

The Human Soul

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Dear Members of the Endtime Issues Forum:

Many members of our forum have expressed appreciation for the Sabbath School comments I have provided in the previous newsletters. Frankly, I never anticipated such a keen interest for a more in-depth analysis of the issues addressed in our weekly Sabbath School lessons. Such an interest is encouraging because it reveals that many fellow believers are seeking for a deeper understanding and experience of Biblical truths.

This week lesson "Spirit, Soul, Body" (April 17-23) deals with the fundamental question of the make up of human nature. What Christians believe about the make-up of their human nature largely determines what they believe about their ultimate destiny. Those who believe their nature is wholistic, consisting of an indivisible whole where body, soul, and spirit are only characteristics of the same person, generally envision a destiny where their total mortal person will be resurrected either to eternal life or eternal death.

On the other hand, those who believe their nature is dualistic, that is, consisting of a material, mortal body and a spiritual, immortal soul, generally envision a destiny where their immortal souls will survive the death of their body and will spend eternity either in the bliss of paradise or in the torment of hell.

Today the belief in the survival of the soul after the death of the body is spreading like wild fire around the world. Some of the contributory factors are the traditional dualistic view of human nature, the polished image of mediums and psychics, the sophisticated "scientific" research into near-death experiences, and the popular New Age channeling craze with the alleged spirits of the past. The latter is successfully promoted by people like actress Shirley Maclaine. The outcome is that the vast majority of people have come to believe Satan's lie that no matter what they do to their bodies, their soul "shall not die" (Gen 3:4). This lie has done incalculable damage to Christian beliefs and practices.

As Adventists we cannot afford to passively watch the spreading of the deception of innate immortality that has fostered such heresies as spiritualism, communication with the spirits of the dead, praying for the dead, the intercession of the saints, purgatory, eternal hellfire, the worship of Mary, indulgences, etc. All of these heretical beliefs fall automatically like dominos when we expose the fallacies of the dualistic view of human nature by showing that the Biblical view of human nature is WHOLISTIC. The body and the soul, the flesh and the spirit, are characteristics of the same person and not detachable components that come apart at death.

To meet this challenge I devoted a seventh months unpaid leave-of-absence from Andrews University during 1997 to a painstaking investigation of the Biblical teaching on human nature. The outcome of this research was published in the book IMMORTALITY OR RESURRECTION? A BIBLICAL STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE AND DESTINY. The objective of this study is twofold. The first is to unmask with compelling Biblical reasoning the popular deception of innate immortality, and the second is to challenge Christians of all persuasions to recover the Biblical wholistic view of human nature and destiny. The Bible teaches that the body and soul are not detachable components that come apart at death, but an indissoluble unity, created, redeemed, and ultimately restored by God.

The response has been very encouraging. About 100 seminary professors have already reviewed the book. I would be glad to email a sampling of their reviews to anyone interested. Some students from Fuller Theological Seminary contacted me to request copies of the book because their Professor, Ray Anderson, Ph. D., highly recommended the book to the class. This is what Ray S. Anderson, Ph. D., Professor of Theology, had to say about the book in his review: "IMMORTALITY OR RESURRECTION is a groundbreaking work based on solid biblical exegesis, calling into question the traditional belief in the immortality of the human soul and the doctrine of unending eternal torment for the wicked. I want all of my students to be aware of this timely study." On a similar vein, Prof. Clark Pinnock, a highly respected theologian who recently served as President of the Evangelical Theological Society, wrote a most complimentary foreword to IMMORTALITY OR RESURRECTION? where he praises the book ! as a "decisive study" which is "much needed to combat the persistent but mistaken opinion that the soul is an immortal substance."

In this newsletter I decided to focus solely on the Old and New Testaments view of the "soul," since this is indeed a crucial ENDTIME ISSUE. It is unfortunate that this week lesson devotes only one page (Monday, April 19) to the Biblical view of the soul. Yet the belief in the immortality of the soul is by far the most far-reaching deception of our times.

For the sake of brevity I have excerpted the most relevant material dealing with the Biblical view of the soul from chapters 2 and 3 of IMMORTALITY OR RESURRECTION? I would be glad to email to anyone interested the complete text of these two chapters which is over 100 pages. It is my fervent hope that this study will provide you with helpful insights into the topic of the Sabbath School, and compelling Biblical reasoning to unmask the deception of the immortality of the soul.

THE OLD TESTAMENT VIEW OF THE "SOUL"

In the Bible the "soul" is the animating principle of life which present both human beings and animals. The Hebrew term used for soul in the Old Testament is "nephesh." This term occurs 754 times and is rendered in 45 different ways. Our focus is on three main usages of the word that clearly negate the prevailing belief in the immortality of the soul

Soul as a Needy Person. In his state-of-the-art book **Anthropology of the Old Testament**, which is virtually undisputed among scholars of various theological persuasions, Hans Walter Wolff entitles the chapter on the soul as "Nephesh-Needy Man." The reason for this characterization of nephesh as "needy man" becomes evident when one reads the many texts which picture nephesh-soul in dangerous situations of life and death proportions.

Since it is God who made man "a living soul" and who sustains the human soul, the Hebrews when in danger appealed to God to deliver their soul, that is, their life. David prayed: "Deliver my soul [nephesh] from the wicked" (Ps 17:13, KJV); "For thy righteousness sake, O Lord, bring my soul [nephesh] out of trouble" (Ps. 143:11, KJV). The Lord deserves to be praised, "for he has delivered the soul [nephesh] of the poor from the hand of the evildoers" (Jer 20:13).

People greatly feared for their souls [nephesh] (Jos 9:24) when others were seeking their souls [nephesh] (Ex 4:19; 1 Sam 23:15). They had to flee for their souls [nephesh] (2 Kings 7:7) or defend their souls [nephesh] (Es 8:9); if they did not, their souls [nephesh] would be utterly destroyed (Jos 10:28, 30, 32, 35, 37, 39). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ez 18:4, 20). Rahab asked the two Israelite spies to save her family and "deliver our souls [nephesh] from death" (Jos 2:13). In these instances, it is evident that the soul was in danger and needed to be delivered was the life of the individual.

