



### LESSON 13

## THE “IMMORTAL SOUL” DOCTRINE

### Part 3

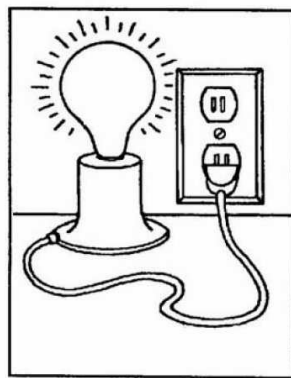
### OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING ON DEATH

We have found in our Old Testament study of **soul** (Hebrew: **nephesh**) that this term, in its most basic use, refers first to a biological breathing creature. Secondly, it refers to the composition of characteristics that define a creature. The soul of someone is his essential, unique identity. “Soul” distinguishes one creature or personality from another. It is **the whole person or creature**. Animals, too, are “souls.”

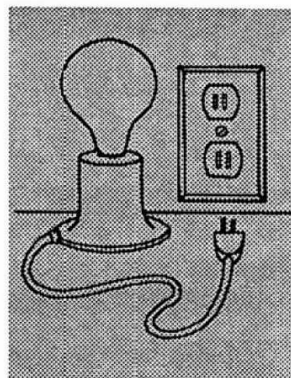
So, contrary to church teachings, a “soul” is not a parcel of a multi-section person. Also, a soul is not an immortal being that gets incarnated into a biological body. Thirdly, a soul is not an invisible component that separates from a person’s body at death to continue living in an alternate venue. Rather, we have seen that a “soul” is mortal. It can die or be destroyed. Scripture plainly teaches that when a person dies his soul dies. For example, Jesus was born mortal flesh. When He died He did not die partially, but completely. Then He was raised immortal and unable to die again.

In this lesson, we will examine what the Old Testament teaches concerning death. In doing so, the popular “immortal soul” teaching will be clearly exposed for what it is – **a deception**. This teaching, which is so prevalent in church theology, simply cannot stand against the truth of the Scriptures.

#### SYMBOLIC ILLUSTRATION OF LIFE AND DEATH



1.  
Living Soul



2.  
Dead Soul

# DUST OF THE GROUND: A SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSION

Often in Scripture, the expression “dust of the ground (earth)” is used as a symbol of large numbers of people. God created people long before Adam appears in Genesis. God selected one man (Adam) from among the masses of people (the dust of the ground) and breathed spiritual life into him.

## FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Genesis 2:7 states, “And the LORD God formed man (Adam) of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of \_\_\_\_\_; and man (Adam) became a \_\_\_\_\_ soul.”

God’s initial creation included **all** living things. That’s in Genesis 1:1-25. Then starting in verse 26 God selects one man/family (Adam), inspires him and sets him as overseer in Eden. The word “**man**” in Genesis 1:26-2:22 *KJV* is the Hebrew word “**Adam**.” English translators generally choose to translate this word as “man” ... but it is actually “Adam.” All the *KJV* references to “man” in these early verses are in fact Adam either as a man or a family. In Genesis 2:23 another Hebrew word appears: “**Ish**.” This word is correctly translated “man.” In the Old Testament, each time the *KJV* reads “man” you must check to see if the real word is “**ish**” or “**Adam**.” It is an important distinction.

Genesis 1:26, in the *KJV* God says “let us **make** Adam ...” The word “**make**” is from the Hebrew “**asah**” (accomplish, make with, appoint, fashion). Then, in verse 27 the *KJV* says God “**created**” Adam. Likewise, “**created**” is the Hebrew word “**asah**.” ‘Asah’ does not indicate a creation out of nothing. Rather it indicates an adjustment or a work involving something already existing. Compare how “asa”(“make”) is used in Genesis 8:6, 33:17, & Exodus 25:10-11. Thus, man already existed, but now God was choosing one man, Adam, to breathe spiritual “life” into him (Genesis 2:7).

