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TEACHING MAGAZINE

Is Soul Sleep Biblical?



Preface:

Whether it is speaking to a Jehovah Witness or Seven Day Adventist the topic of Soul Sleep is heard in many occasions. Is it biblical or unbiblical? This is the Topic I wish to write about in this issue. Where does this doctrine comes from ? And Can it be found in the Bible?

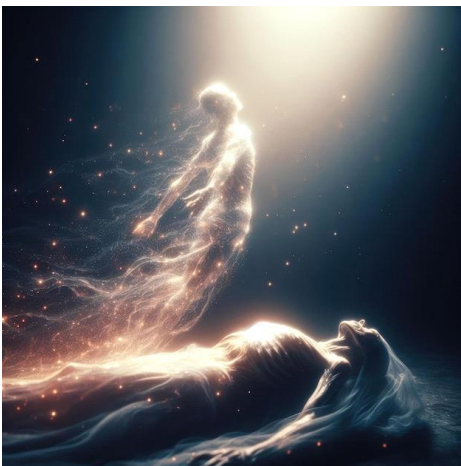
June 2026 Harris Kakoulides

Chapter 1 What Church History can tell us on who made this doctrine of Soul Sleep ?



As I try to look at where this doctrine came from I get a little information by the reformer John Calvin. In *Psychopannychia* (1534; first published 1542) John Calvin states that this doctrine of Soul sleep was of Arabian origin. He states "Nor does it now appear for the first time; for we read that it originated with some Arabs, who maintained that "The soul dies with the body, and that both rise again at the Day of Judgment." So this is not a doctrine that is new but one that the christian church had to deal with for many hundreds of years . Although who invented it is unknown but we can like Calvin state it might of come from Arabian origin.

Chapter 2 Verses that are wrongly accepted as teaching Soul sleep



There are a number of verses which are wrongly thought that it teaches soul sleep when in reality

soul is not mention there and the reference is to the body and not the soul for example lets look at some of them:

(Psalms 6:5) For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks? (NKJV)

(Psalms 30:9) "What profit is there in my blood, When I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth? (NKJV)

(Psalms 115:17) The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence. (NKJV)

(Ecclesiastes 9:5) For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. (NKJV)

(Ecclesiastes 9:10) Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (NKJV)

(Isaiah 38:18-19) For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth. The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day; The father shall make known Your truth to the children. (NKJV)

As we look at Ecclesiastes we notice that his focus is on what happens under the sun and not the after life for example 27 times Solomon mentions the phrase under the sun: Ec 1:3,9,14,2:11,17, 18,19,20,22, 3:16 , 4:1 ,3, 7,15, 5:13,18,6:1,12,8:9,15,17, 9:3 ,6,9,11,13, 10:5

All these verses on soul sleep are mention by a man as his outcome but not one of them is God speaking as this is what will happen to man after he dies. These passages can easily be taken to refer to the body and not the soul. The Book of Daniel when speaking about death as sleeping makes mention of the dust which is a reference to the body going to being dust again and then awoken and not the soul.

(Daniel 12:2) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (NKJV)

(Genesis 3:19) In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." (NKJV)

Jesus tells us what happens after death and the location of the soul when he talked about the rich man and Lazarus

(Luke 16:19-23) "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. "And being in torments

in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (NKJV)

A thing to notice that this was not a parable. Because no parables of Jesus ever mention names of persons. This story we see a number of names Abraham, Moses, Lazarus.

Else where Jesus speaks of dead people still being alive unto God and also of fearing God who could take the soul and destroy it in hell.

(Matthew 10:28) "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (NKJV)

(Luke 12:5) "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! (NKJV)

Peter states that Jesus soul preached the gospel to those who died at the time of Noah's flood.

(1 Peter 3:18-20) For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. (NKJV)

(1 Peter 4:6) For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (NKJV)

How could that be possible if the soul was sleeping in the time of death? How could Jesus preach to them if their soul were asleep waiting for the resurrection of the body? It would be impossible.

Some might say that Peter said that David did not ascend to heaven !!! And Quote Acts 2 when Peter states Ac 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, (KJV)

One just has to look at the verse in its context to find out that Peter is referring to body aka flesh of David and not the soul of David.

(Acts 2:25-34) "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day." Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in

Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, (NKJV)

Jesus was very clear he states the dead are alive to God.

(Luke 20:37-38) "But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' "For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him." (NKJV)

(Matthew 22:31-32) "But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (NKJV)

Although they may be very dead to us in that we can't contact them as we would like to but they are very alive to God. Moses for example who had died appeared to Jesus at the mount of transfiguration. And spoke to him . His soul was not sleeping but very active.

(Matthew 17:1-3) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. (NKJV)

(Joshua 1:1-2) After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them-the children of Israel. (NKJV)

Chapter 3 Death for the Christian is a reunion with Jesus and other believers



In the first 5 books of the Bible known as the book of Moses, Torah or Pentateuch we see a reunion with fellow family members after death . The Phrase Gather to his people is used a number of occasions which implies a reuniting with fellow loved ones when we die .

(Genesis 25:8) Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. (NKJV)

(Genesis 25:17) These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. (NKJV)

(Genesis 35:29) So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. (NKJV)

(Genesis 49:33) And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people. (NKJV)

(Numbers 20:24) "Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. (NKJV)

(Deuteronomy 32:48-50) Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: "Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; "and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; (NKJV)

Moses was not buried by his people but the Lord buried him which is important to notice so the phrase can't mean a reion of living family with the corpse after his death but a reunion with

those who died before him with him after death.

(Deuteronomy 34:5-6) So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. (NKJV)

The Soul of Samuel who was dead told Saul tomorrow you and your sons will be with me in stating that he was implying that they were to die and join him in the underworld.

(1 Samuel 28:19) "Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." (NKJV)

When David's son died he stated he was to unite with him after death.

(2 Samuel 12:23) "But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." (NKJV)

When Jesus was on the cross he told the thief that on that very day they both were to be together in Paradise.

(Luke 23:42-43) Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (NKJV)

There are some who make the argument that today means at this moment I am telling you this but it will not happen now. But today means today as we see the same author Luke using the same today to refer to Jesus telling Peter today you will deny me 3 times.

(Luke 22:34) Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." (NKJV)

The Bible is clear that Christians will be with Jesus at the moment of death.

Stephen saw Jesus at the moment of death standing to receive him.

(Acts 7:55-60) But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (NKJV)

Paul makes mention of the Christian being with Jesus after death

(Philippians 1:21-23) For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. (NKJV)

(2 Corinthians 5:1-9) For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. (NKJV)

When Christians come back to receive the bodies at the resurrection they coming back with Jesus who was with them .

(1 Thessalonians 4:14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. (NKJV)

As to those who are not believers at the moment of death they will be in hell under punishment waiting to receive their bodies so they so to be cast to the lake of fire.

(Luke 16:22-23) "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (NKJV)

(2 Peter 2:9) then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, (NKJV)

(Revelation 20:11-15) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (NKJV)

Although there is of course more to be said , Lets leave it here .