The soul experienced danger not only from enemies but also from lack of food. In lamenting the state of Jerusalem, Jeremiah says: "All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul [nephesh]" (Lam 1:11). The Israelites grumbled in the wilderness because they no longer had meat as they had had in Egypt. "But now our soul [nephesh] is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes" (Num 11:6).

Fasting had implications for the soul because it cut off nourishment that the soul needed. On the Day of Atonement, the Israelites were commanded to "afflict your souls" (Lev 16:29) by fasting. They abstained from food to demonstrate that their soul was dependent upon God for both physical nourishment and spiritual salvation. "Quite appropriately," writes Tory Hoff, "they [the Israelites] were asked to fast on the Day of Atonement because it was their soul that was atoned for through the shedding of blood [of an innocent soul] and it was the providential God who sustained the soul despite the sin of the soul"

The theme of danger and deliverance associated with the soul [nephesh] allows us to see that the soul in the Old Testament was viewed, not as an immortal component of human nature, but as the uncertain, insecure condition of life which sometimes was threatened unto death. Those situations which involved intense danger and deliverance reminded the Israelites that they were needy souls [nephesh], living persons whose life depended constantly upon God for protection and deliverance.

Soul as Seat of Emotions. Being the animating principle of human life, the soul functioned also as the center of emotional activities. In speaking of the Shunammite, 2 Kings 4:27 says: "Her soul [nephesh] is vexed within her" (KJV). David cried to the Lord, seeking deliverance from his enemies, saying: "My soul [nephesh] is also sore vexed. . . . Return, O Lord, deliver my soul [nephesh]" (Ps 6:3-4).

While the people were waiting for God's deliverance, their soul was losing vitality. Tory Hoff notes that "because the Psalmist often wrote from within this experience [of danger], the Psalms include phrases such as 'their soul fainted in them' (Ps 107:5), 'my soul melts for sorrow' (Ps 119:28), 'my soul languishes for salvation' (Ps 119:81), 'my soul longs, yea, faints for thy courts' (Ps 84:2), and 'their soul melted away in their evil plight' (Ps 107:26). Job asked, 'How long will you torment my soul' (Job 19:2). It was also the soul that would wait for deliverance. 'For God does my soul wait in silence' (Ps 62:1). 'I wait for the Lord, my soul waits and in his word I hope' (Ps 130:5).

Since the Hebrew knew all deliverance came from God, his soul would 'take refuge' in God (Ps 57:1) and 'thirst for him' (Ps 42:2; 63:1). Once the danger had passed and the intense, precarious nature of the situation was over, the soul would praise God for deliverance received. 'My soul makes its boast in the Lord, let the afflicted hear and be glad' (Ps 34:2). 'Then my soul shall rejoice in the Lord, exalting in his deliverance' (Ps 35:9)."

These passages which speak of the soul as the seat of emotion are interpreted by some dualists as supporting the notion of the soul being an immaterial entity attached to the body and responsible for the emotional and intellectual life of the individual. The problem with this interpretation is, as Tory Hoff explains, that "the soul is the 'seat of emotion' no more than any other Hebrew anthropological term." We shall see that the soul is only one center of emotions because the body, the heart, the bowels, and other parts of the body also function as emotional centers. From the Biblical wholistic view of human nature, one part of the body can often represent the whole.

Wolff rightly observes that the emotional content of the soul is equated with the self or the person and is not an independent entity. He cites, as an example, Psalms 42:5, 11, and 43:5 in which the same song of lament and of self-exhortation is found: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him." "Here," Wolff writes, "nephesh [soul] is the self of the needy life, thirsting with desire."²⁸ There is nothing in these passages to suggest that

the soul is an immaterial part of human nature that is equipped with personality and consciousness and is able to survive death. We shall note that the soul dies when the body dies.

The Soul as the Seat of Personality. The soul [nephesh] is seen in the Old Testament not only as the seat of emotions but also as the seat of personality. The soul is the person as a responsible individual. This is exemplified in those texts in that discuss sin and guilt. "If a soul [nephesh] shall sin through ignorance . . ." (Lev 4:2, KJV); "And if a soul [nephesh] sins . . . he shall bear his iniquity" (Lev 5:1, KJV); "But the soul [nephesh] that doeth ought presumptuously . . . that soul [nephesh] shall be cut off from among his people" (Num 15:30, KJV). "Behold all souls [nephesh] are mine; . . . the soul [nephesh] that sinneth, it shall die" (Ez 18:4). It is evident that in texts such as these, the soul is the responsible person who thinks, wills, and is answerable for his conduct.

Any physical or psychical activity was performed by the soul because such activity presumed a living, thinking, and acting person. "The Hebrew did not divide and assign human activities. Any act was the whole nephesh in action, hence, the whole person." As aptly expressed by W. D. Stacey, "Nephesh sorrowed, hungered, and thought because each of these functions required the whole personality to perform it, and the distinction between emotional, physical, and mental was not made." In the Old Testament the soul and the body are two manifestations of the same person. The soul includes and presumes the body. "In fact," writes Mork, "the ancient Hebrews could not conceive of one without the other. Here was no Greek dichotomy of soul and body, of two opposing substances, but a unity, man, who is bashar [body] from one aspect and nephesh [soul] from another. Bashar, then, is the concrete reality of human existence, nephesh is the personality of human existence." It is surprising that Mork, a Catholic Scholar, should make such a statement in his book *THE BIBLICAL MEANING OF MAN*, which is published with the official Catholic imprimatur.

The Soul and Death. The survival of the soul in the Old Testament is linked to the survival of the body, since the body is an outward manifestation of the soul. This explains why the death of a person is often described as the death of the soul. "When death occurs," writes Johannes Pedersen, "then it is the soul that is deprived of life. Death cannot strike the body or any other parts of the soul without striking the entirety of the soul. Therefore it is also said to 'kill a soul' or 'smite a soul' (Num 31:19; 35:15,30; Jos 20:3, 9); it may also be called to 'smite one as regards the soul,' i. e. to smite one so that the soul is killed (Gen 37:21; Deut 19:6, 11; Jer 40:14, 15). There can be no doubt that it is the soul which dies, and all theories attempting to deny this fact are false. It is deliberately said both that the soul dies (Judg 16:30; Num 23:10 et al.), that it is destroyed or consumed (Ez 22:25, 27), and that it is extinguished (Job 11:20)."

