



## Where Do the Human Soul and Spirit Go When We Die? (Part I)

**Hebrews 4:12:** (NASB) *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*



Do human beings *have* souls or *are* they souls? Do human beings have a spirit and if so, what does that mean? Or are we really spirit beings temporarily confined in a terrestrial body? What happens when we die? Does our soul and spirit die? Do they go someplace? Do they stay together? Religions, cultures and philosophy have weighed in on these questions for untold centuries. The answers they have come up with are as varied as the people of this planet. How can we know who is right? If we objectively look into the Bible to define the human soul and spirit and what happens to them at death, it is possible to find concrete guidance and answers. Why a biblical perspective? The Bible contains ancient reasoning written over many centuries that has proven to be historically accurate, morally sound and prophetically true. The Scriptures have a long track record of telling the truth. This is why we go to the Scriptures.

This is a two-part podcast. Part I focuses on the human soul. Part II will focus on the human spirit. Both parts are needed in order to have a clear idea of this subject.



**A POPULAR UNDERSTANDING IS:**  
**YOU LIVE IN A BODY**  
**YOU ARE A SPIRIT**  
**YOU HAVE A SOUL**



**SPIRIT – BODY – SOUL – MIND - ARE ALL CONNECTED TO MAKE UP “YOU”**

When we die, it is like a caterpillar that goes to sleep in a cocoon and appears to die, but it then transforms into a beautiful butterfly. Something inside of us is immortal and goes on into the next life. Sounds simple enough. **But is this all true? Is it scriptural?**

Here are the basic scriptural elements of the soul, spirit, life and death questions:

### THE HUMAN SOUL

**Genesis 2:7:** (KJV) *And the LORD 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 Bible seems to clearly label man *as* a soul.

### THE HUMAN SPIRIT

**Zechariah 12:1:** (NASB) *The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him.*

The Bible seems to define the human spirit as formed within each person.



## THE HUMAN SOUL AND SPIRIT DIVIDED

Hebrews 4:12: (NASB) *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

The Bible seems to show us a significant difference between our soul and spirit. Are these interchangeable terms or are they different?

### GOD HAS A SPIRIT

Genesis 1:1-2: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.*

What does God’s spirit have to do with the human spirit? Understanding how God’s spirit is defined will help us understand the human spirit.

We will examine these four scriptures in greater detail over this two-part series.

We cannot know where a soul goes upon death unless we first know how a soul is defined. The following is a working definition of what we believe the Bible teaches about the human soul:



The human soul is the result of an animated, living physical body. It is the human life that is dependent upon basic bodily function, external sustenance and protection. Without all of these elements, the soul - the human life - would be rendered dead, and therefore out of existence.

This statement might seem strange to some, but it was drawn from scriptures - let’s see from where.

Old Testament teaching shows us human life was created in God’s image and man becomes a soul/being:

Genesis 2:7: (NASB) *Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living **being** <5315>.*

**Soul/being**: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #5315 *nephesh*; properly, a breathing creature

The same scripture in the King James Version says: *and man became a living soul*. Some translations like Young’s Literal use *living creature*. It is all the same exact Hebrew word, *nephesh*.

BODY +  
THE BREATH OF LIFE =  
A LIVE CREATURE CALLED A “SOUL” |  Man BECAME a living soul.  
He was not GIVEN a soul.

At creation we have a clear-cut phrase - *man became a living soul (being, creature)*. We will build on this foundation.



Humans and animals are all referred to as souls, *nephesh*, creatures - the same word:

Genesis 1:20-21: (NASB) <sup>20</sup>Then God said, Let the waters teem with swarms of living *creatures* <5315>, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens. <sup>21</sup>God created the great sea monsters and every living *creature* <5315> that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

Humans and animals, as sentient beings, are both described with that same Strong's Exhaustive Concordance number <5315> - *nephesh*. They have life; they are living souls.

Some translators take the same Hebrew word *nephesh* and translate it into English as *soul* or *that hath life* when it relates to humans and *creature* when it relates to animals. (For example, see Genesis 1:24,30, 2:19, 9:3-4,12,15 in the King James Version.) The translators of the King James Version had a problem with one verse.

Because of the sentence structure, they had no choice but to use *soul* for both men and animals:

Numbers 31:28: (KJV) ...levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle: one *soul* <5315> of five hundred, both of the persons and of the beeves (cattle) and of the asses and of the sheep.

Humans are *nephesh*; animals are *nephesh*. Same word, same soul.

Genesis 1:30: (NASB) And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which *has life* <5315> (is a creature), I have given every green plant for food; and it was so.

How is *nephesh* used after the Flood, 1,600 years later?

Genesis 9:15-16: (NASB) <sup>15</sup>And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living *creature* <5315> of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living *creature* <5315> of all flesh that is on the earth.

Man and animal are of the same makeup. In both cases, their lives are a result of the combination of their body and God's breath of life. The Bible tells us again and again how there is this commonality between man and animals.

What is the difference between humanity and the animals?

