

Doctrine of Soul Sleep

1. Soul sleep is the teaching that when a person dies, his soul "sleeps" until the time of the future resurrection.
2. In this condition, the person is not aware or conscious.
3. The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists hold to this doctrine.
4. The Jehovah's Witnesses go on to teach annihilation for the wicked.
5. Several primary verses are used to support soul sleep.
 - *Ecclesiastes 9:5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.*
 - *Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*
 - *Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*
6. Regarding the passages in Ecclesiastes, it must be remembered that the author is expanding on the theme that "*all is vanity*" (Ecclesiastes 1:1-3), from a human perspective "*under the sun*".
7. A proper understanding of any biblical topic must take in the whole counsel of God and this includes the New Testament which brings light to bear on the Old Testament.
8. In the New Testament Paul teaches that to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord.
 - *2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*
9. The conscious immortality of the soul, not soul sleep, has been the hope of the Christian faith since New Testament times.
10. The Lord's communion with Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration is an argument against soul sleep.
 - *Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.