

PROJECT TITLE: HOPE AFTER DEATH
PROGRAM TITLE: RESURRECTION
SPEAKER: DR. DWIGHT NELSON
WRITER/PRODUCER: JIM WOOD
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: PAT ARRABITO

You climb into bed, snuggle down, find a comfortable position, and pretty soon you're drifting. Thoughts and memories float by while your mind plays around the edges of unconsciousness. Then you're gone into the timeless realm of sleep.

The machinery of the universe doesn't stop just because you've drifted off. The earth keeps orbiting the sun and turning on its axis. The clock ticks away the minutes. Planes fly over. Cars drive past. Night-shifters go to work. In far-away time zones, people work and play, live and die. And you are oblivious to it all.

Then you wake up. It's like you've time-warped into the new day. It takes you a heartbeat or two to recognize yourself and connect with your own identity. Your consciousness flickers into reality. Then you're back in the flow of time. I hope you had a good rest!

Listen, what I just said about sleep I could also say about death. At least that's how the Bible sees it. And the WAKING UP part of sleep is about the closest we can get to what the Bible calls RESURRECTION.

Let me tell you about Lazarus. He was a friend of Jesus. He got sick and died. Jesus told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up" (John 11:11 NIV).

The disciples didn't understand. They said, "Good. If he's sleeping, he'll get better."

So Jesus makes it clear. "Lazarus is dead."

Jesus goes out to the cave where they've put the body of Lazarus. He says, "Roll away the stone," then He cries out, "Lazarus, come out!" And the dead man walks out – resurrected – awakened from the sleep of death.

Now, a lot of people think death is a transition to something better: some sort of spirit life. But, according to the Bible, the portal to the future life is RESURRECTION, not death.

Listen to St. Paul's words of comfort for early believers who were grieving over the death of loved ones:

"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in

death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13 NIV).

Then he goes on to picture what has been the great hope for Christians for 2000 years: the return of Christ from heaven – with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God – and the dead in Christ rising.

Paul finishes with this:

"After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thessalonians 4:17 NIV).

Did you get that?

Paul didn't assure them that their deceased loved ones were enjoying a better life up in heaven with Jesus and the angels. No. Instead, He pointed them to the future resurrection for their hope. Just imagine what a great reunion that'll be!

Paul also wrote this:

"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51-52 NIV).

The Bible's version of life after death has no spirit beings floating on clouds and playing harps. It's not life on some spiritual, ethereal plane. In the Bible, life after death requires resurrection.

The dust and ashes, the molecules and particles of perishable, corruptible matter, will be replaced with a new, immortal body.

Jesus Christ is our prime example of resurrection:

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20 NKJV).

So, don't plan an itinerary for your spirit life after you die.

Don't plan a grand reunion with those who have gone before.

And don't expect to see God – or Jesus - or the angels - until your great awakening.

Because death is like a good night's sleep. With a "Good Morning" on Resurrection Day.