Mystery of Man

Bible Study

August 1, 2015

The Church of God, International (Philippines)



One of the greatest mysteries that confound theologians and Christians alike is "man."



- 1) What is man made of?
- 2) What is man's nature?
- 3) What is man's ultimate destiny?

These are the questions we will explore and ponder on today.



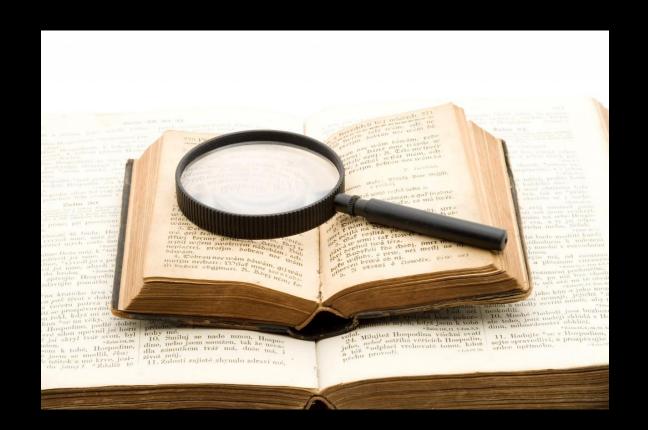
These questions deserve answers, and to many, the answers are elusive.



This morning we will assure you that this session is eye opening and inspiring.



The nature of man is not a mystery.



Man is the crowning glory of God's creation.



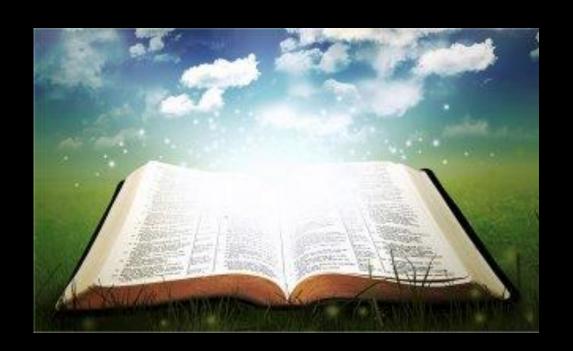
God revealed His master plan for mankind in the pages of the Bible - from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation.



Many have attempted to draw theories, philosophies, and theologies on the nature and purpose of man-secular, scientific or spiritual.



Yet, the only source of profound understanding on the subject is revealed knowledge from the Word of Life.



The Man

The first question is "What is man?"



Man is a creation of God.

Of all God's creation, man is most special.



Mankind was fashioned on the sixth (6th) day of creation. God prepared man's habitat for 5 days before creating him on the sixth day.



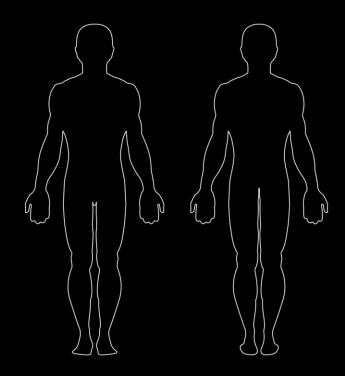
The entire creation and fashioning of the earth is for man. The atmosphere, vegetation and animal life are part of the ecology that sustains human life.



The centerpiece, pride and joy of God's creation is Man – you in particular.



Man is unique. All living things were created after its own kind; except man who is fashioned in the image and likeness of the Creator – the Godkind.