Readers of the English Bible may question the validity of Pedersen's statement that the soul dies, because the word "soul" does not occur in the texts which he cites. For example, speaking of the cities of refuge, Numbers 35:15 says: "Anyone who kills any person [nephesh] without intent may flee there." Since the word "soul-nephesh" does not occur in most English translations, some may argue that the text is speaking of the killing of the body and not of the soul. The truth of the matter is that nephesh is found in the Hebrew, but translators usually chose to render it with "person," presumably because of their belief that the soul is immortal and cannot be killed.

In some instances, translators render nephesh-soul with personal pronouns. Readers of English versions have no way of knowing that the pronoun stands for the soul-nephesh. For example, one of the texts quoted by Pedersen is Deuteronomy 19:11, which in the RSV reads: "But if any man hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and attacks him and wounds him [nephesh] mortally so that he dies. . . ." The phrase "wounds him mortally" in Hebrew reads "wounds the soul-nephesh mortally." Pedersen quotes the texts from the Hebrew Bible and not from English translations. Thus, his statement that "the soul dies" accurately reflects what the Hebrew text says. Furthermore, there are texts even in the English version, that clearly speak of the death of the soul. For example, Ezekiel 18:20 reads: "The soul that sins shall die" (See also Ex 18:4).

Death is seen in the Old Testament as the emptying out of the soul of all its vitality and strength. "He poured out his soul unto death" (Is 53:12). "He poured out" translates the Hebrew *arah* which means "to empty, to bare, or make naked." This means that the Suffering Servant emptied himself of all the vitality and strength of the soul. In death, the soul no longer functions as the animating principle of life, but is at rest in the grave.

"The dead," writes Pedersen, "is a soul bereft of strength. Therefore the dead are called 'the weak' (*rephaim*). 'Now thou art become weak' is the greeting with which the fallen king of the Babylonians is received in the realm of the dead (Is 14:10)." The dead body is still a soul, but a soul without life. The Nazarites were not allowed to defile themselves by coming near "a dead body" (Num 6:6), or as the Hebrew text says: "the soul of one dead." In the same manner, the priests were not to defile themselves by coming near the dead souls of their relatives (Lev 21:1, 11; Num 5:2; 9:6, 7, 10).

The fate of the soul is linked to the fate of the body. As Joshua conquered the various cities beyond the Jordan, we are told repeatedly "he utterly destroyed every soul [*nephesh*]" (Jos 10:28, 30, 31, 34, 36, 38). The destruction of the body is seen as the destruction of the soul. "In the Bible," writes Edmund Jacobs, "*nephesh* refers only to the corpse prior to its final dissolution and while it has distinguishable features."³⁵ When the body is destroyed and consumed so that its features are no longer recognizable, then the soul no longer exists, because "the body is the soul in its outward form."³⁶ On the other hand, when the body is laid to rest in the grave with the fathers, the soul is also at rest and lies undisturbed (Gen 15:15; 25:8; Jud 8:32; 1 Chron 29:28).

The Old Testament view of the soul as ceasing to function at death as the animating life-principle of the body raises some interesting questions regarding Jesus' statement: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Mat 10:28). This text seems to suggest that the death of the body does not necessarily entail the death of the soul. This text is examined in the next chapter dealing with the New Testament view of human nature.

The Departure of the Soul. In addition to those passages we have just considered in which the soul-*nephesh* is associated with death, at least two texts deserve special consideration because they speak of the departure and return of the soul. The first is Genesis 35:8, which says that Rachel's soul was "departing" as she was dying, and the second is 1 Kings 17:21-22, which tells of the soul of the widow's son returning to him. These two texts are used to support the view that at death the soul leaves the body and returns to the body at the resurrection.

In his book **Death and the Afterlife**, Robert A. Morey appeals to these two texts to support his belief in the survival of the soul upon the death of the body. He writes: "If the authors of Scripture did not believe that the soul left the body at death and would return to the body at the resurrection, they would not have used such a phraseology [departing and returning of the soul]. Their manner of speaking reveals that they believed that man ultimately survived the death of the body."

Can this conclusion be derived legitimately from these two texts? Let us take a closer look at each of them. In describing Rachel's hard labor, Genesis 35:18 says: "And as her soul was departing (for she died), she called his name Benoni; but his father called his name Benjamin." To interpret the phrase "her soul was departing" as meaning that Rachel's immortal soul was leaving her body while she was dying, runs contrary to the consistent teaching of the Old Testament that the soul dies with the body. As Hans Walter Wolff rightly points out, "We must not fail to observe that the *nephesh* [soul] is never given the meaning of an indestructible core of being, in contradistinction to the physical life, and even capable of living when cut off from that life. When there is a mention of the 'departing' (Gen 35:18) of the *nephesh* from a man, or of its 'return' (Lam 1:11), the basic idea is the concrete notion of the ceasing and restoration of breathing."

The phrase "her soul was departing" most likely means that "her breathing was stopping," or we might say, she was taking her last sigh. It is important to note that the noun "soul-nephesh" derives from the verb by the same root which means "to breathe," "to respire," "to draw breath." The inbreathing of the breath of life resulted in man becoming a living soul, a breathing organism. The departing of the breath of life results in a person becoming a dead soul ("for she died"). Thus, as Edmund Jacob explains, "The departure of nephesh is a metaphor for death; a dead man is one who has ceased to breathe."

Tory Hoff offers a similar comment: "Through the concrete image of the departure of breath, the text communicates that Rachel was in the process of dying while she named her newborn son. She was not yet dead in the modern sense of the word, but was ebbing closer to death by the moment. She was losing the nephesh vitality that ruah [breath] sustained to the degree that she would soon depart from nephesh existence." We conclude that the departure of the soul is a metaphor for death, most likely associated with the interruption of the breathing process. This conclusion is supported by the second text, 1 Kings 17:21-22, which we now examine.

The Return of the Soul. In relating the story of the raising to life of the widow's son at Zarephath by Elijah the prophet, 1 Kings 17:20-22 says: "Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, 'O Lord my God, let this child's soul come into him again.' And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." It must be granted that, taken in isolation, this text could be taken to mean that the soul leaves the body at death and in this instance was recalled by Elijah's prayer. This conclusion obviously would support the belief that the soul is immortal and survives the death of the body.