Thus, God chose Adam from among all He had created. He selected Adam “*from the dust of the land*” (i.e., from among the masses) and inspired him (breathed “life” into him). This was how God prepared or accomplished Adam ... as a potter shapes clay into pottery, or a carver shapes raw wood into a work of art. God prepared Adam by giving him spirit (i.e., inspiration). Then God gave Adam law to equip him to represent God in Eden.

## FIND THE ANSWERS

2. Genesis 1:27 says “God created Adam in his image, “ ... “male and female created He \_\_\_\_\_.”
3. Genesis 2:7 says that Adam became a \_\_\_\_\_ soul.
4. In John 20:22 Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ on his disciples and they received \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In John 1:4 it says that in Him (Jesus) was \_\_\_\_\_. That life was the \_\_\_\_\_ of men.
6. In 1 John 5:12 it says that anyone who has not the Son of God has not \_\_\_\_\_.

The theme of Genesis 1 & 2 is not merely God’s creation of the physical Universe. More to the point it is about his implantation of spiritual “life” (eyes to see, ears to hear) into Adam ... the same kind of “life” Jesus later “breathed” into his disciples. Jesus called it “eonian life” ... wrongly translated “eternal life” in the *KJV*. As Jesus’ disciples had eonian life (eyes to see, and ears to hear) but were mortal, so also Adam had “life” and was mortal.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. According to Job 34:15, "All flesh shall perish together, and \_\_\_\_\_ shall turn again unto \_\_\_\_\_."
2. Genesis 6:3 states, "My \_\_\_\_\_ shall not always strive with man, for that he also is \_\_\_\_\_."
3. In John 3:6 Jesus states, "That which is born of the flesh is \_\_\_\_\_; and that which is born of the spirit is \_\_\_\_\_."

Again, these passages clearly differentiate between "spirit" and "flesh." This designation is used both for biological life and for spiritual life. Life force (also called spirit) animates biological flesh. By the same principle God can put spiritual "life" into us to upgrade us to a spiritual level. We then become spiritual men (i.e., guided by spirit rather than by flesh). We, like Adam, are "born of flesh." But when Jesus breathes "life" (spirit) into us, as God breathed life into Adam, we are "born of spirit."

When our flesh dies it returns to physical dust. The biological "life" force (spirit) no longer animates us. That "spirit" belongs to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke. 23:46; Acts 7:59).

### DEATH LIKENED TO SLEEP

The Old Testament often refers to biological death as a sleep.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

4. God told Moses in Deuteronomy 31:16, "... thou shalt \_\_\_\_\_ with thy fathers."

In the above passage, the phrase "sleep with thy fathers" means to join his fathers in death. There is no indication that Moses thought his flesh would die while his soul continued living. Also take note that Moses' fathers were asleep (dead) rather than still existing. (For other examples, see 2 Samuel 7:12; 1 Kings 2:10; 1 Kings 11:43; 2 Kings 15:38; 2 Kings 20:21, 2 Chronicles 9:31.)

### FIND THE ANSWERS

5. Psalm 13:3 uses the phrase "... lest I sleep the sleep of \_\_\_\_\_."
6. By contrast Daniel 12:2 states, "And many of them that \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth shall awake ..." referring to the spiritual awakening that came through Christ.

The preceding verses describe the condition of death as a “sleep.” There is no suggestion that just part of the person sleeps (dies) while another part stays awake (continues to live).

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

1. Speaking of death, Job 7:21 states, “... for now shall I \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.”

Notice that Job clearly states, “I (the whole person) will sleep (die).” It does not say “part of me” will sleep. Also, it says “I shall not be.” The Old Testament clearly teaches that the entire person dies – not just part of him.

## **DEATH ENDS CONSCIOUSNESS**

These advocates of the immortal soul doctrine believe that man himself (the “soul”) retains consciousness after death. They teach that consciousness is independent of the body. They say that when the body dies, the consciousness (an invisible intelligent entity) remains alive. However, this idea is contrary to the teachings of the Bible.