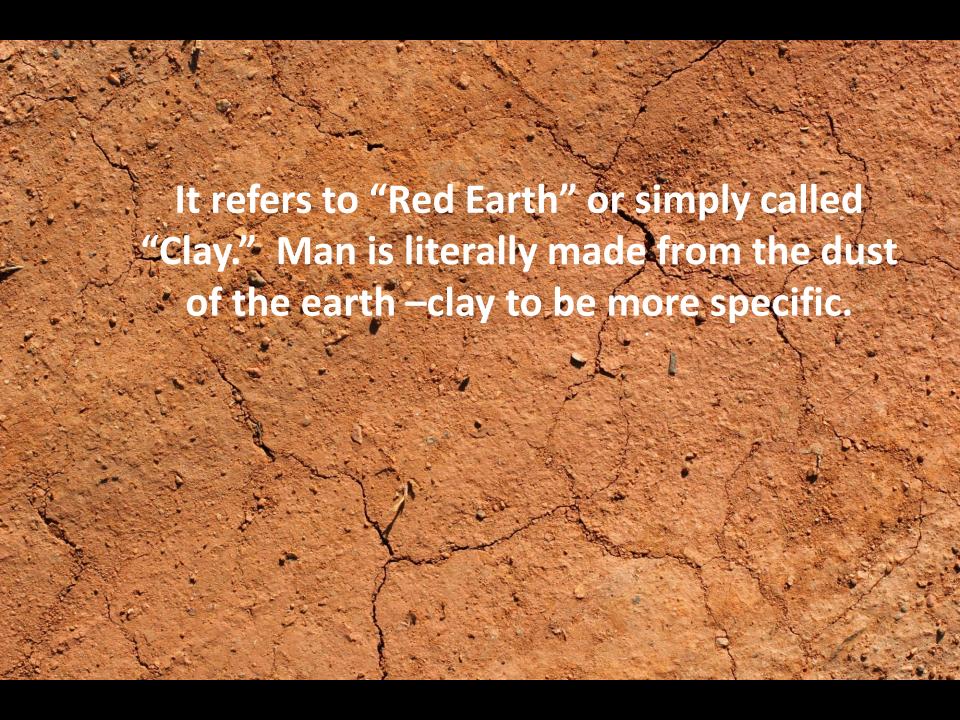


Genesis 1:26-27

- (26) Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, over all the creatures that move along the ground
- (27) So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The Hebrew word for man is 'Adam.' Man is called 'Adam' in the Scripture which means "Ruddy or Redness."





Genesis 2:7

(7) Then the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Of all the creation, it is only man whom God breathed into the nostrils. With the breathe of life, man became a living being.



The spirit – the life source – that God puts in man makes man unique.



It endowed him with intellect, reason, logic, feeling, emotion, and creativity with high-functioning capability and competence.



Therefore to be alive, to be self-aware, conscious, active, functioning and sustaining is to be God-like.



What we are experiencing today – this physical mortal life – this awareness - is a foretaste, a preview of what God is like.



This is the gift that God has endowed upon mankind.



Man being created in God's image and likeness is not simply talking about shape, form or composition.



Rather, it talks about the functioning capacity and the ultimate potential of mankind.



Hence, God gave mankind governance and dominion over the whole earth.



Genesis 1:28

(28) God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

What are we made of?

We are composed of physical materials from the ground.



Almost 99% of the mass of the human body is made up of six elements.

Make a guess of what they are:



99% of the mass of the human body is made up of six elements:

oxygen
carbon
hydrogen
nitrogen
calcium
phosphorus.

Only about 0.85% is composed of another five elements:

potassium
sulfur
sodium
Chlorine
magnesium

All of the elements needed for life are relatively common in the earth's crust — the clay.



Therefore, we are made from dust and at death, we will return to dust.



Genesis 3:19

(19) By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
Until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

Man is composed of physical materials, of flesh and blood, weak, perishable, mortal.



Angels are powerful, spiritual beings compared to mankind. While, man is mortal, physical made from the dust of the earth.

Man's construction and composition is inferior or lower than the angels.



Psalm 8:4-5

- (4) What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?
- (5) You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.

Many have tried to formulate various treatise on the nature of man and his composition.

The generally accepted notion is the erroneous idea that man is made up of a material and a spiritual component.

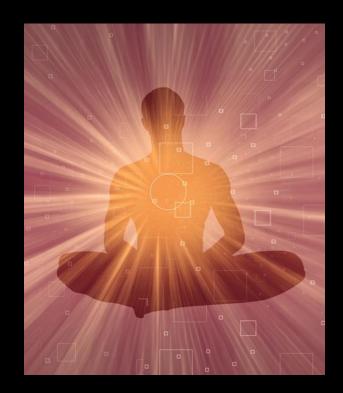
The material component is called the *body*, while spiritual and immortal component is called the *soul*.



The concept of immortal soul is the origin of the pagan doctrines of reincarnation and transmigration of soul. The immortality of the soul is not an original Christian concept.



The concept of an immortal soul permeates most religions; it is shared by Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, etc.



The concept of an immortal soul that lives on after death is the greatest and oldest lie and this lie is perpetuated by Satan.

