
Do You Have an Immortal Soul?

It is true that we human beings go either to heaven or to hell when we die? Hundreds of millions say *yes!* One of the fundamental beliefs of the mainstream “Christian” religions is that of the immortality of the soul! This belief is based on the concept of an ever-burning hell fire as punishment for the wicked, and heaven as the reward for the saved. Belief in an “immortal soul” in some form or another was commonplace among heathen nations long prior to Christianity. The pagan Greek and Roman philosophers speculated about the “soul,” as did ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, and Chinese.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that the doctrine has its origins in antiquity—that the concept of an immortal soul in man long antedates Christ and the apostles.

But is this doctrine true? Did it come from the *Bible*? Did Christ and the apostles teach the immortality of the soul?

Do you have a *soul*? Are you a *soul*? Is there something about you that is *immortal*—that will *never die*? If so, when, and how did that “soul” get into your body? Was it imparted to you at the moment of conception? Did it come into your body at some time during your fetal development? Were you given an “immortal soul” at the moment you took your first breath, shortly after birth?

If you have a soul, can you touch it, taste it, feel it, hear it, or smell it? Can you take it out and look at it? Can you *see* the souls of others? Are you—you, with all your innermost, private thoughts, inclinations, perceptions, concepts and dreams, hidden longings, doubts and fears, beliefs and convictions, sensory perceptions and feelings—going to SURVIVE this human flesh, and *live forever*?

According to the so-called “Christian” religions the real PERSON is dwelling *within* the temporal body. The body is seen as a temporary suit of clothes. The real person dwells within that temporary suit of clothes; and at the time of death, the now useless “suit of clothes” (the body) is discarded, buried in the ground or cremated, while the real *person* wafts away either to heaven or to ever-burning hell fire! (In the Catholic tradition, there are allegedly various intermediary stages called “purgatory”).

How can you KNOW, one way or the other?

What is your ultimate *authority* for determining the *truth* on any subject which has to do with life and death, judgment and the hereafter?

If your “authority” for your beliefs is myth, superstition, fables, stories of alleged death-bed visions or conversations with “departed souls”; if your authority is mysticism, oriental religions, heathen superstitions or esoterica, then you should

read no further. This article accepts THE BIBLE, the inspired, written Word of God as it appears in its earliest manuscripts (and in its original languages), as the only and final *authority* on the subject of the “immortality of the soul.”

WHY, then, are so many hundreds of millions of human beings *absolutely convinced* they possess an immortal soul when the words “immortal soul” are NOT FOUND anywhere in Scripture?

What is Man?

Obviously, the question concerning whether you have an immortal soul is really the question, *what are you*?

To atheists and evolutionist, man is merely a “hairless ape.” God-rejecting atheists view man as the end result of aeons of blind chance; the final outcome of millennia of randomness; “natural selection,” and the “survival of the fittest.” Of course, those who reject the Word of God are *cultist*; they have a blind FAITH in the theories of the evolutionary “fathers,” and nothing is more *unscientific* than the theory of evolution!

Those who believe in Creation—who know and understand that life can only come from preexisting life, and preexisting life of the *same kind*; who understand that laws can only come from a great Lawgiver; that perfection, symmetry, interdependency, and fabulous *design* can only come from a SUPREME DESIGNER—know better.

They know that the human family began with one man, and that a *wife*, miraculously created from his own body and as unique and original a creation as Adam himself, formed the *first family*.

In any event, even if for the sake of argument alone, those

who profess the Christian religion and believe in the inspiration of the Bible, *must* explain “What is man?” from the perspective of the Creation account revealed in the Bible.

When God created our first parent He said, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, til thou *return unto the ground*; for out of it was thou taken: for DUST THOU ART, and unto *dust* shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19).

God was talking to Adam. He was talking to the *conscious man*! He did NOT tell Adam that only his *body* was composed of the elements of the earth, and that Adam was really a “soul” locked within a temporal, physical body! NO! He said Adam WAS “red clay” or, “red mud”—for that is the real meaning of the Hebrew word translated *dust*.

Notice! “And the Eternal God formed man of the *dust of the ground*, and breathed into his nostrils the *breath of life*; and man BECAME a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).

Remember, the Bible was not written in the English language. Mostly, the Bible was written in Greek and Hebrew; Hebrew being used predominantly in the Old Testament, and Greek in the New Testament.

There was no such word in existence at the time the Bible was written as *soul*. It is an English word, with an almost exclusively *ecclesiastical* connotation!

