



# Ambassador College

## CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

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*An International Course of Biblical Understanding*

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What Is Death?

LESSON 5

# What OUR STUDENTS SAY

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— Patrick O., Jackson, Tennessee



## Ambassador College CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

### LESSON 5

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## About Our Cover . . .

Is the grave really the end of it all? Or does life continue at some other unspecified location? Theologians and scientists offer traditionally vague answers, or else assume it is impossible to know. Even though it has become fashionable to claim there are no absolutes, this lesson gives the absolute, concrete *truth* — from the Bible! Here are the answers to the agonizing questions about death which have puzzled mankind for millennia.

Ambassador College Photo

# JUST WHAT IS MAN?

***Is man an immortal soul in a material body? Is death the separation of body and soul? What REALLY happens to a person at death? These questions have puzzled mankind for thousands of years. Study the surprising ANSWERS in this revealing lesson!***

**D**EATH is a *reality!*

Though many like to shove it from their minds to escape having to think about it, death is *real*. It is the inevitable consequence of being alive!

Religious people often picture death as the inescapable final plunge into the unknown — into the “next world” with its heaven, hell or purgatory.

What is this thing called *life*, and DEATH? Isn't it about time we finally learned what man really is, and what hope there is — if any — of life after death?

## **Do You Have an Immortal Soul?**

The ancient philosophers taught that man is essentially an immortal spiritual “soul” housed in a temporary body of flesh — that the *real* man is not the body, but an invisible, imma-

terial “immortal soul” that thinks, hears, sees and will consciously live on forever.

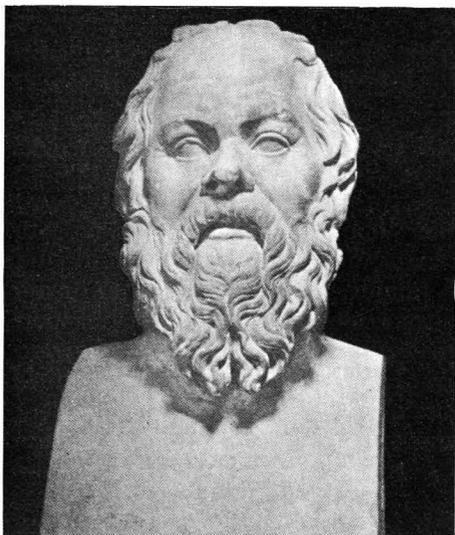
At death, according to the speculation of the ancients, the soul leaves the body and journeys to a nebulous realm, possibly paradise or a place of punishment. The body, they correctly observed, goes to the grave.

Some Oriental philosophers speculated that the souls of the departed go into other bodies after death and live as animals, birds, snakes, even trees or gnats — or perhaps as human beings. This doctrine, called “transmigration of souls” or “reincarnation,” is currently gaining a renewed popularity.

But what is the authority for these beliefs? Do they come from Biblical revelation? Where *did* they come from? Where did the Christian-professing churches acquire their present teachings about the immortality of the soul?

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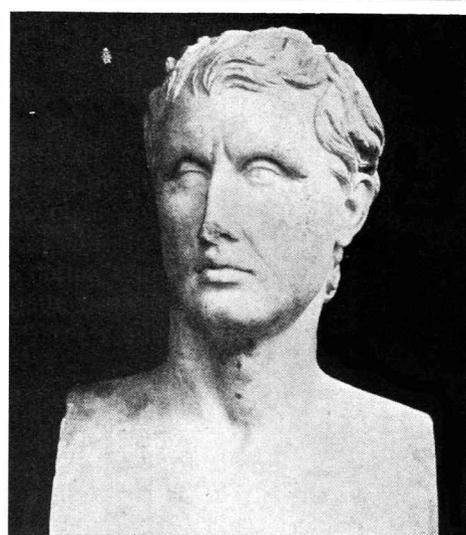
University Prints, Boston

**SOCRATES** (c. 470-399 B.C.) — Consulted the Egyptians about immortal soul teachings.



Yeshiva University

**PLATO** (c. 428-348 B.C.) — Famous student of Socrates, Plato taught that death is the separation of body and soul.



University Prints, Boston

**VIRGIL** (c. 70-19 B.C.) — Popularized the immortal soul concept throughout the Roman world.

Consider this candid statement from the *Jewish Encyclopedia*: “The belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body” — after death — “is a matter of philosophical or theological *speculation* rather than of simple faith, and is accordingly *nowhere taught in Holy Scripture*” (from article, “Immortality of the Soul,” emphasis ours throughout lesson).

### Inherited from Pre-Christian World

This same article continues: “The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato, its principal exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended.”

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, according to this respected encyclopedia, came from pre-Christian Greek philosophers who acquired it from pagan Egypt and Babylon!

Notice what Herodotus, the famous Greek historian who lived in the fifth century before Jesus, admitted: “The Egyptians were also *the first that asserted that the soul of man is immortal*. . . . This opinion, some among the Greeks have at different periods of time adopted as their own” (*Euterpe*, chapter 123).

It was the Greek Socrates who traveled to Egypt and consulted the Egyptians on this very teaching. After his return to Greece, he imparted the concept to Plato, his most famous pupil. Compare the present-day doctrine of the

## THESE MEN TAUGHT IM

churches with what Plato wrote in his book, *The Phaedo*:

“The soul whose inseparable attribute is life will never admit of life’s opposite, death. Thus the soul is shown to be immortal, and since immortal, indestructible. . . . Do we believe there is such a thing as death? To be sure. And is this anything but the separation of the soul and body? And being dead is the attainment of this separation, when the soul exists in herself and separate from the body, and the body is parted from the soul. That is death. . . . Death is merely the separation of soul and body.”

Sounds a lot like ordinary church teaching, doesn’t it?

You were probably taught that this same doctrine was totally Christian. You undoubtedly assumed it came straight from the Bible — but it did not, as you can see for yourself.

After Plato came Aristotle who perpetuated the theory. Then the poet Virgil (70-19 B. C.) popularized it throughout the Roman World.

But how did this concept become a fundamental doctrine of the vast majority of professing Christians?

### Later Labeled “Christian”

The introduction of this popular superstition into the churches was a gradual process which took centuries. The early “church fathers” were



Culver Pictures

**ORIGEN** (c. 185-254 A.D.) — Joined Plato's immortal soul teachings with certain portions of the Bible.



Historical Pictures Service

**TERTULLIAN** (c. 155-220 A.D.) — Influential teacher of the doctrine at close of the second century.



Culver Pictures

**AQUINAS** (1225-1274 A.D.) — Stamped the immortal soul doctrine permanently on professing Christianity.

## MORTALITY OF THE SOUL

divided on this subject. As late as 160 A.D. Justin, the philosopher-turned-professing-Christian, wrote:

“But our Jesus Christ, being crucified, and dead, and having ascended to heaven, reigned, and by those things which were published in His name among all nations by the apostles, there is joy offered to those who *expect* the immortality *promised* by Him” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. I, p. 176). Many of the early Catholics indeed knew they did not have immortality within themselves. It was something they yet *expected* to receive.