Genesis 1:26-27: (NASB) <sup>26</sup>Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. <sup>27</sup>God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Like humans, animals ARE a soul; they were not GIVEN a soul. We are all souls - creatures - sentient beings - the difference is in how we were created. Mankind is created in the image of God.

BODY +

THE BREATH OF LIFE =

A LIVE CREATURE CALLED A "SOUL"



Animals ARE living souls.

They were not GIVEN souls.

It is interesting how the Bible uses the term LIVING soul over and over, which implies there can be a DEAD soul.



**The Old Testament emphatically defines human beings as souls.**

**It is clear that Adam was not given a soul but became a soul when God gave him life. The Old Testament is also emphatic that all living creatures on earth are souls as well and that humanity is different than the rest because we were created in God's image.**

What does "God's image" mean? Humanity was created to have dominion over the earth, to be thinking, moral creatures like God. We are able to make decisions, have emotions and have dominion. Even though our makeup is the same as that of the animals, we are different because we have a level of intelligence, feeling and personality that God has.

The Bible seems to clearly define what a soul is, and yet most Christians do not accept its definition. We need to dig deeper!

**The Old Testament seems emphatic about humans BEING souls. Is the New Testament also emphatic?**

Believing that the Bible in its entirety is the inspired word of God means we need to check how the writings before and after Jesus fit together. While Jesus' first advent changed some things, like no longer needing to follow the letter of the Jewish Law, some things like the very nature of humanity did not change. Jesus brought massive changes, but he also built on the basis and foundation of what God set into place in the Old Testament about humanity and its destiny.

Let's focus on what did NOT change from the Old to New Testament.

To examine New Testament teaching regarding the human soul, we need to first link what Old Testament word is translated into Greek in the New Testament teaching.

**This was part of the Law:**

Deuteronomy 6:4-5: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! <sup>5</sup>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your **soul** <5315> and with all your might.

This is how we build a bridge from the Old Testament to the New Testament. We take an Old Testament scripture that is quoted in the New Testament. We can then conclude that the words used in the Greek language to describe the Old Testament scripture in Hebrew are an exact correspondence.





Matthew 22:36-37: (NASB) <sup>36</sup>Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? <sup>37</sup>And he said to him, You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your *soul* <5590>, and with all your mind.

Here Jesus quotes directly from Deuteronomy 6:5: ...and with all your *soul* <5315> *nephesh*. When Jesus quotes it in Greek, he uses the word for Strong's Exhaustive Concordance number <5590> *psuchē*.

So, *nephesh* <5315> is the word used in the Hebrew Old Testament, and it is the equivalent of *psuchē* <5590> in the Greek New Testament according to Jesus' own words.

*Psuchē* means "the animal sentient principle," the person's life as a whole; a breathing entity. We will see in Part II how this differs from the New Testament word translated as *spirit*.

**Soul:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5590 *psuchē*; breath, i.e. (by implication) spirit, abstractly or concretely (the animal sentient principle only; thus distinguished on the one hand from #4151... (the New Testament word translated as "spirit"); and on the other from #2222, which is mere vitality, even of plants: these terms thus exactly correspond respectively to the Hebrew #5315, #7307 and #2416)



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**WHAT IS THE SOUL?**  
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Old Testament	New Testament
Strong's Concordance #5315 (Hebrew) <i>nephesh</i>	Strong's Concordance #5590 (Greek) <i>psuchē</i>
Translated as soul, being, creature	Translated as soul, life, mind, heart
Compare: Deuteronomy 6:5	Compare: Matthew 22:37

According to one of the definitions given in Thayer's Greek/English Lexicon, the meaning of *psuchē* expanded over the centuries and came to mean, "The soul is an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved in death."

(Source: *The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, by Lawrence O. Richards) As with many biblical terms, the basic meaning of *psuchē* is established by its Old Testament counterpart rather than by its meaning in Greek culture.

In other words, the word *psuchē* came to mean something more and very different than its original meaning when Jesus was quoting it. This is why we took the time to establish the Old Testament basis before moving on to the New Testament.



Let's stop here for a second and talk about a term we have all heard - "immortal soul." Some might be surprised to find out that the Bible never uses this term. The butterfly is a commonly used example. The idea behind the immortal soul theory is that when the physical body dies, the person's soul - their personal identity - continues to consciously exist, and in fact, even God does not have the power to destroy it. It had a beginning when it was created but has no end. According to this theory, some part of "you" lives on somewhere forever with your memories.



Versions of this immortal soul theory are popular in religions other than Christianity and in different philosophies that teach transmigration, where individual souls successively animate different human beings, and even the bodies of lower animals and insects. Through successive reincarnations, the soul can allegedly undergo evolution and improvement of its condition.

When hearing "soul," many people think "immortal soul." So much added interpretation goes into the immortal soul theory - we need to go back to the basic definitions of soul in the Scriptures. This is where we will find a clear, concise, never-changing perspective. Words may change over time but the Scriptures do not.

