras in the sixth century B.C., [later] Plato, Aristotle, and even those of the first century always had two doctrines! Invariably, their disciples were told the truth (as much as the philosophers understood), and the common people were told as many bold-faced LIES as was necessary to control them and render them governable."
Ernest L. Martin, *The People That History Forgot* (Portland, OR: ASK, 1994): Dr. Martin shows that not only did the major mystery religions originate from the area of Babylon, but the philosophical school of Stoicism also originated from Babylon. See Chapter 17, *Eastern Philosophy Conquers Rome*.
7. Origen, On Philosophy, see fragments, Ernest Martin, *Pagan Doctrine of the Soul*, p. 6.
8. William Warburton, *Divine Legation of Moses*, 3 volumes, 10th

prove the divine nature of the Old Testament by its omission of any discussion of the future state of the dead, even though the rest of the world's religions all had such beliefs. That lack of information about a future state of the dead proved the divine origin of the Old Testament.

Warburton gathered a massive amount of primary evidence to show that ancient philosophers and rulers taught a scheme of Double Doctrine as a method to coerce control over and provide meaning in the lives of their people. Future rewards were promised to promote social behavior, so that soldiers, citizens and even slaves would willingly sacrifice themselves for the state. This method of gaining obedience was much cheaper than using force.⁹

First, Warburton's evidence led him to conclude that "The idolatry of the Gentile States was chiefly the worship of dead men ... [who were] Kings, Lawgivers, and Founders." This explains why countries had so many gods similar to gods of other countries. Every city had a founder, a mighty king, a mother of the city, a builder, a developer, a leading landholder, a lawgiver, a military hero and a savior in their distant past. As city-states became kingdoms, and kingdoms became empires, consolidating larger territories and trade and communication, syncretizing and incorporating the gods of neighboring peoples was a normal process, if done under the auspices of the

edition (London: Tomas Tegg, 1846).

9. For example, during a crucial time in the siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the Roman general Titus inspired his troops to move forward and fight, in full recognition that the first ones attacking would surely be killed:

"... what man of virtue is there who does not know, that those souls which are severed from their fleshly bodies in battles by the sword, are received by the ether, that purest of elements, and joined to that company which are placed among the stars; that they become good genies, and propitious heroes, and show themselves as such to their posterity afterward? while upon those souls that wear away in and with their distempered bodies [meaning, by disease], comes a subterranean night to dissolve them to nothing, and a deep oblivion to take away all remembrance of them. ... but since fate has determined that death is to come of necessity upon all men, a sword is a better instrument for that purpose than any disease whatever. Why is it not then a very lowly thing for us not to yield up that to the public benefit which we must yield up to fate?" – Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, 6:46-49.

In other words, Titus is saying to them that, since death is inevitable, it is better and more noble to die for the good of the state than simply to die. Of course, Titus was not leading the charge. As the general he was too essential to the battle.

government of the state.¹⁰

Second, "the attributes and qualities assigned to their gods, always corresponded with the nature and genius of the government." If a society and government was warlike, the gods would be warlike. If a society and government was involved with sea-going or overland trade, the gods would reflect those involvements.

Third, the practice of public worship was such that the government, and to a lesser extent society as a whole, were the major beneficiaries from public religious practice. Individuals gained little. Religion was a state function, not a function of persons. The practice of pagan religion was totally interwoven with the transactions of the State.¹¹

THE IMMORTAL SOUL AND DOUBLE DOCTRINE

The Greek historian Herodotus tells us who the first people were to talk about an immortal soul.