Origen, an early Catholic teacher in Alexandria, Egypt, joined the speculations of Plato with certain parts of the Bible and called his philosophy *neo-Platonism*. Here is what Origen wrote around 200 A. D.: “Souls are immortal, as God Himself is eternal and immortal!” He openly professed to be a true “Platonist, who believed in the immortality of the soul” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. IV, pp. 314, 402).

Another influential teacher at the close of the second century was Tertullian of Phoenician North Africa. He wrote: “For some things are known, even by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many. . . . I may use, therefore, the opinion of Plato, when he declares: ‘EVERY SOUL IS IMMORTAL’” (*ibid.*, vol. III, p. 547).

And so the personal ideas of these influential

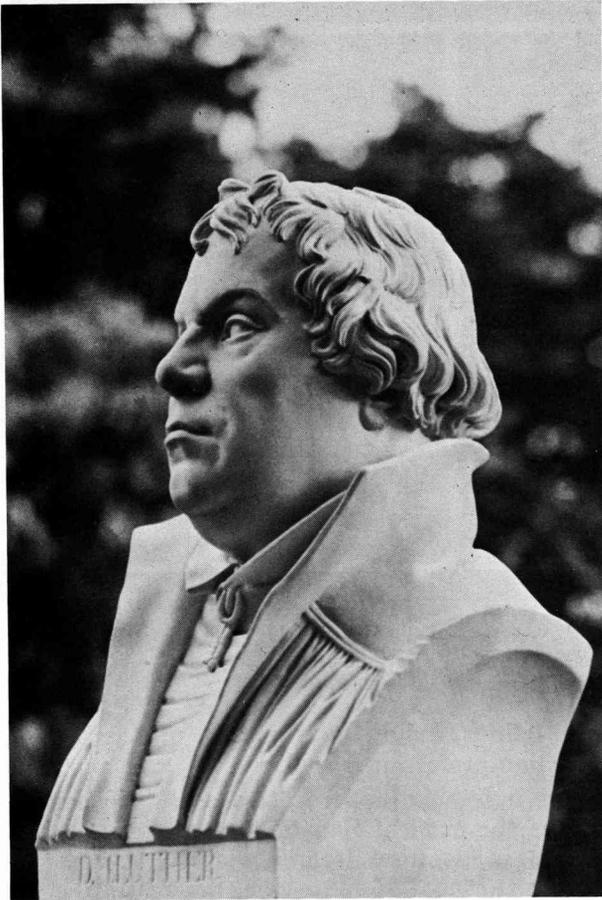
men helped mold the thinking of the entire Christian-professing world.

But a few Catholic writers and teachers as late as the time of Constantine condemned the change in doctrine from Christ's teachings to those of Plato. Here is the remonstrance of Arnobius against those who were being “carried away with an extravagant opinion of themselves that souls are immortal. . . . Will you lay aside your habitual arrogance, O men, who claim God as your Father, and maintain that you are immortal just as He is?” (*ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 440.)

After the time of Emperor Constantine — who forced the Roman Empire to accept one universal faith — Augustine, another writer of North African extraction, “sanctified” the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in his book, *The City of God*. Along came other writers — all under the influence of Plato, Aristotle and Virgil — who dominated the philosophy of Western “Christian” theology during the early Middle Ages.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.), Italian scholastic teacher and theologian, stamped the doctrine of the immortality of the soul permanently on the Christian professing world. Fifty years later, Dante Alighieri wrote the immensely famous poem, *The Divine Comedy*, in which he pictured for the common people his imaginary concepts of hell, purgatory and paradise — which have been widely believed since that time.

But not only did this doctrine become religious dogma in the medieval world, those who rejected this idea became branded as heretics!



Wide World Photo

Martin Luther's futile efforts to eradicate the immortal soul concept were soon forgotten by the Protestant movement.

### Finally Imposed by Force

Just before the Protestant Reformation, the Lateran Council of 1513 issued this decree:

"Whereas some have dared to assert concerning the nature of the reasonable soul that it is mortal, we, with the approbation of the sacred council, do condemn and reprobate all those who assert that the intellectual soul is mortal, seeing, according to the canon of Pope Clement V, that the soul is . . . immortal . . . and we decree that all who adhere to like erroneous assertions shall be shunned and *punished as heretics*."

That meant that any who taught the truth were to be turned over to the civil authorities for punishment. And the punishment was usually severe!

### The Original Protestant View

During the Reformation, some early Protestants tried to cast off the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Martin Luther declared that the Bible did not teach the immor-

tality of the soul (*Defense*, Proposition No. 27). "Luther held that the soul died with the body, and that God would hereafter raise both the one and the other" (*Historical View*, p. 344).

How different were Luther's first teachings from the Protestant doctrine today! Here are Luther's own words, expressed about the year 1522:

"It is probable, in my opinion, that, with very few exceptions, indeed, the dead sleep in utter insensibility till the day of judgment. . . . On what authority can it be said that the souls of the dead may not sleep . . . in the same way that the living pass in profound slumber the interval between their downlying at night and their uprising in the morning?" (From Michelet's *Life of Luther*, Bohn's edition, p. 133.)

Luther's original teachings have never ceased to embarrass Protestant theologians who have since readopted the teachings of ancient Egypt and Greece.

