

Life and Death

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WHAT IS LIFE?

Man is the union of the dust of the ground (the body) and the breath of life (the spirit), creating a living soul. Thus, the two (the body and the spirit) joined together create a third (the soul).
Body + spirit = soul.

This principle can be seen in the example of water (H₂O).

“The teaching of Scripture is (as we see it) that man consists of two parts: body and spirit; and that the union of these two makes a third thing, which is called ‘soul’ or ‘living soul.’ Hence the word ‘soul’ is used of the *whole personality; the living organism.*”¹

“Soul” Is Used as a Reference for Man

Young defines both the Hebrew word “nephesh” and the Greek word “psuche,” both translated as our English word “soul,” as “animal soul.”² The idea being “animated, alive.” That is why the word soul is used to speak of living man, as well as lower animal life (Numbers 31:28).

Strong also defines “nephesh” in the same way as Young, as “a breathing creature, *i.e.*, animal or vitality.”³ This definition matches the way that “soul” is used in Genesis 2.

“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” (Genesis 2:7).

When God breathed “*the breath of life*” THEN man became a “*living soul*,” but when that “*breath of life*” leaves he will no longer be a “soul” (*i.e.*, a breathing creature)!

The Hebrew word *nephesh* and the Greek word *psuche* have the exact same meaning, which can be seen by comparing Psalm 16:10 and Peter’s quotation of it in Acts 2:27.

1. E.W. Bullinger, *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, page 9.
2. Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*.
3. James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

“For thou wilt not leave my soul [nephesh] in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10).

“Because thou wilt not leave my soul [psuche] in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27).

Here are a few simple examples from Scripture where we can see the usage of the word “soul” as a reference to living man.

*“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and **the souls** that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came” (Genesis 12:5).*

In Genesis 36:6 the Hebrew word translated “soul” is also translated “persons.”

*“And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the **persons** [nephesh – souls] of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob” (Genesis 36:6).*

*“These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all **the souls** of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three. ... All **the souls** that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob’s sons’ wives, all **the souls** were threescore and six” (Genesis 46:15, 26).*

WHAT IS DEATH?

Death is the opposite of life – it is the reversal of life. In death the spirit is removed from the body, and it is returned to God who gave it. Man is returned to the earth.

*“Then shall the dust **return** to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall **return** unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).*

*“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all **turn** to dust again” (Ecclesiastes 3:20).*

*“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou **return** unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou **return**” (Genesis 3:19).*

*“His breath goeth forth, he **returneth** to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4).*

*“... They die, and **return** to their dust.” (Psalm 104:29).*

Death is the absence of life, not life in some other form or place.

*“... Thou shalt die and **not live**” (II Kings 20:1).*

*“... The rest of the dead **lived not** again until ...” (Revelation 20:4-6).*

The Soul (Person) Will Die

Unlike what many believe and teach, the soul can and will die.

“The soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4).

“... He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence” (Psalm 78:50).

“Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me” (Matthew 26:38).

“And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23).

Satan’s Great Lie

In the garden of Eden God told Adam,

“Thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

It was Satan’s lie that,

*“Ye shall **not** surely die” (Genesis 3:4).*

E.W. Bullinger has written,

“So effectually has Satan’s lie succeeded, and accomplished its purpose that, though the Lord Jesus said, ‘I will come again and receive you unto myself,’ Christendom says, with one voice, ‘No! Lord. Thou needest not come for me: I will die and come to thee.’ Thus the blessed hope of resurrection and the coming of the Lord have been well nigh blotted out from the belief of the churches; and the promise of the Lord has been made of none effect by the ravages of tradition.”⁴

Although death is sure for Adam and his descendants, so also is the hope of resurrection, as expressed by the Psalmist:

“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me. Selah” (Psalm 49:15).

4. Bullinger, page 16.

Taken from chapter 4 of *The Salvation of All: Creation’s Final Destination* (A Biblical Look at Universal Reconciliation). Available from StudyShelf.com for **\$16.²⁵** (+**\$3.⁷⁵** s&h).

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