Actually, as you will see, the English word “soul” should be virtually expunged from the English language, and *replaced* with many of the possible synonyms which connote the real meaning of the Hebrew word *nephesh*.

For the Hebrew word *nephesh* is the word from which the English word *soul* is translated!

Naturally, then, our quest for knowledge and understanding centers around the meaning of the word *nephesh*!

What is the meaning of the Hebrew word *nephesh*?

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance says: “(5315) *nephesh*; a breathing creature, i.e. *animal* or (abstr.) vitality: used very widely in a literal, accommodated or figurative sense (bodily or mental); appetite, beast, body, breath, creature, dead, desire, contented, fish, ghost, greedy, he, heart, (jeopardy of life; in jeopardy), lust, man, me, mind, mortally, one, own, person, pleasure, (her, him, my, thy) self, them (your) selves, slay, soul, tablet, they, thing, will, would have it.”

What a list! You see, the Hebrew word *nephesh* has to do with “being”! As such, it has a wide usage, concerning the physical, animal, *breathing* LIFE of flesh and blood creatures! Notice that it can be translated *dead*, or even *beast*, or *creature*, as well as *lust*, *mortality*, or *person*.

Did you know that the Hebrew word *nephesh* is used several times for lower life forms PRIOR to ever being used concerning *man* in the Bible?

Notice Genesis 1:20 where *nephesh* is rendered, “moving creature”; in verse 21, “living creature”; verse 24, “living creature; and beast”; verse 25, “beast” (referring to whales, fish, crustaceans, and lower life forms inhabiting the sea)!

In this graphic description of the creation of all the animals and sea-dwelling creatures, the word *nephesh* is used again and again!

Naturally even the superstitious translators who were heavily affected by Roman Catholic and Anglican doctrines in the 1600s

did not *dare* render the word *nephesh* as “soul” in these passages!

Now, turn to and read Numbers 19:11: “He that toucheth the dead *body* of any man shall be unclean seven days.” In this scripture, the laws of purification under the Levites are discussed. A person would be considered “unclean” if he touched the decaying corpse or body of an animal or man!

We read verse 22, “And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul [*nephesh*] that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.”

The very same word rendered soul in verse 22 (which should be translated “individual” or “person”) is rendered “DEAD BODY” in verse 11! Get it into your mind; firmly fixed once and for all! The *same word* which is translated “soul” in literally dozens of places in the Old Testament is here translated “dead body.”

Now, turn to and read Ezekiel 18:4,20. “Behold, all souls [*nephesh*] are mine; as the soul [*nephesh*] of the father, so also the soul [*nephesh*] of the son is mine: the soul [*nephesh*] that sinneth IT [that ‘soul’ or *nephesh*] shall DIE.” Here, it would be far clearer if the English were rendered “Behold all persons are mine; as the person of the father, so the person of the son; the individual that sins HE shall die”!

The thrust of the scripture is individual, *personal responsibility* before God! What God is saying through Ezekiel is that no one can render excuses for sin; that we cannot “pass the buck” by pointing to others as the cause of *our* sins!

This scripture is *not* given as a lesson in whether or not souls are immortal or mortal; yet, because the scripture very plainly says that “the soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE,” it represents a further, powerfully conclusive PROOF that the Hebrew word for soul (*nephesh*) means *physical, mortal, temporal life*, and has *nothing whatsoever* to do with immortality!

So, ask yourself “does the Bible say—whatever the Bible means by the word *soul*—that the soul can die?” Your obvious answer is, ABSOLUTELY!

Then, with your own eyes, you are beholding the absolute *proof* that the word translated into the English word *soul* has *nothing whatsoever* to do with immortality or spirituality; but has to do with physical, carnal, flesh-and-blood human and animal existence!

The word *nephesh* is found in two hundred forty-three (243) passages, and is translated in eleven (11) ways. Notice that the expression “the dead” is translated directly from the Hebrew word (*nephesh*), in the following passages: Leviticus 19:28, 21:1, 22:4; Numbers 5:2, 6:11.

The same word, which is translated soul in most cases is rendered “dead body” in Numbers 9:6,7,10.

It is translated as “body” in Leviticus 21:11, Numbers 6:6, 19:11,13, and also in Haggai 2:13.

What About the New Testament?