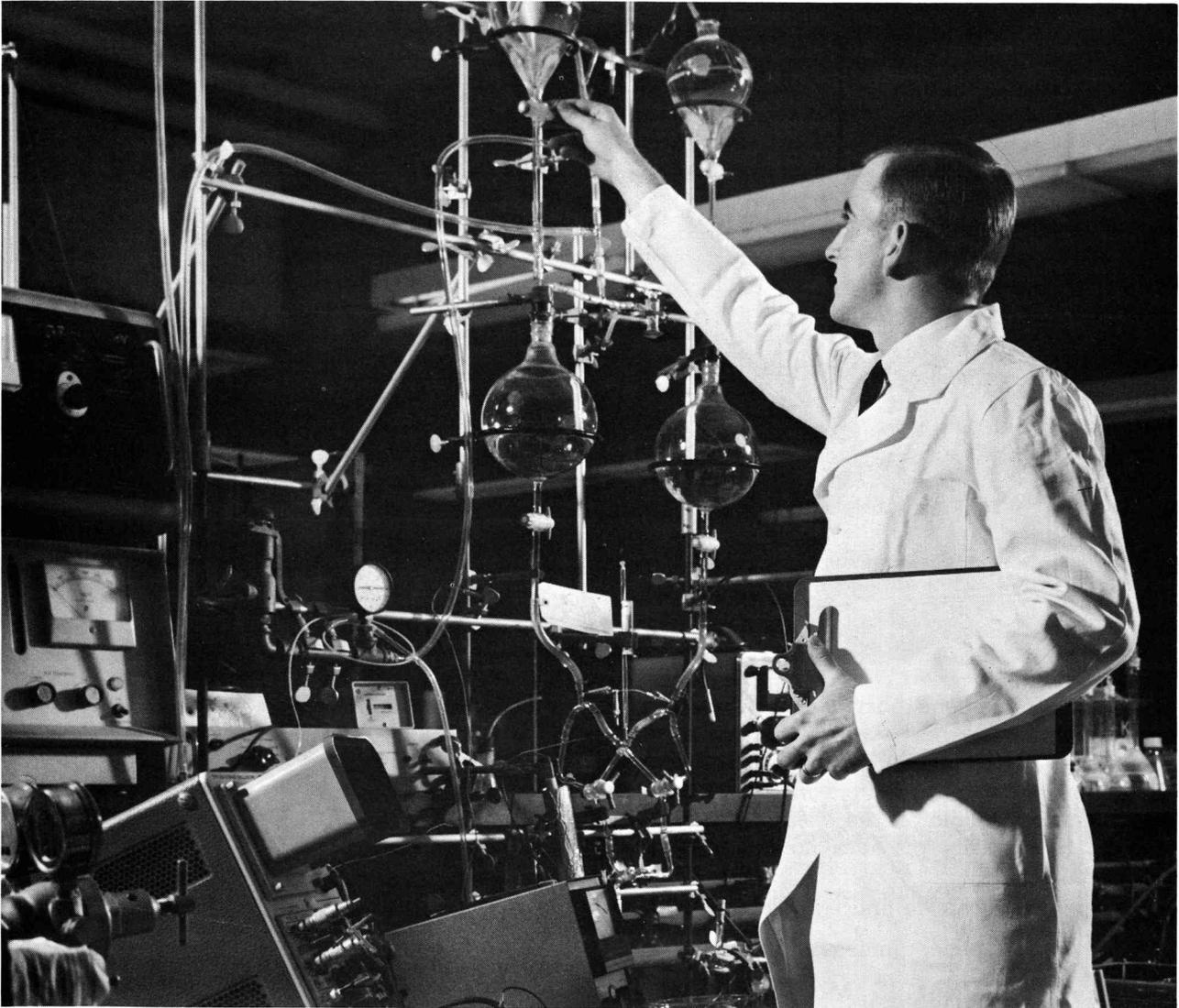
William Tyndale, the printer of the first New Testament in English and another of the Reformers, wrote: "In putting departed souls in heaven, hell, or purgatory you destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. . . . The true faith putteth the resurrection; the heathen philosophers, denying that, did put that souls did ever live. . . . If the soul be in heaven, tell me what cause is there for the resurrection?"

That's a very good question!

The Protestant Reformers found the people unwilling to change their doctrines. Gradually, the Reformers themselves gave in to popular tradition — tradition which has its roots in pagan philosophy and speculation! And so most churchgoers today believe the doctrine of the immortality of the soul simply because they have unquestioningly embraced the speculations which have been passed down from ancient pagan philosophers!

The Apostle Paul wrote about this very kind of speculation: "*Beware* lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after *the tradition of men*, after the rudiments" — fundamental concepts — "of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

The Bible, as we shall soon see, is NOT the source of the common belief in the immortality of the soul. Surprising as it may seem to some, the Bible plainly teaches that man is mortal — physical — fleshly — of the dust. And when he dies, he turns to dust. Let's look in the Bible and PROVE what it really says!



H. Armstrong Roberts Photo

## LESSON 5

### Does Science Have the Answer?

Is man an immortal soul in a material body? What does science have to say about it?

Absolutely *nothing* to support the concept!

Science simply has *no evidence* for the existence of an immortal soul. Science deals only with *physical*, material substances and behavior — physical matter and energy. Modern science is *limited* entirely to the MATERIAL world that can be weighed and measured — to that which can be perceived by the five senses.

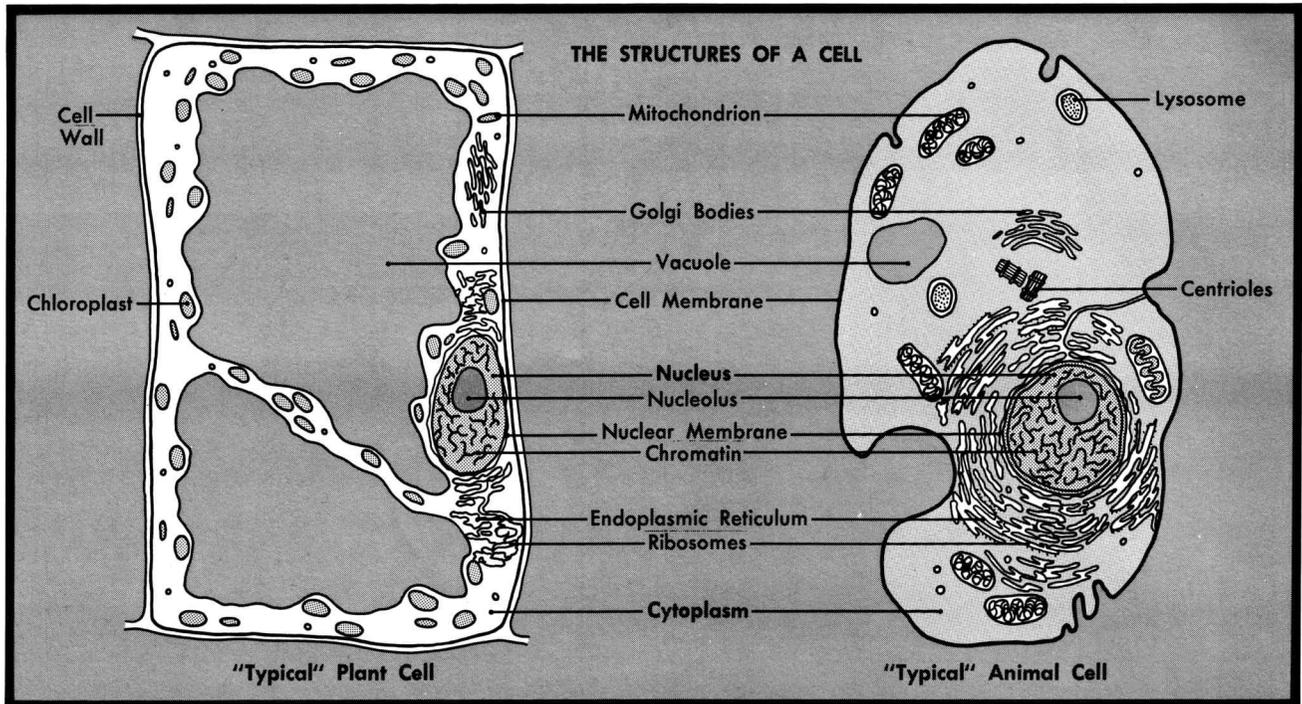
The spiritual is completely outside the realm of physical science and is therefore not subject to the “scientific method.” Science cannot *measure* — hence cannot reveal — any life apart from matter. And so all that man can know (apart from divine revelation) is material. But

what science has learned can nevertheless help immensely in understanding the *composition* of man.

Science has discovered that all living matter, in its simplest form, is protoplasm — a substance which composes the “living stuff” of the cells of both plants and animals, as well as man.

This much also is definitely known: Individuals who died on the operating table and were then quickly revived through direct heart massage or other means, remembered absolutely nothing about the intervening time! They “went” nowhere! They were simply *unconscious*. They merely reawakened on the operating table as if they had been sleeping soundly. But since brain deterioration occurs very rapidly, if too many minutes elapse the person becomes deprived of some of his thought, reasoning and memory faculties.