**BODY + THE BREATH OF LIFE = SOUL** 

These uses of *soul* fit the definition:

Matthew 6:25: (NASB) *For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your **life** <5590>, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not **life** <5590> more than food, and the body more than clothing?*

Jesus speaks of our physical lives as physical creatures. He tells us we do not need to worry about our physical well-being because it is in God's hands.

Those believing in an immortal soul differentiate the word *life*, meaning our life now in this finite lifetime, from *soul*, meaning our "forever" eternal life allegedly inherent in each human. We do not believe the Bible teaches the theory of an immortal soul and see a translator bias in the next verses.

*immortal soul* **LIFE** - THIS FINITE LIFETIME THAT DIES  
**SOUL** - OUR "FOREVER" ETERNAL LIFETIME

*mortal soul* **LIFE = SOUL** - THIS FINITE LIFETIME THAT DIES

Jesus used the word *psuchē* when talking about the present life. How were some translators biased?

Strong's Concordance  
#5315 (Hebrew) *nephesh*

Strong's Concordance  
#5590 (Greek) *psuchē*



### This shows the necessity for careful and consistent translation:

Mark 8:34-37: (NASB) <sup>34</sup>And he summoned the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, *If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* <sup>35</sup>For whoever wishes to save his *life* <5590> will lose it, but whoever loses his *life* <5590> for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

Jesus uses the word *psuchē* talking about dying - losing your physical life, your soul - for his sake and being granted eternal life.

Translators would not put the word *soul* here because that would seemingly contradict the teaching that Jesus came to *save* souls. Why would we lose our souls? We do not "lose" our soul (according to the teaching that soul means our forever eternal life) when we follow Jesus; we gain it. We can see how *life* had to be used in the translation in order to make sense with a belief in the immortal soul.

Remember, the word *life* could have just as appropriately been translated as *soul*: *Whoever wishes to save his soul will lose it, but whoever loses his soul will save it.*

For many Christians, "losing your soul" would mean your soul is in a burning hell, which we know the Bible does NOT teach. "Saving your soul" would mean your soul is in heaven. But here this would not make sense - how could you/why would you "lose your soul" - go to hell - for Jesus' sake?

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In this context, the translators HAD to translate *psuchē* as *life* here, meaning our life now in this finite lifetime.

However, the very next verse often DOES translate the exact word for *life* as *soul*:

<sup>36</sup>For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his *soul* <5590>? <sup>37</sup>For what will a man give in exchange for his *soul* <5590>?

Jesus is using the exact same word in these consecutive verses to talk about the same thing! *Life* in the first two verses, *soul* in the last two verses. Why is the same word translated differently? We can see the translators used the words that fit their doctrine. This obscures the truth, giving the impression that the *life* (as finite, temporary) is one thing and the *soul* or *being* is something different (as eternal). It fosters the false idea that a man might lose his life without losing his soul.

But the truth is, divine grace has provided - not for an automatic continuance of being - but for a resurrection, a living again. If we lay our lives down in the LORD's service following Jesus, we are promised a life in heaven.

immortal soul ~~LIFE - THIS FINITE LIFETIME THAT DIES~~  
~~SOUL - OUR "FOREVER" ETERNAL LIFETIME~~

mortal soul LIFE = SOUL - THIS FINITE LIFETIME THAT DIES



The key is that our physical being/soul is present here in this lifetime. Mankind will have a future life through resurrection, which we will discuss soon.

The New Testament word for *soul* is plainly shown to mean our life as a human creature:

Acts 27:21-22: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. <sup>22</sup>Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of *life* <5590> among you, but only of the ship.

Translating *psuchē* as *life* here is appropriate because a shipwreck might very well cause your sentient being to die. It makes perfect sense. But this is the word that is used for *soul* as well. ...*No loss of life among you* means the loss of life was a possibility. That means your "soul" can die.

Acts 15:25-27: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>It seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup>men who have risked their *lives* <5590> for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup>Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth.

Barnabas and Paul *risked their lives* in these verses - but did they risk their "eternal souls" from traditional Christian belief? No, of course not. They risked their *physical lives*, but it is the same word.

The Scriptures are emphatic about the definitions of these words. *Psuchē* in the New Testament, *nephesh* in the Old Testament - both mean the breathing creature.

Strong's Concordance  
#5315 (Hebrew) *nephesh*

Strong's Concordance  
#5590 (Greek) *psuchē*

These brothers had risked their human life, NOT their ultimate reward, in service. If anything, such dangerous service would have enhanced their grasp of that reward, not put it at risk! If they had risked their lives for the sake of the gospel, God would have rewarded that. If the translators had put the word *soul* in these verses, it would have confused their traditional understanding of an immortal soul. It would not work here.



We need to search the Bible with integrity so it can show us what to believe rather than have our belief system tell the Scriptures what they say.

Sometimes the word's meaning is a bit hidden:

Hebrews 12:3: (KJV) For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your *minds* <5590>.

What does this mean? How can this be the same word? The thought is, your very being would become faint; not just your intellect.

When Jesus connected the the Greek *psuchē* back to the Hebrew *nephesh*, we see how his thinking reflected his Jewish roots. He was not influenced by the Greek culture of mythology and philosophy around him. He connected the Jewish Old Testament and the Christian New Testament for us.





