

GLEANINGS — April 10, A.D. 2016  
Every Thought Captive

*"..casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ..." (2 Corinthians 10:5)*

The following was posted in a public forum on a social media website:

A girl believes that when she's dead, she's dead and nothing happens afterward. That the idea of heaven and hell is just a lie manufactured in order to scare people into being decent human beings. I know this to not be true, but my debate skills have gotten a bit rusty. Any idea for an intelligent retort that might make her reconsider her position?

This writer offers the following answer:

Death is not synonymous with cessation (end) of existence. When you see a road kill squirrel, the wee beastie has not ceased to exist. This is obvious to anyone coming across such a smelly blob of rotting flesh which once scurried about trying to find nuts. Death is better understood as separation; the onset of decay...dysfunction...dissolution of some kind.

Hell is described in Scripture as the second death – everlasting existence but an existence separated from God and all that is good, condemned by Him to darkness, chaos, and torment which is the only alternative to being vitally connected to Him the Source of all light, meaning, and delight.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they did not cease to exist nor did their bodies immediately cease to function. But instantaneously they were separated from the intimate communion with their Creator which they had enjoyed up to that point and expelled from the glorious garden which God Himself had planted. Their bodies began a slo-o-o-w dissolution, a miserable descent back to dust.

If this young lady DOES believe that death means cessation of existence, perhaps you can appeal to the observable reality that the corporeal remains of the dead do not cease to exist. She can observe this at the next funeral she attends. Ask her why would the intangible part of her being cease to exist?

If she asserts that she does not believe there is an intangible part of her being (soul, spirit, mind, will, affections, memory), then you can simply ask her "who is making that denial?" What other than an immaterial self can make a statement like "when I'm dead, I'm dead and nothing happens afterward?" For that matter, what other than an immaterial self can make any statement?

In other words how does a biological mechanism with no spirit (*the girl herself, according to her own beliefs*) make any sort of affirmation or denial or ask any kind of question – whether she is asking a weighty question about life and death, or asking you what you had for lunch?

The irrationality is patently obvious, but only when the Spirit has given the new birth can one embrace Him Who is Truth, or know anything aright – because all truth inheres in Him, as the same Spirit proclaims through His apostle at Colossians 2:3, "...in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He refers of course to our Lord Jesus Christ.

ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him, not just some of them! There is ZERO knowledge or wisdom apart from Him. ALL means all. Those who don't know Him as Savior and Lord could know nothing at all apart from the same mercy which "...makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45)