These facts would surely indicate that an “immortal soul,” if there is one, is completely



Ambassador College Art

unable to think, remember or reason *apart* from the body!

Science, therefore, tells us that it has no evidence of an "immortal soul" in man. Even the experience of people on the operating table who "died" temporarily provides no evidence of an immortal soul.

Where, then, can we find reliable evidence one way or the other?

### What IS Man?

The Bible is the FOUNDATION of knowledge. In it the Creator God has revealed much knowledge that is totally beyond man's capability to discover for himself — including the knowledge and understanding of what man *is*, as well as what he is to *be*.

Let's not assume. Let's look into the Bible to see what man really is.

1. What did Jesus Christ say man is composed of? John 3:6, first part. And is that which is "born of *spirit*" of a *totally different* composition? Same verse.

COMMENT: Man is composed of flesh — of protoplasm. Jesus plainly says that if one is born of (and therefore composed of) flesh, he cannot also at the same time be born of (composed of) spirit. He must be one or the other! So this verse alone is strong evidence that man is not an immortal spiritual "soul" in a body of mortal flesh. But let's continue.

2. Was the Apostle Paul an immortal soul clothed with a body of flesh — or did he speak

**PLANT, ANIMAL CELLS** — Fantastically complex and minute cells are composed primarily of protoplasm, the essential living matter of all plants and animals.

of himself and *his flesh* as being synonymous? Rom. 7:18.

COMMENT: Paul did not distinguish between himself and his flesh in this verse. He indicated they were one and the same. (We will deal with some of Paul's other statements later.) Although these verses do not conclusively prove man has no immortal soul, they certainly should open one's mind to the possibility that such does *not* exist!

In order to understand whether man has an immortal soul, let's go back to Creation — the time when the first man was formed — to see exactly what happened.

### The Creation of Man

God created the first man. And He tells us what He made him from so there would be no doubt as to what we really are. Here is that account as revealed in the Bible:

1. Out of what did God form man? Gen. 2:7. Notice that it was the *man* — not only the body — that was formed.

2. Was it the *whole man* — "thou" — that was composed of dust? Gen. 3:19.

COMMENT: Adam was made from and therefore composed of *earth*!

3. What would eventually happen to the conscious man? Gen. 3:19, last part.

4. After God had formed the man and made every cell in his body, what did He do to give him *life*? Gen. 2:7.

COMMENT: God blew air — “the breath of life” containing oxygen — into the man’s lungs through the nostrils, and the man began to *live*! The verse does not say that God breathed an immortal soul into the man.

5. Is the “breath of life” the same thing which passes through the nostrils of animals? Gen. 7:21-22. Is it therefore the breath of life that is *cut off* when a human being or an animal drowns? Verse 23. Then the source of life in man and all animals is the same, isn’t it?

COMMENT: If the “breath of life” even remotely meant that man has an immortal soul, then so do animals, birds and even insects — gnats, fleas, mosquitoes, etc.!

### What Kind of “Soul”?

1. When God had breathed the breath of life into Adam’s nostrils, what did he become? Gen. 2:7, last part.

COMMENT: Man does not *have* a soul — man *IS* a “soul”! The original Hebrew word for “soul” is *nephesh*. Bagster’s *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* defines it as “breath,” and “anything that breathes, *an animal*.” It can also refer to a “person,” or even “one dead, a dead body.” In Genesis 1:21, 24; 2:19; 9:10, 12, 15, 16 and Leviticus 11:46, the same word *nephesh* is translated “creature” when referring to *animals*.

And so man is a creature; man *is* a SOUL. Animals are creatures or souls, too! Notice! The same word *nephesh* is translated as “dead body” or “the dead” in Leviticus 19:28; 21:1; 22:4; Numbers 5:2; 6:11 and 9:6, 7, 10. The “soul,” then, is merely animal life that is subject to death and decay. It is *not* immortal!

The soul is composed of the “dust of the ground” — it is material, not spiritual. It is matter. When man breathes, he is a living soul. When man ceases to breathe, he becomes a non-living or *dead* soul. That’s what your Bible reveals. Are you willing to believe what the Bible plainly says?

2. Can the “soul” die? Ezek. 18:4, 20. If the soul were immortal — eternal — could it die? Is man plainly said to be “mortal”? Job 4:17.

COMMENT: Since man is a soul, and the soul is mortal — then man is mortal, subject to death. That is why the Scriptures call human beings “mortal man.”

3. Was Adam subject to death? Gen. 2:17, last part. Was it the body only that would die, or was it the whole conscious man — Adam — “*thou*” — that would die?

4. What one thing befalls *both* man and beast? Eccl. 3:19. Is this because they all have the same *temporary* source of life — the breath of air? Same verse.

5. Do all men and animals alike go to the same place at death? Eccl. 3:20.

COMMENT: When an animal dies, it is dead. When man dies, he is completely dead, too. Like “Rover,” when a man dies he dies “all over.” And all men and animals return to the dust from which they came.

6. Now what does Ecclesiastes 3:21 ask?

COMMENT: Far from proving an immortal soul, Solomon’s *question* actually ridicules the “immortal soul” doctrine which was extant and believed by the pagans even in his day. Therefore he asks a question which no pagan can answer.

The Hebrew word *ruach*, translated “spirit” in this verse, also means air, wind, breath. It is translated 28 times as “breath” in the King James version. Three examples are Genesis 6:17; 7:15 and Lamentations 4:20. It is also translated 90 times as “wind.” Thus we can see *ruach* has a very broad meaning, and may be applied to a wide variety of things whose common denominator is *invisibility*. It may even mean “attitude” as well as “spirit,” and with the word “holy” preceding, it means the Holy Spirit of God.

Solomon asks, therefore, since the same event — death — occurs to both man and beast, “Who knows whether a man’s spirit goes up while a beast’s goes downward?”

There is, however, a vast difference between man and beast, as we will shortly see — and that difference does involve the Hebrew word *ruach*.

### What Is the LIFE of Man?

Man is a living, breathing MORTAL creature — a *nephesh*, or living soul in whose nostrils is *air*. What happens to the breath of *air* that goes into our lungs?

When you take a breath of air, it passes through your trachea, into the lungs and into little pockets or sacs called alveoli. There oxygen is absorbed from the air and goes into the bloodstream. As the blood flows through the blood vessels from the lungs on the way back to the heart, and then is pumped again throughout the body, the oxygen is carried by the red blood cells

throughout the body to the individual cells. Each of your 60 trillion cells uses oxygen to “burn” your food to create the energy needed to power your organs and muscles, and to maintain body heat. The life of man clearly depends on *the blood*, and the blood needs *the breath of life* to keep the body active and alive.

1. According to the Bible, is the life of man and animals found in the bloodstream — or in an immortal soul? Lev. 17:11, 14. Does Deuteronomy 12:23 corroborate this?

COMMENT: In these verses, the Hebrew word *nephesh* is translated “life.” Thus *nephesh* (or soul) can refer either to the fleshly *man* or the *life* of man which depends on his *blood*.

