



March 04, 2022

What Happens to Humans at Death? Continued...

Warm hellos again, friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Let's continue to examine our mortality or human condition as limited physical beings. We began to examine the subject of the nature of mankind and his destiny last week.

Does man have a spirit component that is immortal and continues on in a conscious state after death? Does man have an immortal soul?

Many who claim to be students of the Bible will say "Yes!" and will also regularly teach that belief to others.

Let's look at God's Word, the only authority that is absolute.

"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." (KJV Genesis 2:7)

This states that man is a soul composed of the dust of the ground and requiring air to be breathed into his lungs. The Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon comments on the Hebrew word *nephesh*, translated "soul": "1c) living being (with life in the blood) 1d) the man himself, self, person or individual" among a number of other comments. This same word, *nephesh*, is applied to "every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air" (Genesis 2:19 & Genesis 9:10) We are told twice, "*The soul [nephesh] who sins shall die.*" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) Man, who is a soul, can and does die.

Some will turn to Matthew 10:28 "*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*" and claim that this proves there is an immortal soul.

But, we are told here that the soul can be destroyed. The Greek word translated "hell" in the King James Version and New KJV is "*gehenna*." It is derived from "originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned." (Online Bible Greek Lexicon)

Jesus warned about the ultimate Gehenna fire, (the lake of fire), that would destroy the body of the person and also the possibility of their future resurrection. Again, we notice that Jesus said *they would be destroyed*, not live forever some way as an immortal soul in the lake of fire.

So, you might ask, what's the big deal? What happens to us as humans at death is critically important to God's plan for you and me as humans, and that to me is a big deal.

Another related question is, what is the difference between a "human being" and other physical creatures that God has created?

Many today would have us believe that we are all on the same level of importance, in fact some would say animals are more important. There's a big push by many to worship animals and even this earth more than our Creator.

The book of Romans talks about how this would happen. Romans 1:24 *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

It's God who determined that mankind would "have dominion" over the other creatures. We humans are not on the same level or less important to God than animals. Some of the creatures are much larger, stronger and faster than mankind. But mankind was equipped with vastly superior mental intellect with which to create weapons, devices and other means to subdue and control the other creatures.

There's a special spirit essence which the Creator provides to enhance man's

brain functioning. This is referred to in Job 32:8 and 1 Corinthians 2:11 where the apostle Paul states, "*For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?*" Paul goes on to compare this special knowledge with the spiritual understanding and knowledge which is made possible through the indwelling of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God (or the Holy Spirit) is not the man, but is sent to work within the mind of man to provide understanding and qualities that are on God's level. Solomon also referred to this spirit that is temporarily present with physical human beings. "*Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.*" (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

This is what the Creator informed Adam after he and Eve had sinned. "*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.*" (Genesis 3:19).

Humans and animals die a similar death when they stop breathing, the heart stops beating, and oxygen is no longer sent through the bloodstream. I saw this first hand over and over many times in my service as a Firefighter/Rescue in southcentral Wisconsin for over a decade.

Solomon commented on this reality several times. "*For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.*" (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20).

Solomon also comments that the dead are not conscious; they don't feel pain or suffer or communicate in the grave. "*For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, . . . Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.*" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10).

One final thought. The prophet Daniel referred to the time of the end and to the dead and their future resurrection. ". . . *And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.*" (Daniel 12:1-2)

We'll continue next time with the subject of "the dead and their future" as they come back to life in *the resurrection*.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Hoefker', written over a circular scribble.

Scott Hoefker

Pastor, CGM

Church of God Ministries (CGM)

(*Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios*)

tshoefker@cogministries.org

www.cogministries.org

P.O. Box 983

Daphne, AL 36526-0983

251-930-1797 Office