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## THE ORIGIN, NATURE, AND DESTINY OF THE SOUL [PART I]

Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

Throughout the whole of human history, man has struggled to find answers to any number of important (yet often difficult) questions that have to do with his origin, existence, nature, and destiny. Such queries as “Whence have I come?,” “Why am I here?,” and “Where am I going?” routinely intrigue and enthrall each of us as members of the human race. Securing clues to the exact makeup of the creature known popularly as *Homo sapiens* always has been one of mankind’s keenest intellectual pursuits. And along the way, perhaps no topic has perplexed us, or piqued our interest, as much as that pertaining to the origin, nature, and destiny of the soul.

Contemplate, if you will, the concept of the soul and the issues that spring from it. What is the definition of a soul? If the soul actually exists, what is its origin? Do humans possess a soul? Do animals? If souls do, in fact, exist, are they purely temporal—thus living only as long as our corporeal nature exists? Or are they immortal—surviving the death of the physical body? What is the difference, if any, between the “soul” and the “spirit”? What is the ultimate destiny of the soul? And what part does the soul play in the biblical statement that men and women were created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27)? These are the kinds of issues that I would like to investigate in this series of articles.

The subject of the soul—including its origin, nature, and destiny—has long been controversial. Some people believe that there is

no such thing as a soul. Certain individuals advocate the position that only humans possess a soul, but that it ceases to exist at the death of the body. Others seek to maintain that both humans and animals possess a soul, and that those souls likewise die when the physical body dies. Still others are convinced that both animals and humans possess an immortal soul. And finally, there are those who have concluded that humans possess an immortal soul, but that animals do not. What, then, is the truth of the matter?

Science certainly cannot provide the answers to such questions, for they lie far beyond the purview of the scientific method. In her best-selling book, *The Fire in the Equations*, award-winning science writer Kitty Ferguson addressed this very issue. While discussing the efforts of several renowned, modern-day scientists (like eminent physicists Stephen Hawking, Paul Davies, and others) to uncover what they view as a grand, unified “Theory of Everything,” she asked:

Is there anything else? We needn’t get spooky about it. Part of the “anything else” might be human minds and personalities. Can we entirely account for our self-awareness, our minds, personalities, intuitions, and emotions, by means of a physical explanation? This is a matter of enormous significance for many of the questions we are asking in this book, and we will return to it frequently. If we are super-complex computing machines—the sum of our physical parts and their mechanical workings, which in turn ex-

ist as a result of the process of evolution—then science may ultimately be able to tell us everything there is to know about us. Even if no computer can ever assimilate the human mind, science may find another complete physical explanation. **But we have at present no scientific reason to rule out the possibility that there is more to self-awareness, our minds, and our personalities than any such explanation can encompass.** Is there such a thing as the soul? If there is, does its existence begin and end with our material existence? Despite some impressive advances in the field of artificial intelligence, and an increasing understanding of the way our minds work, certainly no-one would claim to be able to say at present, except on faith, whether science will eventually be able to assimilate the phenomena of self-awareness, mind, and personality into the materialistic picture. **If science can’t, then there is truth beyond the range of scientific explanation.**

Another part of the “anything else” may be what we call the supernatural. Perhaps it is simply figments of imagination, psychological events, not so much to be explained by science as to be explained away. Or perhaps these are real events which are at present unexplainable because we lack complete understanding of the full potential of the physical world. If either is the case, then the supernatural ought eventually to fall into the realm of scientific explanation. However, **if the supernatural world exists**, and if it is in-

# CONTENTS

## ARTICLES

- The Origin, Nature, and Destiny of the Soul [Part I]*  
Bert Thompson, Ph.D. . . . . 9

## DEPARTMENTS

- Speaking Schedules . . . . . 13

### Note from the Editor

- Announcing: Volume Eight in the "Scripture & Science Series"*  
Bert Thompson . . . . . 16

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herently beyond testing by the scientific method, **then there is truth beyond the range of scientific explanation.** There may indeed be more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in our science (if not our philosophy) [1994, pp. 82-83, emp. added].