The Egyptians were the first who maintained the following doctrine, too, that the human soul is immortal, and at the death of the body [the soul] enters into some other living thing, then coming to birth; and after passing through all creatures of land, sea, and air, it enters once more into a human body at birth, a cycle which it completes in three thousand years. There are Greeks who have used this doctrine, some earlier and some later, as if it were their own.¹²

Pythagoras was thought to have gained many of his philosophical and religious concepts from the Egyptians. One of Pythagoras' pupils was the renowned Plato, who clearly taught a Double Doctrine in his teaching. Plato is universally considered one of the greatest philosophers of history and his opinion is extremely important, influencing people for thousands of years. A pupil of Plato's, the revered physician Galen wrote,

Plato declares that animals have constantly a soul

10. Warburton, *Op. Cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 170–171.

11. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 170–173.

12. Herodotus, *The Histories*, A.D. Godley, ed., Book 2, chapter 123.

[meaning all animal beings, including man, have an immortal soul], which serves to animate and inform their bodies; but as for stones, wood and what we commonly call inanimate parts of the creation, all these, he says, are quite destitute of soul. And yet in his *Timaeus*, where he explains his principles TO HIS DISCIPLES AND SELECT FRIENDS, he there GIVES UP THE COMMON NOTION ... Now we are NOT to imagine that in this case he is inconsistent with himself, or maintains contrary doctrines, any more than Aristotle and Theophrastus are to be charged with contradiction, WHEN THEY DECLARED TO THEIR DISCIPLES THEIR REAL DOCTRINES and to the COMMON PEOPLE, principles of another nature.¹³

Plato himself admitted that he did not merely withhold the truth from people, but that he directly lied to them. Plato even arranged a system whereby his friends would understand when he was writing to those who were knowledgeable, or to those who were ignorant. The serious letter meant messages that were to be regarded as true. The less serious meant those which were for the masses:

Concerning the sign which indicates which of my letters are seriously written and which not. ... "God," [singular] then, is at the head of the serious letter, but "gods" [plural] of the less serious.¹⁴

PYTHAGORAS, PLATO AND THE IMMORTAL SOUL

Origen, the Christian apologist, wrote a book titled *Against Celsus*. Celsus was a pagan opponent of Christianity, a philosopher of the system now called Neo-Platonism. Addressing Celsus, Origen writes that the followers of Celsus:

... Have accepted the doctrine of Pythagoras and Plato regarding the soul, that it is its nature to ascend to the vault of heaven, and in the super-

celestial space to behold the sights which are seen by the blessed spectators above. According to you, O Celsus, they also who have accepted the doctrine of the duration of the soul (after death), and who lead a life through which they become heroes, and make their abodes with the gods, are won over by vain hopes.

Probably also they who are persuaded that the soul comes (into the body) from without, and that it will be withdrawn from the power of death, ... let him meet the arguments, which are not lightly advanced among Greeks and Barbarians, regarding the immortality of the soul, or its duration (after death), or the immortality of the thinking principle; and let him prove that these are words which deceive with empty hopes those who give their assent to them; ... [they] give birth to no hope at all, on account of the immediate and complete destruction of the soul.¹⁵

The Greek historian and geographer Strabo knew about Plato when he discussed Indian religion in his history and descriptions of peoples around the world. He compared Indian beliefs with Plato's:

They invent fables also, after the manner of Plato, on the immortality of the soul, and on the punishments in Hades, and other things of this kind.¹⁶

DOUBLE DOCTRINE IN THE PAGAN MYSTERIES

There were also religious practices called mysteries, also called mystery religions. The mysteries were different from the "orthodox" pagan state religions, and originally they operated outside of state control. The pagan rites of the mystery religions also had elaborate secret rituals and teachings. They were experiential rites, many involving music, chanting, darkness, sensory deprivation, sexual acts, blood sacrifice and drugs (given orally, on the skin, or through vapors) that caused altered states of consciousness. Contact with spirits or gods, real or imagined, was encouraged.¹⁷ Occasionally the rituals ended in violent acts requiring suppression by government officials. ►

13. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, fragments.

Ernest Martin, *Pagan Doctrine of the Soul*, p. 6. Plato in *Timaeus*:
"We may say that the world became a living creature truly endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God."
This is pantheism, that the universe contains everything that is God. This is clearly not biblical.