John 15:12-13: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.* <sup>13</sup>*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his **life** <5590> for his friends.*

Jesus DID lay down his earthly life, his being, his creature, his soul for humanity.



So, *life* and *soul* are scripturally interchangeable.



The New Testament is in complete harmony with the Old Testament teaching regarding humans *being* souls and not *having* them. This fundamental biblical truth will provide a basis for understanding the role that the human spirit plays in our lives.

Defining "soul" will help us understand "spirit" in Part II.

Depending on your Christian perspective, grasping this scriptural teaching may create more questions than answers.

So, we as humans *are* souls and we do not *have* souls.  
What does this mean when it comes to dying?

Now that the soul is scripturally defined, we can look into the destiny of our soul when our time of death arrives. Our journey begins towards understanding the relationship between the human soul and the spirit. If I am my soul and my soul is me, then I obviously cannot end up in a different place than myself. Now what?

Looking into this further, the concept of the immortality of the soul comes less from the Bible and more from pagan thinking. The Egyptians had elaborate afterlife stories, and the ancient Greeks influenced beliefs, mostly through the philosophy of Plato. He said, "Death is merely the separation of the soul from the body." One of his main arguments for a soul that does not die is the necessity of a future existence for an appropriate reward of the good and punishment of the wicked. This shows a lack of understanding of the purpose of resurrection and judgment.



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**Episode 934:**  
**Will Sinners Be Happy on Judgment Day?**

Understanding how Judgment Day works and why it probably isn't what you think it is



Plato lived several hundred years before Jesus. When I was a senior in high school at 17 years old, I had given my life to the LORD the year before and was trying to be very enthusiastic. I had a philosophy class, and we had to do a project comparing two philosophies. I chose to compare the philosophy of Plato and the philosophy of Jesus Christ as a witness to Christianity. The teacher randomly asked students what their project was about and what had they found so far. When she came to me, I said, "Plato believed in the immortal soul and Jesus did not." Of course, many Christians would take issue with that. I was not being really brave; I was being foolish because I had no idea what I was walking into. The teacher told me bluntly that I was wrong. Of course, I said, "No, I'm right." She said, "No." I said, "Yes," and she spent the rest of the class beating me down.

She was a college-educated philosophy teacher and made me look completely foolish, to the point where my classmates would say, "Maybe he didn't understand what you said." And I would answer, "No, I understood what she said." They would say, "Well, maybe he sees it in a different perspective, but you are saying the same thing." I'd say, "No, we are saying different things." By the end of the class, I felt really, really small. I walked up to her desk and told her I wanted to change my project to prove to her why the soul was mortal. The end result was, I did not change anybody's mind. But I tried very hard as a young person to stand for what I believe in, and it taught me a lot. Many of my friends turned on me; they thought I was an idiot afterwards, but it was worth it to me because I am really convicted by what the Scriptures say.

(Editor's note: The story continues in that the teacher later brought in another student's minister to "debate" a young Rick in front of the whole class. In the end, the teacher focused on the minister and did not allow Rick to speak.)

### The answer about what happens at the end when we die, is in the beginning - the test of obedience:

Genesis 2:15-17: (YLT) <sup>15</sup>And Jehovah God taketh the man, and causeth him to rest in the garden of Eden, to serve it, and to keep it. <sup>16</sup>And Jehovah God layeth a charge on the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden eating thou dost eat; <sup>17</sup>and of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou dost not eat of it, for in the day of thine eating of it - **dying <4191> thou dost die <4191>**.

**Die**: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4191 *muth*; a primitive root: to die (literally or figuratively); causatively, to kill

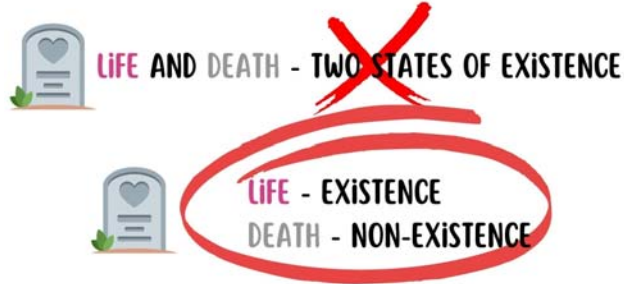


### Observations about death being the absence of life:

- God gave man the perfect environment conducive for living.
- Man was tasked with its care and upkeep.
- Man had free access to all except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- Potential consequences for disobedience were immediately present.
- The consequence would have an immediate effect *...dying thou dost die* - the dying process would now begin.



Some people are confused by the concept of death, saying life and death are two states of existence, rather than *existence* and *non-existence*.



They believe death is not the end of existence, and the body dies but the spirit somehow survives and presumably finds itself either in heaven, hell, or perhaps in the body of an ant or an aardvark, depending on what you have been taught. Before ancient Egypt with their elaborate afterlife ideas, and ancient Greek philosophy and myths, where did this false concept of death NOT actually being the end of existence come from?