2. Did Christ make His “soul” an offering for sin? Isa. 53:10. How did He accomplish this? Verse 12.

COMMENT: Christ voluntarily offered up His body to be crucified and allowed His life’s blood (“soul”) to be poured out!

How clear that when a man ceases to breathe the breath of life, his heart stops beating and circulating his life’s blood, and he dies. But then what happens?

### Is There Life After Death?

1. When a person dies — becomes *lifeless* — does he still have a conscious existence because of an immortal soul within him? Eccl. 9:5; Ps. 146:4.

COMMENT: Since the Bible states plainly that the dead are *not conscious* of anything, we can logically conclude that man is *not* born with an immortal soul which is conscious and aware of things happening around it after death!

2. Are the dead able to praise God? Ps. 115:17. But if Christians have immortal souls, wouldn’t they be praising God after they die, thankful to be with Him in paradise? Here, then, is more concrete evidence that human beings do not have immortal souls.

3. Is there any remembrance of God in death? Ps. 6:5.

COMMENT: Death is the *opposite* of life. Death is the *CESSATION* of life! That is the reason dead people can remember *nothing*. How clear!

4. According to Matthew 10:28, is the “soul” something which can be *destroyed*? Then didn’t Jesus plainly show that the soul is not immortal? Let’s understand exactly what Jesus was talking about.

COMMENT: Although some people use this text to support their belief of the immortality of the soul, it plainly says the soul is something

that can be *destroyed* in hell! Thus, whatever this “soul” is, it could NOT be immortal!

The Greek word here translated “soul” is *psuche*. It refers to the same thing as the Hebrew word *nephesh*. It simply means *life, existence*.

In Matthew 10:28, Christ obviously used this word to refer to “life” that man *cannot* destroy — but which God can. What kind of life could this be? Obviously life which God *RESTORES* by a resurrection!

Man cannot “destroy” a life that God turns right around and renews. But *GOD* can destroy it — *permanently* — by casting the resurrected person into the “lake of fire,” never to be resurrected again!

Luke makes this scripture plainer: “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which *AFTER* he hath killed hath power to cast into hell . . .” (Luke 12:5). God not only has the power to take our present physical life, but also has the power to resurrect us and — if we have proved disobedient and incorrigible — to cast us into the lake of fire from which there will be *NO* future resurrection! (Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8.)

Although men may kill their physical bodies, true Christians know that men cannot take from them their *hope* of eternal life.

### Is Man Merely an Animal?

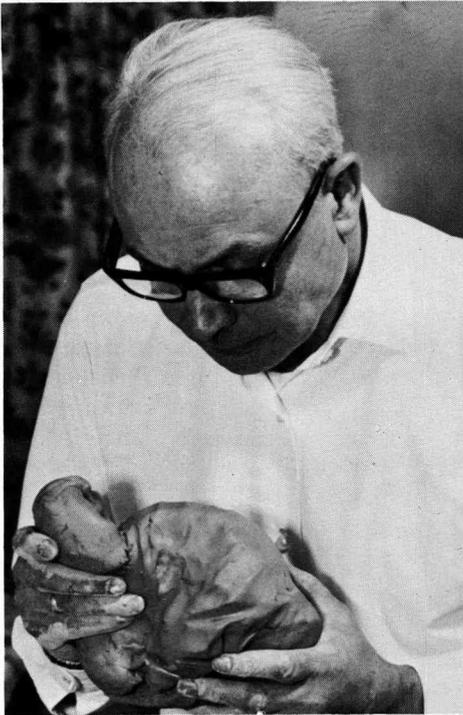
Since man does not have an immortal soul, does this mean he is just an animal — here today and gone tomorrow? Not at all!

What is it that makes man different from the animals? Let’s understand the amazing truth!

1. Were animals created in God’s image — or were they created each after its *own* kind? Gen. 1:21, 24, 25. But was man created in the “image” and “likeness” of *GOD*? Gen. 1:26-27. Was man to rule over all other creatures? Verse 26.

COMMENT: The Hebrew words of Genesis 1:26-27 reveal God’s great plan and ultimate purpose for mankind! When God molded Adam of the dust, he was shaped in the “likeness” — the outward form and shape — of God Himself. God didn’t form any of the other creatures to be an exact clay replica of Himself. This unique form and shape was *given to man alone*!

Notice again that God said “Let us make man in our *image*. . .” The Hebrew here indicates more than merely the outward form and shape of God, His likeness — far more. “Image” refers to *mind* and *character*! God intended for man — to whom He gave the gift of a thinking, reasoning mind — to develop the very mind and character of *GOD*!



Ambassador College, H. Armstrong Roberts Photos

Each animal was created with a brain suited for each animal kind. But animals do not have the potential of MIND and CHARACTER which God gave only to man. No animal was ever given the gift of mind power!

*It is this very SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE OF MIND AND CHARACTER that separates men from animals!*

Animals do not have reasoning, *self-conscious* minds. Animals follow *instinctive* habit patterns in their feeding, nesting, migration, and reproduction. God has “programmed” their brains, so to speak, with particular *instinctive* aptitudes. Thus beavers build dams, birds build nests, etc. These aptitudes are *inherited* — they are not the result of logical cognitive processes.

For example, thousands of birds flock south each year as winter approaches in the northern hemisphere. They don’t stop to “reason” why, they don’t ask themselves whether they should, they don’t “plan ahead” an itinerary for the trip. At a given signal — like the pre-set alarm of a clock — they leave their summer feeding grounds in the north and travel thousands of miles south. Scientists don’t fully understand why — they merely observe the operation of this animal *instinct*.

Each species or kind of bird builds different nests, feeds on different foods, and migrates in different ways at different times to different places. But none of these actions is planned by the birds. They are merely the capability and proclivity which Almighty God built into the *instinct* of each kind at creation.

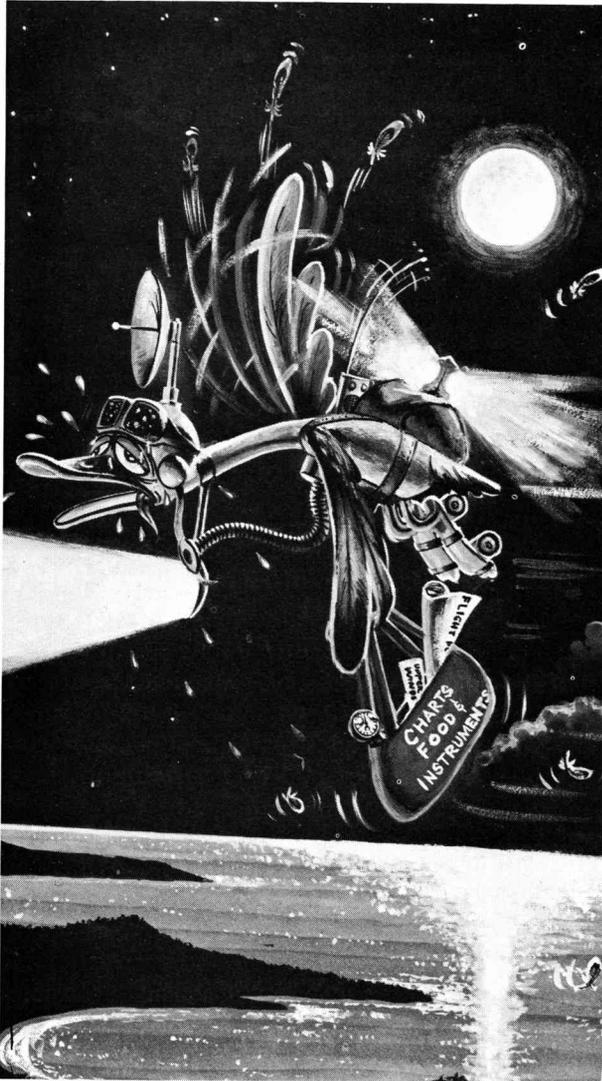
Left: Even as a potter molds clay to form a work of art, God, the Master Potter, made man a clay replica of Himself. Right: God-given human brain and animal instinct meet for a turtle’s-eye view of life.

