

Correspondence Course Lesson 17

Is There an Immortal Soul?

One of the most widely held beliefs in the world today in most religious circles is the immortality of the soul. Most Christian churches teach that the soul is separate from the body and is immortal. They teach that after death if you have been evil you will spend eternity in a never-ending hell fire and if you were a good person, then you will live forever in heaven.

The early Congregation clearly did not teach the concept of "*going to heaven or hell for eternity.*" In the Father's prayer that Yahshua taught His disciples, He taught them to pray "*Your kingdom come your will be done, as it is in heaven also on the earth*". Yahweh has promised the earth as man's inheritance not heaven. The bible speaks about a 1,000 year reign of Messiah on this earth, NOT heaven, and then a new earth to follow.

Such teachings of heaven and hell and the immortal soul did not become popular until long after the death of the apostles! History shows that the teachings of Catholic Church fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen and others, gradually turned most Christians from the belief in a literal 1,000-year reign of Messiah on earth to believing in an immortal soul that spent its eternity in heaven or hell.

How did this happen? Hellenistic philosophy, which had borrowed heavily from ancient Egyptian mythology, began to be taught instead of the teachings of the Bible as the source of doctrine! Prevailing concepts such as the immortality of the soul, an ever-burning hell, purgatory, and heaven, all came directly out of ancient mythology! The popular church, to become more acceptable to potential pagan converts, adopted and taught these pagan philosophies rather than the plain teachings of the Bible!

Plato, a Greek philosopher, born in Athens, 42 ~ B.C., was a student of the renowned Socrates. Plato's famous literary work *Phaedo* also taught the immortality of the soul - the foundation for other writings on the doctrine of an eternal hell where wicked souls are supposedly punished forever. So the world's concept of hell is admittedly a product of human thinking and speculation! Men have puzzled over the eventual fate of the wicked. (*You can read about this in depth in Lesson 6 and 7 of the bible course*)

So we can clearly see from the annals of history that the concept of an immortal soul clearly came from paganism and NOT from the writings of scripture. What does scripture say about the soul of man?

Genesis 2:7 *And YAHWEH Elohim formed the man from the dust of the ground, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul.*

COMMENT: Read verse 7 very carefully; it never says that man has a soul, but that "***man became a living soul***". The man was made from dust of the ground and when Yahweh, the Creator blew the breath of life into his nostrils, "***man became a soul.***"

The word for soul in Hebrew is "*nephesh*". So we clearly see that man does not have a nephesh or soul but man is "*a living soul*". This is extremely important to understand this concept from creation because many falsely believe from paganism that the soul or nephesh is separate from the body, and as a ghost or spirit flying around, that when a person dies, the soul will be roaming around outside the body for eternity in heaven or hell. This is a lie of Satan and could not be further from the truth.

What else does scripture tell us about the soul of man?

Gen 2:16 *And YAHWEH Elohim commanded the man, saying, Eating you may eat of every tree in the garden;*
Gen 2:17 *but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you may not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, surely you shall die.*

COMMENT: Clearly, this verse tells us that Yahweh told Adam in the day he eats of the forbidden fruit he would die. It did not say that he would be burning in some sort of hell fire forever, but that he would die. Death is the absence of life; it is not life under different, dire circumstances. Clearly, the command to Adam was that since he was a living soul that if he disobeyed Yahweh that his soul or nephesh would die, and cease to exist.

Who is really the author of the immortal soul doctrine?

Gen 3:1 *And the serpent was cunning above every beast of the field which YAHWEH Elohim had made. And he said to the woman, is it so that Elohim has said, You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?*

Gen 3:2 *And the woman said to the serpent, of the fruit of the trees of the garden, We may eat,*

Gen 3:3 *but of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, Elohim has said, You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.*

Gen 3:4 *And the serpent said to the woman, surely, you shall not die,*

Gen 3:5 *for Elohim knows that in the day you eat of it, even your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as Elohim, knowing good and evil.*

COMMENT: Yahweh very clearly and directly told Adam that if he ate of the forbidden fruit that he would die. Satan very cleverly told Eve that they would not die and manipulated her to believe that instead of dying for their disobedience that they would inherit an immortal soul.