I would like to seize upon Ferguson's "if... then" proposition as I begin this examination of the origin, nature, and destiny of the soul. Her argument—one that far too few scientists (or science writers) are even willing to consider—is that **if** the supernatural exists, **then** there is truth beyond the range of scientific explanation. The available evidence **does** establish, in fact, that the supernatural exists and that there **is** "truth beyond the range of scientific explanation." As famed NASA astrophysicist (and self-proclaimed agnostic) Robert Jastrow put it: "That there are what I or anyone would call supernatural forces at work is now, I think, a scientifically proven fact" (1982, p. 18). While I do not have the space here to present such evidence, I have done so elsewhere (see Thompson, 1995a, 1995b, Thompson and Jackson, 1982, 1992). The existence of the supernatural (i.e., God) may be doubted by some and ridiculed by still others, but that does not alter the evidence that establishes its reality.

Thus, whenever questions of spiritual importance are under consideration—as they are when discussing the existence, origin, nature, and destiny of the soul—the only reliable source of information must by necessity be the One Who is the Originator and Sustainer of the soul. God, as Creator of all things physical and spiritual (Genesis 1:1ff., Exodus 20:11), and Himself a Spirit Being (John 4:24), is the ultimate wellspring of the soul. The Bible, then, as God's inspired Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21), must be the preeminent authority on this subject. In the great long ago, the psalmist wrote: "The sum of thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth forever" (119:160). Speaking as a member of the Godhead, Christ said: "Sanctify them in truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

We—if we would know the truth about the soul—must examine that Word in an in-depth fashion and be prepared to accept what it says. Only then can we obtain the answers to the many questions on this vital topic that have perplexed and plagued us through the millennia.

## DEFINITION OF THE SOUL

If you and I were having a conversation and I mentioned the word "banana," likely you would have absolutely no difficulty understanding my meaning. Your thought processes immediately would conjure up a long fruit—with a yellow outer covering and a light beige, inner soft body—that grows on trees and is useful as food for both humans and animals. But were I to ask you to define the term "foil," without seeing the word in context you could not possibly know what I meant. I might be referring to: (1) a noun that is used to define a fencing sword; (2) a noun that indicates a thin, shiny metal used by cooks in kitchens all over the world; or (3) a verb that is used as a synonym for "defeat." However, if I were to say, "I covered the turkey with foil prior to placing it in the oven," you would know immediately what I had in mind.

The same is true of the definition of the word "soul." Minus its context, it is difficult, if not impossible, to define accurately. Speaking from the vantage point of a language scholar who had studied the Hebrew and Greek texts for over sixty years, Guy N. Woods once suggested that "...there is no pat and easy answer to the question, 'What is the soul?'" (1980, 122[6]:163). Why is this the case? First, the word "soul" in modern English usage is represented by various words in the Hebrew and Greek languages in which the Bible originally was written. Second, those Hebrew and Greek words can have a number of different meanings in their original contexts. Robert Morey has noted:

These terms are not technical words in the sense that they have one consistent meaning throughout Scripture. They display unity and diversity by being synonymous at times when referring to the immaterial side of man, and at other times, referring to different functions or ways of relating. It is obvious that we should not impose 20<sup>th</sup>-century standards of consistency and linguistic preciseness to a book which was written thousands of years ago... (1984, p. 44).

