

THE STORY OF MAN'S DESTINY #7

WHAT ABOUT THE SOUL?

1. INTRODUCTION.

In our previous lesson on “What Are We Made Of”, we discussed the process, purpose and substance of man’s creation. The “substance” of which we are made is “dust and air”. From these two materials, God made a marvelous creation. He called it a living soul. The process of this creation was the power and genius of God, forming all of the intricate details and amazing functionality of the human body, and then breathing air into the nostrils of man for him to be alive. We discussed in a brief manner the marvel of man as the product of God’s creative design. With only dust and air as the raw materials, it seems unbelievable that God could make of them a being with the function, capacity and distinctiveness that man possesses. It is as though man feels that surely God had to have some other substance of much higher caliber in order to have a being with the capabilities man has. We seem to forget that dust and air in the hands of an omnipotent, omniscient God is all that is necessary in order to design a being as his own divine will dictates.

Then we considered the purpose behind all of the intricate design and capabilities of man. Not only were the faculties, organs, senses and mind of man so wonderfully equipped to function in a world of other creatures, but man was also equipped to have a loving relationship with God. First, God gave man total freedom to make his own choice about life, even including the freedom to choose to disobey God. In a sense you can say that God “experimented” with this element of freedom, in order to allow man to voluntarily love and obey God. God knew beforehand the risk involved in allowing man to make his own decision as to whether or not he would believe, love and obey the Lord or choose to follow his own carnal lusts and passions. You might well ask the question: “why did God take the risk of creating man with very strong desires or lusts for his own flesh and self elevation. The answer must be that God wanted man to love him above and beyond himself, so much so that he would deny his own passion and lusts for himself, because of a greater love for God.

Herein is the concept of God creating man in his own image and likeness. It is the concept of man loving God as God loved man. The concept of possessing the attributes of God such as, holiness of life; righteousness of being; characteristics of God that today we call “grace”: love, kindness, mercy, long-suffering, etc., etc. God wanted man to love and desire God so completely that in all things he would obey God to be like him. In man’s failure in this concept, God set in motion the great divine plan of restoration whereby God became man (clothed in sinful flesh) so that man would have another chance to be (re) made in the image and likeness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. Therein is the wonderful concept of man being created in the image and likeness of God. It is not a concept of physical stature and features, but one of God (likeness) dwelling in the heart of man, because man chose that experience above the choice of self elevation. (Sounds like the Christian concept, doesn’t it? And it is).

2. THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

We previously dealt very briefly with the concept of God dwelling in our lives. I would like to emphasize that point again before we go on to the main subject of this lesson. In I Cor. 6:19-20 and II Cor. 6:16, Paul declares our bodies to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. There are many scriptures that speak of God dwelling in us. We often speak of God dwelling in our hearts or in our life. This in-dwelling is a by-product of our relationship by faith in God. Rom. 6, emphasizes the concept of God dwelling in the members of our body. He emphasizes the necessity of mortifying the deeds of the flesh, so that God may be exemplified in every faculty and member of our being. In Rom. 8:23, Paul declares that “our bodies are the objects of redemption.

This is a vital point of Christianity and also of this lesson we are studying. God wants to redeem my

heart and mind to be sure. The reason for this is so that my hands, my feet, my eyes, my ears, my tongue, etc., may also be cleansed by the blood of Christ and so that God may be seen in all I am and all I do and all I think and all I desire.

This marvelous concept of God dwelling in us (by faith) is so that we may be fully restored in the image and likeness of God in all things. It does not mean that there is some “cavity”, as it were, in our bodies, and God fits in that cavity and calls it his temple or dwelling place. Neither is this indwelling just some spiritual impression or intangible influence upon life. It does not refer to some “soul” or “spirit” being somewhere inside of us to which God’s indwelling is confined. Instead it means that he dwells in our whole being. Anything short of that is a serious limitation and exclusion of the desire of God to dwell in all that we are. Maybe those who espouse such a limited and restricted indwelling of God in our whole being should describe in detail for us, just where it is then that God dwells in us. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ was not for God could to pick out some unidentified spot in our bodies and dwell there in some spiritualized manner. Instead, the atoning work of Christ was so that our whole being could be redeemed; transformed into the image and likeness of God by his grace; and consecrated totally to live for his honor and glory. Anything else is mere religion.

3. WHAT ABOUT THE SOUL?

This question is critical to all that the Bible teaches about the creation of man, his nature and his ultimate destiny. We cannot afford just to take for granted what it means. It is not enough just to quote scriptures; we must seek them out; find their real meaning and usage, and above all, our findings must fit within the entire scope and teachings of the Bible on this and all related subjects.