### It came from Scripture!

Genesis 3:4-5: (YLT) <sup>4</sup>And the serpent saith unto the woman, *Dying <4191>*, ye do not *die <4191>*, <sup>5</sup>for God doth know that in the day of your eating of it - your eyes have been opened, and ye have been as God, knowing good and evil.

This is the first lie in Scripture. Therefore, Satan is the “father of lies” and a *murderer from the beginning* in John 8:44. The Serpent twisted God’s command by telling Eve, *you will NOT surely die*, the complete opposite of what God said would happen. *Listen to me instead!* He took something true and changed the fundamental consequences. How many world religions - including a majority of Christianity - support this lie that people really do not die?

It comes down to this: Are you going to believe God, the Creator of all things, or Satan, Lucifer, the father of lies? It is that simple! We at Christian Questions stand up for the Creator whenever He is misrepresented. No wonder 1 Timothy 4:1 describes how in our day Christianity would be teaching *the doctrines of devils*.

An immortal soul implies that God’s penalty against sin did NOT go into effect because a part of you never actually dies. Death, far from being the sentence or curse upon our race, is just a temporary door you pass through. If our souls already have eternal life, *what was the purpose of Jesus dying on our behalf?*

Satan misquotes God and cushions it within a partial truth that makes it feel less offensive.



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## Eve is deceived and the test of obedience will now go into the consequences stage:

Genesis 3:17,19: (NASB) *<sup>17</sup>Then to Adam He said... <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

God is making a simple and profound statement in these verses: *I made you from the dust of the earth and gave you life as a creature of earth. Your disobedience will send you back to the dust of the earth, in death. What you have been given has now been lost. You, as a human being will be life-less.*



Think of it like “batteries not included.” God created Adam, but Adam was not “energized” to be alive. God miraculously made him alive - “He put the batteries in”! After Adam and Eve sinned, they began to die. They would return to the elements from which they were made after the “batteries” run out.

No heaven was promised for obedience, no hell of torment for disobedience. Even after Adam sinned, God did not say a word about a hell of torment awaiting him. Nothing here says a soul will live on to go to another place. God pronounced the sentence, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

### Other Old Testament verifications of death being the absence of life:

Job 14:13-14: (NASB) *<sup>13</sup>Oh that You would hide me in sheol, that You would conceal me until Your wrath returns to You, that You would set a limit for me and remember me! <sup>14</sup>If a man **dies** <4191>, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait until my change comes.*

*...if a man dies will he live again?* It does not say: *If a man’s body dies, will it live again?* No, it is talking about the man as a living, sentient being. It is simple: Death is the absence of life.

### Death applies equally to both human beings and flies:

Numbers 16:29: (NASB) *If these men **die** <4191> the **death** <4194> of all men or if they suffer the fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me.*

**Death**: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #4194 *maveth*; death (natural or violent); concretely, the dead, their place or state (hades, the grave); figuratively, pestilence, ruin



Ecclesiastes 10:1: (NASB) ***Dead** <4194> flies make a perfumer’s oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.*



The word for **dead** flies is the same word as is used in Numbers 16:29 above for **dead** men. The same fate is true for all manner of earthly creation.

Psalms 115:17: (NASB) *The **dead** <4191> do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence;*

There is nothing going on where the dead go - it is silent. They go down to the quiet grave, not a tormenting hell. It is talking about being buried in the earth.



If the foundation of life and death found in the Old Testament is true, it should withstand the test of the New Testament. That death is the absence of life should be verifiable and easily proven. We cannot have a major doctrine without the Old and the New Testament in 100 percent agreement. If we build the doctrine just on the Old or just on the New, we will be missing something. We need to always check and verify through the other part of Scripture.

These next two texts refer back to the original sentence for sin given in the Garden of Eden:

1 Corinthians 15:20-22: (NASB) <sup>20</sup>But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. <sup>21</sup>For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup>For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.



Adam caused the sentence of death to come upon all mankind, as plainly spelled out in the Old Testament. Remember how Jesus described the death of Lazarus as sleep.

Again, if a soul exists that cannot die - why do you need a resurrection? Why do you need to be *made alive in Christ* if you never really died?

## ? WHAT USE WOULD AN IMMORTAL SOUL HAVE FOR A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD?



DEATH = LIFELESSNESS

Death came because of sin - back to the original sentence:

Romans 6:20-23: (NASB) <sup>20</sup>For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. <sup>22</sup>But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*The wages of sin is death* - this is really clear. Sin brings death to our sentient beings, from which on our own there is no return.

*But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus* - man does not have some "spark" of eternal life inside of him. The entire hope of any future life is based upon the divine power and the divine promise of a recovery through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus.

That is why it is such a miracle, a phenomenal thing, that Jesus bought back the human race. It has a powerful meaning because mankind was out of existence - but by the miracle of God through Christ, we are brought back to life. This is physically, *humanly* impossible.

1 Corinthians 15:22 assures us that, *As in Adam all die* (actually die in the grave, a cessation of existence), *even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*



Because of Adam's sin, the destiny of our human lives - our human souls - is revealed in the Bible as death, which is the absence of life. This tragic truth highlights the redeeming value of Jesus' sacrifice.

