

# What Is Man?

*What makes humans  
unique? Is there any  
way of knowing what  
we are, why we are  
and where we are  
going?*





**What  
Is  
Man?**

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# WHAT IS MAN? WHAT MAKES HIM UNIQUE?

**M**AN IS the most complex, truly unique physical mechanism ever designed and made.

With such a marvelous mind and body, we might expect it was only natural that our Maker send along his “Instruction Book”—just as a manufacturer sends along with the instrument or device he manufactures an instruction book describing what his product is designed to do.

That Instruction Book God did send. It reveals the *missing dimension* in knowledge—the incredible human potential.

## **God's Instruction Book**

This Instruction Book tells us *what* we are, *why* we are, *where* we are going, and the *way* to get there! We call it the Holy Bible.

It reveals that God first created angels—composed of spirit, though lesser than God and lacking in ultimate creative power. It reveals that the physical universe, including the earth, was next brought into existence. A third of the angels were then placed here on earth. They were put under the rule of the government of God, which was administered on earth by the great archangel known as Lucifer.

Under the government of God—which is in reality the administration of God's way of outgoing *love* as spelled out



by the Ten Commandments—the earth was initially filled with peace, happiness, joy and wonderful accomplishment. But ultimately, Lucifer led the angels under him into rebellion. The government of God was rejected, no longer enforced. As a result, the earth became waste and empty, in confusion and darkness (Gen. 1:2). Later, in six literal days God renewed the face of the earth (Ps. 104:30). He made physical life forms—the flora and then the fauna. These life forms were created without reasoning, decision-making processes, and without ethical or moral capabilities—except for man, God’s masterpiece of creative workmanship.

### What Man Is

In the FOUNDATION of knowledge, God’s Instruction Book for man, the Creator God reveals much knowledge about man himself that is totally beyond man’s ability to discover for himself—including the knowledge and understanding of what man *is*, *why* he was made that way, and what he is ultimately to *become*.

God created the first man. And he tells us how he made him so there would be no doubt as to what we really are. The first man was made from and therefore composed of earth—the dust of the ground! (Gen. 2:7). It was the *whole man*—“thou”—that was composed of the dust of the ground (Gen. 3:19).

After God had formed the man—made all the cells in his body—God imparted to him *physical* life (Gen. 2:7). God blew into the man’s lungs, through the nostrils, *air*—“the breath of life”—containing oxygen, and the man began to live! Notice that the verse does not say God breathed an immortal soul into the man.

The source of physical life in man and all animals is the same. Not once in the Bible does the “breath of life” even remotely refer to an “immortal soul” or life apart from the physical body. Otherwise animals, birds and even insects—gnats, fleas, mosquitoes—have immortal souls, for they all have the same “breath of life” (Gen. 7:21-22).

When God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the first man, he became “a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

Man does not *have* a soul—man IS a “soul”!



Since man is a soul, and the soul is mortal—then man is mortal, subject to death. That is why the Scriptures call human beings “mortal man” (Job 4:17).

When an animal dies, it is dead. When man dies, he is completely dead, too. All men and animals alike go to the same place at death (Eccl. 3:20). Why? Because they all have the same *temporary* source of life—air. After death, all men and animals become dust once again.

#### **Why Created Mortal**

The government of God ceased to be administered on this earth after the rebellion of Lucifer (now Satan) and one third of the angels. Later, God created the first human, Adam, with the potential of qualifying to replace Satan as ruler of the earth, thus restoring the government and way of God to this earth. But to qualify as successor to Satan, the human successor had to *reject* Satan’s way and voluntarily come under the government of God.

God’s master plan for accomplishing his purpose for the human race took form and shape even before man was made. God planned that if mortal man sinned by rejecting God’s government—as all but Jesus have—God would make it possible for him to REPENT—to *turn from sinning*, to be reconciled to God and to live God’s way of life, finally to be born of God as members of his eternal family!

Repentance is turning *from* the way of Satan *to* the government of God. It is accepting God’s rule over our lives through his law of love. It is accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and coming King—the “second Adam” who qualified (where the first Adam failed) to reestablish the government of God on the earth by overcoming Satan. Those who are to reign with Christ must likewise reject Satan’s way, overcome that

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way day by day, and actually live by God's law of love. If they continue in this way, they will be born of God—become immortal spirit at the first resurrection (I Cor. 15:42-54; John 3:3-8).

But those who will not repent and accept Christ's sacrifice in payment for their sins—those who refuse to turn from Satan's way and refuse to come under the government of God in their lives—will ultimately perish (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14-15; Mal. 4:1-3).

God wants every human being who has ever lived to have the opportunity to repent and live forever (II Pet. 3:9; I Tim. 2:4). But God will not force anyone to choose life. For those who refuse to follow God's way to eternal life there will be the "second death"—the fate of all UNrepentant sinners. They will cease to exist forever. They will be as if they had never been!

We can now see that God chose to make man first out of physical matter instead of spirit for an important reason. Before the creation of man, he had made angels out of immortal spirit—not mortal flesh and blood, subject to death. And one third of these angels sinned by rebelling against the government of God. But the punishment of sinning angels is not death.

### **Angels Were Created Different**

Angels are composed of spirit and therefore cannot die. Since one third of the angels chose the way of sin, their punishment will last for eternity. Their sins have resulted in eternal hopelessness and frustration, their minds being filled with resentment, bitterness and rebellion. Happiness and joy have left them *forever!*

But for man, God planned in advance that if man, composed of matter, sinned and refused to repent, he would die—he would be as though he had not been. God will *not* allow any incorrigible human being to live forever in mental anguish and torment like the fallen angels. This plan reflects God's great mercy toward mortal man!

When called by God and made to realize that he has sinned, man can REPENT—turn *from* his sin *to* God's way. And once his course is changed, with God's help he can



pursue a life of obedience to God. He can grow in spiritual knowledge and develop the character of God—overcome wrong habits, weaknesses and faults.

And this is all done through the free will and choice of each *human mind*.

Only man, of all God's physical creatures, has the marvelous ability to think, reason, plan and design, come to conclusions based on acquired knowledge. Animals cannot comprehend the concepts of good and evil. They don't repent.

Have you ever wondered why? Have you ever thought about the *vast difference* between animal brain and human mind, and what could possibly account for it?

### **Animal Brain vs. Human Mind**

There is a great, *uncrossable* GULF between animal brain and human mind. The evolutionary theory assumes that humans are animals. But one thing evolution can never explain is the total difference between animal brain equipped with instinct, and the human mind with creative reasoning powers of intellect and devoid of instinct in the strict sense that animals possess it.