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

2. Speaking of man’s death, David wrote in Psalm 146:4, “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to the earth; in that very day his \_\_\_\_\_ perish.”
3. Solomon states in Ecclesiastes 9:5, “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead \_\_\_\_\_ not any thing.”
4. Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 9:10, “... for there is no work, nor device, nor \_\_\_\_\_, nor \_\_\_\_\_, in the grave, whither though goest.”

The passages above clearly indicate that no consciousness remains after death. Scripture teaches that when a man dies, his thoughts (consciousness) perish – they are terminated. His knowledge and wisdom cease. By contrast, the immortal soul doctrine teaches that only the flesh perishes while man’s consciousness continues. This teaching contradicts scripture.

Notice, also, that these verses say that man himself returns to the earth and goes to the grave – not just his flesh. There is no indication in these statements that souls continue to exist in a conscious state somewhere while bodies perish. Scripture is clear: Man’s consciousness perishes along with his body.

## CAN THE DEAD PRAISE GOD?

Many professing Christians today, who believe in the immortal soul teaching, fervently believe that dead believers continue to live in the presence of God in a conscious state, and that these departed souls are joyfully praising God along with all those who preceded them. But the Bible clearly refutes this.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. David says in Psalm 115:17, "The dead \_\_\_\_\_ not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence."
2. Psalm 6:5 states, "For in death there is no \_\_\_\_\_ of thee (God): in the grave who shall give thee \_\_\_\_\_?"
3. In Psalm 146:2 David says, "While I \_\_\_\_\_ I will praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any \_\_\_\_\_."

According to David, there is no praise or remembrance of God in death. As a result, he realized that his praise for God must be while he is alive. If David would have remained conscious in the presence of God after his body died, this statement would have made no sense. David knew that his consciousness (his thoughts – his mental activity) would cease at death.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read Isaiah 38.

4. According to verse 1, Hezekiah was sick unto death; Isaiah tells him, "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt \_\_\_\_\_, and not \_\_\_\_\_."
5. After Hezekiah prayed to God and wept sore, verse 5 indicates that God added how many years to his life? \_\_\_\_\_
6. In verse 18 Hezekiah states, "... for the grave cannot praise thee (God), death cannot \_\_\_\_\_ thee: they that go down into the pit cannot \_\_\_\_\_ for thy truth."
7. In verse 19 he says, "The living, the living, he shall \_\_\_\_\_ thee, as I do this day ..."

Hezekiah, like David, knew he could praise God only while he was alive. He clearly states that a dead person (without consciousness) cannot praise, celebrate, or hope; they can do these things only while alive (conscious). He did not say there was no hope for the dead; he simply stated that the dead cannot exercise hope because they have no thoughts. There is absolutely no indication in these verses that Hezekiah would remain conscious after his body died.

## SOUL VS. SPIRIT

At this point in our study, we should discuss the relationship between soul and spirit, since some may bring up Solomon's statement in Ecclesiastes 12:7 as proof that a person's consciousness continues after death and returns to God.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Solomon states in Ecclesiastes 12:7, "Then shall the \_\_\_\_\_ return to the earth as it was:  
and the \_\_\_\_\_ shall return unto God who gave it."

The above verse is used by some who support the immortal soul doctrine to suggest that when a believer dies his body perishes and returns to the earth while his spirit separates from his body and continues living in a place they call "heaven." They say the "dust" that returns to the earth is the person's "body," while the "spirit" that returns to God is the person's conscious soul. However, the verse does not say that.

We have already seen in our study of the Old Testament (Lessons 11 and 12) that "soul" constitutes the whole person as a unit – the whole entity. We have learned that the soul (the whole person) can, and does, die. We have also seen that man (a soul) came from the earth and returns to it when he dies. Therefore, the "dust returning to the earth" in Ecclesiastes 12:7 is a reference to the death of the whole man.

## SPIRIT IS NOT SOUL

The word **spirit** in Ecclesiastes 12:7 is translated from the Hebrew word **ruwach** (#7307 in *Strong's Concordance*), which literally means "breath," "air in motion," or "wind." Spirit moves and drives us as wind moves things like leaves or sail boats. By driving activity or movement, spirit creates life ("quicken") in things both physically and mentally.