But man is vastly different. Man is able to perceive and understand various ways to do any one thing. Man can reason from memorized facts and knowledge, draw conclusions, make decisions, will to act according to a thought-out plan.

Each man may build a different house, eat different foods — live an entirely different way of life — from every other man. If a man wants to change his way of life — *he can!* Man is not subject to instinct. He is not governed by a set of pre-determined habit patterns as animals are.

Man can *choose* — he has free moral agency. He can devise codes of conduct and exercise self-discipline. Man can originate ideas and evaluate scientific knowledge because he has a MIND *which is patterned after God’s own mind!* Man can devise, plan, and bring his plans to fruition because he has been given some of the very creative powers of God!

Man alone can wonder, “*Why* was I born? What is life? What is *death*? Is there a *purpose* in human existence?” Man, unlike the animals, not only “knows” how to do certain things, but he also KNOWS he knows — that is, he is *aware* that he has “knowledge.” He is *conscious* of the fact. He is *self-conscious*, aware of his own existence as a unique being.



Ambassador College Art

**MIGRATION-SCHMIGRATION!** — Some believe wildlife developed instinct gradually. But until the time instinct became fully developed, migratory birds must have relied on travel agents and navigational aids!

The attributes of mind and character make man God's **UNIQUE** physical creation. God has shared some of His own qualities with man and expects him to develop the "image" of God's *perfect mind and holy character!*

### What Makes Man's Mind Unique?

Many animals have physical brains as large, or even larger than man's brain, and with similar cerebral cortex complexity — but none has the powers of intellect, logic, self-consciousness and creativity.

What gives man's brain these unique abilities?

And what will God use, after the death and complete dissolution of the physical body and

brain, to *reproduce* each individual at the resurrection?

1. Since man has no immortal soul within him which enables him to live on apart from his body after death (remember man is a **MORTAL** soul), does the Bible speak elsewhere of a "spirit in man"? Job 32:8; Zech. 12:1; I Cor. 2:9-14. Notice especially verse 11 of I Corinthians 2. Is this spirit "in" man clearly *distinguished from* the Holy Spirit of God? Same verses in I Corinthians 2.

**COMMENT:** This spirit is *not the man* — it is something that is *IN* the man. Joined with the physical brain of the man, it forms human **MIND**. It imparts to man's brain his *unique* powers of intellect and personality — the ability to think rationally and make free-will decisions. It imparts the ability to learn mathematics, languages or any type of philosophical knowledge.

But that's all. The spirit that is *IN* man has no consciousness of itself. It is *not* an "immortal soul." This spirit is *not* the "man."

Because of this spiritual element, the Bible often uses the word "spirit" simply to mean man's *mind*, intelligence, attitude. To distinguish this kind of spirit in man and the kind of spirit that is God's Holy Spirit from mere physical breath, the book of Job continues in context to use two separate Hebrew words — *ruach* for spirit, *neshamah* for breath (Job 33:4; 34:14).

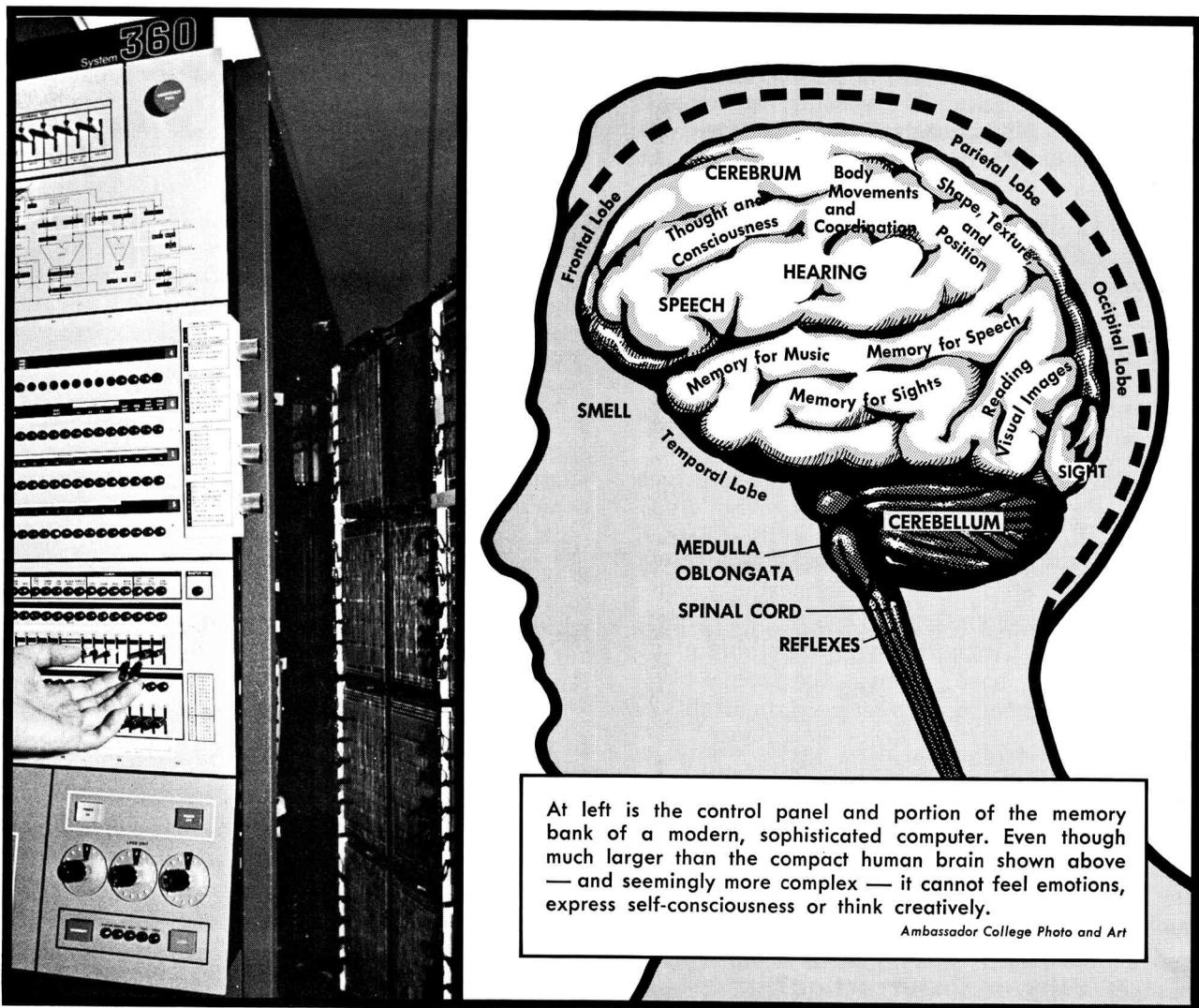
2. When a person dies, does this totally non-conscious "spirit in man" return to God who gave it? Eccl. 12:7.