Three major reasons cause us to reject this interpretation. First, neither in this passage nor anywhere else in the Bible is there any indication that the human soul is immortal. On the contrary, we have found that the soul is the animating principle of life manifested in the body as long as the body is alive.

Second, in verse 17, the death of the boy is described as the cessation of breathing: "There was no breath left in him." This suggests that as the cessation of breathing caused the departure of the soul-nephesh, so the revival of breathing caused the return of the soul. As Edmund Jacob puts it: "In 1 Kings 17:17 lack of neshamah [breath] causes the departure of nephesh, which returns when the prophet gives the child breath again, for nephesh alone is what makes a living creature into a living organism."⁴¹ Since breathing is the outward manifestation of the soul, the cessation or restoration of breathing causes the departure or return of the soul.

Third, in Hebrew, verse 21 literally reads: "Let this child's soul come into his inward parts again." This reading, which is found in the margin of the AV, puts a different construction on the passage. What returns to the inward parts is breathing. The soul as such is never connected with some "inward" organs of the body. The return of breathing in the inner parts results in the revival of the body, or, we might say, in the body becoming again a living soul.

Basil Atkinson perceptively observes that "the writer did not think of the soul as being the real child or carrying his personality. The child was lying dead on the bed and the soul came back to the child. Elijah did not think or say such words as are sometimes heard at modern funerals, 'I can't think of him as here any longer.'"

In the light of the above considerations, we would conclude that the statement "the soul of the child came into him again" simply means that the child came to life again or the child began breathing again. This is the way the translators of the NIV understood the phrase by rendering it as "the boy's life returned to him." This is a perfectly intelligible way of understanding the text and is consistent with the rest of the Old Testament teaching.

Conclusion. Our study of the meaning of nephesh-soul in the Old Testament has shown that never once is the word used to convey the idea of an immaterial, immortal entity capable of existing apart from the body. On the contrary, we have found that the soul-nephesh is the animating principle of life, the life-breath, which is present in both human beings and animals. The soul is identified with blood because the latter is seen as the tangible manifestation of the vitality of life. At death, the soul ceases to function as the animating life-principle of the body. The fate of the soul is connected inextricably with the fate of the body because the body is the outward manifestation of the soul.

THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF THE "SOUL"

The Greek word psyche-soul is used in the New Testament in accordance with the basic meanings of the Hebrew nephesh-soul that we found in the Old Testament. We briefly review the basic meaning of psyche-soul, giving special attention to the expanded meaning of the word in the light of Christ's teachings and redemptive ministry.

Soul as Person. The soul-psyche in the New Testament denotes the whole person in the same sense as nephesh in the Old Testament. For example, in his defense before the Sanhedrin, Stephen mentions that "seventy-five souls-[psyche]" of Jacob's family went down to Egypt, a figure and usage found in the Old Testament (Gen 46:26-27; Ex 1:5; Deut 10:22). On the day of Pentecost, "three thousand souls-[psyche]" (Acts 2:41) were baptized and "fear came upon every soul-[psyche]" (Acts 2:43). Speaking of Noah's family, Peter says that "eight souls-[psyche] were saved by water" (1 Pet 3:20). It is evident that in texts such as these the "soul-psyche" is used as a synonym for person.

Within this context, we mention Christ's famous promise of rest to the "souls-[psyche]" of those who accept His yoke (Matt 11:28). The expression "rest for your souls-[psyche]" comes from Jeremiah 6:16, where rest for the soul is promised to people who walk according to God's commandments. The rest which Christ gives to the soul, as Edward Schweizer points out, "differs completely from what we find in the Greek world, where the soul finds rest when it is liberated from the body, for here the unity and totality of man are upheld. It is in his physical acts in obedience that man finds God's rest." Christ gives rest (inner peace and harmony) to the souls of those who accept His gracious provision of salvation ("Come to me") and live in accordance to the principles of life He taught and exemplified ("learn of me").

Soul as Life. The most frequent meaning of the word soul-psyche in the New Testament is "life." According to one reckoning, 46 times psyche is translated "life." In these instances, "life" provides a fitting translation of the Greek psyche because it is used in reference to physical life. To facilitate the identification of the word soul-psyche found in the Greek text, psyche will be translated literally as "soul" in places where the RSV renders it as "life."

At the height of the storm, Paul reassured the members of the ship that "there will be no loss of souls [psyche] among you, but only of the ship" (Acts 27:22; cf. 27:10). In this context, the Greek psyche is correctly translated "life" because Paul is talking about the loss of lives. An angel told Joseph: "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's soul [psyche] are dead" (Matt 2:20). This is one of the many references to the seeking, killing, and saving of the soul-psyche, all of which suggest that the soul is not an immortal part of human nature, but the physical life itself which can be in danger. In accordance with the Old Testament, the soul-psyche is put to death when the body dies.

Jesus associated the soul with food and drink. He said: "Do not be anxious about your soul [psyche], what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not the soul [psyche] more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Matt 6:25). Here the soul-psyche is associated with food and drink and the body (the visible exterior) with clothing. By associating the soul with food and drink, Jesus shows that the soul is the physical aspect of life, though He explains that there is

more to life than food and drink. Believers can raise their desires and thoughts to heavenly things and live for Christ and eternity. Thus, Christ expanded the meaning of the "soul" by including the higher life or eternal life He came to offer mankind. The fact remains, however, that by associating the soul with food and drink, Christ shows that the soul is the physical aspect of our existence and not an immaterial component of our nature.

Saving the Soul by Losing It. In the Old Testament, we found that the soul-nephesh is used frequently to denote the uncertainty of life, constantly facing the possibility of harm or even destruction. Consequently, the ancient Israelites were concerned about saving their soul, delivering their soul, restoring their soul to safety, and sustaining their soul through provisions, especially food. In this context, it must have been perplexing for the Jews to hear Christ saying: "Whoever would save his soul [psyche] will lose it; and whoever loses his soul [psyche] for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35; cf. Matt 16:25; 10:39; Luke 9:24; 17:33; John 12:25).

The impact of Christ's statement upon the Jews must have been dramatic, because He had the audacity to proclaim that their souls could be saved only by losing them for His sake. The notion of saving the soul through losing it was unknown to the Jews because it is not found in the Old Testament. Christ demonstrated His teaching by acting in a way that culminated in His own crucifixion. He came "to give his soul [psyche] as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). As the Good Shepherd, He "laid down his soul [psyche] for the sheep" (John 10:11). By teaching that in order to save one's soul, it is necessary for one to lose it, to give it up, and to lay it down, Christ expanded the Old Testament meaning of nephesh-soul as physical life by making it inclusive of the eternal life received by those willing to sacrifice their present life (soul) for His sake.