There is no subject in the Bible about which there is as much tradition, assumption, imaginations and, unfortunately, misquotes and out-right, error as there is about the “soul”. That same characteristic is also true of the “spirit”. Two words with vastly different meanings and usage, and yet in so many instances with very similar meanings and usage. All the while, there is a meaning and usage of these two words, “soul and spirit”, which has been completely ignored, that puts an entirely different perspective on the subject. What is the soul? We need to find this perspective and meaning. It is wrong to uphold a tradition, doctrine, or concept of any kind unless the entire Bible presentation of it has been considered.

This question, “What is the soul”, comes down to this simple difference. “ARE WE A SOUL”? OR, “DO WE HAVE A SOUL”? There is a very great difference in these two questions and that difference controls the outcome of so much in the study of the soul.

If we “are” a soul that means that our entire being, faculties, members, mind, organs, bodies, all combined, constitute what a soul really is. If, on the other hand, we “have” a soul, that implies that there is some kind of entity, complete with faculties and senses, totally separate from our fleshly organs, flesh, bones, blood, skin, nerves, mind, etc., that reposes or resides somewhere in our bodies, with the capability of functioning apart and free from our bodies and their faculties.

If we are a soul, this embraces the position that God’s redemptive purpose and work applies to every member of our bodies and every faculty of our being. It embraces the concept that we, ourselves, flesh and bones, heart and mind, are the object of redemption. If we have a soul, then the redemptive work of Christ is relegated to some entity somewhere inside of and totally separate from our bodies and the body is, indeed, only a thing of refuse for which there is no process of redemption or purpose.

If we are a soul, it means that at death we are laid in the grave, awaiting the coming of the Lord and a resurrection. It also means that it is by the resurrection that we come into immortality, eternal life. This eternal life, by way of a resurrection, will have all the joy, blessedness and reward that God is able to arrange. On the other hand, if we have a soul, then we already have immortality, eternal life and are literally deathless. And it would be essential then for such “immortal soul” to be liberated from our body at death and necessarily must go somewhere. It also means that a resurrection is of

no value whatever, if we have already gone to an eternal reward.

If we are a soul, then that explains how the Bible can speak of souls dying and of man as being mortal. But if we have a soul and it is immortal, then the Bible is misleading to speak of souls dying (Eze. 18:4 &20) and also of being beheaded.

We believe that the Bible clearly teaches that man *is a soul* and that a soul is made up of his entire being: flesh, bones, organs, senses, blood, breath, etc. The Bible never refers to the soul as being an immortal entity which has every conscious faculty, sense, capability and emotion, separate and apart from our fleshly being wherein all of the parts and functions, etc., actually reside. When Gen. 2:7, states that man became a “living soul” that is precisely what happened, i. e., *man*, made of the dust, became a living soul or a soul that was alive. The word for soul in this verse, as every student of the subject surely knows, is from the Hebrew word “NEPHESH”. It means a living being or living creature. This same word and meaning is also used for the animal kingdom (Gen. 2:19). WITH THIS PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUL, IT WILL HELP IF YOU TURN TO THE DIAGRAM ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS LESSON AND SEE A KIND OF COMPARISON OR DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO POSITIONS: “ARE WE A SOUL”? OR “DO WE HAVE A SOUL?” (The completely darkened one is an illustration of what we are trying to teach that the soul really is your entire being. The lighter one with the line inside is intended to illustrate the “idea” that the soul is a separate entity or being inside the body).

There is further proof that man and beast are both “living creatures” or “living souls”. In Gen. 2:7, it is said that 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. Theologians have tried desperately to make this “forming” to mean that God made the body into a kind of a “mold” or “shell”, within which God then placed a separate “being” which they describe as the (immortal) soul. Their point is that the use of the word “formed” is intended to express that view. But error always finds a way to self-destruct, and this instance is a good example of that. First of all, I do not believe that the verse is trying to teach any such “shell” formation in order to accommodate an inserted, immortal soul. Then the 19th verse of the same chapter says: “And out of the ground the Lord God “formed” every beast of the field. Thus the beast of the field was “formed” in the same manner from the same substance as man was. It follows then that if the forming of man was in order to make a clay shell to house an immortal soul, so also was the forming of the beast and therefore a beast would also have an immortal soul. Unthinkable! God did form man. He is not an unorganized pile of dust; neither is the beast of the field. God formed, made, created them. Then the last clause of this 19th verse says: “And whatsoever Adam called every living creature (living nephesh, soul), that was the name thereof. The beast of the field was a living soul, just the same as man was.