That lie that Satan told in the Garden of Eden has been handed down through paganism for generation after generation. Almost every pagan religion in the world including Christianity believes in the immortality of the soul. Satan for the last 6,000 years has hoodwinked mankind into believing that there is no penalty for disobedience and that it actually brings the reward of an immortal soul. Some factions in Christianity go so far to believe that the only way to lose your eternal life is to be obedient to Yahweh's Torah. This is how far Satan's perversion from the Garden of Eden has fed into mankind's wicked, selfish, human nature.

Satan deceived Adam and Eve that sin will not bring death, but immortality as Elohim has. What did YAHWEH say that the penalty of sin is?

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of YAHWEH is everlasting life in Yahshua, Messiah our Master.*

Does scripture say that a soul or nephesh can also die?

Eze 18:4 *Behold, they are all My souls. As the soul of the father, also the soul of the son, they are Mine. **The soul that sins, it shall die.***

Exo 31:14 *And you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you; **the profaners of it shall sure be executed; for everyone doing work in it, that SOUL shall be cut off** from the midst of his people.*

Mat 10:28 *And you should not fear the ones killing the body, but not being able to kill the soul. But rather **fear Him being able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.***

COMMENT: Man was created mortal and when Yahweh breathed the oxygen (breath of life) into Adam he became a living soul. It was never stated that Adam was immortal and Yahweh clearly stated in **Genesis 2:17** that the soul of man could die. The above scriptures also clearly confirm from scripture that souls are not immortal, and that a soul is **NOT** separate from the body and can indeed die.

Are animals also called living nephesh or souls?

Gen 1:20 *And Elohim said, Let the waters swarm with swarms having a living soul; and let the birds fly around, over the earth, on the face of the expanse of the heavens.*

Gen 1:21 And Elohim created the great crocodiles, **and all that creeps, having a living soul**, which swarmed the waters, according to its kind; and every bird with wing according to its kind. And Elohim saw that it was good.

Gen 1:24 And Elohim said, **Let the earth bring forth the soul of life according to its kind cattle, and creepers, and its beasts of the earth**, according to its kind. And it was so.

Gen 2:19 And YAHWEH Elohim formed every animal of the field, and every bird of the heavens out of the ground. And He brought them to the man, to see what he would call it. And all which the man might call it, each living soul that was its name.

Gen 9:10 and with every living creature (nephesh) which is with you, among fowl, among cattle, and among every animal of the earth with you, from all that go out from the ark, to every animal of the earth.

Gen 9:12 And Elohim said, this is the sign of the covenant which I am about to make between Me and you, and every living soul which is with you, for everlasting generations.

Gen 9:15 And I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you, and every living soul in all flesh. And the waters shall not again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Gen 9:16 And the bow shall be in the clouds, and I shall see it, to remember the everlasting covenant between Elohim and every living soul, in all flesh on the earth.

Ecc 3:19 For that which happens to the sons of men, and that which happens to beasts, even one event is to them. As this one dies, so that one dies; yea, one breath is to all; so that there is to the man no advantage over the beast; for all is vanity.

Ecc 3:20 All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all return to the dust.

COMMENT: The word nephesh or soul in English is used to denote the life of either a human or an animal. It is simply a breathing creature. In scripture there is no delineation to the human soul compared to the animal soul. In both cases the word nephesh is used to simply imply that they are a living, breathing, entity.

Is there a difference between the animal life and the human life?

Ecc 3:21 Who knows the spirit of the sons of the man, whether it goes upward; and the spirit of the beast, whether it goes downward to the earth?

COMMENT: There is a big difference between an animal life and a human life. Both are living souls, meaning they both breathe and are alive for a time and then die, when the breath of life is taken away from them. However, Yahweh has given man the spirit that He has. This spirit gives the man the ability to think and to reason and to exhibit qualities, such as love and compassion and reason. The animal spirit was created simply instinctive and does not have the same qualities of the spirit of man.

