

### The Christian Belief in the Afterlife:

1. **Christianity clearly affirms that we survive our death (John 11, I Cor. 15, I Thess. 4, John 14).** We've heard it preached in church and in funerals all our lives. Without this doctrine, Christianity would have little to no appeal to us.
2. **What would we need to defend?**
  - A. *Death—Body/ Soul Separation.* In Ecc. 12:6-7, the preacher tells us that at death, the dust (body) goes back to the ground from where it comes from, and the spirit goes back to God from where it came from.
  - B. *The Intermediate State.* The Bible affirms that in death, our souls go to be with Christ and exist in a disembodied state, awaiting the resurrection (II Cor. 5:7, Luke 23:43, and Phil. 1:21-26). This may not be the emphasis in the NT regarding life after death, but it is certainly affirmed.
  - C. *Bodily Resurrection in the Eschaton.* The major emphasis in the NT is on bodily resurrection (John 11, I Cor. 15, and I Thess. 4). Both Jesus and Paul spend considerable time developing this idea.
  - D. *Judgment.* Various theological perspectives place this moment at different times in the process. Yet, the New Testament and all of Christian history affirm a judgment (based on sin, repentance, and receiving salvation) wherein God separates those who are saved and those who are lost (Matt. 25:31-46, John 5:22, Rom. 14:10-12, Heb. 9:27). Those who have turned from their sins and placed their faith in Jesus Christ who died for their sin are saved and have eternal life in heaven with Christ. Those who have not are separated from Christ in hell of all of eternity.
3. **What are the challenges with this?**
  - A. None of us have ever experienced anything like this; death seems to be so final. Billions of people have died on this planet, and none of us has ever seen someone come back. Atheists claim that this belief is nothing more than a coping mechanism we employ in the face of death.
  - B. Bodies decompose, come to compose new organisms, or just get destroyed. Again, billions of people have died and their bodies either decompose, get cremated, or destroyed through explosions. In these cases, it looks like there is just nothing left for God to raise up. Even worse, in many cases, it appears that the old parts of a person's body may even come to compose someone else's body.
  - C. The soul is non-physical, and thus difficult to prove. In fact, the mind/body interaction problem seems to disprove the existence of the soul. In short, if souls and bodies are different substances, one physical and one non-physical, then it seems impossible for them to interact with each other. For centuries now, philosophers and scientists have taken this problem to be a disproof for the soul.

### The Existence of an Immaterial Soul:

1. **The case from consciousness.** Despite the mind/body interaction problem and the atheists' confidence that there can thus be no soul, the soul (and dualism in general), have made a significant comeback. Specifically, the issue of consciousness raises serious problems for materialism. In short, our experience of things cannot be explained by materialism. For example: the taste of sugar.
2. **The "Binding" problem.** Likewise, materialism seems to have difficulty explaining the unity of our conscious experiences. You feel the seat, hear my voice, see the stage, and smell the gym all at the same time. These are all processed by different parts of the brain, and the brain process is jumbled. But the experience we have of the moment is unified. Materialism has difficulty explaining how and why. The "unity" of our conscious experiences seems to require something else beyond the brain.
3. **Out of Body and Near Death Experiences.** Additionally, a variety of situations have been documented recently of people having out of body experiences in near death situations. In these cases, they have been able to see or hear things while outside the body. Most of these cases are far-fetched. But not all of them. Some can be and have been verified empirically.

### The Possibility of Bodily Resurrection:

- 1 **The case depends on your view of human persons, and what you believe about resurrection itself.**
  - A. You are your soul. This is the account of substance dualism. It affirms that body and soul are different kinds of things and that you are your soul. If so, then all you have to have to survive death is your soul.
  - B. You are your body. This is materialism. This view says you are just a body. If so, then to survive death, you have to have not just a body, but you have to have the specific body you are in.
  - C. You are your body and soul. While there are plenty of example of Christians holding both materialist and substance dualism, the majority position has been this body & soul view. If this is true, then both the soul and the body (this specific body) must survive.
- 2 **Our Options.**
  - A. *Duplicate or carbon-copy body.* If you are your soul, then all God has to do is give us a duplicate body or something like it. We do not have to have the same body we have now.
  - B. *Reassembly.* But what if we have to get our current bodies back? One view that tries to accomplish this is called the reassembly model. This view says that in the resurrection, God goes out and gets all the old parts that once composed your body and reassembles them. But, would this work in cases of cannibalism, decomposition, or something like that? Most modern philosophers reject reassembly because of the cannibal objection.
  - C. *Logical Possibilities.* These responses are not intended to show how God actually does it. Rather, they simply try to show one logical way God could do it. If their way is logically possible, then it is not impossible and we should worry about it (the atheist claims that it is impossible).
    1. *Brain Snatching.* Perhaps in the moment just prior to death, God snatches the brain from the dying person and replaces it with a duplicate. The person survives via the brain snatching event.
    2. *Fission Events.* Or maybe at the moment just prior to death, the body experiences a fission event where it splits into two sets of physically identical parts or bodies. One becomes the dead corpse in the casket, and the other becomes the person alive in heaven.
  - D. *Revised Reassembly.* Or maybe we can revisit reassembly and revise it a bit to bypass the cannibal objection. What if our bodies have essential parts and that all God has to do is give us our essential parts back in the resurrection? If so, then I argue that the reassembly model still works. And, just to make it interesting, we have numerous parts of our bodies that are present the whole time.