Some animals have physical brains as large or larger than man's brain, and with similar cerebral cortex complexity—but none has the powers of intellect, logic, self-consciousness and creativity.

The physical brain of a dolphin, whale or elephant is larger than the human brain, while a chimp's is slightly smaller. Qualitatively the difference between them and the human brain is very little—not enough to remotely account for the vastly superior intelligence and output of the human brain. The gap between animal brain and human mind is incredibly vast!

When God molded Adam out of the dust of the ground, he was made in the "likeness"—the outward form and shape—of GOD himself (Gen. 1:26). God did not make any of the other creatures to be a clay replica of himself. This unique form and shape was *given to man alone*. This is because man was created with the potential to become God!

Each animal was created with a brain suited for its particular animal kind. But animals do not have the potential



of MIND and CHARACTER that God gave only to man. No animal was ever given the gift of *mind power*—ability to think, to reason, to make choices and decisions—as was man!

*It is this very SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE OF MIND AND CHARACTER that separates men from animals!*

Animals possess what we call instinct. Their brains are programmed, so to speak, by God with particular instinctive aptitudes to live and perform in a certain way. They follow *instinctive* habit patterns in their feeding, nesting, migration and reproduction. Thus beavers build dams, birds build nests. These aptitudes are *inherited*—they are not the result of logical, cognitive or thinking processes.

For example, millions of birds flock south each year as winter approaches in the Northern Hemisphere. They don't stop to reason why, they don't ask themselves whether they should, they don't plan ahead an itinerary for the trip. At a given internal signal—like the preset alarm of a clock—they leave their summer feeding grounds in the north and travel hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles south. Scientists don't fully understand why—they merely observe the operation of this animal instinct.

Each species or kind of bird builds a different type of nest, feeds on specific kinds of foods, and migrates at different times to various destinations. But none of these actions is *planned* in advance by the birds as humans would. Birds merely have the capability and proclivity to do that which Almighty God built into the instinct of each at creation.

But man's mind is vastly different from animal instinct. Man is able to devise various ways to do any one thing or to achieve a predetermined goal. Man can acquire knowledge and reason from it. He can draw conclusions, make decisions, will to act according to a thought-out plan.

Man can design and build different types of houses, using different designs and different building materials. Some houses are built of wood, some of brick or stone, and some people living near the North Pole even live in ice houses called igloos. Humans also eat different foods, prepared in many different ways. We may live entirely different life-styles from one another. And if a man wants to change his way of life—he can! Man is not subject to instinct. He is not gov-



erned by a set of predetermined habit patterns as animals are.

Man can *choose*—he has free moral agency. He can devise codes of conduct and exercise self-discipline. Man can originate ideas and evaluate knowledge because he has a MIND *that is patterned after God's own mind!* Man can devise, plan and bring his plans to fruition because he has been given some of the very creative powers of God!

Man alone can wonder, "Why was I born? What is life? What is *death*? *Is there a purpose* in human existence?" Man, unlike the animals, not only "knows" how to do certain things, but he also KNOWS that he knows—that is, he is *aware* that he has knowledge. He is *conscious* of the fact. He is *self-conscious*, aware of his own existence as a unique being.

These attributes of mind and character make man God's UNIQUE physical creation. God has shared some of his own qualities with man. And God expects man to develop and become conformed to the *spiritual* "image" of God's perfect mind and holy character (Matt. 5:48)—just as man

now is formed in the *physical* "image" of God.

#### **"Human" Spirit Makes the Difference!**

Man was created to have a special relationship with God that animals are utterly unable to have. Man was made in the likeness of the GOD kind. He was made in

God's image so that he might one day be *born* into God's divine family!

God's purpose in making mortal man after his own likeness demanded mind power in man patterned after *God's own mind*. That is why the most remarkable thing about man is his mind.

**Spiritual things  
cannot be seen with  
the eye, heard with the  
ear, felt with  
the hands, tasted or  
smelled.**



What is it then that separates humankind from the animal kingdom? What gives man this God-plane power of intellect?

It all boils down to a *nonphysical* component in the human brain that does not exist in animal brain. It is this nonphysical component that makes man so vastly different from animals. It is what makes man truly UNIQUE!

Man does not have an immortal soul within him that enables him to live on apart from his body after death (remember man is a *mortal* soul). But the Bible nevertheless does speak of a "spirit IN man" (Job 32:8, 18; Zech. 12:1; I Cor. 2:11).

Many passages of Scripture show that there is a "spirit" IN man! This spirit is *not the man*—it is something that is *IN* the man. Joined with the physical brain of the man, it forms human MIND. It imparts to man's brain his unique powers of intellect and personality—the ability to think rationally and make free will decisions. It imparts the ability to learn mathematics, languages or other types of knowledge such as music, art, carpentry, flying.

But that's all. The spirit that is *IN* man has no consciousness of itself. It is *not* an "immortal soul." This spirit is *not* the "man."

The spirit that is IN man can be called "human" spirit, for it is in each human, even though it is *spirit essence* and not matter. It is not a "ghost," spirit being or the Holy Spirit. It is not the man, but spirit essence IN the man. It is NOT a soul—the physical human *is* a soul.

The *human* spirit does not supply human life—the human life is in the physical blood, oxidized by the breath of life (Lev. 17:11).

But the spirit in man does impart the power of intellect to the human brain. This nonphysical component in the human brain is spirit essence, just as in the material world air is a gaseous essence. This "human" spirit cannot see. The physical brain sees through the eyes.

The human spirit in a person cannot hear. The brain hears through the ears.

This human spirit cannot think. The brain thinks—although the spirit *imparts the power to think* far above the



level of brute animals' brain function. Without such spirit animals cannot do original thinking.

Whatever knowledge enters the brain through the five senses is instantly stored (memorized) in the "human" spirit within the person, much like a computer stores information. It enables the brain to have instant recall of stored-up knowledge in the spirit, thus enabling the brain to utilize bits of related knowledge in the process of THINKING and REASONING.

The human spirit imparts the power of intellect to the physical brain in two ways: 1) it gives the brain instant recall of whatever the brain calls for in the knowledge stored in this memory; 2) it supplies the brain whatever energy is needed to cause it to think—that is, to put the pieces of information stored in the spirit together in the processes we call "thinking," "reasoning" and "drawing conclusions." The human spirit also is the means God has instilled to make possible a personal relationship between human MAN and divine GOD.

The truth about the "spirit in man" is so important that Satan, the archdeceiver, twisted and perverted it long ago. He clouded the minds of men and led them into believing his "big lie" as far back in time as the first human beings in the garden of Eden.