14. Plato, *Epistle 13*.

15. Origen, *Against Celsus*, Book III, chapter 80.

16. Strabo, *Geography*.

17. Warburton, *Op. Cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 193–202.

The secrets were hidden first to excite curiosity for potential initiates, and second, to keep certain teachings only for initiates. The best known were the Orphic, the Bacchic, the Eleusian, the Samothracian, the Cabiric and the Mithriac mysteries. These mysteries each had lesser and greater mysteries attached to them. The secrets of the lesser mysteries were openly taught to all who wished to learn. The uninitiated were told many wild and fabulous tales about the gods in order to confuse them and to keep them in ignorance of the truth. The greater mysteries were only for initiates who became qualified to learn them. The initiates were told by degrees the truth of the mysteries.¹⁸

DOUBLE DOCTRINE IN GNOSTICISM

Double doctrine and immortal soul are also the foundation of all Gnostic thought. Gnosis means knowledge. Gnosticism was a system of occult beliefs that used Jewish and Christian terms. The knowledge was gained either by direct mystical experience or through possession of secret teachings given to initiates.¹⁹ This blending was likely begun by Simon Magus who attempted to buy his way into the mysteries of God:

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit" Acts 8:17-19.

It was likely that Simon Magus blended pre-Gnostic mystical concepts with elements of early Christianity to begin what historians today call Gnosticism, according to Epiphanius (in *Contra Heresies* ii.1-6).²⁰

18. Ernest Martin, *The Secrets of Ancient Religion Revealed!*, Parts 1 and 2.

19. James Webb, *The Occult Underground* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1974), p. 199.

20. Ernest Martin, *The People That History Forgot*, chapters 4, 8 and 17.

Ernest Martin, *Essentials of New Testament Doctrine* (Portland, OR: ASK, 2001), chapter 19.

Epiphanius in G.R.S. Mead, *Simon Magus* (London: 1892; reprint London: Ares Publishers, 1985).

DOUBLE DOCTRINE IN HISTORY

Double Doctrine is also the basis of all secret political and religious sects, even today. It is the root of all occult and magical teaching almost without exception. In fact the term "occult" itself means "hidden." Such occult mysteries were thought to have great spiritual power. Double Doctrine was even used by Jewish philosophers and teachers such as Jacob Luria and Maimonides.²¹ The organization called the Illuminati, established in the late 1700s, was structured on Double Doctrine whereby only those at the top of the organization knew the true goals and methods. Communal and secret societies, so popular during the late 1700s to middle 1800s in Europe and in the United States up to the early 1900s, all had forms of Double Doctrine teaching.²²

THE DIFFERENCE OF BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

When Christianity began it was initially a set of beliefs based on the truth of God and not on deception. That was upsetting to rulers everywhere that Christianity took root. Even though Christians were obedient to law, they were considered atheists, not

21. The Jewish philosopher Maimonides in the 12th century used Double Doctrine teaching to lead Jews away from a desire to rebuild their Temple. Attempts in doing so had been disastrous to Jews throughout their history. Maimonides also strove to get his Hellenistic and atheistic religious beliefs accepted by fellow Jews. During his lifetime his beliefs were not widely accepted (Ernest Martin, *The Greatest Revolution in Human History*; Ernest Martin, *Maimonides – Saint and Heretic*).

22. Adam Weishaupt, *Apologie des Illuminatum* (Frankfurt, 1789). George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine all discuss the Illuminati in private letters. A large third political party, the Anti-Masonic Party, was organized in the United States between 1827 and 1838. It considered Freemasonry with its hidden traditions to be a threat to society.