The Greek word *psuche* is the ONLY word translated “soul” in the New Testament. You will find the word one hundred five (105) times in the New Testament; of which it is translated “soul” only fifty-eight (58) times, but can also be rendered “life” forty (40) times, “mind” three (3) times, and “heart,” “heartily,”

“us,” and “you” one time each.

The Greek word *psuche* is the exact Greek rendering of the Hebrew word *nephesh* and is used in the same way throughout the New Testament.

For example, *psuche* is used of the lower animals, just as you have seen *nephesh* used of lower life forms in the first chapter of the book of Genesis! In Revelation 8:9, the Greek word *psuche* (remember this is the only word in the English language used for the word “soul”), is rendered “life.” Notice also Revelation 16:3, where lower life forms are spoken of, yet the word “soul” is used. Read that last scripture carefully! It describes one of the horrible plagues yet to fall upon the land and the sea, and says “every living soul DIED”! Here is one more *New Testament* proof that the word “soul” as it found its way into the *English* language means a *being*, or a *living thing*, which can DIE! In this case, it is used of various forms of life (of which there are *thousands*) in the sea!

The Greek word *psuche* is also used for an *individual*. On many occasions, in making out a flight plan when I was piloting a jet airplane, we would have to include the information of how many *persons* were aboard that flight. All airlines dispatchers do the same things. Oftentimes, many pilots calling in their flight plans would say they had so many “souls” on board, using the word interchangeably for individuals, or persons. When a newspaper headlines speaks of so many “souls” being lost in the sinking of a ship, it is using the word in much the same way as it occurs fourteen (14) different times in the Bible! For proof, read Acts 2:41-43, 3:23, 7:14, 27:37; Romans 2:9, 13:1; I Corinthians 15:45; James 5:20; I Peter 3:20; II Peter 2:14; Revelation 6:9, 18:13, 20:4.

In those passages, the Greek word *psuche* is used for the *life of man*, which can be *destroyed*, or *lost*.

A classic example of where the translators have *tampered* with the English, in translating from the Greek, is found in Matthew 16:25,26.

Notice the way it is rendered in the King James Version: “For whosoever will save his *life* [*psuche*] shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life [*psuche*] for my sake shall find it.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [*psuche*]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul [*psuche*]?”

Obviously, since the *identical* Greek word is used in both passages; and since it is rendered *differently* in verse 26 (soul) from the way it is used in verse 25 (life), it was a translator’s *decision* as to changing the way he rendered this Greek word (*psuche*) in the two verses.

To be honest, and to be fair with the word, it should have been rendered the *same* in both passages! Here, it is obvious the word should better be rendered “life,” just as it was rendered in verse 25! For, after all, it is your *life* you can lose—and what can you give in exchange for your *LIFE*?

The point is, the Greek word is capable of nearly as many applications as is the Hebrew word *nephesh*, and can even be used of man’s moods, passions, and feelings! For example, *psuche* is translated into the following: mind, us, you, heart, and heartily.

By no stretch of the imagination can this Greek word EVER

connote anything which is *immortal*, or extraphysical, in the sense of being *spiritual*.

The English word soul, in the Old Testament is *always* taken from the Hebrew *nephesh* and does NOT mean anything immortal; just as the English word soul in the New Testament is taken from the Greek word *psuche*, and only means mortal, temporal, human physical MAN, who is subject to *death*.

What Happens at Death?

It is clear from both the Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Bible, that man dies in exactly the same fashion as does a beast. “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, *so dieth the other*; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast; for all is vanity.

“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecclesiastes 3:19,20). Write for the free booklet *Afraid to Die?*

Notice how the inspired Bible writers *described* the condition of death: Job wrote, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

“He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: He fleeth also as a shadow, and *continueth not*” (Job 14:1,2).

In the same chapter, Job said, “So man lieth down, and riseth not: TILL the heavens be no more, [obvious reference to the *resurrection* and the ‘new heavens and new earth’] they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

“O that thou wouldest hide me in the *grave*, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be passed, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

“If a man die shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my *change* come [an obvious reference to the change at resurrection, I Corinthians 15:50-52].

“Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands” (Job 14:12-15).

God inspired David to write a great deal about the subject of life and death. David said, “Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the *beasts* that perish...Like *sheep* they are laid in the grave [*sheol*]; death shall feed upon them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave [*sheol*] from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul [Hebrew, *nephesh*—meaning *LIFE*] from the *power of the grave* [notice the grave has *POWER* over the kind of ‘life’ connoted by the Hebrew word *nephesh*]: For He shall receive me. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the *beasts* that perish” (Psalm 49:12-20).