In Genesis 2:16-17

(16)...the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; (17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

In Genesis 3:2-5

- (2)...the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;(3) but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die."(4) Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.
- (5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

This lie that 'you shall not surely die' continues today through the unbiblical concept of the immortal soul. The immortal soul does not truly die, it just goes somewhere.

The Bible does not teach about the immortality of the soul.



Nowhere in the Holy Scripture does the Bible teach about an immortal soul.



Ezekiel 18:4

The Bible plainly teaches that the soul that sins shall die, and that is written in Ezekiel 18:4.

(4) Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. (KJV)

Romans 6:23

The principle of this fundamental truth can be found in Romans 6:23.

(23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The penalty of sin is death, not souls infinitely tormented for eternity in hell fire.



The Scripture is clear that everlasting life is a gift from God.



Since eternal life is a gift to the faithful, it is not something anyone possesses inherently at birth.



Think about it, if man had an immortal component that continued to live after the physical death, then mankind would have already possessed the power of immortality within himself.



Therefore, if one had an immortal soul that lived on after death he would not need Christ because he inherently would have eternal life.



John 3:16

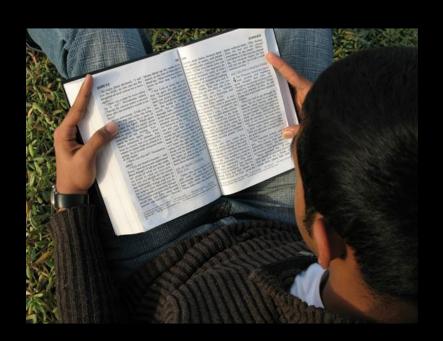
But, Jesus said in John 3:16 that only those who believe in Him will have everlasting life – because eternal life or immortality is a gift!

(16) For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Eternal life is a gift and that gift is pre-conditioned upon accepting Christ as our personal savior.



But how should we understand the numerous Scriptures that talk about the spirit and the soul?



You ask: Are the spirit and the soul identical? Are they one and the same?



If they are not the same, what is the difference between the spirit and the soul? And more importantly, what are they in relation to the nature of man?



On top of these, there are numerous Scriptures that talk about the spirit in man and the spirit returning to God.



How can we clearly explain in a plain and simple format the biblical truth about the nature of man?



Body and Soul

Before we proceed further, lets us read Matthew 10:28:

(28) Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

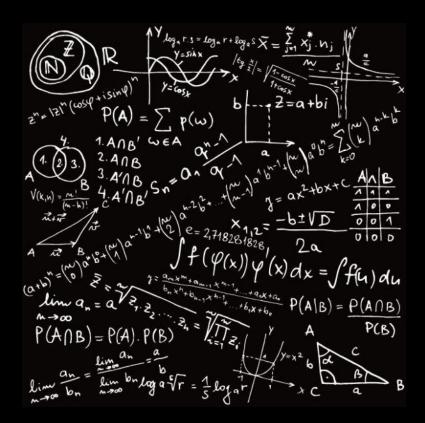
Does the verse suggest the possibility of an immortal soul? What is it that Jesus wanted to convey?



The Scripture reveals that the soul, like the body, can be destroyed by fire. Therefore, the soul is not immortal. It was Jesus who said that.



To simplify the explanation of the nature of man, we will reduce it into a simple understandable formula.

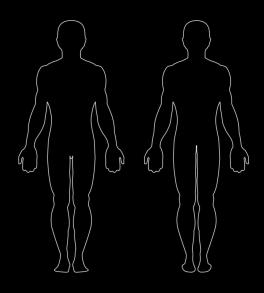


And you will be pleasantly surprised at how simple the nature of man is, and at the same time, be amazed at how simple the truth can be.



The Composition of Man

What is man made of? The Bible says man is formed from the dust of the earth and he is fashioned in the image and likeness of God.



Genesis 1:26-27

- (26) Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, over all the creatures that move along the ground
- (27) So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God formed man, Adam – red earth, from the dust of the ground. From dust comes man and to dust he returns.

Genesis 3:19

(19) By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
Until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

Adam means red earth



When Adam was first formed, he was lifeless – it was just a body.



Therefore, man's material body is made from the dust of the earth. It is physical, material, composed of matter – clay to be exact.



Let: Adam = Body

Genesis 2:7

The creation process of man is recorded in Genesis 2:7.

(27) And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

The body that was formed from the dust of the ground was inanimate and lifeless.