This principle holds true for biological life as well as spiritual life. Spirit motivates. In its most basic sense, it is force or energy that animates or drives things including living creatures (souls). When a soul (man or animal) dies, the spirit (life force or energy) is switched off (unplugged). Since the life force (spirit) originates from God, it can be said that when a soul dies the spirit returns to God in the same way electricity returns to its source when a light switch is turned off. This is described in Ecclesiastes 12:7.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

2. Speaking of both man and animals, David states in Psalms 104:29-30, "... thou takest away their \_\_\_\_\_, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy \_\_\_\_\_, they are created."
3. Both answers above are translated from what Hebrew word? \_\_\_\_\_

The Hebrew **ruwach** (whether rendered "breath" or "spirit") is not an entity; rather, it is that which animates. It is that spark that gives life. Biological life is used as a model to describe spiritual life. Without spirit a biological creature is lifeless. Accordingly, without God's spirit (inspiration) we are spiritually lifeless (uninspired). This figure of speech is used for both biological life and spiritual life.



## BREATH IS NOT THE PERSON

Earlier in this lesson, we examined a passage which describes the use of the Hebrew word **ruwach** in relation to man.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Psalms 146:4 states, "His \_\_\_\_\_ (ruwach) goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

The verse above explains that it is **ruwach** (spirit/breath) which gives man life, and when **ruwach** is removed, man himself returns to the earth. Solomon also knew this truth.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

2. Ecclesiastes 3:18-19 states, "... concerning the estate of the sons of Adam ... they are like beasts. For the appointment of the sons of Adam is the appointment of beasts; one appointment to death, so death to one and the other; they all have one \_\_\_\_\_."

The truth of the Old Testament is that men and beasts have certain common characteristics. They are both mortal – that is, they die. While alive, they possess "ruwach" (breath/spirit) – they are living souls. When they die, the breath (spirit) is gone. At that point, no consciousness remains – the entire person or beast is dead.

## SPIRIT PUTS LIFE IN A SOUL

To understand how spirit (ruwach) puts life into otherwise inanimate objects, consider the operation of a common light bulb. (Refer to the illustration on the first page of this lesson.) The electricity (energy) which lights the bulb corresponds to **spirit** (life force) which animates the body. The unlit bulb (tangible, but without light) corresponds to a corpse (physically complete, but without life force). Just as the loss of electricity from the bulb causes the light to be lost, the loss of spirit from a body causes the body to die. Both life and body die. A living **soul** (a conscious being with personality, thoughts, and feelings) becomes a dead soul.

When the electricity is turned off, light is turned off. Likewise, when spirit (the breath of life) is cut off from man, the whole man is dead (ceases to be vital). Part of him does not continue to live independently from the body. (The subject of "spirit" will be studied more in later lessons.)

## IMMORTAL SOUL DOCTRINE SUPPORTS PRE-EXISTENCE

Those who insist that man is an immortal being who returns to God at death must likewise teach that man pre-exists with God before he is born. Logic dictates that man cannot "return" to a place or state where he has never been. Man cannot "return" to God unless he was "with" God previously. This, then, is the basic question: Did man (or man's soul) originate in an immortal state prior to his birth? Or did he begin at his birth? As we have seen, the Old Scriptures plainly teach that man returns to the dust of the ground from which he came. Pre-existence (so-called) is refuted by God's Word just as plainly as continued existence after death. (The doctrine of pre-existence will be studied more in later lessons.)

## IMMORTAL SOUL DOCTRINE DENIES “THE RAISING”

One kind of “raising” is out of a state of biological death. According to logic, the living cannot be raised to life. Only the dead can be raised to life. Without death, there can be no raising. If man really doesn’t die, as most churches teach, then man cannot be “raised.” Neither was Jesus! The Scriptures say nothing about raising spirits or souls out of a place called “heaven.”

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read Ezekiel 37:1-14.