Here was the *origin* of the "immortality of the soul" teaching so prevalent today! Satan told the first woman she would "not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). In other words, she had an "immortal soul" that would live forever. Eve believed this lie. And most of the world today continues to believe some variation of that ancient "big lie"!

### **A Second Spirit Needed**

Humans have the intellectual capacity to design spaceships to take them to the moon and back, to invent the computer and to do other marvelous exploits in the physical, material realm. Yet during their nearly 6,000 years on earth, they have proved that they cannot solve their problems with fellow humans.

Why has this been so? Because man's real problems are *spiritual* in nature and the natural man simply cannot solve spiritual problems. In producing the computer or in flying to the moon, he is dealing with physical matter that he can



understand because of the human spirit within him. But he cannot solve problems with fellow humans because this involves knowledge and understanding of *spiritual principles*, which he cannot comprehend without the addition of *another spiritual element* to his mind!

Humans were made to need *another* spirit—the Holy

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Spirit of God! Just as a human could not know the things of human knowledge except by the human spirit within him, so he or she cannot know the things of God—spiritual knowledge—except by the addition of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:9-11, 14).

Just as surely as no animal brain—such

as a cow's, for example—can comprehend or understand *human* affairs without the *human* spirit, so no human mind can have comprehension of spiritual truths on the divine plane without the Holy Spirit!

Even the greatest scientific and philosophical minds simply cannot come to know and understand SPIRITUAL truths with their natural minds. They are “foolishness” to them. The natural man with his human spirit is *limited* to material knowledge.

Spiritual things cannot be seen with the eye, heard with the ear, felt with the hands, tasted or smelled. The human mind, which can receive knowledge only through the physical senses, can never really comprehend spiritual concepts and principles without the Holy Spirit of God. A person can come to know that which is spiritual only through God's Holy Spirit, which works with the human spirit in the mind. That is the only way the human mind can receive and comprehend the knowledge of and attain God's GREAT PURPOSE for man's existence!

Humans were created incomplete. They were made to need another spirit—the Holy Spirit of God.



How can one receive the Holy Spirit? Through Christ, the second Adam, we can receive God's gift of his Holy Spirit. Upon repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, whose death paid the penalty for sin in our stead, we may be reconciled to God and receive the Holy Spirit of God, which is *added* to our human spirit (Acts 2:38; John 7:38-39). Thus we become the *begotten* children of God (I Pet. 1:3; Rom. 8:14-17).

The human spirit in man and the Holy Spirit of God *join* to make a begotten child of God, just as the male sperm cell and the female ovum or egg cell join to make a begotten human, but not yet developed or ready to be born as a human being.

God's Holy Spirit, when it combines with the human spirit in the human mind, does two things: 1) it begets the human with divine, eternal life later to be born into the God family as a divine being, then composed wholly of spirit; 2) it imparts to the mind the ability to comprehend *spiritual* knowledge—to understand the things of God.

The first human beings were freely offered this second and much-needed Spirit. Of the two symbolic trees in the garden in Eden, the "tree of life" represented God's Holy Spirit. To have taken the fruit of that tree would have been to receive God's Holy Spirit, which would have joined with their human spirits, impregnating them as begotten (not yet born) children of God.

But by taking of the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," our first parents rejected God's Spirit, which would have begotten the very life of God in them and would have enabled them to understand revealed *spiritual* knowledge. Thus they cut themselves and their descendants off from access to God's Spirit. They *limited* themselves and the human race to material knowledge and understanding (Gen. 3:22-24), except for those whom God would specially call (John 6:44) and give his Spirit.

The Spirit-begotten Christian now has, conditionally, the presence of eternal life within him (or her) through a portion of the Spirit from the Father. But this does not mean he is an immortal spirit being. He is not yet composed of God's Spirit. He is now an "heir" of God (Rom. 8:16-17)—not yet an inheritor or a possessor, not yet "born again." But, if



the Holy Spirit dwells in us, God will, at Christ's return to earth as King of kings, give us immortality by his Spirit that dwells in us (Rom. 8:11).

Now just as in human reproduction the impregnated embryo, which later becomes a fetus, is not yet born, but must be nourished for a period of time through the human mother, so the begotten Christian is not yet born into the God family. The divine life has merely been begotten. It must now *grow!*

### **Why We Must Grow Spiritually**

Included in God's purpose for creating man is the development of righteous, spiritual character within him. Notice again what God said in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our *image* . . ." The original Hebrew here indicates far more than merely the form and shape of God—his outward likeness. "Image" also refers to *mind* and *character!* God intended for man—to whom he gave the gift of a thinking, reasoning mind—to ultimately have the very mind and character of GOD!

God's purpose in creating man is to *reproduce himself* with the perfect spiritual character only God possesses. Man was therefore created in God's own image and likeness, his own form and shape with a mind similar to his, so God could begin to *develop* the very character of God in him.

Just as the human body and brain gradually begin to form during the gestation period in human reproduction, the righteous and holy character of God must begin to form and *grow* once one is begotten by God's Spirit (II Pet. 3:18; I Pet. 2:1-2).

Obviously, one cannot become absolutely perfect in character until the resurrection, when God will complete the process by giving each begotten human a new, perfect spirit body with perfect—sinless (I John 3:2, 9)—nature that will be like Christ's and the Father's. But in the meantime, God wants his Spirit-begotten children to *grow* in his spiritual character daily by obeying his commandments and overcoming and rooting sin out of their lives—*growing toward* that spiritual perfection!

Such perfect, holy and righteous character cannot be



created by fiat. It must be developed, and that requires time and experience. God gives mortal man time in which to learn that only God's way of life brings real peace, happiness and a joyful, abundant life. Men will have learned that sin causes only heartache, misery, suffering and death. Those whom God calls will have seen the results of Satan's way of life and rejected it, and will have been developing, with the help of God's Spirit, God's own holy, righteous character until their change to sinless immortal life!

We become spiritual "embryos" when, upon receipt of the Holy Spirit, we are begotten of God. And to grow spiritually, we must take in *spiritual* nourishment. Just as the embryo in a mother's womb must be nourished with life-giving food through the placenta, so we must be nourished by the Word of God. "The words that I speak unto you," said Jesus, "they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Those words are recorded in the Bible—and Jesus said we are to live by every word of God (Matt. 4:4). We drink in these life-giving words from the Bible through reading, studying and meditating (thinking) on what we read.

Spiritual character development requires time and comes largely by experience—by putting the Word of God into practice in our daily lives. One builds the righteous character of God as one comes to discern, through God's revelation in the Holy Bible, right from wrong—the true values from the false—truth from error, then chooses the right and rejects the wrong and, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, *resists* the wrong and DOES the right.

