



AFTER DEATH, THEN WHAT?

Before we consider what happens to a person at death, let us consider how man came into being.

1. Did man evolve, or was he created by God?

Genesis 1:26-27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

2. In the creation of man, what common elements did God start with?

Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, . . ."

Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Scientists have discovered that the elements that compose the human body are the same as those found in the earth.

3. After God formed man from the dust of the ground, what did He add? and what was the result?

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."

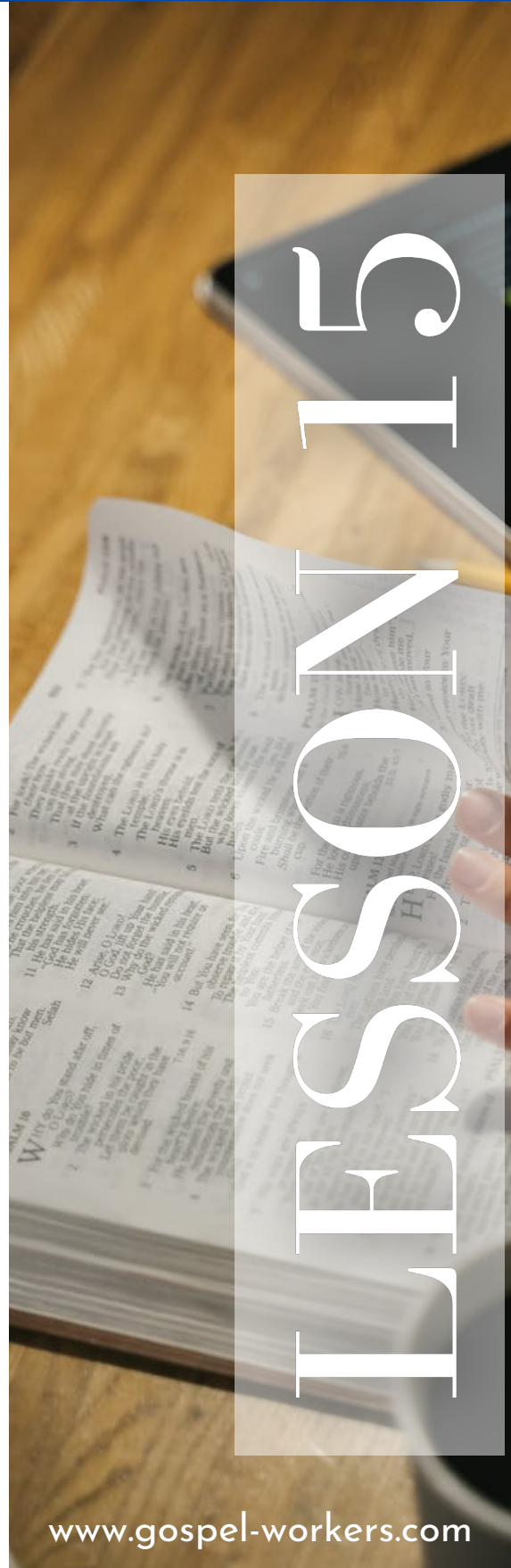
4. Since DUST + BREATH OF LIFE = A LIVING SOUL, what happens if one part is missing?

James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

According to Strong's Concordance the words breath and spirit are closely related and in most instances synonymous. Breath means — vital breath, spirit means — breath of life, and soul means — a breathing creature.

5. What happens to the living soul at death?

Psalms 104:29: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust."



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Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

[Further Study]

Ecclesiastes 3:20 "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

6. If the life-giving breath/spirit returns to God at death, does it remain conscious?

Ecclesiastes 9:5: "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."

Psalms 115:17: "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."

Psalms 146:4: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

[Further Study]

Isaiah 26:14 "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

Just as there is no life or consciousness before birth, neither is there at death.

7. What does the Bible say death is like?

Deuteronomy 31:16: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; . . ."

Daniel 12:2: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Acts 2:29, 34: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens: . . ."

[Further Study]

Psalms 13:3 "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;"

1 Kings 1:21 "Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders."

Acts 13:36 "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption."

1 Corinthians 11:30 "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

8. What did Jesus call death?

John 11:11-14: "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead."

9. When Stephen was stoned, what does the Bible say he did?

Acts 7:60: "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

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10. Did Jesus go to heaven when he died?

John 20:17: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

This encounter with Mary Magdalene took place Sunday morning after Jesus' resurrection. During the Sabbath hours Jesus rested (slept) in the tomb.

11. Jesus visited with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha many times. What was Martha's understanding of her brother's whereabouts when he died?

John 11:24: "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Martha understood that the dead will come back to life when the body and breath are once again reunited. Lazarus had been dead four days when Jesus raised him (John 11:39 "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days."), and it is interesting that he had nothing to say about where he had been. Wouldn't it have been a dirty trick if he had been enjoying the bliss of heaven for four days only to find himself once again back here on earth?

12. Where will the dead be when Jesus comes?

John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

[Further Study]

Job 14:12-14 "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."

John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

The Bible speaks of two resurrections which will be the subject of another lesson.

13. Are we mortal or immortal?

Job 4:17: "Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?"
Romans 6:12: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

14. The dictionary defines mortal as “subject to death, destined to die”. What does the Bible say happens to a mortal soul (breathing creature) that sins?

Ezekiel 18:4, 20: “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. . . . The soul that sinneth, it shall die. . . .”

[Further Study]

Psalms 33:19 “To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”

Matthew 26:38 “Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”

15. Who only has immortality?

1 Timothy 6:14, 16: “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: . . . Who only hath immortality. . . .”

1 Timothy 1:17: “Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

[Further Study]

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

16. Can human beings become immortal? If so, how and when?

2 Timothy 1:10: “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-54: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

[Further Study]

Philippians 3:20-21 “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

God is able to preserve our character and personality until we are given a new body which we will receive when Jesus returns.

LESSON 15: AFTER DEATH, THEN WHAT?

17. Will immortality be given to the righteous and the wicked alike?

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Revelation 22:11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

[Further Study]

Romans 2:6-8 "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,"

18. If the wicked are not given immortality, what about the teaching of eternally burning hell?

That is a good question, one that will be covered in detail in another lesson.

"The doctrine of man's consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If the dead are admitted to the presence of God and holy angels, and privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why should they not return to the earth to enlighten and instruct the living? If, as taught by popular theologians, spirits of the dead are hovering about their friends on earth, why should they not be permitted to communicate with them, to warn them against evil, or to comfort them in sorrow? How can those who believe in man's consciousness in death reject what comes to them as divine light communicated by glorified spirits? Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.

"He has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear 'to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils'."

The Great Controversy, page 551-552.