Third, the matter of the progressive nature of God's revelation to man must be considered. While it certainly is true that the Lord possesses a constant, unchanging nature (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17), His revelation of that nature and His will for man-

kind was a progressive process that was adapted to man as he matured spiritually through the ages. This explains why, in the course of human history, God sometimes tolerated in man both attitudes and actions that were less than what the divine ideal intended. This, of course, does not mean that the Holy God vacillates in His ethics or morality; rather, it simply means that—because of His infinite love—He dealt gently and compassionately with man in the particular state of spiritual maturation in which He found him at the time (cf. Acts 14:15-16 and 17:30-31). As God progressively revealed more and more of both His nature and His will, He did so in a manner, and in terms, that fit the occasion. In addressing the failure of some to comprehend and appreciate the importance of this concept, Morey observed that certain words, therefore,

...may have a dozen different meanings, **depending on the context and the progressive nature of revelation.** The failure to avoid reductionistic and simplistic definitions is based on the hidden assumption that once the meaning of a word is discovered in a single passage, this same meaning must prevail in every other occurrence of the word.... The resistance to the idea that what soul meant to Moses was probably not what it meant to David or Paul is based on their unconscious assumption that the Bible is one book written at one time. Thus as we approach the biblical term which describes the immaterial side of man, we will not attempt to develop artificial definitions based upon the absolutizing of the meaning of a word in a single passage but recognize that a contextual approach will reveal a wide range of meanings (1984, pp. 44-45, emp. added).

The word “soul” does indeed enjoy a “wide range of meanings.” In order to understand those meanings, it is necessary to examine how the word is employed within the various contexts in Scripture where it appears.

### Use of the Word “Soul” in Scripture

The word for “soul” in the Bible (Hebrew *nephesh* [from *naphash*, to breathe]; Greek *psuche*) is used in at least four different ways (see Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, pp. 901-902; Thayer, 1958, p. 677). First, the term is employed simply as a synonym for a person. Moses wrote: “All the souls (*nephesh*) that

came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls (*nephesh*)” (Exodus 1:5; cf. Deuteronomy 10:22). In legal matters, the word soul often was used to denote an individual. The Lord told Moses: “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘If a soul (*nephesh*) shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done’...” (Leviticus 4:2). When Jacob was speaking of himself in Genesis 49:6, he used the expression, “O my soul (*nephesh*)”—which meant simply “me.” Numbers 9:6 records that “there were certain men, who were unclean by reason of the dead body (*nephesh meth*) of a man, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day” (cf. Number 6:6 and Ecclesiastes 9:5). In the New Testament, the word *psuche* is employed in the same manner. In Acts 2:41,

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Luke recorded that “there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls (*psuchai*).” In Peter’s first epistle, when he addressed the topic of the Genesis Flood, he referred to the fact that “few, that is eight souls (*psuchai*), were saved by water” (3:20). In each of these instances, actual people—individually or collectively—were under discussion.

Second, the word soul is used to denote the form of life that man possesses in common with animals and that ceases to exist at death. In their *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Brown, Driver, and Briggs noted that *nephesh* often is employed to mean “life principle” (1907, p. 659). In the King James Version, *nephesh* is translated as “soul” in the Old Testament 472 times, as

“life” 118 times, and as “creature” 8 times; *psuche* is translated as “soul” in the New Testament 59 times and as “life” 39 times (Morey, 1984, pp. 45,55). In addressing the use of the word “soul” in such passages as Genesis 2:7 and 1:20, Woods wrote:

...the word **soul** from the Hebrew *nephesh* occurs, for the first time in the sacred writings, at Genesis 1:20, where it is assigned to fish, birds, and creeping things. (See also, another similar usage in Genesis 1:30.) As thus used, it is clear that the soul in these passages does not refer to anything peculiar to the constitution of man. It signifies, as its usage denotes, and the lexicons affirm, **any creature that breathes**, in all of these early occurrences in the book of Genesis. Nor is it correct to conclude that the phrase **breath of life** in the statement of Moses (“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”) sums up, or was designed to denote the **whole** constitution of man. The word “life” here is, in the Hebrew text, plural, literally **breath of lives** (*nishmath khayyim*). It occurs, in similar form, in three other instances in the early chapters of Genesis (6:17; 7:15; 7:22). In the first of these the phrase is *ruach khayyim*; in the second the same; in the third, *nishmath-ruach khayyim*, and out of the four instances where the phrase, the **breath of lives**, occurs in our translation the last three are applied to the beasts, birds and creeping things. It follows, therefore, that the phrase “breath of life” does not designate anything peculiar to man. And in view of the fact that the word “soul,” from the Hebrew *nephesh*, is similarly extended to include the animal world, birds and creeping things, it may not be properly limited to man... (1985, 127 [22]:691, emp. and parenthetical comment in orig.).