We find confirmation for Christ's expanded meaning of soul in John's rendering of the same saying: "He who loves his soul [psyche] loses it, and he who hates his soul [psyche] in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:25). The correlation between "this world" and "eternal life" indicates that soul-psyche is used to refer to both earthly and eternal life. In John's rendering of Christ's saying, it is evident that the soul is not immortal, because, as Edward Schweizer points out, "otherwise we should not be called upon to hate it. Psyche is the life which is given to man by God and which through man's attitude towards God receives its character as either mortal or eternal. . . . Hence we never read of the psyche aionios or athanatos [eternal or immortal soul], only of the psyche [soul] which is given by God and kept by Him to zoe aionios [life eternal]"

The meaning of soul as eternal life appears also in Luke 21:19, where Christ says: "By your endurance you will gain your soul [psyche]." The context indicates that Christ is not speaking of the preservation of earthly life, because He predicts that some of his followers will be betrayed and put to death (v. 16). Here the soul-psyche is plainly understood as eternal life attained by those willing to make a total, sacrificial commitment to Christ.

The promise that the soul-life will be saved when it is sacrificed for Christ shows that what Christ had in view is the true and full life which He offers to those who accept Him as their Savior. The life in Christ does not differ from natural life because it is the life experienced by those who are freed from trying to preserve it. It is a released, liberated, and open life, which gives a sense of fulfillment to the natural life. This is the expanded meaning that Christ gave to the soul; a meaning which negates the notion of the soul as an immaterial, immortal entity that coexists with the body.

The Apostolic Church grasped this expanded meaning of the soul as denoting a life of total commitment to the Savior. Judas and Silas became men who "risked their soul [psyche] for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:26). Epaphroditus risked "his soul [psyche]" for the work of Christ (Phil 2:30). The Apostle Paul himself testified: "I do not account my soul [psyche] of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20: 24). If Paul believed that the soul is immortal, it is unlikely that he would have viewed it of no value and worth losing for the sake of the

gospel. These texts show that the Apostolic Church lived out the new expanded meaning of the soul by living a life of total, sacrificial commitment to Christ. Believers understood that their soul as physical life could be saved only by consecrating it to the service of Christ.

The most foolish mistake anyone can make is "to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul [psyche]" (Mark 8:36). It is this soul-psyche, the life that transcends death, that is the primary object of redemption (Heb 10:39; 13:17; James 1:21; 1 Pet 1:9, 22). While the term "soul" is used considerably less frequently in the New Testament than in the Old Testament, these key passages indicate a significant expansion of its meaning. The term came to include the gift of eternal life received by those who are willing to sacrifice their present life for Christ's sake.

In very few instances is the soul-nephesh used in the Old Testament to denote life that transcends death. An example is Psalm 49:15: "God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me." It is this meaning of soul as life beyond death that is expanded in the teaching of Jesus about losing and finding the soul. The continuity between the present and the future life is guaranteed, not by the indwelling of an immortal soul in man but by the faithfulness of God who will give eternal life to believers.

The physical life and the eternal life are not two different realities, because they are both given by God. The soul encompasses both because eternal life is the physical life lived for God. After all, the physical life is the only form of existence we know. But the ambivalent meaning of the soul serves to remind us that human life is not just health and wealth; it is a life lived in relationship with God.

The twofold Biblical meaning of the soul as physical and eternal life negates the Hellenistic distinction between body and soul, between the life of the body on earth and the life of the soul in heaven. From a Biblical perspective, the life of the body is the life of the soul, because the way a person lives this present life determines the destiny of the soul as either eternal life or eternal destruction. The soul, then, is not a substance which survives the body at death; it is the life we live by God's grace and which will be revealed and consummated by God at the Last Judgment.

The Soul and the Flesh. One important text in the New Testament makes the soul-psyche to stand in clear antithesis to the flesh-sarx. It is found in 1 Peter 2:11 where the Apostle says: "Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh [sarx] that wage war against your soul [psyche]." Edward Schweizer states that this is the most Hellenistic use of the soul in the New Testament, since the plain antithesis between soul-psyche and flesh-sarx can suggest a dualistic composition of human nature.

A closer look at the text, however, shows that Peter was influenced not by Greek dualism but by the Old Testament understanding of the soul-nephesh. In the Old Testament, we found that the soul-nephesh was constantly in danger and needed to be protected. The same is true in Peter's admonition. The difference is that Peter is referring to an "internal" enemy that attacks the soul from within. The enemy is the carnal passions that wage war against the soul by causing a person to live only to satisfy the physical appetites.

Peter views the soul not as an immaterial entity that survives the body at death, but as the life of faith sanctified by obedience to God's revealed truth. He expresses this view in the same epistle saying: "As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls [psyche]" (1 Pet 1:9), "having purified your souls [psyche] by your obedience to the truth" (1 Pet 1:22). Since the salvation of the soul (eternal life) is the outcome of a life of faithful obedience to the truth, carnal passions threaten the soul (eternal life) because they cause a person to live unfaithfully and disobediently to the truth. Thus, the antithesis between flesh and soul in this passage is ethical and not ontological, that is, it is

between a life of disobedience (flesh) and one of obedience (soul). We shall soon see that Paul expresses the same antithesis by contrasting the flesh with the spirit.

God Has Power to Destroy the Soul. This expanded meaning of the term soul-psyche helps us understand a well-known and yet much misunderstood saying of Christ: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul [psyche]; rather fear him who can destroy both the soul [psyche] and the body in hell" (Matt 10:28; cf. Luke 12:4). Dualists find in this text support for the concept that the soul is an immaterial substance that is kept safe and survives the death of the body. Robert Morey, for example, contends that "Christ here [Matt 10:28] plainly says that while we can kill or cut off the physical life of a body, we cannot kill or harm the soul, i. e., the immaterial transcendent self, mind or ego. He employs the body/soul dichotomy which is found throughout the Scripture."

