



Where Do We Go When We Die?¹

Hebrews 9:27

Thesis: The Bible is very direct that man is created in the image of God. What makes man in God's image is the soul. Even after physical life ends the soul continues to live into eternity. The question is, where does the soul go when we die physically?

Introduction:

1. All cultures have shown an interest in life after death.
 2. Many have feared death, even to the point of being superstitious.
 3. It is generally accepted that death is not a coffee-table subject.
 4. However, death is a fact that all must eventually face (Hebrews 9:27)
 5. This lesson examines:
 - a. Death
 - b. Resurrection
 - c. Eternity
- I. Conception: God Unites and Man Begins
- A. Genesis 1 - man is different than animals
 1. Man is multi-dimensional in the sense that he has a body and a spirit (1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12)
 2. Animals have body and life, but not an eternal spirit
 3. Animals die and cease to exist, **man has personhood in the image of God.**
 - B. Adam/we were made from dust, but that does not make us humans, the breath of God fused us with His likeness (Gen. 2:7; 1:26-27; Mat. 10:20)
 - C. Conception:
 1. Life begins at conception and the body is united with the spirit - thus a living soul - Hebrews 12:9; Psalm 139:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:1
 2. The spirit is what departs and ascends when the body dies (Gen. 35:18; Luke 23:46)
 3. Jesus said if we believe in Him, we will not die (John 11:26)...what does that mean?
- II. Death: Man Separates and God Sorts
- A. Man Separates
 1. Evolutionary worldview and some religions (Jehovah's Witnesses) believe that death is the end, when one dies one simply goes out of existence.
 2. Biblical view, death is a transition from this world to an unseen eternal world
 - a) James 2:26 defines death as a body without the spirit
 - b) Eccl. 12:7 the body goes to dust and spirit returns to God
 - B. God Sorts
 1. At death God sorts people into two groups: saved and lost (Luke 16:19-31)
 2. Dead continue to live: rich man and Lazarus continued to live on in eternity
 3. Earthly status no longer mattered-neither rich or poor mattered
 4. Dead no longer had physical bodies (2 Cor. 5:1-8)
 5. Dead are conscious rich man realized he was in torment
 6. Dead retain their identities and recognize each other (recognized Lazarus and Abraham)
 7. At death our destinies are sealed, judgment day final sentence, and reason will be revealed (2 Cor. 5:10; Ecc. 12:13-14; Lk. 16:22-31)
 8. Righteous dead will join the dead saints (Rev. 6:9-11)
 9. Hadean realm contains two sections: Paradise and torment

¹ Webster, Allen. "Where Do We Go When We Die?" *House to House Heart to Heart*, House to House Heart to Heart, 2021, housetohouse.com/where-do-we-go-when-we-die/. Accessed 2 Apr. 2021.

III. Resurrection: Man Reunites and God Judges

A. Man Reunites

1. Death is necessary in order to move on into eternity (1 Cor. 15:50)
2. No matter what happens to our bodies (dust, cremated) one day they will be resurrected (1 Cor. 15:22; **John 5:28-29**; **Rev. 20:13**)
3. The living at 2nd coming will be changed (1 Cor. 15:51-52)
4. Resurrected bodies will be immortal (1 Cor. 15:42-55), and our bodies will be like Christ's (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:13-17)

B. God Judges (**2 Cor. 5:10**)

1. Judgment scene: **Rev. 20:12-15**; Mat. 25:31-33
2. At judgement God will reward:
 - a) Good deeds (**Mat. 10:41-42**; 16:27)
 - b) Evil deeds (**Gal. 5:21**; 2 Cor. 6:9-10)

IV. Eternity: God reigns and Man Lives

A. God Reigns: "**Hallelujah!** For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns." (Rev. 19:6)

B. Man Lives

1. There are only two destinations for man when he dies: heaven or hell (**John 5:29**)
2. Hell:
 - a) Fire: (Mat. 3:11-12; 13:42; Mk. 9:43-48; Rev. 20:14)
 - b) Pain: place where worm never dies, prison with no rest, fire never burns out, darkness (Mat. 8:12; Mk. 9:43-48; Rev. 14:11)
 - c) Shame: "but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt." (Dan. 12:2)

Conclusion:

1. Death is such a terrible fact of life. It is scary and frightens even the toughest of all. It is natural for many of us not to want to even think about death, especially our eternal destiny.
2. However, what makes the subject bearable is that Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection and gives us the hope to do the same.
3. Paul says that God gives us the privilege of determining whether we will go to heaven or hell (Philippians 2:12)
4. Revelation 1:5; 7:14 - washed by the blood of Jesus!
5. Plan of Salvation
6. Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones;" Acts 7:54-60, "...They went on stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Works Consulted

Frame, James Everett. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*. Vol. 39, New York, Sagwan Press, 21 Aug. 2015.

