

## Uplifting Passages about Resurrection

### **Introduction**

Scripture contains quite a bit of information about the subject of **resurrection**. In essence, the Bible tells us that *when* Jesus returns, he will bring believers *back to life* – so that believers will live with Jesus, forever, on the restored paradise earth.

However, from my experience, most Christians have almost no knowledge about the subject of resurrection. The main reason for this is that almost all mainstream churches teach that human beings have “immortal souls” – and that when a person’s body dies, his immortal soul *leaves his body* and goes to *heaven*. In other words, the mainstream belief is that people **never really** die – because their immortal souls keep on living, forever.

As a result, many mainstream churches tend to downplay – or even completely *ignore* – the many Scriptural passages about resurrection. The reason for this is that the resurrection hope contained in the Bible completely *contradicts* the “immortal souls going to heaven” concept!

Of course, this “immortal soul” belief is often discussed at funerals. For example, the loved ones of a deceased person will often try to console themselves with the idea that the deceased is now “in a better place”; or that he is “watching over us” now.

For those of us who understand the Biblical resurrection hope, funerals have the potential to cause some rather “difficult” situations. In particular, people who are grieving at a funeral might ask us to provide uplifting verses from the Bible, in order to try to improve people’s spirits. However, the Bible contradicts the immortal soul doctrine – and many mainstream Christians try to console themselves with *that very doctrine*.

So, the overall question is the following: What, *exactly*, should we say to people who are grieving at a funeral – when those people believe in the immortal soul doctrine?

Certainly, we should not agree that a deceased person is living in heaven, as a “disembodied soul” – because that would be dishonest of us. However, if we *explicitly* contradict the immortal soul doctrine, then that might cause even more sadness for the loved ones of the deceased – and we definitely should *not* cause any additional pain for grieving people.

It occurs to me that a resolution to this issue is to simply **avoid** the topic of “immortal souls” completely. In other words, do not even bring up that subject. The subject that we can bring up – and which is very inspiring – is the subject of **resurrection**. In fact, speaking about resurrection can have a “double” benefit – because not only is it an inspiring topic, but also (as mentioned above) most Christians have almost *no knowledge* of that topic.

### **Short verses about resurrection**

First off, here are some very short verses from Scripture, which appear to be quite inspiring. All of these verses are rather explicit about the fact that deceased people will *live again*, when Jesus returns – and that would hopefully provide some comfort to grieving people.

Note: in the verses below, I *only* included information about resurrection, itself – i.e., I did *not* include any information about punishment for the wicked. The reason for this is that my *goal* in these verses is to bring *comfort* to grieving people.

Here are the verses in question; along with a basic outline about how I would *present* those verses:

1. The prophet Isaiah gave us some very inspiring words, about *life after death*:

**Isaiah 26:19 (ESV):**

<sup>19</sup> Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise.  
You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy!  
For your dew is a dew of light,  
and the earth will give birth to the dead.

2. The prophet Daniel “echos” that sentiment from Isaiah – about the dead coming *back to life*:

**Daniel 12:2a (NIV):**

<sup>2</sup> Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake...

3. As it turns out, Jesus also discussed the subject of *resurrection* – just like the prophets did:

**John 5:28-29a (NIV):**

<sup>28</sup> “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice <sup>29</sup> and come out...

4. In fact, Jesus, **himself**, will raise us from the dead – *when* he returns:

**John 6:40 (ESV):**

<sup>40</sup>For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

5. Finally, the patriarch Job had an *extremely* inspiring belief about resurrection – even though he suffered *terribly* during his life:

**Job 19:25-27 (NIV):**

<sup>25</sup> I know that my redeemer lives,  
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.  
<sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I will see God;  
<sup>27</sup> I myself will see him  
with my own eyes—I, and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me!

## Longer, more in-depth passages

The passages listed above are very “short and to the point”, of course. As a result, it is *possible* that after hearing those verses, people may want to learn *more* about resurrection.

If so, then the passages below can be provided. Those passages go into quite a bit of detail about our resurrection hope:

### **Ezekiel 37:1-14 (ESV):**

<sup>1</sup> The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” <sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup>And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup>And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” <sup>10</sup>So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

<sup>11</sup>Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ <sup>12</sup>Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup>And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

### **John 11:1-16,38-44 (ESV):**

(Note: for brevity, I *removed* verses 17-37; but those verses are *also* very inspiring.)

<sup>1</sup>Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup>It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup>So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” <sup>4</sup>But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

<sup>5</sup>Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup>So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. <sup>7</sup>Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” <sup>8</sup>The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?” <sup>9</sup>Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup>But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” <sup>11</sup>After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.”

<sup>12</sup>The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." <sup>13</sup>Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup>Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, <sup>15</sup>and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup>So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup>The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

### **1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (ESV):**

<sup>50</sup>I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup>Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup>For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup>When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory." <sup>55</sup>"O death, where is your victory?  
O death, where is your sting?"

<sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>58</sup>Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (ESV):**

<sup>13</sup>But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.

## Prophetic descriptions of the kingdom

Finally, there are a number of Scriptural passages which provide inspiring descriptions of the kingdom. In particular, those passages tell us that there will not be *any* sickness, injuries, or disability in the kingdom – and eventually, even *death* will never occur any more!

### Isaiah 35:1-10 (ESV):

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;  
<sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
<sup>4</sup> Say to those who have an anxious heart,  
“Be strong; fear not!  
Behold, your God  
will come with vengeance,  
with the recompense of God.  
He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
<sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.  
For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup> And a highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;  
the unclean shall not pass over it.  
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;  
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.  
<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Isaiah 65:17-25 (ESV):**

<sup>17</sup>“For behold, I create new heavens  
and a new earth,  
and the former things shall not be remembered  
or come into mind.  
<sup>18</sup>But be glad and rejoice forever  
in that which I create;  
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,  
and her people to be a gladness.  
<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem  
and be glad in my people;  
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping  
and the cry of distress.  
<sup>20</sup>No more shall there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days,  
or an old man who does not fill out his days,  
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,  
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.  
<sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
<sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
<sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain  
or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,  
and their descendants with them.  
<sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer;  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
<sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
and dust shall be the serpent’s food.  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain,”

says the LORD.

**Revelation 21:1-7 (ESV):**

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup>And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

### Revelation 22:1-7 (ESV):

<sup>1</sup>Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup>through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

<sup>7</sup>"And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

### Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, I do not want to explicitly contradict the "immortal soul" doctrine, when I am at mainstream funerals – because many people try to console themselves with that doctrine. However, I certainly *do* want to be able to raise people's spirits, when they are in the midst of grieving.

So, the solution that I have come up with is to completely *avoid* the immortal soul doctrine – and to speak instead about the wonderful *resurrection* hope that Scripture gives us.

To be sure, the verses listed above do not *explicitly* contradict the immortal soul doctrine. However, they do "implicitly" contradict it somewhat – because those verses make it quite clear that dead people will *not* live again, *until* Jesus returns.

As a result, some people may end up *directly* asking about the current "status" of a deceased person. If so, I would try to provide an answer like this one:

The deceased person is sleeping peacefully now. In other words, she is "taking a nap", so to speak – but when Jesus returns, he will wake her up!