Never forget the value of the sacrifice of Jesus.

Now we have clarification that death is the absence of life, and that the human soul does experience this death.

**All of this talk about souls dying!  
Don't most churches teach that the human soul is immortal?**

The false "immortality of the soul" doctrine is pretty much everywhere in Christianity. As we have seen, it got its start with Satan's lie to Eve. There is another scriptural path of reasoning that can settle this immortal soul belief. That path has to do with proving that immortality is not an inherent human trait.

We defined "soul" as a living, breathing creature:

Old Testament	New Testament
Strong's Concordance #5315 (Hebrew) <i>nephesh</i>	Strong's Concordance #5590 (Greek) <i>psuchē</i>
Translated as soul, being, creature	Translated as soul, life, mind, heart

We defined "death" as lifelessness:



**Souls die:**

Ezekiel 18:1-4: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup>What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge? <sup>3</sup>As I live, declares the Lord GOD, You are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore.

The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge - meaning, suffering for what others have done. God pronounced punishment on three and four generations as a natural consequence for sin.



Curses in family bloodlines and the bigger context of Old Testament curses



What we do wrong often reflects on our children and grandchildren, and of course, we are all sinners because of Adam. These verses tell us there will come a time when that proverb is no longer valid because there will be a change.

### What is the change?

*<sup>4</sup>Behold, all **souls** <5315> are Mine; the **soul** <5315> of the father as well as the **soul** <5315> of the son is Mine. The **soul** <5315> who sins will **die** <4191>.*

This is a future prophecy of the Day of Judgment, specifically the reconciliation process where everybody will be miraculously raised because of Jesus, and now have to stand on their own two feet. Yes, everybody did die because of the sin of Adam, but there will come a time because of Jesus when all will have to be responsible for their own sins. If they die because they disobey God again and again, then it is on them, not anybody else. It puts the responsibility of life on each and every "soul."

In other words, everyone is responsible for their own sin in the kingdom. The soul who sins, or the person, the sentient being, who sins, will die. The soul does not split off from the body somewhere. There is no "divine spark" inside of a person that stays alive. This would be what Revelation called the **second death** from which there is no resurrection.



### Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary:

**immortal: adjective**

1. exempt from death
2. exempt from oblivion

The New Testament uses only two Greek words for *immortality*:

**Immortality:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #861 *aphtharsia*; incorruptibility; unending existence; (figuratively) genuineness

The King James Version translates this word as: immortality, incorruption, sincerity

**Immortality:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #110 *athanasia*; deathlessness;

The King James Version translates this word only as immortality

These are specific words - if something is incorruptible <861>, it cannot go bad. Unending existence, deathlessness <110> - this is the opposite of dying and being out of existence.

We would expect to see at least an inkling of these words connected with the human soul, if in fact the soul was inherently immortal.

**The Scriptures teach the opposite! They teach immortality is not inherent; it is something to be sought for:**

**Romans 2:7:** (NASB) *To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and **immortality** <861>, eternal life;*

Why are we told to *seek for glory and honor*? Because we do not inherently have it. Why are we told to *seek for...immortality*? Because we do not inherently have it.



Why would we seek for something we already have?



These next texts address seeking immortality in the context of what kind of “body” goes to heaven:

1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50: (YLT) <sup>42</sup>So also is the rising again of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in *incorruption <861>*; <sup>43</sup>it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup>it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body; <sup>50</sup>and this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood the reign of God is not able to inherit, nor doth the corruption inherit the *incorruption <861>*.

If we pay attention to these texts, they really open up our understanding.

...*rising again of the dead* - the followers of Christ

...*sown in corruption* - something that goes bad and dies

...*raised in incorruption* - unending existence

...*sown in dishonor* - we are all sinful

...*raised in glory* - by the miracle and life of Jesus

...*sown in weakness* - we are weak human beings in our sinfulness

...*raised in power* - beyond what we have in humanity

So many people say that the soul is a body-less entity, and yet here it says:

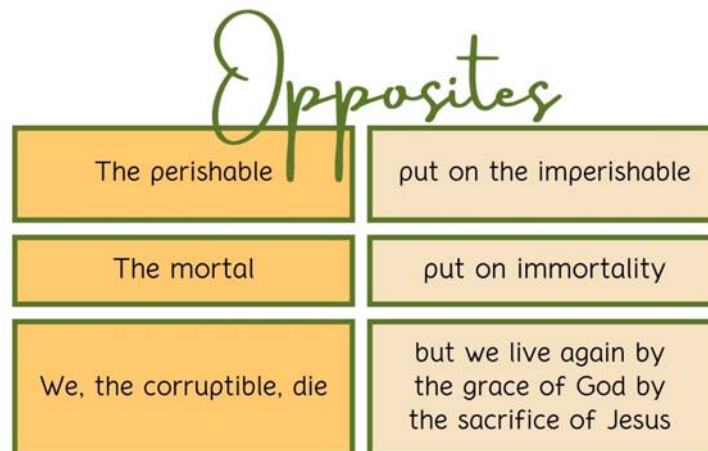
...*it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body* - there is always a body when the Bible talks about a *soul*, be it a natural body or a spiritual body.