This growing in spiritual knowledge and spiritual character is a gradual process that continues the rest of one's life.

In addition to Bible study, earnest prayer is absolutely necessary. You absorb spiritual nourishment through personal, daily contact with God. When you study the Bible, God is talking to you. When you pray, you are talking to him. You get to really know God in this manner, just as you become better acquainted with people by conversation.

God's Church is the spiritual "mother" of all who have been begotten by God's Holy Spirit. God has set his called and chosen ministers in his Church to "feed the flock" so the individual members may *grow spiritually* (Acts 20:28). Christ



has given his ministers the responsibility to instruct, teach and counsel the members of the Church (Eph. 4:11-15). So just as a human mother feeds her begotten child within her womb through the placenta and umbilical cord, God's children are nourished with spiritual food *within the true Church*.

And as the human mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can protect it from physical harm, the function of God's Church is to also protect the begotten children of God from spiritual harm—the false doctrines of false ministers who appear as Christ's representatives, but who actually represent Satan and his way (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Finally, when resurrected from the dead or changed from mortal flesh to immortal spirit at Christ's return, the incredible human potential will have blossomed into reality for those who were called by God and begotten by his Holy Spirit. We will have been BORN into the divine family of God possessing the *fullness* of the very character of God!

Now we see clearly the great purpose the Creator God had in making man UNIQUE among all his physical creations. Mortal man has within his reach the glorious reality of attaining to the resurrection of the dead, and receiving immortality—forever being a part of the universe-ruling family of God.



## WHERE DID THE IDEA OF AN “IMMORTAL SOUL” COME FROM?

**F**EW BELIEFS are more widely held than that of the “immortal soul.”

Virtually everyone is familiar with the concept. The average religious person, if asked, would state it something like this:

A human person is both *body* and *soul*. The body is the physical flesh-and-blood “shell” temporarily housing the soul. The soul is the nonmaterial aspect, made of spirit. At death the soul leaves the body, and lives on consciously forever in heaven or in hell. (Some hold that liberated souls are reborn in new bodies in a series of “reincarnations” or “transmigrations.”)

Some form of this concept is found among virtually all peoples and religions in the world today. The average religious person generally takes the idea for granted.

Science, which deals with the material universe and physical data, cannot verify or deny the existence of any such soul.

How, then, can one *know* whether or not man really has an “immortal soul”?

Few have stopped to ask *where* the concept came from. Many simply *assume* it is found in the Bible.

So prepare yourself for what could be one of the big surprises of your life!



The idea of an “immortal soul” long predates the founding of today’s major religions. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus (5th century B.C.) tells us in his *History* that the ancient Egyptians were the first to teach that the soul of man is separable from the body, and immortal. This Egyptian idea was centuries before Judaism, or Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam came onto the scene.

Nowhere in the ancient world was the afterlife of more concern than in Egypt. The countless tombs unearthed by archaeologists along the Nile provide eloquent testimony to the Egyptian belief that man possessed a spiritual aspect extending beyond his physical life.

To the east, the ancient Babylonians also held a belief in a future life of the soul in a “lower world.” But Babylonian beliefs were nowhere so elaborate as the Egyptian.

A person, the Egyptians believed, consisted of a physical body and not one but *two* souls that lived on after his death: a *ka* soul and a *ba* soul.

The *ka* was said to be a spirit replica of a man, containing the “vital force” given to him at birth. At death, the *ka* was believed to take up residence in a statue or picture of the deceased. The statue or picture was placed in the tomb for that very purpose. As the tomb was to be the eternal home of the *ka*, it was provided with everything the *ka* would need for a happy afterlife—food, furniture, games, reading material, grooming aids and the like.

The other soul, the *ba*, was held to be that part of man that enjoyed an eternal existence in heaven. It was believed to fly from the body with the last breath. The *ba* was often depicted on tomb paintings as a human-headed hawk hovering over the deceased’s body. The ancient Egyptians believed the *ba* occasionally came back to “visit” the body in the tomb and to partake of the food and drink offerings there.

The famous *Book of The Dead*—a collection of ancient Egyptian funerary and ritual texts—lays out in great detail the many Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife. In one version of the work, dating from the 15th century B.C., the *ba* of a deceased person is pictured as asking one of the Egyptian gods, “How long have I to live?” To which the god replied:



"Thou shalt exist for millions of millions of years, a period of millions of years." What better depiction of the concept of immortality?

### Passed on to Greeks

The idea of the soul's immortality did not cease with ancient Egyptian civilization. Notice again the testimony of the historian Herodotus:

"The Egyptians were the first that asserted that the soul of man is immortal. . . . This opinion *some among the Greeks* have at different periods of time adopted as their own" (from *Euterpe*, the second book

**The word  
*immortality* is found  
only in the New  
Testament, where it  
occurs fewer than half  
a dozen times.**

of Herodotus' *History*).

The pagan Greeks got the concept of an immortal soul from the Egyptians!

The foremost advocate among the ancient Greeks of the idea of an "immortal soul" was the Athenian philosopher Plato (428-348 B.C.), the pupil of Socrates. Plato was the founder of the Academy, an institute for philosophical and scientific research just outside of Athens.

The pre-Socratic Greek philosophers had no real conception of any nonmaterial element in man. The philosophers Socrates and Pythagoras were among the first of the Greeks to adopt the Egyptian view. They subsequently had a great influence on the thought of Plato. It was Plato who popularized the immortal soul concept throughout the Greek world.

In the *Phaedo*—one of Plato's most famous works—Plato recounts Socrates' final conversation with his friends on the last day of Socrates' life. Socrates declared to them:

"Be of good cheer, and do not lament my passing. . . . When you lay me down in my grave, say that you are burying my body only, and not my soul."



Socrates' statement is little different from the teaching of most churches today!

Notice also the following assertion from Plato, again taken from the *Phaedo*:

“The soul whose inseparable attitude is life will never admit of life's opposite, death. Thus the soul is shown to be immortal, and since immortal, indestructible. . . . Do we believe there is such a thing as death? To be sure. And is this anything but the separation of the soul and body? And being dead is the attainment of this separation, when the soul exists in herself and separate from the body, and the body is parted from the soul. That is death. . . . Death is merely the separation of the soul and body.”

In Book X of *The Republic*—another of Plato's major works—he again wrote: “The soul of man is immortal and imperishable.”

Statements by such ancient Greek and Roman writers as Polybius, Cicero, Seneca, Strabo—and even Plato himself—have led some modern historians to question whether Plato *really* personally believed the immortal soul doctrine. They suggest that he may have simply popularized what he knew to be a fiction as a means of keeping the citizenry in line through the fear of mysterious “unseen things” beyond this life.