For the role of secret societies in politics see James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

In America, a large percentage of the urban male population during the last part of the 19th century and early 20th century belonged to fraternal organizations that had secret traditions and rituals, most of which were harmless. The attraction of secret knowledge is still powerful to many people in the modern world. Modern military, intelligence, and security organizations have a structure of information dissemination called compartmentalization. Only those who "need to know" something have access to relevant information. As a person's security clearance and "need to know" is higher, that person is allowed access to more and more information relevant to their function. It is an excellent means of keeping secrets, and an effective way to control both information and people. It also minimizes damage if persons holding a portion of secret information is compromised or reveals what he or she knows.

just because they denied the pagan gods, but because Christians exposed religious lies. This exposure directly threatened the political stability of the state.

When the apostle Paul was in Thessalonica, the opposing Gentiles alleged that Paul had “*turned the world upside down*” (Acts 17:6) with his teachings. In Ephesus Paul was accused of exposing idol worship, threatening the livelihood of the idol makers (Acts 19:21-41). In Athens Paul had a good welcome from Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who thought he was bringing them news about strange new gods (*daimion*, demons in Greek), one called Jesus, that had been resurrected. Apparently the idea of demons being resurrected was acceptable to them. They took Paul to speak to the people at the Areopagus on Mars Hill (Acts 17:18-20). He initially had a good reception. He spoke about how all men “*are the offspring of God*” and not made with “*gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device*” (Acts 17:29).

Then Paul began to teach about the resurrection of a man (Acts 17:30-33), and everyone’s attitude immediately changed. The philosophers and the people laughed and mocked him, and most suddenly lost interest (:32). The resurrection of a man was directly contrary to the lie of the immortal soul, and the related lie of the transmigration of souls.

IMMORTAL SOUL AND DOCTRINES OF DEMONS

I Timothy 4 discusses the latter times:

Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats ... (I Timothy 4:1-4).

Previously I understood that the phrase “*doctrines of demons*” introduced the list of what those doctrines would be. I now understand that the two objects of the verb should be a connected unit:

Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giv-

ing heed to seducing spirits, and [giving heed to] doctrines of devils [demons]: ... (I Timothy 4:1).

What would those doctrines of demons be? They would not only be the doctrines by demons, but they would be doctrines about demons – falsely applied to human beings. They would include the teachings of (1) a supposed immortal soul, (2) “endless” punishment in hell (*hades*), and (3) transmigration of souls, or reincarnation, as it is commonly termed today.

All three of these teachings are what the pagan philosophers taught the common people, but which they themselves did not believe.

CHRISTIAN TEACHERS OF DOUBLE DOCTRINE

Origen, who strongly believed in universal reconciliation of all men in Christ, nonetheless himself held back that full teaching from unbelievers. Perhaps it was the influence of the Alexandrian culture where Plato was honored for his wisdom second only to the Bible. In any case, Origen taught Double Doctrine regarding universal reconciliation. Why did he hold back and not teach the full truth to all people? The reason was given by Origen himself, again in his work *Against Celsus*. He believed that proclaiming the biblical teaching of universal reconciliation to the unconverted might be dangerous for them. Origen held back the truth for the same reason that pagan philosophers told lies to the people. He felt that the teaching of universal reconciliation should be presented guardedly. He writes about the purification of sinners through Christian atonement in light of universal reconciliation:

But the remarks which might be made on this topic are neither to be made at all ... [but] for the sake of those who are with difficulty restrained, even by fear of eternal punishment, from plunging into any degree of wickedness, and into the flood of evils which result from sin.²³

Origen wrote and taught this to unbelievers. Universal reconciliation was not part of the Gospel of Christ for Origen, even though he taught strongly within the church that all men would be saved. ►

²³ Origen, *Against Celsus*, 6:26.