It bears repeating again that the only thing added to the dust of the ground in order for God to have a “living” soul instead of a “lifeless” soul, was the breath of his nostrils. Pretty marvelous, wouldn’t you say, that God is able to take dust and air, and create man with heart and brain; nervous system; organs; limbs; bones; faculties; senses, and with it the ability to communicate, function, exercise freedom and emotions and to enjoy the abundant beauty and marvel of the world God had placed him in. And the “Garden of Eden” means “garden of pleasure or paradise”. I would say that the psalmist was right on target when he says: (Ps.139:14) that man was “fearfully and wonderfully made”.

I believe therefore, and declare with utmost confidence, that the record in Genesis of the creation of man and beast reveals no evidence whatsoever of anything remotely resembling an “immortal” soul as being placed within man as the only device for initiating thought, emotion, sensation, desire, communication, feeling, sight, hearing, taste as well as the functions of the heart, lungs, blood, brain and nervous system. These faculties and functions operate because God made a coherent living being out of dust and air. The only evidence given in the account of creation is of a being that was: (1) totally created at that time; (2) out of the same material as the beast; (3) that man and beast are both souls; (4) that there is nothing immortal or deathless about either of them; (5) that God made man to be in his likeness in godly attributes and not in physical make up and thus made a dynamic

distinction between man and beast in the operation of his faculties, functions, senses and organs to achieve this likeness.

4. MORE ABOUT THE SOUL.

We have drawn our present conclusions about the soul primarily from the story of creation. Even though this should be conclusive enough, yet there is much more in the Bible on the subject. The word soul is found hundreds of times throughout the Bible and we owe it to the subject to review the many uses of the word, under a variety of circumstances, to be sure that the conclusions we have already made hold true. We should expect the rest of the Bible to enforce and strengthen our views thus far expressed and thus verify their accuracy. In order to pursue this through the rest of the Bible we will follow a plan of simply allowing the verses of scripture to speak for themselves about the use and meaning of the soul.

Let's review the word "NEPHESH", from which the word soul in the Old Testament is translated. It is not a word which is translated into "soul" only, but is also used in translating other words in the Bible as well.

- a. It is translated as "breath": Job. 41:21.
- b. It is translated as "life": Gen. 9:4, 19:19, 32:30, Ex. 4:19 and Lev. 17:11,14.
- c. It is translated as "mind": Det. 18:6, I Sam. 2:35, and I Chron. 28:9.
- d. It is translated as "person": Num. 31:19, 35:11, 15:30; Ps. 28:15.
- e. It is translated as "creature": Gen. 1:24, 9:15-16, Lev. 11:46.

Add to these the hundreds of times that "nephesh" is translated into soul and you can see that the variety of uses of "nephesh" helps us to understand just what it is saying to us about the soul. It will confirm that the term is not intended to convey the idea of an invisible, immortal being, but is about our whole person in its entirety.

Following is a representative recital of various verses that will bring to our minds the use and meaning of this term "soul". These verses should clearly identify for us that the soul is not an invisible, immortal being inside of us that never dies, and is sent to some mansion in the sky or a lake of fire for tormenting lost souls for eternity.

- a. **THE SOUL HAS THE FACULTY OF TOUCH.** Lev. 5:2. "Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or a carcass of an unclean creeping things ----- .
- b. **THE SOUL EATS NATURAL FOOD.** Lev. 7:18. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted ----- and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity.
- c. **SOULS ARE NATURALLY BORN, NOT SENT FROM ANOTHER WORLD.**
Gen. 46:15 & 18. These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dina: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls.
- d. **SOULS HAVE NATURAL BLOOD IN THEM.** Jer. 2:34. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: ----- .
- e. **THE SOUL CAN AND DOES DIE.** Ps. 22:29. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. Ps. 49:8. For the redemption of their soul is precious and it ceaseth forever. Eze. 18: 4 & 20. 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. The soul that sinneth, it shall die! -----
- f. **THE BEES, DONKEYS, AND SHEEP ARE CALLED SOULS.** Num. 31:28. And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep.
- g. **SOULS ARE SEEN AS BEING BEHEADED.** Rev. 20:4. ----- and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God....
- h. **THE LIFE (SOUL) OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD.** Lev. 17:11 & 14. For the life (nephesh

-- soul) of the flesh is in the blood. (It is oxygen, breath that is in the blood). For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of the soul is for the life thereof.....