The idea of immortality is something we need to reach for that we do not have. God provides a spiritual body with this miraculous resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:53-54: (NASB) <sup>53</sup>For this perishable must put on *the imperishable <861>*, and this mortal must put on *immortality <110>*. <sup>54</sup>But when this perishable will have put on *the imperishable <861>*, and this mortal will have put on *immortality <110>*, then will come about the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory*.

The Bible distinctly declares that man is MORTAL. We find this in Job 4:17, Romans 6:12, Romans 8:11 and 2 Corinthians 4:11. Mortal means “liable to death.”

*Death (life-lessness) is swallowed up in victory* - because those things that perish (that go bad and are gone) become imperishable.







This is a study of opposites: we are the perishable, the corruptible, the flawed - and we die. But by the grace of God and by the sacrifice of Jesus, there is a calling and absolute miracle to the resuscitation of life from that which was not. It is an amazing thought!

If we have to *put on immortality* (and it says this again and again), we do not have it within us. It is something we are grasping and figuratively putting on. It is not from within; it is outside of our being.

**Immortality was never available until Jesus made it so:**

2 Timothy 1:10: (NASB) *But now has been revealed by the appearing of our savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and **immortality <861>** to light through the gospel.*

Other than God Himself, immortality did not exist before Jesus. It is not something humans have - by the way, nor do angels. This is an interesting point - the angels are not immortal. While they are spirit beings and we do not know a lot about the spirit nature, we do know angels are not immortal. Satan and his fallen angels will be destroyed.

**Jesus, dwelling in the light of God after his resurrection, is the only being other than God with immortality until the true church is glorified with him:**

1 Timothy 6:16: (NASB) *Who alone possesses **immortality <110>** (Jesus) and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*

Jesus received immortality, the divine nature, at his resurrection as a reward for his faithful obedience to the Father's will. Ephesians 1:21 and Philippians 2:9,10 say he was *highly exalted, far above angels...and every name that is named in heaven and in earth*. If he had been immortal sooner, if he had been born a human with an immortal soul, he would not have been able to die and be the Savior of the world. Christ died for our sins and was subsequently exalted with immortality.

This podcast episode provided only Scripture to explain this topic. Old Testament Scripture has to be tested and proved with New Testament Scripture. New Testament Scripture has to be backed up with Old Testament Scripture when we are investigating major doctrines. We cannot have God's unbreakable word without both Testaments working together.

As human souls, we simply do not have immortality inherently present within us. The Scriptures are clear in their evidence.



**The Bible clearly teaches that the human soul is the result of a living physical body. It is the human life that is dependent upon basic bodily function, external sustenance and protection. Without all of these elements, the soul - the human life - would be rendered dead, and therefore out of existence.**



**LET'S GO BACK TO THE POPULAR UNDERSTANDING:**

**YOU LIVE IN A BODY - TRUE OR FALSE?**

True. Our conscious human being lives in a body, but our life is because of a body. We need a body in order to be alive.

**YOU ARE A SPIRIT - TRUE OR FALSE?**

False. We will discuss this in Part II.

**YOU HAVE A SOUL - TRUE OR FALSE?**

False. Man BECAME a living soul. You ARE a soul.

**SPIRIT – BODY – SOUL – MIND - ARE ALL CONNECTED TO MAKE UP “YOU” - TRUE OR FALSE?**

All of these things do make up the human form, but we want to make sure we look at these things through the eyes of scriptural clarity.

With the human soul now being defined and understood, we next need to do the same for the human spirit. Part II will go through the defining and understanding process so we can see the differences between soul and spirit, how they work together and what happens to our spirit at death.

We will use what the Bible teaches without any prejudice, additions, philosophies or paganism. We just want the Scriptures to show us what we are and how God's plan will bless every human who has ever lived.

*So, where do the human soul and spirit go when we die?  
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on May 9, 2022  
Ep. 1228: Where Do the Human Soul and Spirit Go  
When We Die? (Part II)

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.

**Bonus Material and Study Questions**

Further reasoning on the mortality of the soul:

If the soul does not die but continues to exist then to ask if you will live again is futile, for in death you are already living, albeit in an altered state.