He also knew that most Christians held to the same doctrine of universal reconciliation.²⁴

Jerome was an irascible but productive 4th century scholar, translator and “father of the church.” Although he wrote contradictory statements about his own belief, it is clear that, like Origen, Jerome felt that universal reconciliation should not be promoted to unbelievers. He thought that the terrors of punishment would keep people in line, and that unrepentant people might react badly if they understood the full extent of God’s grace:

All of which nevertheless they allow should not now be openly told to those with whom fear yet acts as a motive, and who may be kept from sinning by the terror of punishment. But this question we ought to leave to the wisdom of God alone, whose judgments as well as mercies are by weight and measure, and who well knows whom and how long, He ought to judge.²⁵

JOB AND IMMORTAL SOUL

The patriarch Job asked an important question that goes to the heart of the matter regarding the supposed immortal soul. He asked this question while undergoing intense suffering. The question involves you and all humanity:

If a man die, shall he live again? (Job 14:14).

The answer to this question is, yes; but the obvious inference is that the dead are not alive. One is either alive or dead.²⁶

All have sinned (Romans 5:12) and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The soul that sins shall not remain alive in another state of existence or state of being, but it shall die: “*the soul that sins, it shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:4). In light of this, let us enlarge the context and look at the Job passage again:

So man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that you would hide me in

the grave, that you would keep me secret, until Your wrath be past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire to the work of Your hands (Job 14:12-15).

This passage in Job is not describing an immortal soul. It is a statement that the dead are dead. They are unconscious, nonexistent – for a period of time – until God calls them and changes the death state like “sleep” to be “awake.” The dead are not immortal. They do not have an immortal soul. Immortality only comes from God, when He chooses to give it.

At the time Job expressed his thoughts, written after his experience of great loss and suffering, he understood that the resurrection would not occur until the heavens cease to exist. He was content to wait “*until my change come*.” It is doubtful that he understood details about the new heavens and new earth, we cannot tell from what he wrote. To be sure, for the vast percentage of humanity their resurrection will not occur until after the Kingdom of God has been on earth for 1,000 years, the new heavens and the new earth are created, and the Great White Throne judgment begins. This fits precisely with what Job wrote.

CHRISTIAN TEACHERS OF AN IMMORTAL SOUL

Justin Martyr writes of those whom he does not consider to be Christians:

... Who are called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth of resurrection], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians.²⁷

24. David Sielaff, *The Recognition of Universal Reconciliation*, part 3.

25. Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, book 18, chapter 66.

26. David Sielaff, *Pope John Paul II Is in Hell*.

27. Justin Martyr, *Dialogues with Trypho*, 80.

Not long after Justin wrote those words, the first "church father" openly declared a belief in an "immortal soul." It was Athenagoras of Athens in about 177 C.E.:

Our belief rests on a most infallible guarantee – the purpose of Him who fashioned us, according to which He made man of an immortal soul ...²⁸

I will not bore you with the litany of Christian believers and leaders After Athenagoras who clearly incorporated non-biblical Platonic and neo-Platonic concepts into their Christian beliefs. Then after Christianity became legally recognized and even protected as an acceptable religion by the Roman government during the reign of Emperor Constantine, and Christianity became politically and socially acceptable, then political opportunists became church leaders and incorporated the popular and familiar Platonic concepts into their teaching about the nature of the soul and rewards. The teaching of Double Doctrine for the purpose of social control accompanied the doctrine of the immortal soul.

GOD'S REWARD

One attraction of the immortal soul doctrine is the supposed promise of immediate reward. God promises rewards also, but in His Own good time. God will reward those who seek Him. In order to gain that reward, one must first believe that God exists, and then express faith in Him, all as a prerequisite for that reward. That reward will come with the resurrection from the dead.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must [1] believe that He is, and [2] [believe] that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

This verse is embedded within a larger text that talks about those of faith in the Old Testament who had not yet received their reward. None yet have been resurrected to their reward. Moses and the others to

²⁸. Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection*; Translated by B.P. Pratten, *Ante Nicene Fathers*, volume 2, chapters 13, 15 and 16.