Because Almighty God reveals we human beings—the creation of His hands—are His *children*, and that we will be *resurrected FROM THE DEAD* (Luke 20:36), He inspired David to write, “Precious in the sight of the Eternal is the *death* of His saints” (Psalm 116:15).

There are many examples in the Bible about what happens at death!

There is NO case in the Bible where the words “immortal soul” appear! There *is* a “spirit in man,” mentioned in the Bible, which is a very profound subject (needing an entire booklet to thoroughly explain). In brief, the spirit in man is that *spiritual*

essence which lifts the mind of man to a level far above the mere brain of animals. This is mentioned by Job and the apostle Paul who talked of how God's Holy Spirit "witnesseth with our spirit" that we are the children of God.

The Bible clearly reveals that Almighty God is begetting CHILDREN!

Even as human beings are not reproduced without life begetting life; male life uniting with female life; so Almighty God reveals that His Holy Spirit does not unite with mere *flesh*; but that there is a spirit in man, very likely in the frontal lobes of the brain (which is why the "forehead" is mentioned so often) where our will power; our volition, decision-making capacity and our *personality* exists!

When the Bible speaks, metaphorically, of "the heart" it is speaking of that portion of our human mind wherein our *attitude*, and our CHARACTER resides! Recent scientific knowledge has revealed that the human brain is divided into many different parts. Some portions of the brain control such things as our coordination, equilibrium; our physical and athletic ability; other portions deal with our sensory perceptions such as the central nervous system, the eye, etc. Other portions deal with the memory, and the frontal lobes, behind the forehead of the human brain control the DECISION-MAKING part of the brain.

Perhaps there is greater meaning in the symbolism of those who receive the "mark of the beast" in their *foreheads* (meaning *willingly*; with their own permission, acceptance and volition) when one understands this simple truth!

But this spirit in man is *not* immortal! God's Word says clearly that *only God* has immortality! Man is revealed as being temporal, fleshly, carnal, physical—*of the dust*! He is said to perish and waste away! Yet, think about it deeply for a moment. Think about the *pattern for all that you are* contained within a tiny, microscopic germ of life from your father, uniting with an egg of life from your mother. The pattern which was to determine your basic appearance, height, shape, color of eyes and hair, texture of skin, talents and abilities, was all miraculously contained in that microscopic bit of life. Almighty

God is building in our Christian lives a pattern, through the power of His Holy Spirit which can beget a "new creation in Christ" when in connection with the *spirit of man*!

Even as your human father stamped you with his *identity*—gave you his NAME—so our heavenly Father is putting His own identity, His name, and His personality within His children!

The *false doctrine* of the immortality of the soul *conceals this great truth*!

After reading all this, check and study it thoroughly in your own Bible. You can also write for additional study material on these subjects. Ask for the free brochures: *Is Elijah in Heaven? Is Lazarus in Heaven?* and *Are There Worms in Hell That Never Die?*

If God is allowing you to understand the deeper truths of His Word through this article, then to Almighty God goes the credit! If God is revealing deeper truths to you, you should now turn to Romans 8 and read with greater understanding the entire chapter. Particularly, as you study this important chapter, read verse 29! "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He [Jesus Christ] might be the FIRSTBORN among MANY BRETHREN"! Yes, even as Jesus Christ was the first begotten among all human kind; He was also the *first*BORN from the dead! How plain! How simple!

The greatest phenomenon we see around us is that of LIFE! We see the *miraculous* fact that life comes from preexisting life of the same kind; that life has the basic urge to perpetuate itself; that like produces like, kind reproduces after kind, and that we human beings, through love in marriage, reproduce *after our own kind*!

Almighty God is reproducing after *His kind*!

What a great TRUTH that is! If you are still curious about things you have learned reading this article, we urge you to write for the additional literature offered.

The Church of God, International, urges you to *study* the Word of God. □

If you would like . . .

Personal Counselling:

Many write asking if we have representatives in their *local* areas to counsel with them personally, to answer their questions, and even to baptize in certain cases.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Church of God, International sends personal representatives into communities throughout the United States and British Commonwealth and many other parts of the world.

These representatives can visit you directly in your own home. Of course, none of them will ever call on you unless invited.

But, if you do have questions or require personal counsel for any reason, feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Or, if you'd prefer faster service, please dial 903-825-2525. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, Texas 75710.