When the animal dies it is simply buried and that is the end of it, but the human life, since it has the spirit of Yahweh in it, when it will die, since Yahweh's spirit is eternal, and there is only one spirit, that spirit simply goes back to the Father who gave the breath of life when we were born.

Here are some other scriptures where the word nephesh or soul is used to show that it is not immortal.

Lev 21:11 nor shall he come near any **dead person (nephesh)**; he shall not defile himself for his father or for his mother;

Num 6:6 All the days of his separation to YAHWEH he shall not go near a **dead person (nephesh)**.

Num 19:11 He that touches the **dead body (nephesh)** of any man shall be unclean seven days.

Num 19:13 *Anyone who touches the **dead body (nephesh)**, the body of a man who dies, and does not cleanse himself, he shall have defiled the tabernacle of YAHWEH; and that person shall be cut off from Israel, for the water of impurity shall not be sprinkled upon him. He shall be unclean; his uncleanness shall be still on him.*

COMMENT: In each and every case of the above scriptures we see that a soul or nephesh can die. Sometimes in scripture nephesh is translated as soul, sometimes it is translated as body and sometimes it is translated as life. What we have seen from all the scriptures we have studied is that a nephesh or soul is made by the breath of life of Yahweh and the giving of oxygenation to the blood to make something alive.

Gen 2:7 *And YAHWEH Elohim formed the man from the dust of the ground, **and blew into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul.***

Lev 17:11 *For the **life (nephesh)** of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar, to atone for your **souls (nephesh)**; for it is the blood which makes atonement for the **soul (nephesh)**.*

Lev 17:12 *For this reason I have said to the sons of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood; and the alien who is staying in your midst shall not eat blood.*

Lev 17:13 *And any man of the sons of Israel, or of the aliens who stay in your midst, who hunts game, beast or fowl, which is eaten, shall even pour out its blood and shall cover it with dust.*

Lev 17:14 *For it is the **life (nephesh)** of all flesh; its blood is for its life. And I say to the sons of Israel, You shall not eat blood of any flesh, for the **life (nephesh)** of all flesh is in the blood; anyone eating it is cut off.*

COMMENT: It is interesting in the above scripture that first nephesh is translated as life and later in the verse as soul. This is because as **Genesis 2:7** states that life came from Yahweh breathing oxygen into the nostrils of man, which in turn gets the blood circulating and keeps a person alive. When a person stops breathing the blood stops circulating, then death occurs. That is why life (*soul/nephesh*) is in the circulation of the blood and it is forbidden to eat blood. Nephesh is always referring to the temporarily, physical life, which is supplied by the oxidation of oxygen in the blood. Nephesh is translated life because a nephesh or soul is a living, breathing, temporary, creature/human and never in scripture is it ever translated as an immortal being.

This clearly proves that a nephesh or soul is the living creature itself and not some kind of immortal spirit outside the body as flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Yahweh (**1st Corinthians 15:50**). Also, look at the following scripture.

Isa 53:10 *But YAHWEH pleased to crush Him, to make Him sick, so **that If He should put His soul (nephesh) as a guilt offering**, He shall see His seed; He shall prolong His days; and the will of YAHWEH shall prosper in His hand.*

Isa 53:12 *Because of this I will divide to Him with the great, and with the strong He shall divide the spoil; because **He poured out His soul to death**; and He was counted with those transgressing; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors.*

In this Messianic scripture, the Messiah is pouring out His soul/nephesh as a guilt offering. This is the same word used in the book of Leviticus for the animal sacrifices dying by pouring out their blood. So again, we see that a soul can die and that a soul or nephesh dies when he cannot breathe anymore and loses his blood.