In Genesis 1:20,24, and 30, God spoke of the *nephesh hayyab*—literally “soul breathers” or “life breathers” (often translated as “living creatures” or “life”—cf. Leviticus 11:10; grammatically the phrase is singular but it bears a plural meaning). The writer of Proverbs observed in regard to animals: “A righteous man regardeth the life (*nephesh*) of his beast; But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel” (12:10). Hebrew scholar Hugo McCord therefore noted:

Then the translators realized that the first meaning of *nepshesh* is “breath,” and so Genesis 1:20,24,30 and Genesis 2:7 all fit together in understanding Moses as saying that all animals and man too are breathers. Breathers, coupled with *hayyah*, “living,” the translators thought, would be well translated, in the case of animals, as “living creatures,” and in the case of man as a “living being” (1995, 23[1]:87-88).

In Exodus 21:23, Moses commanded: “But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life (*nepshesh*) for life (*nepshesh*).” He later wrote that “the life (*nepshesh*) of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11,14). Blood often is said to be the seat of life because when blood is shed, death ensues (cf. Deuteronomy 12:23). In speaking of God’s retribution upon the Egyptians during the time of the Exodus, the psalmist wrote: “He spared not their soul (*nepshesh*) from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence” (78:50). In this particular instance, the Egyptians’ souls represented their physical life and nothing more. Ezekiel later observed: “The soul (*nepshesh*) that sinneth, it shall die” (18:20).

In the New Testament, the principle is the same. Christ observed in regard to humans: “Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life (*psuche*), what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body” (Matthew 6:25). God told Joseph: “Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child’s life” (*psuche*, Matthew 2:19). In the book of Revelation, John spoke of the fact that “there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life (*psuchas*); and the third part of the ships was destroyed” (8:9; cf. 16:3, *psuche*). Many a follower of Christ was said to have risked his or her life (*psuche*) for the Lord. In Acts 15:25-26, Luke recorded that Barnabas and Paul were “men that have hazarded their lives (*psuchas*) for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Earlier, John recorded Peter as saying to the Lord: “I will lay down my life (*psuchen*) for thee” (John 13:37-38). In Philippians 2:30ff., Paul spoke of “Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier...hazarding his life (*psuche*) to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.” And in Luke 14:26, one of the conditions of dis-

cipleship was to hate one’s own life (*psuche*)—that is, to be willing to deny oneself to the point of losing one’s life for Christ (cf. Luke 9:23; Revelation 12:11).

Third, the idea of the soul is used to refer to the varied emotions or inner thoughts of a man—a fact that explains why *nepshesh* is translated “heart” (15 times) or “mind” (15 times) in the Old Testament (KJV) and why *psuche* is translated as “heart” (1 time) and “mind” (3 times) in the New. Man was called to love God with all his heart and with all his soul (*nepshesh*; Deuteronomy 13:3b). The soul (*nepshesh*) is said to weep (Job 30:16; Psalm 119:28) and to be exercised in patience (Job 6:7-11). From the soul (*nepshesh*) originate

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knowledge and understanding (Psalm 139:14), thought (1 Samuel 20:3), love (1 Samuel 18:1), and memory (Lamentations 3:20). In His discussion with a lawyer, Jesus said: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul (*psuche*), and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37). In Acts 4:32, Luke recorded how, on one occasion, “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul (*psuche*).” In a similar fashion, “soul” also is employed to refer to the lower, physical nature of mankind. In his first letter to the Christians at Corinth, Paul wrote that “the **natural man** receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (2:14). In addressing the specific intent of this passage, Woods noted that the phrase “natural man” is literally

**the soulish man**, since the adjective “natural” [*psuchikos*—BT] translates a form of the Greek word for soul, which may be expressed in English as **psychical**. Thus, this usage is supported by etymology and required by the context. See, especially, Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 1:18-28 and 2:6-16 (1980, 122[6]:163, emp. in orig.).