The immortal soul concept, in other words, was a necessary companion doctrine to the doctrine of the terrible torments of parts of Hades or hell. Such fearsome teachings, some philosophers thought, were necessary to scare the masses into being good citizens.

Regardless of his motives and personal beliefs, Plato's teachings did have a wide impact. They spread throughout the known world and were accepted as truth by millions.

### **Plato and the Jews**

The Jewish communities of antiquity were deeply influenced by Greek philosophical ideas. Many will suppose that the Platonic view of the soul imprisoned in the flesh would have been nothing new to the Jews. But notice the testimony of Jewish scholars themselves:

“The belief that the soul continues its existence after the



dissolution of the body is . . . nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture. . . . The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato its principal exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended" (*The Jewish Encyclopedia*, article, "Immortality of the Soul").

Many of you will undoubtedly be surprised to discover that the idea of the immortality of the soul was not derived by the Jews from the Old Testament scriptures, but rather taken *from Plato*.

As we shall see, the Old Testament takes a *completely different* view!

### Another Surprise!

But what of the professing Christian world? Certainly here we should find the doctrine of an immortal soul independent of any Greek influence.

Now consider this fact:

Many of the early theologians and scholars of the professing Christian religion—including such men as Origen, Tertullian and Augustine—were closely associated with Platonism.

Tertullian (A.D. 155-220), for example, wrote: "For some things are known even by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many . . . I may use, therefore, *the opinion of a Plato*, when he declares: 'Every soul is immortal'" (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. III).

Notice, it is the opinion of Plato that is cited!

Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430)—held to be the greatest thinker of Christian antiquity—also taught the immaterial and spiritual nature of the human soul. But notice the source of his teachings. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* states: "He [Augustine] fused the religion of the New Testament with the Platonic tradition of Greek philosophy."

Why should those early professing Christian scholars have resorted to the opinions of a pagan Greek philosopher? Could it be that the immortal soul doctrine is not clearly supported in Christian Scripture?



Notice the much later view of Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. More than a thousand years later, in 1522, he wrote:

“It is probable, in my opinion, that, with very few exceptions, indeed, the dead sleep in utter insensibility till the day of judgment. . . . *On what authority* can it be said that the souls of the dead may not sleep . . . in the same way that the living pass in profound slumber the interval between their downlying at night and their uprising in the morning?”

Luther himself encountered difficulty in finding support for the immortal soul doctrine in the pages of Scripture. Notice that he asked, “On what authority . . . ?”

But the deep-seated teachings of centuries were not to be easily dislodged, even by Protestant reformers. Theologians and churchgoers alike persisted, for the most part, in their unquestioning embrace of the ideas passed down from the ancient pagan philosophers. As the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* summarizes:

“Traditional Western philosophy, starting with the ancient Greeks . . . shaped the basic Western concepts of the soul.”

### **What the Bible REALLY Says!**

Notice the warning of the apostle Paul, who once personally confronted Greek thinkers on Mars' Hill in ancient Athens (Acts 17:15-34). To the Greeks in Colosse in Asia Minor he wrote:

“*Beware* lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the *tradition of men*, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

Jesus Christ himself warned of “making the word of God of none effect through your *tradition*” (Mark 7:13). “In vain they do worship me,” he lamented, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9).

So what *does* the Bible really say?

Consider first the teaching of the Old Testament. As we have seen, the Jews living in the Hellenistic world admit they took the immortal soul doctrine from Plato. It is *nowhere found* in the Hebrew Scriptures.



Notice Genesis 2:7: "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.*"

Consider carefully: Man—formed *of the dust of the ground*, not out of spirit—"became" a living soul. A soul is what man *is*. It is not something a man *has*.

The Hebrew language further proves this point. The Hebrew word translated as "soul" in Genesis 2:7 in the widely used *Authorized Version* of the Bible is *nephesh*. *Nephesh* designates temporary physical life. It means a living, breathing creature. This is the *same word* used frequently in the first chapter of Genesis and elsewhere in reference to *animals*.

Notice, for example, Genesis 1:24: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature [*nephesh*] after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so."

Here the word *creature* is the identical Hebrew word that is used in Genesis 2:7 and throughout the Old Testament for "soul." In biblical usage, a brute beast is also a "soul"!

In *Leviticus* 21:11, *Numbers* 6:6, *Haggai* 2:13 and elsewhere, the word *nephesh* is even used with reference to a *dead body*.

*Nephesh* clearly has *nothing whatsoever* to do with any sort of spirit essence. The soul is not a separate entity from the body. It *is* the body!

Man *is* a *nephesh*. He *is* a soul!

Many additional Old Testament scriptures reveal clearly the *mortality*—not the immortality—of the soul. Ezekiel 18:4, 20, for example, declares that a soul can *die*! Read it for yourself: "The soul that sinneth, it shall *die*." If the soul were immortal, how could it die? It's a direct contradiction of terms!

**Christ's resurrection  
was a type or  
forerunner of the  
resurrection God  
promises to all who  
obey him.**



No wonder Jewish scholars today have to point to Plato as the origin of the immortal soul doctrine!

### The New Testament Speaks

What about the New Testament? Surely here we find biblical proof for an immortal soul. Or do we?

In the New Testament, "soul" is a translation of the Greek word *psuche*. *Psuche* is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *nephesh*. Like *nephesh*, *psuche* is frequently rendered "life" in addition to "soul."

*Psuche* is twice used in the New Testament for the lower animals, exactly in the same way as the Hebrew *nephesh* can refer to the life of animals. In these two scriptures (Rev. 8:9 and 16:3), *psuche* is rendered "life" and "soul" respectively, with reference to the life of sea creatures.

The word *psuche* has no connotation whatsoever of "spirit essence" or "immortal soul"!

Jesus Christ, in fact, declared that God is able to *destroy* one's soul (Greek *psuche*, or life) in Gehenna fire (Matt. 10:28).

The words *immortal soul* are found nowhere in the Bible—Old Testament or New. The word *immortal* occurs *only once* in the entire Bible—in I Timothy 1:17, where it refers specifically to *Jesus Christ*!

The word *immortality* is found only in the New Testament, where it occurs fewer than half a dozen times. One of those places—I Timothy 6:16—clearly states that, of all humans, Jesus Christ "ONLY hath immortality"! Romans 2:7 admonishes Christians to "SEEK FOR . . . immortality." If man already had immortality, he would not have to *seek* for it!

I Corinthians 15—the "resurrection chapter" of the Bible—shows that a Christian "puts on" immortality at a future resurrection of the dead (see verses 50-54).

