

Where do Souls go at Death?

The Adversary is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44). He started in the Garden of Eden and continues to this very day, deceiving many with the words, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). It is understandable for unbelievers to cling to his lie, but God's saints who study the Scriptures should not have fallen prey to Satan's trap, especially when God earlier said, "You shall die" (Genesis 2:17).

However, it is Satan's lie that is being proclaimed and believed instead of God's truth. Just as theology and pagan philosophy pulled the wool over our eyes about "hell," the same is true of "death." Around four hundred years before Christ there was a pagan philosopher who learned from Socrates. His name was Plato, and he was the author of a book titled *Phaedo*, where the theory of the immortality of the soul originated. To understand the meaning of "soul" and its relationship to death, a look at what occurred in the creation of man will be helpful. In Genesis 2:7 God formed man from the soil of the ground. This first step in the creation of man is very important to grasp. Picture in your mind God forming a human body with all of its organs from the soil. Did you notice something? Man is nothing more than a life-less body! He did not speak, nor could he hear, smell, taste, see or feel! He had no consciousness or sensation whatsoever. What did God do next? He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, which is what? The spirit! So we have a lifeless body plus the spirit. What is the result with the union of the body and the spirit? Man became a living soul!

Now the man had all of his senses and was aware. He heard God, he ate fruit, he named the living creatures and so forth. God gives life through the spirit. May we stress that He did not breathe the soul into man, but the breath of life, the spirit. The chief characteristic of the soul is consciousness or sensation, and it cannot exist without the body and spirit. Ezekiel gives a similar analogy of what occurred at the creation of man:

O dry bones ... I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live (Ezekiel 37:4-6).

Plants have life, but they are not conscious. Living souls are associated with moving about from place to place, being aware of their existence. This is true of animals in Genesis 1:21, referring to "***every living moving soul.***" When speaking of the term "***living soul***" there is a similarity between man and animal as to being able to move about and sensing the things of the world. Paul gave the characteristics of man in his speech to the Athenians. In Acts 17:28 he says, "***for in Him [God] we are living and moving and are.***" The words "***in Him we are living***" relate to the spirit. "***Moving***" refers to the soul. "***Are***" is the usual word for body. The word "***soul***" occurs 488 times, 430 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 58 times in the Greek. It is not associated with deathlessness or immortality. It is found with some words that have negative meanings, such as "***fainting***" (Hebrews 12:3), "***slain***" (Revelation 6:9), "***destroy***" (Matthew 10:39), and "***laying down*** [dying]" (1 John 3:16).

The soul is attached to the senses, as the following passages denote (taken from the *Authorized Version*):

Whatsoever thy soul lusteth after (Deuteronomy 12:15, 20-21);

Thy soul longeth to eat flesh (Deuteronomy 12:20);

Eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure (Deuteronomy 23:24);

Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat (Psalm 107:18);

A thief if he steal to satisfy his soul (Proverbs

6:30);

Eateth to the satisfying of his soul (Proverbs 13:25);

An honeycomb, sweet to the soul (Proverbs 16:24);

If thou be a man given to appetite (Proverbs 23:2);

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet (Proverbs 27:7);

Should make his soul enjoy good (Margin reads: "***delights in senses***" Ecclesiastes 2:24);

The appetite is not filled (Ecclesiastes 6:7);

To make empty the soul of the hungry (Isaiah 32:6).

Since the body and food are from the same soil, there is a sensation of physical satisfaction when eating.

Preachers herald the message, "save your souls!" However, Jesus said that whoever may be wanting to save his soul shall be destroying it.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone is wanting to come after Me, let him renounce himself and pick up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever may be wanting to save his soul shall be destroying it. Yet whoever should be destroying his soul on My account shall be finding it" (Matthew 16:24-25).

Why would Jesus tell anyone to lose their soul? Remember that Jesus also came to set up a literal kingdom on earth, and those who would suffer with Him (pick up his cross) would reign in the coming Millennial eon, enjoying physical blessings. Those who prefer physical sensations (soul) over following Jesus will miss the Millennium glory. Paul seldom mentions the word "soul" in his epistles, because he was acquainted with no one after soulish desires.