Girdwood, Jim, and Peter Verkruyse. *College Press NIV Commentary Series: Hebrews*. Joplin, MO, College Press, 1997. The phrase, “soul and spirit” is not designed to be a full psychological analysis of man any more than “body, soul and spirit” has that purpose in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. They seem to be simply a way of designating the whole of a person..

Green, Gene L. *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids, Mich., W.B. Eerdmans Pub. ; Leicester, England, 2002. holoklēron.

Kittel, Gerhard, et al. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : Abridged in One Volume*. Grand Rapids, Mich., W.B. Eerdmans, 1985. holoklēron.

Malherbe, Abraham J. *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New Haven, Conn. ; London, Yale University Press, 2007. kardia kai psychē mia (“one heart and soul”).

Moffatt, James. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. The International Critical Commentary*. 1924. Edinburgh, T and T Clark, 1924. The μερισμοῦ ... μυελῶν passage is “a mere rhetorical accumulation of terms to describe the whole mental nature of man” (A. B. Davidson); the climax is καρδιά, for what underlies human failure is καρδιά πονηρὰ ἀπίστιας (3:12), and the writer’s warning all along has been against hardening the heart, i.e. obdurate disobedience. Hence the point of καὶ κριτικός κτλ. Κριτικός is another of his

terms which are classical, not religious; it is used by Aristotle (Eth. Nik. vi. 10) of ἡ σύνεσις, the intelligence of man being κριτική in the sense that it discerns. If there is any distinction between ἐνθυμήσεων (ἐνθυμήσεως C* D* W vt Lucifer) and ἐννοιῶν, it is between impulses and reflections, but contemporary usage hardly distinguished them; indeed ἔννοια could mean “purpose” as well as “conception.” The two words are another alliterative phrase for “thought and conception,” ἔννοια, unlike ἐνθύμησις, being a LXX term..

Peter Thomas O'brien. *The Letter to the Hebrews*. Leicester Apollos [20]12, 2010. Spirit and soul are virtually identical, and Hebrews uses the terms for the inner person (6:19; 10:38; 12:3). The result of this penetrating power of God’s word is that it is able to probe the inmost recesses of our being and bring the subconscious motives to light (note 1 Cor. 4:5): it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. The heart is the seat of thought and will.

Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). *1 Thessalonians*. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company. The “spirit” is the highest part of man, that which assimilates him to God; renders him capable of religion, and susceptible of being acted upon by the Spirit of God. The “soul” is the inferior part of his mental nature, the seat of the passions and desires, of the natural propensities. The “body” is the corporeal frame.

Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). *Hebrews*. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company. the second clause is not to be taken as denoting a further dividing—of the bodily parts as well as of the soul and spirit, but as expressing, by recurrence to the figure of a sword, the thoroughness of the division the Word of God.

Further, the division spoken of is surely not of the soul from the spirit, as some have taken it.

Vicent, Marvin R. *Word Studies in the New Testament*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887. Spirit, soul, body (πνεῦμα, ψυχὴ, σῶμα).

Hebrews 4:12 - Spirit and soul are virtually identical, and Hebrews uses the terms for the inner person (6:19; 10:38; 12:3). The result of this penetrating power of God's word is that it is able to probe the inmost recesses of our being and bring the subconscious motives to light (note 1 Cor. 4:5): it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. The heart is the seat of thought and will.

Weatherly, Jon A. *1 & 2 Thessalonians*. Joplin, Mo., College Press Pub. Co, 1996. The combination of three terms here is probably only intended as a means of underlining the comprehensive nature of that protection; it is no more a systematic presentation of human nature than is the combination "heart, soul, mind and strength" in Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27..

Webster, Allen. "Where Do We Go When We Die?" *House to House Heart to Heart*, House to House Heart to Heart, 2021, housetohouse.com/where-do-we-go-when-we-die/. Accessed 2 Apr. 2021.