As Jesus clearly stated: "That which is born of the flesh *is* flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit *is* spirit" (John 3:6). Man—born of the flesh—*is* flesh. He was not created with inherent immortality. He has only a temporary physicochemical existence. "For dust thou *art*, and *unto dust* shalt thou return," God told Adam (Gen. 3:19).

Only when mortal man is "born again" in a future



resurrection will he finally put on immortality and *be* spirit! Why would a resurrection of the body be needed if the soul were already in heaven? The soul does not go to heaven! The mortal soul—man's physical life—dies and turns to dust.

The New Testament, then, teaches *the resurrection*—a rising from the dead—in direct opposition to the pagan Greek idea of an immortal soul. The resurrection is our only hope of eternal life! Jesus Christ's resurrection was a type or forerunner of the resurrection God promises to all who obey him (John 5:28-29; 11:25; Rom. 8:11; Phil. 3:10-11).

Man has no hope of future life *inherent* within himself!

### The "Spirit in Man"

Now understand an additional basic truth. Few have ever grasped it.

Since man's material "soul"—his body and its physical life processes—is corruptible and perishes after death, *how* is it possible for God to ultimately resurrect an individual? If everything is physical and turns to dust, what is there that remains of a person to be "brought back"? *How* are his personality, his memory and his character *preserved* by God until a day of resurrection?

The answer is simply that *not everything* about a man is physical! The Bible calls this nonphysical component the "spirit [Hebrew *ruach*, Greek *pneuma*] in man" (Job 32:8; Zech. 12:1; I Cor. 2:11). It is not *the* man. It is *in* man.

This spirit in man, however, has no consciousness apart from the physical human brain. It is not to be confused in any way with the fictional concept of a conscious "immortal soul." "The dead know not any thing," the Bible declares (Eccl. 9:5, 10). In the day of a man's death, "his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4). The Bible clearly pictures death as a *sleep*—a state of *unconsciousness* (Dan. 12:2).

At death, this spirit in man "shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). It is then "filed away," so to speak, like a tape recording, for God's future use at a resurrection.

On it is indelibly recorded one's character and the many experiences accumulated during one's lifetime.

It is also this "spirit in man" that sets man apart from



the animals. It is what makes man *unique*. It imparts to the living human brain the power of intellect to comprehend materialistic knowledge. It is the source of human intelligence. It is *not* present in animal brain. (For a further examination of the spirit in man concept, write for the booklet *What Science Can't Discover About the Human Mind*. It is free upon request.)

### Whole World Deceived

There is no scriptural basis whatever for belief in an "immortal soul" surviving consciously after death.

Throughout the centuries of professing Christianity, innumerable sermons have been preached and countless pamphlets written purporting to prove the soul's immortality. Upon careful and open-minded examination, they are all found to be riddled with surprising error.

The doctrine of the immortal soul is built on a foundation of biblical mistranslations, false premises and sloppy scholarship. Few have had the spiritual courage to take a fresh, unprejudiced look at the question and accept the *true*

Bible teaching.

For when the false doctrine of the immortal soul is toppled, along with it falls the equally pagan and false concept of Heaven and Hell—one of the cornerstones of traditional Christianity!

Satan the devil has succeeded—for the time being—in de-

**For those who  
choose it and fulfill  
the conditions,  
there is  
life after death by  
a resurrection.**

ceiving the whole world (Rev. 12:9). It was he who first introduced the idea that man does not really die, but is inherently immortal. "Ye shall not surely die," Satan lied to Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:4).

God's future for mankind is far more transcendent than the common picture of immortal souls floating on



clouds and strumming harps for eternity. For those who choose it and fulfill the conditions, there is life after death by a resurrection. But that life will come through a *new birth* as an immortal spirit being into the very family of God—by means of a future *resurrection* from the dead!

Write for our booklet *Lazarus and the Rich Man* if you want to know more about the resurrection and life after death. And why not, when writing, also request *What is the Reward of the Saved?* and *Is There Life After Death?* All these booklets, like our other literature, are of course free of charge.

It is time to cast off the fables and traditions of men and understand the great meaning and purpose of human life as revealed in the Bible!

Will *you* have the courage to look into it for yourself?



## WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THAT HOLE IN YOUR HEAD?

**B**ELIEVE IT OR NOT, you have, as one might say in the speech of the inner cities of America, a hole in your head.

“Who me?”

Yes, you! You and all the rest of mankind have something missing. All your life you have been trying to fill that figurative hole—that feeling of emptiness—and yet, you are still unfulfilled. This is why you are always driving and never arriving—getting but never having—seeking and never finding. That is why you “can’t get no satisfaction.”

Yet you can discover what you have been searching for all your life. You can fill that feeling of emptiness with the “right stuff” that satisfies!

### **Man’s Missing Dimension**

So you have that void, that figurative hole in your head, but where did it come from and who put it there? To find the answers, let us go all the way back to the creation of man.

Man is unique in all of creation. We are the only creatures that look like God, yet we are the only creatures that God purposely made incomplete. Even though we look like God, we are a long way from being complete like God.

Man is incomplete in that he is mortal and will die (Gen. 3:19). On the other hand, God is immortal spirit (John 4:24).



But the most important difference is that man's mind is incomplete—there is something missing. What are humans missing? You were born missing the mind of God.

When Almighty God made your physical brain, he also put a spirit entity there to give you intellect and reasoning ability. This spirit also gives you the ability to receive another spirit—God's Spirit that is needed to make your mind complete.

The apostle Paul explains: "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (I Cor. 2:11, *New King James Version* throughout, except where noted). This spirit is what we call the human mind. But notice what the rest of the verse says: "Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God." Your spirit plus God's Spirit equals a whole mind fulfilled and satisfied. But your spirit minus God's Spirit equals "a hole in your head," and a hole in your head equals frustration and unhappiness.

But beware, there is a counterfeit spirit that promises fulfillment, but it cannot deliver. That spirit is from Satan the devil, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). This spirit promises pleasure and power but delivers only self-centeredness and misery and death.

Our all-wise Creator God deliberately created your mind incomplete so that you would be motivated to fill it—with his Spirit. By the laws of physics, whenever there is a vacuum there is a drive created to fill it. The same is true in man's mind. Man is driven to be fulfilled, but by himself he hasn't discovered how to do it.

There are two ways to fill that emptiness, but only one really works. From the beginning God showed and told man the one way that works.

### **Show and Tell**

The Creator showed the first man the nature of his incompleteness and the way to wholeness. Did you ever think about the significance of God creating man out of the dust of the ground, thus leaving, one might say, a hole in the ground? Unless man fills the vacuum in his head with God's Spirit he



will return forever to the hole in the ground from whence he was taken.