The blood is to the soul as the spirit is to the breath. This analogy has been lost through the English versions. Soul is often translated by the expression "life," so that the difference between soul and life, as well as soul and spirit, is widely unknown. The activity of the spirit gives life. It gave life to a body at creation and will impart life at the resurrection. English words which have originated from the Greek *psuchē*, the word for

“soul,” mistakenly refer to the spirit. For example, psychology deals with the mind, instead of the soulish sensations.

Also, “psychic,” which really means “soulish” or “sensual,” mistakenly indicates “pneumatic,” or spiritual. If soul meant life, Genesis 2:7 would incorrectly read, “man became a living life.” The *Concordant Version* renders the following passages thus:

Yea, only flesh with its soul, its blood, you shall not eat (Genesis 9:4).

For the soul of all flesh, it is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11).

For the soul of all flesh, its blood is it. It is in its soul ... for the soul of all flesh, its blood is it (Leviticus 17:14).

The Scriptures tell us that there is a soulish body and a spiritual body. The first Adam became a living soul (a soulish body with flesh and blood). The last Adam became a vivifying Spirit (a spiritual body with flesh and bones). Flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, because blood is identified with the soulish body.

If there is a soulish body, there is a spiritual also. Thus it is written also, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul: the last Adam a vivifying Spirit.” But not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual. The first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven.

Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial. Now this I am averring, brethren, that flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:45-50).

What Is Death?

Keeping in mind the order of man’s creation, we now can see what occurs at death. Death is simply a return. The spirit returns to God Who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7), the soul returns to the unseen [*sheol* (Hebrew) or *hades* (Greek)] (Psalm 9:17; Acts 2:27,31), the body is soil and

returns to the soil (Genesis 3:19). Job says, **For I know that Thou wilt return me to death** (Job 30:23).

If He should take back His spirit to Himself, and gather to Himself His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust [soil] (Job 34:14-15).

David says, **... when Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust** [soil] (Psalm 104:29).

Everything returns to its original condition. Paul speaks of his own death by saying, **“the period of my dissolution** [not departure] **is imminent”** (II Timothy 4:6). A return to death is a condition of complete unconsciousness. There was no awareness prior to our birth, and the same is true after we die. The Scriptures refer to it as sleeping, where there is no awareness around us. Those who are asleep in death will be awakened at their appointed resurrection. For those of us who sleep straight through the night for eight hours, doesn’t it appear that just a short time has elapsed? Or what about going under anesthesia for an operation? There is no recollection until you wake. The following portions of Scripture refer to death as sleeping and as having no consciousness or perception, which is the true meaning for *sheol* or *hades*:

For there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol (Ecclesiastes 9:10);

For Sheol cannot thank thee, death cannot praise thee ... The living, he thanks thee as I do this day (Isaiah 38:18-19);

Illuminate my eyes, lest I should sleep in death (Psalm 13:3);

For in death, there is no remembrance of Thee; in the unseen, who is acclaiming [praising] Thee?

(Psalm 6:5);

His spirit will pass forth, he will return to his ground; in that day his reflections perish (Psalm 146:4);

For the living know that they will die, yet the dead know nothing whatever, and there is no further hire for them; for their remembrance is forgotten (Ecclesiastes 9:5);

The dead do not praise the Lord (Psalm

115:17);

He has made me sit in darkness like those long dead (Psalm 143:3).

The following chart will further help us understand that only the soul is connected with the unseen, not the body or spirit. However, there were two phenomenal instances when the body went down into sheol. The sons of Korah, Dathan and Abiram went down into sheol alive and Jonah found his sheol in the belly of a fish.

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Component</u>	<u>Manifestation</u>	<u>Dissolution</u>
Soil	Man	Body	Soil
God	Breath	Spirit	God
Unseen	Breath and Body	Soul or Sensation	Unseen

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