In chapter 20 Athenagoras again states that the soul remains immortal after the body dissolves to dust. In chapter 24 he writes:

"For such an end as this, I suppose, belongs to beasts and cattle, not to men possessed of an immortal soul and rational judgment."

this day have not yet gained his future reward since their death (Hebrews 11:26). All rewards after death are in the context of the resurrection (Matthew 5:12; 6:1, 4, 6, 18). Remember, Scripture makes clear that even our will to believe comes from God (Ephesians 1:11; Philippians 2:13).

LIES OF THE PAST, LIES OF THE PRESENT

The apostle Paul makes direct reference to those rulers and philosophers, the wise, who promoted and perpetuated great falsehoods, such as the immortal soul, hell and trinity doctrines. Keep in mind that what Paul is expressing applies to the "wise" today, just as much as it did in his own day:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [back] the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, [how?] being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools (Romans 1:18-22).

By holding back truth, as in Double Doctrine, the wise of the world become fools, and as a result are left to their own lusts by God. This means that they purposely give up truths they know and then falsely declare those truths to be lies. Paul says they are "without excuse" as they "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). How foolish. They do this to maintain power over other people. This is staggering in its implications. Let us unpack these verses to the end of Romans chapter 1 about the wise of the world:

They are ungodly [irreverent] (:18).

They are unrighteous [unjust] (:18). ▶

They “*hold the truth,*” retaining it for themselves alone, unrighteously (:18).

They know and understand “*that which may be known of God*” (:19).

They are wise enough to comprehend the invisible things from what is clearly seen in God’s creation (:19).

They understand God’s power (:20).

They understand the nature of His Godhead (:20).

They therefore have no excuse (:20).

Although they know God, they refuse to glorify Him as God (:21).

Nor are they thankful to God, in spite of their knowledge, which is a gift to them from God (:21).

They are vain in their imaginations (:21).

Their hearts become darkened [unintelligent] (:21).

They think they are wise, but become fools [stupid] (:22).

They imagined that everything was God (:23).

So God acted and gave them over to their own lusts which led to uncleanness of dishonoring their own bodies (:24).

They change the truth (:25).

They make it into “the” lie [definite article in Greek] (:25).

They worship what they know to be false (:25).

They actually serve the creature (:25).

They ignore the Creator [while worshipping the false and serving the creature] (:25).

They are given up by God to all sorts of perversions (:26).

sions (:26).

They shall pay and suffer in their own bodies (:27).

They deliberately refuse to retain God in the knowledge of their minds (:28).

They shall have reprobate minds [disqualified to judge] given to them by God (:28).

They commit all sorts of evils (:29–31).

They shall receive God’s judgment of death, not life (:32).

What a sordid mess! This comes about all because they did not wish to retain the knowledge of God in their hearts. Note that evil progresses [to a] worse and worse [state]. Such is the description by the apostle Paul. He described the past (particularly the immediate post-flood world), his own day, and it applies to our day.

Note that all through the process of decline and degeneracy they knew the truth! Note also that most of all of the verbs in this latter part of the chapter are present tense in Greek. The progression is occurring with the wise, the rulers and the philosophers of the world today. Human nature does not change without God’s intervention, without His giving of His Holy Spirit.

Of course none of this should surprise anyone because lying to others and to ourselves is a common human fault. Rulers lying to their subjects is seen almost as a prerogative of officials around the world and throughout history. Nonetheless it is a great evil that shall increase in intensity in the future:

Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (I Timothy 4:1-2).

IMMORTALITY IN THE BIBLE

The Bible is unambiguous and straightforward about immortality – no Double Doctrine on this subject!

Scripture clearly declares who possesses immortality at present, and who will have it in the future. At this present time only one human being has attained and presently possesses immortality.

