

What Is The Soul Of Man?

Introduction. Let me give you a riddle. Love fools her, ambition mocks her, covetousness rusts her, lust enflames her, hope tickles her, pleasure melts her, despair depresses her, anger burns her, hatred sours her, envy gnaws at her, jealousy provokes her, revenge exasperates her, cruelty hardens her, fear freezes her, and sorrow consumes her. What is she? Your soul.

You cannot prove definitively that man has a soul by scientific calculation. You cannot view the soul by using a microscope. You cannot weigh man prior to and after death and discern any appreciable difference in his weight. You cannot prove a soul exists by using the five senses.

But before you conclude that the soul does not exist, remember that there is a lot that cannot be proven by any of the above criteria either. A good example of this is love. We "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7), believing both in the existence of love and of the soul. We now want to examine the soul, for it is critical to our relationship with God.

I. **A Discussion Of "Soul" And "Spirit"**

A. Occurrences of the terms.

1. The term "soul" occurs 458 times in the KJV.

a) It occurs 419 times in the Old Testament and 39 times in the New Testament.

b) Interestingly, "soul" is used as a proper name in Luke 12:19.

2. The term "spirit" occurs 505 times in the KJV.

a) It occurs 244 times in the Old Testament and 261 times in New Testament.

b) Of those occurrences, it is translated as "Spirit" 34 times in the Old Testament and 138 times in the New Testament.

B. "Soul" in the Hebrew (*nephesh*) and the Greek (*psuche*) literally means "a breathing creature," or in other words, "life." As one might imagine, given the number of times it is found in scripture, the word has various meanings.

1. "Soul" can refer to the natural life in the body (Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 2:20).

2. It can refer to any living, breathing creature (1 Corinthians 15:45; Revelation 16:3).

3. By extension, it can refer to a person (Acts 2:41; Romans 2:9-10; Hebrews 10:38).

4. "Soul" can be used to describe attitudes (Matthew 11:29; 26:38; Acts 14:2). It is the seat of feelings, desires, and affections (Matthew 22:37; Ephesians 6:6).

5. In its most usual rendering, it is the immaterial, invisible, eternal part of man (Psalm 16:10; Matthew 10:28; Acts 2:27; Revelation 6:9-10).
- C. It is difficult to distinguish between "soul" and "spirit."
1. While the Bible tells us they are different, yet in usage we often overlap the meanings because they are sometimes used interchangeably.
 - a) Genesis 41:8 and Psalm 42:6.
 - b) John 12:27 and John 13:21.
 - c) Hebrews 12:23 and Revelation 6:9.
 2. Generally speaking, when the terms are used together, the spirit is the higher part, and the soul is the lower part of man.
 - a) The spirit may be viewed as the life principle bestowed on man by God, and the soul as the resulting life embodied in the individual.
 - b) The soul and spirit are not separate substances, but may be considered different aspects of the same spiritual principle.
 3. Passages such as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 are not trying to advocate a threefold nature of man, but are emphasizing the completeness of sanctification and the ability of the word to divide to the very depths of the spiritual nature, respectively.
 4. The body is the material organism animated by soul and spirit. Since the body without the soul or spirit is dead, a flesh and blood body does not constitute true humanity from a biblical standpoint (James 2:26).

II. ***Implications Of The Soul***

- A. If man has no soul.
1. He belongs to this world, and there is total mortality -- nothing beyond the grave!
 - a) The atheist, evolutionist, humanist, and Communist agree that man has no soul.
 - (1) Thomas A. Edison said, "My mind is incapable of conceiving such a thing as a soul. I may be in error, and man may have a soul; but I simply do not believe it."
 - (2) Mark Twain said, "One of the proofs of the immortality of the soul is that myriads have believed it -- they also believed the world was flat."
 - b) Even some religious groups, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and 7th Day Adventists, affirm that man has no soul.
 2. He is subject to no laws except the laws of nature and those he makes himself. He does not fear any forces except those of nature and those he unleashes upon himself.

3. He is nothing more than a highly developed animal, with no moral responsibilities and no inherent values of "right" or "wrong."
 4. He is a creature shaped by his instinct, physical make-up, and the environment in which he lives, and is not really responsible for his behavior.
 - a) The trust of the sexual revolution was that man was just an animal.
 - b) Sins such as drunkenness are a "disease."
 - c) Homosexuals are the way they are literally from the womb.
- B. If man has a soul.
1. He is a creature, not of instinct (although he is affected by the world), but of choice (Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15).
 2. His eternal well-being lies in recognizing that he is amenable or answerable to the laws of an eternal God.
 - a) Every temptation and sin involves the soul or spirit of man (Matthew 15:16-20; Mark 7:21-23).
 - b) Without the human soul, spirit, mind, heart, etc., there can be no temptation or sin, not even the tendency to sin.
 - (1) A body of mere flesh and blood cannot be tempted nor can it sin.
 - (2) So man's soul is the very essence of humanity, not his flesh and blood.
 3. His destiny will be assigned at the judgment of God and will either be eternal joy or eternal grief (2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:46).

III. ***Your Soul Is Valuable To Christ***

- A. How much is it worth to you? Will you sell your inheritance like Esau for "one morsel of meat" (Hebrews 12:16)?
- B. For what will you jeopardize your soul (Matthew 16:26)?
 1. Sinful pleasures (Hebrews 11:24-26).
 - a) Gambling.
 - b) Drinking.
 - c) Fornication.
 - d) Internet.
 2. Worldliness (1 John 2:15).
 - a) Some take a vacation and take a vacation from God.
 - b) Some put every priority possible above their devotion to the Lord.
 3. Money (1 Timothy 6:6-10).
 - a) Godliness is profitable in every way (1 Timothy 4:8).
 - b) We do not want to be like the rich young ruler (Luke 12:16-21).
 4. Neglect (Hebrews 4:1-4).
 - a) Worship (John 4:24; Hebrews 10:25).

- b) Study (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:18).
- c) Meditation (Psalm 1:2; 119:148).
- d) Children (Deuteronomy 4:9-10; Ephesians 6:4).

Conclusion. Logan P. Smith said, "Most people sell their souls and live with a good conscience on the proceeds." What will it be for you? Will you "eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow we die" (1 Corinthians 15:32)? Will you "fear God and keep His commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13)? Ronald Reagan's burial site is inscribed with these words: "I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph and that there is purpose and worth to each and every life." What is your life? Do you recognize that God has first claim on your life? Christ made a commitment to you. Will you make a commitment to Him?