We have also clearly seen that no scripture even remotely assumes that a soul is immortal and the clear biblical proof is that the soul can die. Mankind has been given a few short years on the earth as a test to prove their faithfulness to Yahweh (**Genesis 6:3**), and then his breath of life is taken away and oxygen no longer will keep his blood flowing and he (*his soul*) will die.

At this point he has no consciousness and is in a state that is biblically compared to sleeping and his body that was made of the dirt of the ground is put back and buried in the earth that he came from.

Gen 3:19 *By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread **until your return to the ground. For you have***

been taken out of it; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Ecc 9:5 For the living know that they shall die; **but the dead do not know anything**; nor do they have any more a reward, for their memory is forgotten.

1st Cor 15:20 But now Messiah has been raised from the dead; **He became the first-fruit of those having fallen asleep.**

1st Th 4:13 But I want you to know, my brethren, **concerning those who sleep**, that you should not grieve, as the rest do who have not hope.

1st Th 4:14 For if we believe that Yahshua died and rose again, **even so Elohim through Yahshua, will also bring with Him all those who have fallen asleep.**

1st Th 4:15 For we say this to you in the Word of Elohim, **that we the living who remain to the coming of our Master will not at all go before those who have fallen asleep.**

1st Th 4:16 Because the Master Himself shall come down from Heaven with a commanding shout of an archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of YAHWEH. **And the dead in Messiah will rise again first.**

1st Th 4:17 Then we who remain alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet with our Master in the air. And so we will always be with our Master.

Acts 7:59 And they were stoning Stephen while he prayed, and he said Our Master Yahshua receive my spirit.

Acts 7:60 And after he kneeled down, he cried in a loud voice and said, Our Master, do not cause this sin to stand against them! **And having said this, he fell asleep.**

COMMENT: The bible clearly states that when a person/soul dies he is buried in the ground and is in a state compared to sleeping. The false pagan doctrine of the soul being immortal has also created the false doctrines of the dead being in heaven and also the state of the incorrigible wicked to burn forever in an everlasting hell fire.

It is evident that when the false doctrine of the immortal soul is clearly laid out from scripture and it is clearly shown that a soul can indeed die that the other false doctrines of eternity of souls in heaven or hell also fall by the wayside. (Please refer to lesson 6 and 7 for full studies on those two topics.)

Are there scriptures in the Old Testament that also prove the dead are asleep in the grave and not in heaven?

Job 14:10 But man dies and is cut off, and man expires; and where is he?

Job 14:11 As the waters go away from the sea, and a river wastes away and dries up,

Job 14:12 even so man lies down and does not rise until the heavens are no more, they shall not awake, nor be roused out of their sleep.

Job 14:13 Who will grant that You would hide me in Sheol; You would conceal me until Your anger turns back; that You would set a limit for me and remember me?

Job 14:14 If a man dies, shall he revive? **All the days of my warfare I will wait, until my change comes.**

Psa 30:3 O YAHWEH, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, from going down into the Pit.

Psa 146:3-4 Put not your trust in nobles, in a son of man, for there is no salvation in him. ⁴ His breath will go out, **he returns to the earth**; his thoughts perish in that day.

John 3:13 And no one has gone up into Heaven, except He having come down out of Heaven, **The Son of Man is He who is in Heaven.**

COMMENT: There is absolutely no scripture in the entire bible that states that when a person/soul dies he goes to heaven or hell. The bible clearly states as the prophet Job even knew that the dead are asleep, buried in the earth, awaiting a resurrection and a day of judgment for all those who ever lived. If the dead are already in heaven or hell what would be the purpose of the resurrection or the judgment day of Yahweh?

Does scripture tell us that there will be a judgment to every human being who ever lived?