1. Concerning the bones (dead people), verse 10 states, “... and the **breath** (ruwach) came into them, and they \_\_\_\_\_, and stood upon their feet ...”
2. Verse 12 states, “... Behold, O my people, I will open your \_\_\_\_\_, and cause you to come up out of your \_\_\_\_\_ ...”
3. Verse 14 says, “And shall put my **spirit** (ruwach) in you, and ye shall \_\_\_\_\_ ...”

Ezekiel was obviously describing a spiritual raising, not a physical one. Israel as a nation had become spiritually dead. Ezekiel prophesied that they would be raised to spiritual life. This is exactly what occurred by Jesus’ work. God says, “I will ... put my **spirit** (ruwach) in you, and you shall live.” What caused them to come out of their spiritual graves and live? Verse 10 says it was “breath,” while verse 14 says it was “spirit” – both are translated from the same Hebrew word: **ruwach**. These verses, in the form of a vision, describe the death and raising of people (souls). In this case spiritually dead people received new life from Jesus. The application is spiritual, but the principle is the same in the physical sense.

## MORE MISUNDERSTOOD SCRIPTURES

In addition to those cited in the previous lesson, other Old Testament passages are misused in an attempt to prove that man does not really die.

## ELIJAH’S SO-CALLED “TRANSLATION” INTO HEAVEN

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read 2 Kings 2:1-11.

4. According to verse 11, “... there appeared a \_\_\_\_\_ of fire, and horses of fire, and \_\_\_\_\_ them (Elijah and Elisha) both asunder ...”
5. Verse 11 also says that Elijah went up by a \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_.



The preceding verse is used by some to prove that Elijah was taken to heaven alive (translated) and that he never died. However, a closer examination of the facts will show otherwise.

First of all, the word **heaven** in this verse is translated from the Hebrew word **shamayim** (#8064 in *Strong's Concordance*), meaning "the sky" – i.e., the atmosphere or space above the ground. This same Hebrew word is rendered "air" many other places in the Old Scriptures. This verse simply says that Elijah was lifted up into the air. Unfortunately, many have been deluded into the pagan belief that "heaven" is a mystical abode in outer space where God lives along with His angels and the departed souls of dead saints. People automatically read this false concept into this account, leading to misinterpretation. (The term "heaven" will be studied in more detail in later lessons.)

Secondly, Elijah did not ride to "heaven" on a fiery chariot, as many have been led to believe. The account says that a chariot of fire parted them (Elijah and Elisha) asunder. In other words, the chariot of fire separated Elijah and Elisha, putting distance between them. It then says a "whirlwind" (not a chariot of fire) lifted Elijah into the air. The word **whirlwind** is translated from a Hebrew word **ca'ar** (#5591), meaning a hurricane or tornado – i.e., a tempest or violent wind storm. Since there is no wind in outer space, it is not logical that a whirlwind could transport Elijah all the way to an outer space location.

Lastly, Elijah could not have been in a place called "heaven," because the Bible records that he was still alive on Earth some 20 years later during the days of King Jehoram.

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

**Read 2 Chronicles 21:12-15.**

1. 2 Chronicles 21:12 says that a \_\_\_\_\_ came to Jehoram from \_\_\_\_\_.

It is obvious from the above verse that Elijah was neither dead nor in outer space at this time. This letter indicates that Elijah was still alive on the earth and was acquainted with contemporary events years after the "whirlwind" event. It is absurd to think that Elijah sent a letter from outer space. Thus, we can conclude from the evidence of Scripture that God moved Elijah from one location on the land to another place on the land by means of a strong wind (or something figurative of strong wind). Logic dictates that Elijah died at some later time just as all mortals do. In their attempt to prove Elijah never died, many combine their erroneous interpretation of Elijah and the whirlwind with Elijah's appearance on the mount with Moses and Jesus (Matthew 17:1-3), which we will discuss more in our New Testament study of soul.

### **ENOCH TAKEN BY GOD**

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

2. Genesis 5:24 states, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was \_\_\_\_\_; for God \_\_\_\_\_ him.

Some try to use the above passage to prove that Enoch did not die, but that God took him directly to "heaven" where he remains to this day along with Elijah. As was the case with Elijah, Enoch also died. The phrase "he was not" is used in the Bible to denote death.

