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As with all of life's difficult situations, true comfort comes from knowing the truth. And God's Word is our source for truth. Throughout the centuries and the world, the idea of the soul continuing to exist after the body perishes has endeavored to influence many cultures. But does God's Word say that the soul is immortal? Is the soul still alive after the body has died?

To learn the answer, let's start in the Book of Genesis, where God set the foundations of all life.

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.

The Bible tells us man was formed of the dust of the ground. Man's body is composed of the same elements that are in the dust of the earth. Then God "breathed into his nostrils" the breath of life. This is a figure of speech meaning that God put life into Adam, and man became a "living soul." The soul in man is that which gives the body its life, its vitality. The soul is "breath life." So the beginning of human life, according to God and His Word, is with the first natural breath after a baby is born. When a human being breathes on his own, then God says he is a "living soul."

The soul is the basis of an individual's mind, personality, emotions, attitudes, thoughts, and capacities of will. As long as a person breathes, he has a soul. Every person alive has a body and a soul. Now let's see what happens at the end of life.

Psalms 146:4:

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalm 146 states some very important truths. At the end of life, a person's "breath goeth forth." When a person takes his last breath, his individual soul, or breath life, ceases to exist; it "goeth forth." A person's body "returneth to his earth," back to the dust of the ground. And "in that very day," the day of taking one's last breath, "his thoughts perish."

Is the soul immortal? The Biblical record tells us it is not. The Book of Ecclesiastes gives us more details.

Ecclesiastes 9:5,6,10:

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

With simplicity and clarity, the Word of God sheds light on matters that have often been clouded. The dead "know not any thing"; "their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." They have no "portion" in things that are done now under the sun.

We have seen that neither the body nor the soul of an individual is immortal. At the end of life, both perish. But is that all there is to life?

John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God has made something available that will not perish or decay—everlasting life. It comes simply by accepting all that Jesus Christ accomplished for mankind.

Romans 10:9:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Whether silently or out loud, whether in public or in private, whether at eight years of age or eighty, when a person confesses Jesus as his lord and believes in his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, that person is saved, born again of God's spirit. The spirit within is that which is eternal life.

I John 5:13:

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

God wants you to know that you have eternal life now. Whosoever fulfills the conditions of Romans 10:9 has eternal life abiding within. So when a born-again son or daughter of God takes their last breath, their body and soul perish, but what happens to their spirit?

Ecclesiastes 12:7:

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

The spirit goes back to God. At the gathering together of the Church, when God's Son returns, the dead in Christ will receive a new, spiritual body and "...so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-58).

Because of God's immeasurable love, we can have answers to life's most basic questions. True comfort does come from knowing the truth. With God's Word as our source for truth, we know how to separate truth from error about the soul. If you would like to know more about this topic, our Biblical research, teaching, and fellowship ministry makes these two resources available to you: the foundational class on The Way of Abundance and Power and the Biblical research work sold in our Bookstore entitled *Are the Dead Alive Now?*

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