Rev 20:11 *And I saw a Great White Throne, and the One sitting on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled; and a place was not found for them.*

Rev 20:12 *And I saw the dead, the small and the great, standing before YAHWEH. And books were opened. And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. **And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works.***

Rev 20:13 *And the sea gave up the dead in it. And death and the grave gave up the dead in them. And they were each judged according to their works.*

Rev 20:14 *And death and the grave were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death.*

Rev 20:15 *And if anyone was not found having been written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.*

2ND Cor 5:10 ***For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what he did, whether good or bad.***

Heb 9:27 *And as it is reserved to men once to die, and after this, Judgment*

COMMENT: Human beings are given on average 60, 70 or maybe even 80 years on this earth to prove to Yahweh that they will be faithful, loyal servants to Him for eternity. Yahweh created man a living soul by His breath of life, and when a person/soul dies he goes back to the ground that he came from and awaits the resurrection to be awarded eternal life in the kingdom of Yahweh or to be punished for his sins and be destroyed and burned in the Lake of Fire.

Every human being who ever lived will be judged, it is just a matter of whether someone is a covenant believer and a Firstfruit of Yahweh and will be in the first resurrection when Yahshua returns, or whether he will be in the second resurrection after the Millennium and be in the White Throne Judgment. Those who are blessed to be Firstfruits in the first or better resurrection will be honored to reign with Yahshua during the 1,000-year Millennial rule.

Rev 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them. And judgment was given to them, and the souls of the ones having been beheaded because of the witness of Yahshua, and because of the Word of YAHWEH, and who had not worshiped the beast nor its image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. **And they lived and reigned with Messiah a thousand years.***

Rev 20:5 ***This is the first resurrection.***

Rev 20:6 ***Blessed and holy is the one having part in the first resurrection. The second death has no authority over these, but they will be priests of YAHWEH and of His Messiah, and will reign with Him a thousand years***

It is called the better resurrection because all of these covenant believers will not have to go through the white throne judgment, but will be granted immortality at Messiah's return.

John 5:24 *Truly, truly, I say to you, The one who hears My Word, and believes the One who has sent Me, has everlasting life, and does not come into judgment, but has removed himself out of death into life.*

John 5:25 *Truly, truly, I say to you that an hour is coming, and now is, **when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of YAHWEH, and the ones hearing will live.***

John 5:26 *For even as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave also to the Son to have life in Himself.*

John 5:27 *And He also gave authority to Him to execute judgment, for He is the Son of Man.*

John 5:28 *Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming in which all those in the tombs will hear His voice.*

John 5:29 *And they will come out, **the ones having done good into a resurrection of life; and the ones having practiced evil into a resurrection of judgment.***

Rom 2:6 *He "will give to each according to his deeds:"*

Rom 2:7 *everlasting life truly to those who with patience in good work seeking glory and honor and immortality;*

John 3:16 For YAHWEH so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 7:38 Anyone who believes in me as the scriptures have said, rivers of living water will flow from his belly.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of YAHWEH is everlasting life in Yahshua, Messiah our Master.

COMMENT: Eternal life and immortality is a gift from Yahweh; it is not an inalienable right. The immortal soul doctrine gives human beings an automatic immortality and tries to elevate man to be on the same plateau as Elohim. The reality though is that the wages of sin are death, but the gift of Yahweh is eternal life. Eternal life is not a right of humans, but a wonderful gift of Yahweh. Every human being who has ever lived has committed crimes according to the Torah, which are punishable by death (***Romans 3:10-23***). Yahweh owes mankind nothing, but in His love for His creation and through His mercy and grace He sent His son to die and pay the penalty of the sins that were committed to those who repent and accept that sacrifice (***Acts 2:37-41***). (See lesson one and two on joining the New Covenant and True Repentance)

Rom 3:10 According as it has been written, "There is none righteous, not even one!"

Rom 3:11 "There is not one understanding; there is not one seeking YAHWEH."

Rom 3:12 All turned away, they became worthless together, not one is doing goodness, not so much as one!"

Rom 3:13 "Their throat is a tomb being opened;" "they used deceit with their tongues; the poison of asps is under their lips;

Rom 3:14 whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Rom 3:15 Their feet are swift to shed blood;

Rom 3:16 ruin and misery are in their way;

Rom 3:17 and they did not know a way of peace;

Rom 3:18 there is no fear of YAHWEH before their eyes.