This interpretation reflects the Greek dualistic understanding of human nature and not the Biblical wholistic view. The reference to God's power to destroy the soul [psyche] and the body in hell negates the notion of an immaterial, immortal soul. How can the soul be immortal if God destroys it with the body in the case of impenitent sinners? Oscar Cullmann rightly notes that "we hear in Jesus' saying in Matthew 10:28 that the soul can be killed. The soul is not immortal."

In the preceding discussion, we have seen that Christ expanded the meaning of the soul-psyche to denote not only physical life but also eternal life received by those who are willing to make a sacrificial commitment to Him. If this text is read in the light of the expanded meaning given by Christ to the soul, the meaning of the saying is: "Do not fear those who can bring your earthly existence (body-soma) to an end, but cannot annihilate your eternal life in God; but fear God who is able to destroy your whole being eternally."

The Death of the Soul Is Eternal Death. Christ's warning hardly teaches the immortality of the soul. Rather it teaches that God can destroy the soul as well as the body. Edward Fudge rightly remarks that "unless Jesus is making idle threats, the very warning implies that God will execute such a sentence on those who persistently rebel against His authority and resist every overture of mercy."¹⁶ Fudge continues by saying, "Our Lord's warning is plain. Man's power to kill stops with the body and the horizon of the Present Age. The death man inflicts is not final, for God will call forth the dead from the earth and give the righteous immortality. God's ability to kill and destroy is without limit. It reaches deeper than the physical and further than the present. God can kill both body and soul, both now and hereafter."

Luke reports Christ's saying, omitting the reference to the soul. "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after killing the body, has power to throw you into hell." (Luke 12:4-5). Luke omits the word soul-psyche, referring instead to the whole person God can destroy in hell. It is possible that the omission of the term "soul-psyche" was intentional to prevent a misunderstanding in the mind of Gentile readers accustomed to think of the soul as an independent and immortal component that survives death. To make it clear that nothing survives God's destruction of a person, Luke avoids using the term "soul-psyche" that could have confused his Gentile readers.

We find confirmation for this interpretation in Luke 9:25, where he again omits the term psyche-soul: "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself [eauton]." Presumably, Luke used here the pronoun "himself" instead of soul-psyche, as used in Mark 8:36, because the latter, as Edward Schweizer suggests, "might be misconstrued [by Gentile readers] as the punishment of the soul after death." By using instead the pronoun "himself," Luke indicates that Jesus meant the loss of the whole person.

When we bear in mind Christ's expanded meaning of the term "soul," then the meaning of His saying becomes clear. To kill the body means to take the present life on earth. But this does not kill the soul, that is, the eternal life received by those who have

accepted Christ's provision of salvation. Taking the present life means putting a person to sleep, but a person is not finally destroyed until the second death, which, as we shall see, is equated in Scripture with hell.

The meaning of Christ's saying in Matthew 10:28 is illustrated by His declaration that Jairus' daughter was not dead but asleep (Matt 9:24). She was actually dead ("kill the body"), but, since she was going to wake up at the resurrection, she could rightly be said to be asleep. Her final destiny had not yet been decided. In the same way, since all the dead will be resurrected on the last day, as they lie in their graves their soul, that is, the life they have lived for or against Jesus Christ, is still awaiting its final destiny: eternal salvation for believers and eternal destruction for unbelievers. The latter is the destruction of body and soul in hell that Jesus warned about.

The preservation of the soul in Christ's teaching is not an automatic process within the power of the soul itself, but a gift from God received by those who are willing to sacrifice their soul (present life) for Him. This expanded meaning of the soul is closely related to the character or personality of a believer. Evil people or forces can kill the body, the physical life, but they cannot destroy the soul, the character, or personality of a believer. God has committed Himself to preserving the individuality, personality, and character of each believer. At His coming, Christ will resurrect those who have died in Him, restoring to them their soul, that is, their distinct character and personality.

The Soul of a Dead Body. In the light of the preceding discussion, we look now at another frequently misinterpreted statement made by Paul at the raising of Eutychus. During a farewell meeting at Troas where Paul spoke at length, a young man, Eutychus, sank into a deep sleep, fell from the third story, and died. In Acts 20:10, we read that "Paul went down and bent over him, and embracing him said, 'Do not be alarmed, for his soul [psyche] is in him.'"

This event is parallel to the times when Elijah (1 King 17:17) and later Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-36) lay upon a child whose soul [nephesh] returned to him. Dualists interpret these episodes as indicating that the soul is an independent entity that can return after leaving the body. This interpretation is discredited by two major considerations. First, in the case of Eutychus, Paul said, "his soul [psyche] is in him," though his body lay dead. This means that Paul did not believe that the soul is an immaterial entity that leaves the body at death. The soul was still in Eutychus, not because it had not yet departed, but because upon embracing the young man, Paul sensed that his breathing was returning and thus he was coming back to life. He was still a living soul.

Second, to understand what happened in the case of Eutychus and of the child raised by Elijah and Elisha, we need to remember that the Bible views death as creation in reverse. At creation, man became a living soul when the body made of the dust of the ground began to breathe as a result of the divine inbreathing of the breath of life. At death, a person ceases to be a living soul when the body takes the last breath and returns to dust. In the case of Eutychus and the children, their breathing miraculously returned and so they again became living souls.

Paul and the Soul. In comparison with the Old Testament, or even the Gospels, the use of the term soul-psyche in Paul's writings is rare. He uses the term only 13 times¹⁹ (including quotations from the Old Testament) to refer to physical life (Rom 11:3; Phil 2:30; 1 Thes 2:8), a person (Rom 2:9; 13:1), and the seat of emotional life (Phil 1:27; Col 3:23; Eph 6:6). It is noteworthy that Paul never uses psyche-soul to denote the life that survives death. The reason could be Paul's fear that the term psyche-soul might be understood by his Gentile converts according to the Greek view of innate immortality.

To ensure that the new life in Christ would be viewed wholly as a divine gift and not as an innate possession, Paul uses the term pneuma-spirit, instead of psyche-soul. Later in this chapter, we examine Paul's use of the term "spirit." The Apostle certainly acknowledges a continuity between the present life and the resurrection life, but since he

sees it as God's gift and not something found in human nature, he uses pneuma-spirit instead.