What about the inescapable lesson of man's first sensation of hunger? God (see Genesis 2:15-18) may have said: "That's your stomach you feel, Adam. You have to eat the right food, and then you will feel satisfied. The emptiness you feel in your stomach is like the emptiness you have in your mind. You not only need food for your physical stomach, you need my Spirit in your mind to be fulfilled and satisfied. If you do not partake of my Spirit, you will feel empty and frustrated, hating your very life.

**We are the only  
creatures that look like  
God, yet we are the  
only creatures that God  
purposely made  
incomplete.**

"You see those two trees over there; the one on the right is the Tree of Life. That is the tree to eat; it will fill that spiritual emptiness in your head. That tree represents my way of life—the way of give, the way of love produced by my Spirit.

"That other tree is called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Do not eat of that tree. It looks good, but its fruit is bad and you will die from it. Spiritually it represents the way of get—the way of selfishness—the way that seems like the right way to fill the spiritual void in your head. Naturally, you are filled when you get and take, but I am telling you that getting and taking only fills you with unhappiness, misery, and eventually death.

"I am leaving it up to you, Adam—you must develop your own character by choosing between the two ways—but choose the way of give, and live!"

Adam soon became aware of yet another emptiness within him. Perhaps he said to God, "I feel like I am missing something in my life. I do not feel satisfied inside. I need something but I don't know what it is." Then God may have said: "You have an emotional hole; you are only half, not



whole. You need a wife. She will complete you and make you whole." Then God put Adam to sleep, and by taking one of Adam's ribs made a woman (Gen. 2:21-22). Then God closed the rib cage in the man and the woman filled his life at his side.

For the moment, Adam was very happy with his new wife and said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). Now he felt whole—he thought he had found the missing dimension in his life—that Eve was the end to his search for fulfillment. But God knew better.

Unfortunately man chose the way of get. Satan deceived Eve, Adam's wife, into believing that the way to happiness—the way to fill the hole—was by getting instead of giving. And humans have followed that way of get ever since. Millennia after millennia, man has exhausted himself in frustration, trying to fill his life with the way of get.

### **But Why?**

Man failed to fill his head with the mind of God because he was not repentant when God called attention to his error in choosing the way of getting instead of giving. Repentance means change, and Adam and Eve did not see the need to change.

They did not fully understand what their spiritual emptiness meant. They did not accept that being spiritually only half there was inadequate—that half is not whole.

Repentance is more than realizing that you have done wrong; it is first realizing that you are incomplete! You must come to understand that there is none good but God. You must come to see that you do wrong because your mind is incomplete. And until you come to admit that you are wrong, you will not have a whole mind. God gives his mind to those who realize they are not whole, and want to change their lives.

Adam and Eve could have repented of what they were and surrendered their lives in complete submission to their Creator. In such an attitude of repentance and submission toward God, they would have been able to resist Satan's temptation of satisfying self, of trying to fill the hole in their heads by getting and taking.



Through the Tree of Life they would have acquired the missing dimension for their minds—the mind of God through the Holy Spirit. Their minds would have been filled with the mind of God.

And what is God? What is the very essence of his mind and being? “God is love” (I John 4:8). And love is the way of give—the way of outgoing concern: total selflessness.

### **Get Won't Get It!**

What does the way of get produce? Can you ever *get* enough to fill the hole in your head? The truth is, the way of get won't get it filled. What happened to man after Adam and Eve chose the way of get?

Their son Cain, whose name ironically means to take or get, killed his brother Abel. Why? Cain did not give God his best. He lived the way of get and kept the best for himself. On the other hand, righteous Abel lived the way of give and gave God the best that he had. Because of Abel's attitude of give, God granted him favor. This infuriated Cain—he was jealous. He wanted to get favor for himself. With all the frustration and rage that the way of get produces, Cain killed his brother (Gen. 4:1-8).

And man has been reaping ever since the bitter fruits that the way of get produces. The apostle James wrote this commentary on the way of get: “Where do wars and fights come from among you? . . . You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you . . . ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures” (James 4:1-3). The way of get does not work!

Perhaps you are not convinced. Maybe you still have the idea that if you had everything you ever wanted, then you would be happy.

Wise King Solomon tried it. He got for himself everything a man could want, but did it satisfy? Let's hear what Solomon had to say.

“Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure. . . . I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine . . . I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vine-



yards. . . . I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces . . ." (Eccl. 2:10, 3-4, 8).

What was the end result, Solomon?

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done . . . and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind . . . Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (Eccl. 2:11, 17).

Is there anything that really fills the emptiness, the void Solomon speaks of? Of course there is! Let's listen to King Solomon again.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). God gives his Spirit, his mind, to those who obey him, who keep his commandments (Acts 5:32).

But what about you, aren't you tired of riding on this crazy merry-go-round of get that always brings you back to where you started—to that same old condition of frustration and unhappiness? Well, you can get off the merry-go-round.

You do not have to ride it. Almighty God is showing you a better way—the only way to what you really want and need in life.

Repent of what you are. It is obvious that something is not quite right in your life—something is missing. And now you know what's wrong. It is you! The hardest

thing for a person to do is admit that he is wrong.

No matter who you are or what you do, without God's Spirit in your mind you are nothing. The psalmist David wrote: "Certainly every man at his best is but vapor" (Ps. 39:5).

In terms of human standards, Job was a man of great

**No matter  
who you are or what  
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nothing.**



accomplishment and moral character, but when God finished showing him the hole in his head Job said, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).

Go down on your knees before your Creator and ask him to forgive you for breaking his laws and for having a mind that is selfish and miserable.

### Start Giving

Once you repent of trying to fill that figurative hole in your head through the get way, you are freed from your self to go on and be fulfilled by giving love to others. Society has many false concepts about love; you need to understand what true godly love is.

Love is God inspired. Of course. God is the source of love. And love is giving. The apostle Paul said, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit] which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5, *Authorized Version*). He inspires the desire to help others through the power of his Spirit in your mind.

Then you must choose to make a commitment to give. After you decide to commit yourself to give, start giving to the other person without expecting anything in return—not even a thank-you. Many people give and still end up unhappy with the hole unfulfilled. Why? Because they give with the expectation of getting something in return. Others give only when they feel the other person is deserving. Neither of these attitudes expresses true love. Love is unconditional; it requires no deposit, no return—just pure giving.

You are incapable of giving this kind of love; you need God's continual help to give in this totally unselfish way. The apostle Paul realized that "it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). So let God love through you. And since it is his love, why should you expect to get anything in return anyway?