Rom 3:19 But we know that whatever the Torah says, it speaks to those within the Torah, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to YAHWEH.

Rom 3:20 Because by works of the Torah not one of all flesh will be justified before Him, for through the Torah is the full knowledge of sin. (***Psalms 143:2***)

Rom 3:21 But now a righteousness of YAHWEH has been revealed apart from the Torah, being witnessed by the Torah and the Prophets,

Rom 3:22 even the righteousness of YAHWEH through the faith of Yahshua Messiah toward everyone and upon all those believing; for there is no difference,

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of YAHWEH,

Conclusion

No human being is immortal and no human being has life existing from himself; each and every human being who ever lived, except for Yahshua Messiah has committed sins that bring the death penalty according to the eternal law of Yahweh, the Father. There is only one way to get that death penalty removed according to scripture. You must repent of your sins and accept the shed blood of Yahshua, the Son of Yahweh, for forgiveness, and to have the penalty of your sins paid for and removed.

Ezekiel 18:4 is very clear, "the soul that sins it shall die". Also, in the beginning of the verse, Yahweh clearly states that all souls belong to Him. Man will live out his days as a temporary, living soul and then, when he stops breathing his soul will die. After that, either at the return of Messiah to this earth, or after the thousand year millennial rule all human beings who ever lived will stand before the judgment seat of Yahshua Messiah and either get rewarded with eternal life, or go to the lake of fire and burn and cease to exist.

Satan has hoodwinked most of the world into believing that they now possess an immortal soul that

cannot die. In doing so in essence they are making themselves equal with Elohim. Many pagan religions teach in re-incarnation where after death in this mortal body that your soul will be transformed into another entity. Christianity teaches that you are immortal now and after death you will simply spend your eternal life in heaven or hell. They totally neglect that the wages of sin are death, not life in another uncomfortable place.

The immortal soul doctrine totally degrades the great sacrifice of our Savior Yahshua Messiah. It gives human beings the false belief that they already, now in the flesh, possess immortality, when scripture clearly states that here, presently, there is only one who has immortality, Yahshua Messiah (*1st Timothy 6:15-16*).

It is the same lie that Satan told Eve in the Garden of Eden that if she sinned and disobeyed Yahweh she would not die according to the word that Yahweh told her, but that she would be immortal like Yahweh is (*Genesis 3:4-5*).

By understanding that when you breathe your last breathe and die that you have no consciousness in the dirt that you will be buried in, but are simply sleeping in the earth waiting for the resurrection and judgment of Messiah, it helps us to be humble and to number our days as Moses stated in (*Psalms 90:12*).

It also is a great inspiration to make the most of every day of this life now knowing how short our days are here before we will sleep in the grave. It is a great encouragement to put our whole heart into the work of Yahweh and bear fruit for His kingdom knowing our reward in the judgment will be based on the fruit we are now bearing (*John 15:1-8*).

Points to Remember

- 1) The immortal soul doctrine comes from paganism and is not found in scripture.
- 2) Man is a living soul and doesn't have a soul.
- 3) The soul that sins shall die.
- 4) When a person dies his/her soul dies and the spirit of life from Yahweh that gave them life goes back to Yahweh. There is only one spirit.
- 5) When a person dies there is no consciousness in the grave and death is compared to in scripture as sleeping.
- 6) Every human being who ever lived will be resurrected in either the first resurrection at the Messiah's return or the second resurrection after the millennium and will be either rewarded or punished by what we do in this life.
- 7) Eternal life and immortality are gifts from Yahweh, and are not automatic rights of humans.
- 8) The only way to ensure going from judgment to life is to repent of our sins and accept the shed blood of Yahshua the Son of Yahweh for paying the penalty of those sins and entering covenant with Yahweh. This enables a person to become a Firstfruit through baptism and the laying on of hands of an elder of Yahweh. (*See lesson one on joining the New Covenant*)

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