In his famous passage on the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul shows that he uses soul-psyche in accordance with the Old Testament meaning of physical life. He explains that the first Adam became "a living soul [psyche]" and the last Adam (Christ) a "life-giving spirit [pneuma]." He applies the same distinction to the difference between the present body and the resurrection body. He writes: "It is sown a physical [psychikon] body, it is raised a spiritual [pneumatikon] body" (1 Cor 15:44). The present body is psychikon, literally "soulish" from psyche-soul, denoting a physical organism subject to the law of sin and death. The future, resurrected body is pneumatikon, literally "spiritual" from pneuma-spirit, meaning an organism controlled by God's Spirit.

The resurrected body is called "spiritual," not because it is nonphysical but because it is ruled by the Holy Spirit, instead of carnal impulses. This becomes evident when we note that Paul applies the same distinction between the natural-psychikos and the spiritual-psychikos to the present life in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15. Here Paul distinguishes between the natural man-psychikos, who is not guided by God's Spirit, and the spiritual man [psychikos], who is guided by God's Spirit.

No Natural Immortality. It is evident that for Paul the continuity between the present and the future body is to be found not in the expanded meaning of the soul that we have found in the Gospels, but in the role of the Spirit of God that renews us in newness of life both now and at the resurrection. By focusing on the role of the Spirit, Paul negates the immortality of the soul. For him it is very important to clarify that the new life of the believer both in the present and the future is wholly a gift of God's Spirit. There is nothing inherently immortal in human nature.

The expression "immortality of the soul" does not occur in Scripture. The Greek word commonly translated "immortality" in our English versions of the Bible is *athanasia*. This term occurs only twice in the New Testament, the first time in connection with God "who alone has immortality [*athanasia*] and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see" (1Tim 6:16). Obviously, immortality here means more than endless existence. It means that God is the source of life (John 5:26) and all other beings receive eternal life from Him.

The second time, the word "immortality-*athanasia*" occurs in 1 Corinthians 15:53-54 in relation to mortal nature, which puts on immortality at the resurrection: "For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality [*athanasia*]. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality [*athanasia*], then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" Paul is not speaking of the natural immortality of the soul, but of the transformation from mortality to immortality that believers will experience when Christ returns. The implications of this passage are clear: human nature is not endowed with any form of natural immortality, because it is perishable and mortal. Immortality is not a present possession; it is a gift to be bestowed upon believers at Christ's coming.

In Plato's philosophy, the soul is considered indestructible, because it partakes of an uncreated and eternal substance which the body does not possess. It is unfortunate that this Platonic dualism has blinded the mind of even such a great Reformer as Calvin, who went so far as saying that "hardly one, except Plato, has rightly affirmed [the soul's] immortal substance." He continues: "Indeed, from Scripture we have already taught that the soul is an incorporeal substance; now we must add that, although properly it is not spatially limited, still, set in the body, it dwells there as in a house; not only that it may animate all its parts and render its organs fit and useful for their actions, but also that it may hold the first place in ruling man's life, not alone with respect to the duties of his earthly life, but at the same time to arouse him to honor God."

It is hard to believe that so diligent a student of the Bible as Calvin could so grossly misinterpret the teachings of the Bible regarding human nature. This serves to

remind us how easily the human mind can become so conditioned by error that it fails to discern Biblical truth. In the Bible, the soul is not an "incorporeal and immortal substance," but the physical and regenerated life, created and sustained by God and dependent upon Him for its existence.

There is no inherent quality in human nature that can make a person indestructible. The Christian Hope is based not on the immortality of the soul but on the resurrection of the body. If we want to use the word "immortality" with reference to human nature, let us speak not of the immortality of the soul, but rather of the immortality of the body (whole person) by means of the resurrection. It is the resurrection that bestows the gift of immortality on the body, that is, on the whole person of the believer.

Soul as the Mortal Aspect of Human Nature. Paul's definition of the present body as psychikon-physical (literally "soulish"), that is, corruptible and mortal, clearly shows that he identified the soul with the physical and mortal aspect of our human existence. This is in accordance with the Old Testament view of the soul-nephesh as the physical and mortal aspect of life. It is evident that the notion of the immortality of the soul is totally absent from Paul's teachings and from the Bible as a whole. But this definition of the soul poses a problem. How does one reconcile the notion that human beings are by nature mortal with Paul's statement in Romans 5:12 that death came into this world "through sin," and not because of the mortal physical human nature?

The resolution of this apparent contradiction is to be found in recognizing that, as stated by Wheeler Robinson, "Paul conceived man to be mortal by his original nature, but with the prospect of immortality; this, however, he forfeited when he was driven forth from Eden, and therefore from the tree of life, which would have nourished immortality in him; thus came death through sin."

Paul does not explain how man through disobedience forfeited the possibility of becoming immortal. His concern is to show how Christ has redeemed us from the tragic consequence of sin, death. Paul's teachings, however, support what he may have seen as two complementary truths: the actual mortality of human nature on the one hand and the justice of that mortality as a penalty for human disobedience.

Soul and Spirit. The distinction between soul and spirit appears in two other important New Testament passages that we need to consider briefly. The first is 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and the second, Hebrews 4:12. Writing to the Thessalonians Paul says: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 5:23).

Some appeal to this text to defend the view that man was made a tripartite being at creation, consisting of a body, soul, and spirit, each of which is a separate entity. Catholics reduce the three to two by merging the spirit with the soul. The new Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to this text to explain that "'spirit' signifies that from creation man is ordered to a supernatural end and that his soul can gratuitously be raised beyond all it deserves to communion with God." For Catholics, the spirit and the soul are essentially one, because it is the spirit that creates each soul as a spiritual, immortal entity. As the Catechism puts it: "The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God - it is not 'produced' by the parents - and also it is immortal: it does not perish when it separates from the body at death." This traditional Catholic teaching ignores the fundamental Biblical wholistic view of human nature. According to the Bible, the soul is not an immortal substance that separates from the body at death, but the physical and mortal life, which can become immortal for those who accept God's gift of eternal life. To make the Spirit subservient to the alleged "spiritual" and immortal nature of the soul means to ignore that a vital function of God's Spirit is to give life to our mortal bodies: "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom 8:11).

We should observe, first, that 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is not a doctrinal statement but a prayer. Paul prays that the Thessalonians may be totally sanctified and preserved blamelessly until the coming of Christ. It is evident that when the Apostle prays that the spirit, soul, and body of the Thessalonians may be preserved blamelessly he is not trying to split human nature into three parts, any more than Jesus intended to split human nature into four parts when He said: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30).