i. SOUL ALSO MEANS HEART. I Sam. 18:1. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

j. SOUL ALSO MEANS BREATH. I Kgs. 17:21-22. And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul (breath) come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul (breath) came into him again, and he revived.

k. SOUL ALSO MEANS MIND. Ps. 13:2. How long shall I take counsel in my soul (mind), having sorrow in my heart daily?

l. SOUL ALSO MEANS CREATURE. Ps. 74:19. O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked.....

m. A SOUL CAN WEEP. Jer. 13:17. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride:

n. SOUL ALSO MEANS BREATH AND CAN DROWN. Jon. 2:5. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul:

o. THE SOUL IS CREATED; NOT ETERNAL. Jer. 38:16. So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, as the Lord liveth, that made us this soul.

p. SOUL ALSO MEANS LIFE OR BEING. Lk. 12:20. But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

q. SOUL MEANS PEOPLE OR PERSONS. Acts 2:41. Then they that gladly received his word and were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

r. SOULS WERE SAVED FROM DROWNING IN THE FLOOD. I Pet. 3:20. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

s. THE SOUL IS CAPABLE OF PRAISE. Lk. 1:46. And Mary said, my soul (heart, mind, being) doth magnify the Lord.

t. THE SOUL OF JESUS WAS IN HELL?! Acts 2:31. He seeing this before spake of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. (here you are faced with a fact that tells us that, (1) Jesus went to hell; (2) it was his body that went there; (3) he stayed there only 3 days and nights; (4) this hell was the grave where they laid him.

5. SUMMARY.

a. The soul is made up of breath and body.

b. There are times when "soul" refers to life, breath, blood, heart, mind, etc.

c. The soul eats; is born; was created; can touch; dies; lusts; has been beheaded; walks; talks and thinks.

d. The animals, bees, donkeys, sheep, birds are all called souls.

e. The soul was created and is not eternal or immortal.

f. The Bible never uses the expression: "immortal soul", or "never dying soul".

g. Man and beast were formed of the dust of the ground and given oxygen to make them alive, and man has no pre - eminence above a beast. All are of the dust and all return to the dust. As the one dies, so dieth the other.

h. The soul goes to the grave at death. It does not go to a mansion in the sky or to a torment of fire.

i. The soul is composed of: flesh and bones; organs; senses; heart; lungs; brain and nervous system.

j. The soul expresses passion, desire, emotion, graces, anger, etc., because it is you.

Next we will study about the spirit.

THE STORY OF MAN
LESSON #8
WHAT ABOUT THE SOUL
SERMON NOTES

1. Scripture: Gen. 2:7 & 19.

2. **INTRODUCTION.**

- a. The materials and process of the creation of man.
- b. Fearfully and wonderfully made.
- c. The purpose and function and distinction in being made in the image of God.
- d. God - likeness dwelling in every member of our being.

3. **THE TEMPLE OF GOD.**

- a. Our body; our very being; our soul, is the dwelling place of God.
- b. It is an indwelling by faith in all we are.
- c. It is not a dwelling by way of some separate soul entity, without the body.
- d. The redemption, restoration and resurrection of our body was the object of calvary.

4 **WHAT ABOUT THE SOUL?**

- a. This is the critical question of this story.
- b. The tradition of expressions about the soul that are not Biblical.
- c. Soul and spirit have similar uses; but also are different.
- d. **ARE WE A SOUL? OR, DO WE HAVE A SOUL?**
- e. **If we are ---** Then every member, organ, faculty, etc., are included.
- f. **If we have --** That implies a totally separate entity with faculties.
- g. **If we are --** Embraces the total redemption and value of the whole man.
- h. **If we have --** The redemption is a process of this inward being and the body is mere refuse and of no redemptive value.
- i. **If we are --** It means we are buried in hope of a resurrection, by which immortality will be conferred.
- j. **If we have --** We already have immortality, eternal life, and the resurrection is of no value at all.
- k. We believe that **WE ARE A SOUL.**
- l. Introduce **NEPESH** into the study.
- m. Consider the illustration on the back page of written message.
- n. What does it mean to be "FORMED". Gen. 2:7 & 19.
- o. The evidence in the creation story about the soul.

5. **MORE ABOUT THE SOUL.**

- a. A review of **NEPESH** reveals other uses besides soul. See examples.

6. **SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF SOUL.**

- a. See written message for scriptures.

7. **SUMMARY. SEE WRITTEN MESSAGE.**