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## The Doctrine of Man: What do the advocates of soul sleep say about man's destiny?

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**THE DOCTRINE OF MAN**  
**ARTICLE FIVE**

**What do the advocates of soul sleep say about man's destiny?**

It is claimed that both the departed saved and unsaved sleep in their graves, awaiting the final resurrection.

- A. This position reviewed—The following verses are offered to support soul sleep. *“These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep ... Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead”* (John 11:11, 14). *“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep”* (Acts 7:59-60). *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept”* (1 Cor. 15:20). *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him”* (1 Thess. 4:14).
- B. This position refuted—Here it should be noted that while soul sleep is not nearly as heretical as the previous seven positions we have thus mentioned, it is, nevertheless, a false view. The context of the above verses describe the body as sleeping, not the soul. Note the wording relating to an event that occurred after the death of Christ: *“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose”* (Matt. 27:52).

Key verses refuting soul sleep and reaffirming soul consciousness after death are as follows: *“And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him”* (Matt. 17:3). *“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living”* (Matt. 22:32). *“We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord”* (2 Cor. 5:8, NIV). *“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better”* (Phil. 1:23).

*“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled”* (Rev. 6:9-11).