**Job therefore believed that death was in fact an absence of life, and his other statements on the matter back this up:**

Job 7:21: (NASB) *Why then do You not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust; and You will seek me, but I will not be.*

Job 14:14: (KJV) *If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*

**What is the context of this verse? It is Job lamenting the finality of death:**

Job 14:7-15: (NASB) *<sup>7</sup>For there is hope for a tree, when it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and its shoots will not fail. <sup>8</sup>Though its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the dry soil, <sup>9</sup>at the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a plant. <sup>10</sup>But man dies and lies prostrate. Man expires, and where is he? <sup>11</sup>As water evaporates from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dried up, <sup>12</sup>So man lies down and does not rise. Until the heavens are no longer, he will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep. <sup>13</sup>Oh that You would hide me in sheol, that You would conceal me until Your wrath returns to You, that You would set a limit for me and remember me! <sup>14</sup>If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait until my change comes. <sup>15</sup>You will call, and I will answer You; You will long for the work of Your hands.*

**Job asks to be hid in sheol (grave/pit). Who else goes into sheol?**

**Bad guys:**

Psalms 9:17: (KJV) *The wicked shall be turned into **hell <7585>**, and all the nations that forget God.*

Psalms 55:15: (KJV) *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into **hell <7585>**: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.*

**Good guys:**

Psalms 49:15: (KJV) *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the **grave <7585>**: for he shall receive me. Selah.*

Hosea 13:14: (KJV) *I will ransom them from the power of the **grave <7585>**; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O **grave <7585>**, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.*

**So, everybody dies! The exact same Hebrew word is used, but the English translators of the King James Version opted to use **hell** when describing someone evil and **grave** when describing someone good.**

**A passage that not only verifies all we have been saying but is also a prophecy of the grace of Jesus:**

Psalms 49:5-15: (NASB) *<sup>5</sup>Why should I fear in days of adversity, when the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, <sup>6</sup>even those who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of their riches? <sup>7</sup>No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him - <sup>8</sup>for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever - <sup>9</sup>that he should live on eternally, that he should not undergo decay. <sup>10</sup>For he sees that even wise men die; the stupid and the senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others. <sup>11</sup>Their inner thought is that their houses are forever and their dwelling places to all generations; they have called their lands after their own names. <sup>12</sup>But man in his pomp will not endure; he is like the beasts that perish. <sup>13</sup>This is the way of those who are foolish, and of those after them who approve their words. Selah.*



**Notice, the foes of the righteous are subject to death and decay like everyone else:**

Romans 5:12: (NASB) *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

**So, all that we build, all that we cling to ends up of no value in death - for in death we perish:**

<sup>14</sup>*As sheep they are appointed for sheol; death shall be their shepherd; and the upright shall rule over them in the morning, and their form shall be for sheol to consume so that they have no habitation. <sup>15</sup>But God will redeem my soul from the power of sheol, for He will receive me. Selah.*

**Sheol - oblivion - BUT, there is hope for redemption from death in the prophesied ransom of Jesus and the prophesied glory of the true church:**

Romans 5:18: (NASB) *So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.*

1 Peter 2:12: (NASB) *Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

God's plan makes extraordinary sense with the understanding that death, as proclaimed in Genesis, is the penalty for sin. Adam's sin plunged the human race into sin and death. Jesus came and ransomed Adam from his penalty and in the process bought the entire human race as well.

**Jesus freely offered his life - soul - to die as a ransom:**

John 15:13: (KJV) *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Isaiah 53:12: (KJV) *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*



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# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep.1227: Where Do the Human Soul and Spirit Go When We Die? (Part I)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1227-soul-spirit/>

See:  CQRewind  
SHOW NOTES

1. Why would we turn to the Bible to define the human soul and spirit and what happens to them at death? What is the definition of "soul" in the Bible? What is the Greek word translated into English as "soul"? (See Genesis 2:7, Strong's #5315 definition)
2. How is the Hebrew word *nephesh* used differently with humans and animals in some translations? What are all the ways it has been translated into English? Is there a scriptural difference between human souls and animal souls? Explain. How was Numbers 31:28 a problem for some translators? How did the creative process differ for humans and animals? (See Genesis 1:20-30, 9:3-4, 12, 15-16)
3. What is the Greek word in the New Testament that corresponds to *nephesh* in the Old Testament? How can we be sure that the Greek and Hebrew words mean essentially the same concept? (See Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Matthew 22:36-37)
4. What is the difference between being "mortal" and "immortal"? How does Jesus use the Greek word *psuchē* in Mark 8:34-37? Why would translators use "life" instead of "soul" in the first two verses? Why use "soul" in the last two? How do Acts 15:25-27 and 27:21-22 show the soul is *not* immortal?
5. What is death? What does Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:17, 19 tell us about what happens to us at death? Where did the false concept of the soul never dying come from? (See Genesis 3:4-5, John 8:44)
6. Where was Adam told he was going after he died? What did Job think would happen at death? How about the flies in Ecclesiastes, or David in Psalms? Where do all creatures, human and otherwise, go when they die? (See Genesis 3:17, 19, Job 14:13-14, Ecclesiastes 10:1, Psalm 115:17)
7. Why do we die? How do these verses connect the Old and New Testament? When did the utter lifelessness of death change? (See Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22)
8. What is another way to prove/disprove if we have a "divine spark" of immortality inherent within us? (See Job 4:17, Romans 2:7, 6:12, 8:11, 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50-54, 2 Corinthians 4:11)
9. Is there a promise of immortality being available in the future? What made immortality available? When did Jesus receive immortality? (See 1 Corinthians 15:53-54, 1 Timothy 6:16, 2 Timothy 1:10, Ephesians 1:21)
10. How will this understanding of the soul and death change your life or your focus?