"Spirit, Soul, and Body." The key to understanding Paul's reference to the "spirit, soul, and body" in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is the fact that the apostle is addressing believing Christians who, while they are still in the flesh (body), possess two natures: the original Adamic nature received at birth (the soul) and the new spiritual nature created within them by the enabling power of the Spirit. The Adamic nature, as we have seen earlier, is called "soul-psyche" and denotes the various aspects of the physical life associated with the soul in the Bible. The spiritual nature is called "spirit" because it is God's Spirit that renews and transforms the human nature. The body is, of course, the outward, visible part of the person.

Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians to keep their "soul-psyche" sound and blameless for Christ's coming means that they were to live not only for the physical life (Matt 6:25; Acts 20:24), which is threatened by death, but also for the higher, eternal life that transcends death. Similarly, Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians to keep their body sound and blameless means that they would "not gratify the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16) or produce "the works of the flesh" such as fornication, impurity, and licentiousness (Gal 5:19).

Finally, Paul's prayer for them to keep their spirit sound and blameless means that they would be led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18) and produce "the fruit of the Spirit" such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (Gal 5:22). Thus, Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians to keep the body, soul, and spirit sound and blameless is not intended to list the structural components of the human nature, but to emphasize the total lifestyle of those who await Christ's coming. The distinction between the three is ethical and not ontological.

The second text in which the same contrast appears between soul and spirit is found in Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing the division of soul [psyche] and spirit [pneuma], of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." The issue here is whether God's Word separates the soul and spirit or whether it pierces them both. Edward Schweizer aptly observes that "since the parting of the bones and marrow is hard to imagine, the text is probably saying that the Word has penetrated the pneuma [spirit] and psyche [soul] as it has the bones and marrow."

Keeping in mind that the soul and the spirit denote, respectively, the physical and spiritual aspects of human life, the text says that the Word of God penetrates and scrutinizes the whole human existence, even the very inwardness of our being. The study of the Scripture reveals to us whether our desires, aspirations, emotions, and thoughts are inspired by God's Spirit or by carnal, selfish considerations. The text simply says that God's Word penetrates into the innermost recesses of our being, bringing to light the secret motives for our actions.

In some ways, this passage is parallel to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:5: "The Lord will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart." Therefore, one has no reason to interpret Hebrew 4:12 as teaching a structural distinction in human nature between the soul and the spirit.

The above passages that distinguish between the soul and the spirit have nothing to say about the immortality of the soul. They do not suggest that one member of the pair could survive separation from the other at death or that they refer to different substances. On the contrary, the role of the Spirit of God as the agent of moral renewal in

this present life and of resurrection to eternal life at the end negates the notion of the immortality of the soul because the only immortality is that which is granted by God's Spirit at the end.

The Soul as the Place of Feeling and Reasoning. The preceding discussion has shown that the term "soul-psyche" is generally used in the New Testament to denote physical life which can become eternal life when lived by faith for Christ's sake. Few instances exist where the term soul-psyche is used as the seat of feeling and the source of thoughts and actions. The Christians in Antioch were troubled by false instructions coming from persons who "unsettled [their] soul-psyche" (Acts 15:24). Here the "soul-psyche" refers to the mind of the believers who were confused by misleading instructions.

A similar usage of the term is found in John 10:24 where the Jews ask Jesus: "How long will you keep our souls [psyche] in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Here the "soul-psyche" is the mind with which decisions are made for or against Christ. The soul as mind can be influenced toward the good as well as toward the bad. Thus, we read that Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch "strengthening the souls-psyche of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22). In this instance, the souls are the persons who were influenced or moved in thought and feeling.

In Luke 12:19, we find an interesting example where the "soul" refers to both physical and psychical activities. The rich man whose land had brought forth plentifully said: "I will say to my soul-psyche, Soul-psyche, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19). Although here the emphasis is on the physical aspect of life, such as eating, drinking, and being merry, the fact that the soul expresses self-satisfaction suggests a psychical function. In the following verse, God pronounces His judgment on such a self-satisfied soul: "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you'" (Luke 12:20). The text suggests that the life or death of the soul is ultimately the gift or punishment of God.

All the synoptic Gospels report the famous saying of Christ where the soul is used as a perfect parallel of the heart: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul [psyche], and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30; cf. Matt 22:37; Luke 10:37). In this saying, quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5, the heart, soul, mind, and strength are each used to express the emotional and rational love-commitment to God.

Conclusion. Our survey of the New Testament use of the term "soul-psyche" indicates that there is no support for the notion of the soul as an immaterial and immortal entity that survives the death of the body. There is nothing in the word psyche-soul that even remotely implies a conscious entity able to survive the death of the body. Not only does the New Testament fail to endorse the notion of the immortality of the soul, but it also clearly shows that the soul-psyche denotes the physical, emotional, and spiritual life. The soul is the person as a living being, with its personality, appetites, emotions, and thinking abilities. The soul describes the whole person as alive and thus inseparable from the body.

We found that though Christ expanded the meaning of soul-psyche to include the gift of eternal life received by those who are willing to sacrifice their earthly life for Him, He never suggested that the soul is an immaterial, immortal entity. On the contrary, Jesus taught that God can destroy the soul as well as the body (Matt 10:28) of impenitent sinners.

Paul never uses the term "soul-psyche" to denote the life that survives death. On the contrary, he identifies the soul with our physical organism (psychikon) which is subject to the law of sin and death (1 Cor 15:44). To ensure that his Gentile converts understood that there is nothing inherently immortal in human nature, Paul uses the term "spirit-pneuma" to describe the new life in Christ which the believer receives wholly as a gift of God's Spirit both now and at the resurrection.

Summing up, in the Bible the soul is not an immaterial, immortal part of human nature standing over against the body, but designates the vitality or life principle in human nature. The latter is composed of a form consisting of dust and a vital principle, called occasionally breath (neshamah) and usually spirit (ruach), breathed into him by God. The body and the divine breath together make the vital, active soul-nephesh. This wholistic view of human nature rules out the distinction between the material, mortal body and the immaterial, immortal soul, because the two are characteristics of the same person. The life or death of the body corresponds to the life or death of the soul.

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