Love is its own reward. When you allow God to give through you, happiness and joy automatically fill you. On the other hand, when you try and get for yourself to fill that gnawing hole in your head, unhappiness and misery fill your life. This is why Jesus Christ said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).



And whom do you love? Whom do you give to? “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37). You love God by dedicating your whole life toward serving him, and obeying him, doing his will.

When David felt frustrated and unfulfilled, when that emptiness in him cried out for fulfillment, he knew what he needed: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” (Ps. 42:1-2). David knew he needed God to fill the hole in his head. What about you?

Not only do you need to love God, but “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39). In seeking to satisfy the needs of others, your most important need is satisfied. In filling the hole in your brother’s (or sister’s) life, the hole in your head will be filled.

Love is the answer. Giving is the way to all you want and need. That old hole in your head need not go empty any longer. Use that drive you feel inside you to lead you to love God and help your fellowman.



## HOW WE SHALL BE CHANGED

**W**HY DOES man exist? You can be assured that there is a definite reason for existence!

Life is not the consequence of the process of evolution. The Creator God made man in his own image for a purpose that transcends this physical life. Man, however, apart from God, cannot know or comprehend this great purpose. Nor can he understand why humans live or why they die.

Much has been written about death. There are hundreds of books and articles available on the medical and psychological aspects of death, the cultural and social impact of death and the philosophical implications of death. Philosophers, teachers, preachers, historians, anthropologists—learned men of every discipline—have searched for the answer to the ultimate question, “What is death?” But they haven’t known where to look.

There is only one source that reveals the true answer — God’s instruction Book, the Bible.

### **Physical Life Temporary**

For there to be a creation there must be a Creator. That’s one of the major proofs that God exists. And through God’s revelations to us about this creation we can begin to unlock the secrets to the great mysteries of death, hidden to us apart



from this revealed truth. But first we must learn more about life.

Exactly what is life? Physical life is purely a biological, chemical existence. In this regard man's life is no different than that of an animal (Eccl. 3:19); although the spirit in man makes him a special creature (Job 32:8, Zech. 12:1, I Cor. 2:9-14).

To answer the question "What is life?" directly, turn to the book of James.

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

Life is physical. Life is temporal. Over and over in his Word God stresses the transient nature of life.

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" (I Pet. 1:24).

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone" (Ps. 103:13-16).

Genesis 2:7 describes the very first life being "born." Notice the exact wording of the verse: "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."

Three of the most fundamental truths concerning the life of man are packed into that one verse.

The first is: God formed man of the dust of the ground. Adam was composed of earth. Every cell, every tissue, every muscle and every limb was made from the dust of the ground. Man was, and is, a purely physical creation, composed of physical matter. At that moment of creation, man was no different than the rest of creation — until a second, more profound event occurred:

"And the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." As God's breath passed through Adam's nostrils and filled his lungs with lifegiving oxygen, life began, which brings us to the third point:



“And man became a living soul.” The last six words of that verse are very significant. It’s important to realize that a soul was not placed within the man, separate from man. God said that man *became* a living soul. The man was a soul — physical, material, animal life — subject to death.

The original Hebrew word for soul is *nephesh*. Look it up in a lexicon. It is defined as breath, anything that breathes, an animal. *Nephesh* can even refer to a dead body. There’s nothing supernatural about the soul. The soul merely means, in this case, man. Man is a soul. And the soul is not immortal. We’re told that in Ezekiel 18:4, 20, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

**The Creator God  
made man  
in his own image  
for a purpose  
that transcends this  
physical life.**

### **Immortal Soul a Pagan Doctrine**

Shocking, isn’t it? Hundreds of millions of people have been taught by misguided men that man has an immortal soul. But here God clearly says that the soul is composed of the dust of the ground. It is material, not spiritual. The soul (man) can die.

Ancient philosophers taught that man is essentially an immortal spiritual “soul” housed in a temporary body of flesh. At death the soul leaves the body and journeys to a nebulous realm, possibly paradise or a place of punishment.

This doctrine has been perpetuated by Greek and Roman scholars and writers. The pagan teaching was slowly, over the centuries, injected into the churches by many of the early “church fathers.”

Not only did this doctrine become religious dogma in the medieval world, those who rejected it were branded as heretics and often suffered death at the hands of the professors.

The apostle Paul gave instruction about believing this



kind of nonsense: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Nowhere does the Bible say the soul is immortal. Actually, it plainly teaches just the opposite. Read Peter's statements in Acts 2.

Here Peter clearly states that King David of Israel, one of the greatest men of God who ever lived — a man after God's own heart — is dead and buried. David is not in heaven. He's in his grave, with us unto this day:

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day" (verse 29).

"For David is not ascended into the heavens" (verse 34).

At death man ceases to exist. His body slowly returns to the elements from whence it came. "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). Death is the end of consciousness. As Ecclesiastes 9:5 points out, "The dead know not any thing."

### **Resurrection Our Hope**

So God says death is death. There is no immortal soul. This being the case, is there any hope for man? Definitely! The resurrection from the dead is the whole hope of a Christian.

The Bible speaks in both Old and New Testaments of a resurrection of the dead — a re-creation of life. Paul was inspired by God's Holy Spirit to write one whole chapter of the Bible on the subject of the resurrection. You should study the 15th chapter of I Corinthians. If there were no resurrection, death would be the final victor (verse 54).

William Tyndale, the printer of the first New Testament in English, wrote: "In putting departed souls in heaven, hell or purgatory you destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. . . . The true faith putteth the resurrection; the heathen philosophers, denying that, did put that souls did ever live. . . . If the soul be in heaven, tell me what cause is there for the resurrection?"

When a person dies, he is dead. There is no consciousness in the grave (Ps. 146:4). There is no remembrance in the



grave (Ps. 6:5). If at death man's soul was released there would be no need for the resurrection.

The fact that the Bible teaches the resurrection from the dead is further proof that man has no immortal soul!

Job once asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" He was inspired to answer his own question.

"O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, 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" (Job 14:13-14).

The Old Testament prophets knew about the resurrection of the dead. Job knew about the resurrection, and so did Daniel: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

In the new Testament the resurrection is the central theme and hope of the early Church. Jesus said: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead . . . even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:21-29).

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:50-52: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The resurrection from the dead was the paramount theme in the sermons of Peter and Paul (Acts 2:23-24, 32, 3:15, 26, 4:1-2, I Cor. 15:36-44, 52). A resurrection from the dead is our only hope of life after death. This is the truth of God. Because Christ conquered death, God's great purpose for man will be achieved.