**COMMENT:** This spirit in each individual, of necessity, does more than merely impart the power of intellect to the physical brain. It becomes a spiritual "mold" of the entire person — even to preserving memory, knowledge and character. And so when a person dies, that spirit "recording" returns to God and is "filed" away until the time God will "replay" it to bring about the resurrection of the identical personality to life and consciousness.

Why haven't you heard this truth before? Simply because the whole world has been **DECEIVED!**

3. Can the human mind — having only this *human* spirit of man — understand the *spiritual* things of God? I Cor. 2:11. What must be *added* before a man can comprehend spiritually revealed knowledge? Same verse.

**COMMENT:** Spiritual things cannot be seen with the eye, heard with the ear, felt with the hands. The human mind, which can receive knowledge only through these physical channels, can never really comprehend spiritual concepts and principles without the Holy Spirit of God. The greatest minds — scientific, philo-



sophical minds — cannot really come to know and understand SPIRITUAL truths with their natural minds.

Just as surely as no animal brain — such as that of a cow, for example — can comprehend or understand *human* affairs, so no human mind can have comprehension of spiritual things on the divine plane *unless and until* it has received the Holy Spirit of God! (More about the function and receiving of the Holy Spirit will be contained in a forthcoming lesson.)

### Origin of the “Big Lie”

The truth about the “spirit in man” is so important that Satan tried to twist and warp and pervert it long ago. He clouded the minds of men and got them to believing his “big lie” as far back as the time of Adam and Eve.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan deceived Eve. Notice what happened:

1. What did Satan tell Eve? Gen. 3:4.

COMMENT: Here was the *origin* of the “immortality of the soul” doctrine preached today! Satan told Eve she would “not surely die” — in other words, she had an “immortal soul” that would live forever. Eve swallowed this lie, hook, line and sinker!

2. Has Satan deceived the WHOLE world? Rev. 12:9.

COMMENT: The devil has deceived the whole world on nearly every point of God’s Truth! And virtually the entire world today believes some variation of the ancient “big lie.” Millions have been deluded to believe in reincarnation or the transmigration of souls as a result of the false doctrine of an ever-living soul.

Satan has deceived the world with a COUNTERFEIT doctrine — a doctrine which perverts the truth about the “spirit in man.” With his cunning counterfeit, Satan has withheld from the minds of MILLIONS the truth about the “spirit in man,” and the need for a resurrection from the dead!

## Only GOD Is Immortal!

We have clearly seen that the Bible does not teach the immortality of the soul. But what, then, *does* the Bible teach about immortality?

1. According to I Timothy 6:15-16, who alone has immortality inherently?

2. Is God also incorruptible? I Tim. 1:17, and see comment.

COMMENT: The Greek word translated "immortal" here is *aphthartos*, meaning "incorruptible." God is incorruptible. Man is not.

3. Now turn to I Corinthians 15:53 and 54. Do these two verses say that man is already immortal? What must man *put on*? Verse 53. When will man be "clothed" with immortality? Verse 52. Does this happen at the time of the resurrection? I Thes. 4:16.

4. Who brought to mankind the knowledge of how to receive eternal life and immortality (incorruption)? II Tim. 1:10. Doesn't this verse plainly show that immortality is something man does *not already* have? Then is the Gospel also the good news about how to *receive* immortality? Same verse.

5. Is immortality to be *sought* for? Rom. 2:7. Is eternal life a free *gift* bestowed on those who *seek* immortality? Same verse and Rom. 6:23.

6. Was David still alive as an immortal soul after he died? Acts 2:29, 34. Will David, King of Israel, be *raised* from the dead? Jer. 30:9.

## Why a Resurrection?

If man were an immortal soul in a material body — and if the death of the body released the soul — then there would be no need for a resurrection to immortal life. Man would merely continue living after death. But the very fact that the Bible teaches the resurrection from the dead is *further proof* man has no immortal soul!

1. If Christ had not risen from the dead, would faith in a future life by a resurrection be all in vain? I Cor. 15:14-17. If there will be no resurrection, have those who are dead in their graves *perished* forever? Verse 18.

2. However, did Christ Himself warn that the unregenerate — unrepentant — man *is* to perish? John 3:16 and Luke 13:3, 5. If man were an immortal soul, could he actually "perish"? (See in your dictionary that the word "perish" means to *CEASE* living.)

3. Who will *hear* the voice of the Son of God at the resurrection? John 5:25. Do they then "rise"? I Thes. 4:16.

COMMENT: The dead cannot "hear" unless

they are first *restored* to *LIFE!* The dead are pictured throughout the Bible as *being asleep* in their graves, awaiting the day of the resurrection. Notice Jesus' words when describing the death of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha:

"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'" (John 11:11-14).

Death is pictured as a sleep. Death, like sleep, is a condition in which people are not conscious and from which they shall be "awakened"! Notice the plain evidence of Scripture:

"And many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall *awake*" (Dan. 12:2). "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which *slept arose*" (Matt. 27:52). "And when thy days be fulfilled," said God to David, "and thou shalt *sleep* with thy fathers..." (II Sam. 7:12).

Death is described as a *sleep* dozens of times in the Bible when referring to the kings of Israel and Judah! "David *slept* with his fathers..." (I Kings 2:10). Notice that it does not say "the body slept while the soul was conscious." It plainly says, "*David slept*." It was the conscious person who fell "asleep" in death!

In the following verses the same expression is used to describe death. Look each one up and see for yourself that death is compared to a sleep: I Kings 11:21, 43; 14:20, 31; 15:8, 24; 16:6, 28; 22:40, 50; II Kings 8:24; 10:35; 13:9, 13; 14:16, 22, 29; 15:7, 22, 38; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18; 24:6; II Chronicles 9:31; 12:16; 14:1; 16:13; 21:1; 26:2; 27:9; 28:27; 32:33; 33:20.

Certainly here is *conclusive evidence* that the dead are not conscious — that they have no conscious "immortal souls"!

## Man to BECOME Spirit

1. Job once asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" What was Job's answer to his own question? Job 14:14. What was the change Job spoke of, and *when* will it take place? I Cor. 15:51-53.

2. What will Job, David and all those in the resurrection be like? Will they be like God? Ps. 17:15. Is God *spirit*? John 4:24. Are they therefore to be composed of spirit then? I Cor. 15:42-49. Compare this with I John 3:2.

3. Why were Adam and Eve *not* permitted to eat the fruit of the "tree of [eternal] life" after

they sinned? Gen. 3:22-24, especially the last part of verse 22.