When God blew the breath of life into man's nostril, he lived. God gave it life and the body became alive.



Breath, *nshamah* in Hebrews means puff or wind. When it entered into Adam it gave life - vitality and intelligence.



Then Adam became a living soul. Soul, *nephesh* in Hebrews means living creature.



Nephesh or living creature refers to all animals that have breathe and life in them; including man.



Genesis 7:21-23

- (21) Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.
- (22) Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died.
- (23) Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth

What then is the spirit? The spirit in Hebrews is "Ruach" and "pneuma" in Greek meaning wind or breath in English.



Therefore, the spirit is the life-giving agent in man and in all living creatures



Job 33:4

(4) The spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

- (6) Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well.
- (7) Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it. (NKJV)

Equation

To retain the spirit is to live.



Let: Breath = Spirit in Man

Breath = Spirit in Man

The breath of life is the spirit in man – the life-giving agent.



Is the spirit, the life source, that is in man immortal?

- Where did it come from? Where does it go after the death of an individual? Here are a few Scriptures that talk about the spirit in man; they are:
- 1) Job 32:8 there is a spirit in man
- 2) 1 Corinthians 2:11 spirit in man
- 3) Proverbs 20:27 spirit of man is the lamp of God

If there is a spirit in man, then where did this spirit come from?



The answer is God formed the spirit in man.

Zechariah 12:1

(1) A prophecy: The word of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares:

Yes, God put the life source in man, the spirit in man and this spirit gives life, awareness, vitality, and intelligence to an otherwise lifeless body.

The spirit in man is the life source and seat of mental capacity and all the things that make us humans - emotions, creativity, rationality, etc.



Again, GENESIS 2:7: "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (KJV)

Now, let us express the basic formula of man:

Adam = Body

Breath = Spirit in Man

Basic Formula: Body + Breath = Soul

The word "soul" has since adapted a broader meaning. Soul has come to denote the essence of the human being with all his faculties, emotions, character and intelligence.

But, in its simplest and strictest sense, 'soul' is the composition of the body and spirit – in short, a living being.

Body + Breath = Soul

What is death?

What is death? What happens at death?

Death is the cessation of life.

Therefore, formula for death is expressed as:

Soul - Breath/Spirit = dead body.

Job 34:13-15

- (13) Who gave him a charge over the earth? Or who has laid the whole world?
- (14) If he set his heart upon himself, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;
- (15) All flesh shall perish together, And man shall turn again unto dust."

When the physical body dies, the spirit ceases.

Job 14:10

The Scripture describes this as "breathing his last."

Job 14:10 "But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more."

Soul – Breath = Death.

John 6:63

(63) The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – they are full of the Spirit and life.

The spirit is the life source.

What happens to the spirit after death?



God is the author of life. He is the life-giver. He gives life and He takes it away.



Acts 17:25

(25) And he is not served by human hands, as if needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

Psalm 104:29

"When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you **take** away their **breath**, they die and return to the dust."

When God takes away the breath in man, the life source returns (goes back) to him.

- Here are a few Scriptures that confirm that the spirit returns to God.
- 1) Acts 7:59 (spirit returns to God) they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God and saying*, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
- 2) Eccl.12:7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it

Therefore, the formula is:

Soul – Body = Spirit/Breath returns to God.

Is the spirit conscious when it returns to God?



The Bible says that once the body is dead, consciousness ceases.

In Ecclesiastes 9:5, we read that the 'dead knows nothing.'

Ecclesiastes 9:5

(5) For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their name is forgotten.

Apart from the body, the spirit does not have its own consciousness.



The spirit returns to God who gave it.

The spirit is in "safe-keeping" with God until God gives it back at the time of the resurrection.



The Bible describes "the state of dead" as sleep.



Daniel 12:2

(2) Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

John 11:11-14

- (11) After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."
- (12) His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."
- (13) Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep
- (14) So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ..."

We now know that the spirit returns to God. But, are they kept in heaven?

The answer is no one knows; not even King Solomon.



Ecclesiastes 3:21

Solomon asked:

(21) Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God as distinguished from the spirit in man.



- (6) We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.
- (7) No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

- (8) None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
- (9) However as it is written:

"What no eye has seen,

what no ear has heard

and what no human mind as conceived"

the things God has prepared for those who love him.

(10) These are the things God has revealed to usby his spirit.

The spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

(11) For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

- (12) What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.
- (13) This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

- (14) The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only though the Spirit.
- (15) The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,

(16) for,

"Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ.

However, our human spirit can be infused with God's Holy Spirit through the process of repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands as we enter into a covenant relationship with our Heavenly Father.



Acts 2:38

(38) Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This fusion or indwelling of the Holy Spirit marks us as an adopted son of God in which the Holy Spirit becomes our earnest deposit of eternal inheritance.



Ephesians 1:13-14

- (13) And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.
- (14) who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory.

- (9) You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.
- (10) But if Christ lives in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

(11) And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

- (12) Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.
- (13) For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

(14) For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

The formula for someone with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is:

Body

+

Breath/Spirit in man

+

Holy Spirit

True Christians

What is Man's Ultimate Destiny?

The Scripture says we are to become children of God, to share and participate in the divine glory.



2 Peter 1:3-4

- (3) His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
- (4) Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2 Timothy 2:10

(10) Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Philippians 3:20-21

- (20) But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,
- (21) who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

The ultimate goal and destiny of man – the reason for the entire creation – is the bringing forth of the Children of God.

This is the gospel of the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom composed of God like beings.

Hebrews 2:10-11

- (10) In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.
- (11) Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

This glorification happens at the resurrection.

The change happens at the resurrection of the saints.



Notice 1 Corinthians 15:35-50 – the spirit is given a spiritual body.

- (35) But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"
- (36) How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.
- (37) When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

- (38) But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.
- (39) Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

- (40) There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.
- (41) The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and stars differ from stars in splendor.

- (42) So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;
- (43) it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;
- (44) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

- If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.
- (45) So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a lifegiving spirit.
- (46) The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

- (47) The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.
- (48) As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven.

- (49) And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.
- (50) I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Therefore, the equation is:

Breath/Spirit in man + Holy Spirit + Spiritual Body = Glorified sons of God.

Condemnation of the Wicked

Now, with all of these equations, let us try to understand what Jesus said in Matthew 10:28.

Matthew 10:28

(28) Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

What is the formula for death?

Death (Dead Body) = Soul - Breath/Spirit.

This is what we call the first death.

Upon the first death, the spirit returns to God who keeps it until the day of resurrection, either the first or the second.



At the day of the resurrection or resuscitation, God gives back the spirit and he lives anew, either in body or in spirit.



For Christians, we are not afraid of the first death for we know we have a Savior who will quicken (bring back to life, transform) our mortal bodies.

There is a spiritual body waiting for all of us – a glorified body that dwells in eternity.

(Breath/Spirit in man + Holy Spirit) + Spiritual Body = Glorified sons of God.

We should however, be afraid of the one who can destroy both the body and the soul in hell.

The destruction of the soul simply means the destruction of the body together with the spirit in Man. That is the second and final death.

The formula for that is:

Second Death = Soul - (body + Breath/Spirit)

Soul – Soul = Second Death.

That is condemnation. Destruction of both body and the spirit in man in hell fire.



Summation

What is the nature of man? The basic composition of man as revealed in Genesis is Body + Breath = Soul.

Any other assumption or interpretation that is contrary to this equation is not biblical and is therefore wrong.



What is exciting and inspiring is that when our spirit is joined with the Holy Spirit and is eventually given a spiritual body, then our hope would come true.



(Breath/Spirit in man + Holy Spirit) + Spiritual Body = Spiritual Children of God.

We would have become spiritual children of God adopted into the Kingdom He has prepared for us.

Therefore:

- Body + Breath/Spirit in Man = Soul
- Soul Breath = Death (dead lifeless body)
- 3) Soul Body = Breath (returns to God)
- 4) Body + (Breath/Spirit in man + Holy Spirit) = True Christians
- 5) Soul (Body + Breath/Spirit in man) = 2nd death
- 6) (Breath/Spirit in man + Holy Spirit) + Spiritual Body = Glorified sons of God

This is the glorious, wonderful plan of God!

This is the real objective of the Creation of Man!

Hebrews 2:9-13

- 9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.
- 10. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Hebrews 2:9-13

- 11. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.
- 12. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."
- 13. And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, <u>"Here am I, and the children</u>
 <u>God has given me."</u>

May God the Father

hasten the day

of the coming of the Lord

and the Day of our Salvation!!!

Join us again for the final part of this series on September 5, 2015:

The Nature of Jesus Christ