*I give you charge in the sight of God, who quickens all things [literally “makes all alive”], and before Christ Jesus ... That you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in His times He shall show, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only has immortality [Greek root word *athanasia*], dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man has seen, nor can see: to Whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen (I Timothy 6:13-16).*

Note that at present only Jesus Christ has immortality. No other human being has immortality (:16) – not now, yet eventually all shall be made alive in the future (:13), just as all shall be saved (I Timothy 2:4-6; 4:9-10, II Timothy 2:11) and gain immortality. I Timothy 6:13-16 specifically answers Job’s question, “*If a man die, shall he live again?*” Yes, all shall die; but all shall live again, all shall be quickened. Christ alone has immortality at this present time, but the apostle Paul states precisely when more people will receive the same immortality that Christ has now:

*For this corruptible must put on incorruption [Greek root word *aphtharsia*], and this mortal must put on immortality [Greek root *athanasia*]. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption [*aphtharsia*], and this mortal shall have put on immortality [*athanasia*], then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Corinthians 15:53-54).*

Paul states twice that immortality must be “*put on.*” It is not a possession at present for anyone except Christ. It is an event to come in the future. For more details read all of Paul’s description of the resurrection body in I Corinthians 15:35-58.²⁹

²⁹ Note the difference between the two Greek roots *aphtharsia* (“*incorruption*”) and *athanasia* (“*immortality*”). *Athanasia* occurs 3 times in the New Testament. *Aphtharsia* occurs 8 times: 4 times as “*incorruption*,” 2 times as “*immortality*,” and 2 times as “*sincerity*.” The two verses in the *King James Version* translated

Immortality at the resurrection will be “*put on*” like a coat or a garment.

And if Christ [Messiah] be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ [Messiah] from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you (Romans 8:10-11).

Evil spirits for millennia have lied to people around the world, and they continue to do so today. Pagan religious and political leaders lied about the immortal soul for the purpose of maintaining some control over the “common” people (who often ran amuck, acting like animals, or worse). Early church leaders also saw the necessity to keep the masses in fear so that they could be more easily controlled.

PAUL’S MINISTRY – AND OURS

Paul as a servant of God plainly stated the example he expected the Corinthians to follow, and they had problems with morality. We also should follow Paul’s example in speaking honestly and making the truth plain to everyone. There should be no hidden truths among us, no mysteries.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God (I Corinthians 4:5).

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have

“*immortality*” should be translated “*incorruption.*”

*“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality [*athanasia*, “*incorruption*”], eternal [eonian] life” (Romans 2:7).*

*“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who [1] has abolished death, and [2] has brought life and [3] immortality [*athanasia*, “*incorruption*”] to light through the gospel” (II Timothy 1:10).*

While *incorruption* is an attribute within *immortality* and is related to eonian or age-lasting life (Romans 2:7) and the abolishment of death (II Timothy 1:10), these verses tell us that the “*incorruption*” is something to be sought and is not the present possession of the believer. Accuracy in translation is important and always yields useful information.

renounced the hidden things of dishonesty [shame], not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully [not adulterating it]; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid [and it is not], it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [age] has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ ... (II Corinthians 4:1-4).

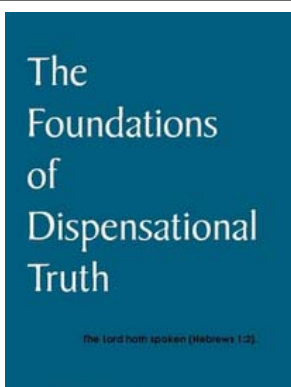
now available to be proclaimed.³⁰ It is God's responsibility to preserve and unveil mysteries, not ours. Our responsibility is to make available and to teach the full Gospel of Christ and God. No biblical teaching today can justifiably be hidden from our fellow human beings. We should be willing to proclaim to every human being:

You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free! (John 8:32).

The light of the truth of the Gospel of Christ, Who is the Image of God, is what must be communicated to the world. Every mystery that God has revealed is

1963, 2006

³⁰. Romans 16:25; I Corinthians 2:7, 4:1; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:29; Colossians 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3.



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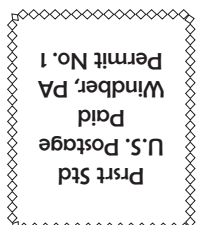
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