COMMENT: Adam and Eve could have eventually gained eternal life and become spirit by eating of the fruit of the "tree of life." This plainly shows Adam and Eve did not have immortality *inherent* in themselves!

The "tree of life" symbolized the Holy Spirit — the way to eternal life. Adam was created incomplete. He was created to need the Holy Spirit of God in order to live forever. If Adam had eaten of the fruit of that tree, rather than of the forbidden tree, he would have received the Holy Spirit (the very life of God) and would *not* have died!

Adam, however, had to choose whether or not he would accept the free gift of the Holy Spirit. He *chose* (I Tim. 2:14, first part), by disobeying God, *not* to receive the Holy Spirit and was consequently cut off from access to the tree of life! Here is yet another proof that *no man* has eternal life inherent within himself.

### When Did Paul Expect to Be With Christ?

Some who believe that Christians have an immortal soul use Philippians 1:23-24 as proof. Do these verses overthrow all of the plain scriptures we have studied? Let's understand what Paul meant.

1. Did Paul have a desire to be with Christ? Phil. 1:23.

COMMENT: All Christians should have the same desire. But does this verse state *when* Paul would be with Christ? Absolutely not! But people try to read certain ideas *into* this verse! Let's notice *when* Paul expected to be with Christ.

2. Did Paul expect to receive something from Christ when he met Him? II Tim. 4:6-8. And when would that be — the time when Jesus returns and all the saints are *resurrected*? Verse 8. Notice the words "*at that day*."

3. When Christ *returns*, will He bring His rewards with Him? Isa. 40:10; Rev. 22:12. When will all (both dead and living) Christians "meet the Lord"? I Thes. 4:16-17.

COMMENT: Those who are dead in their graves are not conscious; they have no knowledge of passing time. The very next moment of their consciousness will be the time of the resurrection! That is why Paul wrote in II Corinthians 5:9-10: "Wherefore we labour [while yet alive], that, whether present [alive in the flesh] or absent [dead in the grave], we may be accepted of him."

When?

Verse 10 tells — at the judgment when Christ returns! That is when Paul expected to receive the reward of his labors and to be with Christ. God will judge us at Christ's coming (II Tim. 4:1) — at the resurrection from the dead — the awesome event every true Christian eagerly looks forward to!

### "Body, Soul and Spirit"

There are also some who claim that man is "body, soul and spirit." But which of the two — the soul or the spirit — is immortal, even they never seem quite sure! Let's understand this expression.

1. What does the Bible reveal about "body, soul and spirit"? I Thes. 5:23. Does this verse really prove the "immortality of the soul"? Of course not! It does not contradict all the *plain* verses we have already studied (John 10:35).

COMMENT: Paul here referred to the MIND in man when he used the word "spirit." And to the PHYSICAL LIFE when he used the word "soul." And to the FLESH when he used the word "body."

What's wrong with having your whole *mind*, your *life*, and your *body* preserved blameless — preserved from the penalty of sin — in anticipation of the coming of Christ? (See also II Cor. 7:1.) Nothing! That is something we should all fervently desire!

How plain the Bible really is. Man is MORTAL, corruptible flesh — organic matter with a temporary life. He has no eternal life inherent within himself — no "immortal soul"! He is a physical, fleshly creature destined to die and turn to dust and remain that way — except for the intervention of the Almighty.

But God has sent His Son to make it possible for us to receive the GIFT of immortality and eternal life at the *resurrection* from the dead! Will you qualify to receive that wonderful gift?

In a soon-coming lesson we will study the glorious promises, and the great rewards, that God holds out for all mankind.

#### Answers to Quiz

1-D	5-B	9-B	13-T	17-F
2-A	6-D	10-B	14-T	18-E
3-C	7-C	11-T	15-F	19-J
4-B	8-A	12-T	16-C	20-I

#### Rate Yourself

19-20 correct	.....	excellent
16-18 correct	.....	good
13-15 correct	.....	fair

## TEST YOUR MEMORY

**This quiz is designed to help you remember the important facts you learned in the lesson. You simply circle, or underline each correct answer. After you've finished, check your choices with the correct answers listed on page 15, and then rate yourself.**

1. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul came from **A.** the Old Testament. **B.** Jewish tradition. **C.** the Apostle Paul principally. **D.** pagan Egyptian and Greek philosophers.

2. "Death is merely the separation of soul and body" is a quotation from **A.** Plato. **B.** the Bible. **C.** the Koran. **D.** Benjamin Franklin.

3. Science reveals **A.** that an immaterial soul does exist in man. **B.** that spirit things are a myth. **C.** nothing whatever about the spiritual realm. **D.** that the soul is able to think independently of the body.

4. God created man **A.** out of dust and spirit. **B.** from the dust of the ground. **C.** with an "immortal soul" within him. **D.** not subject to death and decay.

5. The "breath of life" **A.** was not the element that gave Adam life and kept him living. **B.** is also necessary to keep animals alive. **C.** was an immortal soul God gave Adam. **D.** was not the only thing God breathed into the first man.

6. The Bible does NOT say: **A.** Man became a living soul. **B.** Beasts and men all go to the same place at death. **C.** Death befalls man and beast alike. **D.** The soul cannot die.

7. The word "spirit" in the Bible **A.** often refers to the soul. **B.** always means the Holy Spirit, or angels. **C.** may sometimes refer to the mind, attitude or character of a man. **D.** is never used when a better translation would have been "breath."

8. The Bible mentions **A.** dead souls. **B.** immortal souls. **C.** spirit souls. **D.** invisible souls.

9. Death is figuratively described in the Bible as a sleep because **A.** the dead will never awake. **B.** the dead are temporarily unconscious. **C.** the body is resting while it is separated from the soul. **D.** hell is like a bad dream or nightmare.

10. The expression "body, soul and spirit" **A.** proves that something in man is immortal and eternally conscious. **B.** means the *flesh*, the *life* and the *mind*. **C.** is actually redundant phraseology. **D.** is not found in the Bible.

### TRUE OR FALSE

11. The Hebrew word *nephesh*, often translated "soul," is also translated "creature" when it refers to animals. **T F**

12. The Bible does speak of the "spirit in man," but this spirit is not an immortal soul that consciously lives on after death. **T F**

13. The Hebrew word *ruach* (in the Old Testament) can mean either the material air or wind, or invisible spirit. **T F**

14. According to the Bible, man is mortal, not immortal. **T F**

15. There is no need for a resurrection because man continues to live on forever as an immortal soul. **T F**

### MATCHING

Draw a line from each phrase in the left-hand column to the correctly related phrase in the right-hand column.

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 16. The dead          | <b>A.</b> Immortal soul     |
| 17. Life of all flesh | <b>B.</b> Praising God      |
| 18. Christ's "soul"   | <b>C.</b> Unconscious       |
| 19. Man's uniqueness  | <b>D.</b> Immortal          |
| 20. God's gift        | <b>E.</b> Poured out        |
|                       | <b>F.</b> In the blood      |
|                       | <b>G.</b> Not really dead   |
|                       | <b>H.</b> Eternal death     |
|                       | <b>I.</b> Eternal life      |
|                       | <b>J.</b> The spirit in man |