## FLESH VS. SPIRIT

The terms “flesh” and “spirit” are used often in the Scriptures to describe two contrasting types: those who follow Christ and those who follow the flesh, as described in Romans 8:5.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Romans 8:5-6: “For they that are after the \_\_\_\_\_ do mind the things of the \_\_\_\_\_; but they that are after the \_\_\_\_\_ the things of the \_\_\_\_\_. For to be carnally \_\_\_\_\_ is death; but to be spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ is life and peace.”

Passages in the New Testament often explain passages from the Old Testament. In this case, Paul is addressing the concept of spiritual life (“they that are after the spirit”) as contrasted with spiritual death (they that are “carnally minded”). As we have shown, spiritual life has been the main issue for mankind ever since God breathed spiritual life into Adam. Moses certainly taught it: “*See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil;*” “*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.*” –Deut. 30:15 & 19

## DID ABEL CRY TO GOD AFTER DEATH?

### FIND THE ANSWERS

**Read Genesis 4:8-10.**

2. In verse 10 God says to Cain, “... the \_\_\_\_\_ of thy brother’s blood \_\_\_\_\_ unto me from the ground.”

Some have thought this verse shows that Abel really didn’t die; that only his body died while his “soul” kept on living and talking. The fact that he spoke, they say, proves he was still alive. Note that God did not tell Cain, “Your brother Abel’s soul has talked to me to tell me that you killed his body.” Rather, God told Cain that Abel’s blood cried from the ground. Obviously, blood cannot literally speak. This is symbolic language referring to the fact that Abel had been murdered.

## CONCLUSION

In our study of the Old Testament concerning “soul,” we see no evidence to support the so-called “immortal soul doctrine.” In fact, the Old Testament refutes the notion that man (or a part of him) can continue to live after his biological death. We have seen that the Old Testament confirms that when a man dies, ALL of him dies – no conscious entity or being remains. Man returns to the dust of the ground from which he came. He does not continue living in some alternate life form. We have seen from the Old Testament that there is no consciousness in biological death – no thoughts, no feelings, no awareness.

This life-vs-death terminology is used for biological life and death as well as spiritual life and death. In other words, it indicates inspired eyes and ears (eyes to see, and ears to hear), as compared to uninspired eyes and ears (eyes that are spiritually blind and ears that are spiritually deaf).

The Old Testament teaches that, in this life, man does not possess immortality in any form. It teaches that spirit is a generic term for life or animation in people, animals and plants. When that spirit (animation) ends, life ends. Spirit, then, is life force. Death is the absence of spirit. Soul, on the other hand, constitutes the man – the whole man. Souls do not exist independently of biological bodies. Souls do not continue living independently of bodies. The “immortal soul” doctrine is a lie, without scriptural foundation.



### LESSON 13

## THE “IMMORTAL SOUL” DOCTRINE Part 3

#### Page 122

1. dust; life; living
2. them
3. living
4. breathed; holy spirit
5. life; light
6. life

#### Page 123

1. man; dust
2. spirit; flesh
3. flesh; spirit
4. sleep
5. death
6. sleep; dust

#### Page 124

1. sleep; dust
2. thoughts
3. know
4. knowledge; wisdom

#### Page 125

1. praise
2. remembrance; thanks
3. live; being
4. die; live
5. fifteen
6. celebrate; hope
7. praise

#### Page 126

1. dust; spirit
2. breath; spirit
3. ruwach (#7307)

#### Page 127

1. breath (ruwach)
2. breath (ruwach)

#### Page 128

1. lived
2. graves; graves
3. live
4. chariot; parted
5. whirlwind; heaven

#### Page 129

1. writing; Elijah (the prophet)
2. not; took

#### Page 130

1. flesh; flesh; spirit; spirit; minded; minded
2. voice; crieth

We suggest the following books for additional study:

**Spirits on Trial** - by Ben Williams  
**Doctrine of Salvation** - by Ben Williams

## NOTES