Fourth, the word soul is used in Scripture to designate the portion of a person that is immortal and thus never dies. As early as the book of Genesis, the Bible sets forth such a concept. For example, in commenting on Rachel’s untimely death at the birth of her son, Moses wrote: “And it came to pass, as her soul (*nepshesh*) was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin” (Genesis 35:18). On one occasion while the prophet Elijah was at the house of a widow in the city of Zarephath, the woman’s son fell ill and eventually died. But the text indicates that Elijah “cried unto Jehovah..., ‘O Jehovah my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul (*nepshesh*) come into him again’ ” (1 Kings 17:21). When the psalmist prayed to Jehovah for forgiveness, he cried: “O Jehovah, have mercy upon me: heal my soul (*nepshesh*); for I have sinned against thee” (41:4). In his discussion of the ultimate fate of those who dared to trust in earthly riches rather than in the supreme power of the God of heaven, the psalmist lamented that such people were “like the beasts that perish.... But God will redeem my soul (*nepshesh*) from the power of Sheol” (49:15).

Many years later, Christ warned His disciples: “And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul (*psuche*) and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). In His discussion with the Sadducees in Matthew 22, the Lord quoted from Exodus 3:6 where God said to Moses: “**I am** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Christ then went on to state (22:32): “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living”—a fact that the Sadducees’ opponents, the Pharisees, already accepted as true (cf. Acts 23: 8). Yet when God spoke with Moses (c. 1446 B.C.) about the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those three men had been dead and in their tombs for literally hundreds of years.

Since from Christ's own words we know that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," the point is obvious. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still must have been living. But how? The solution to the seeming problem, of course, lies in the fact that while their **bodies** had died, their immortal **souls** had not. When the apostle John was allowed to peer into the book "sealed with seven seals" (Revelation 5:1), he "saw underneath the altar the souls (*psuchas*) of them that had been slain for the word of God" (Revelation 6:9). Each of these passages is instructive of the fact that there is within man a soul that never dies.

### Use of the Word "Spirit" in Scripture

During his tenure as associate editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, Guy N. Woods penned a "Questions and Answers" column in which he dealt with difficult Bible questions, topics, or passages. When one querist wrote to ask: "What is the difference between the soul and the spirit of man?" Woods responded as follows:

Though it is characteristic of most people today to use these terms interchangeably the scriptures very definitely differentiate them. "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of **soul** and **spirit**, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12.) Since the sacred writers provided for "the dividing of soul and spirit," in those instances where they differ, so ought we and so we must if we are to entertain biblical concepts of these words.

The word "spirit," when denoting the human entity (from the Greek word *pneuma*), is a specific term and designates that part of us which is not susceptible to death and which survives the dissolution of the body. (Acts 7: 59) It is infused in us directly from God and is not a product of human generation. (Hebrews 12:9.) "Soul," from the Greek word *psuche*, however, is a generic word and its meaning must be determined, in any given instance, from the context in which it appears (1980, 122[6]:163, emp. added).

In my above discussion on the use of the word "soul" in Scripture, I examined the various ways in which the Hebrew and Greek terms for soul are employed. I now would like to examine the various ways in which the Hebrew and Greek terms for "spirit" are employed within the sacred text.

The Hebrew term for "spirit" is *ruach* (from *rawah*, to breathe). In their *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Brown, Driver, and Briggs noted that *ruach* has nine different meanings, depending on the specific context. *Ruach* may refer to: (1) the Holy Spirit; (2) angels, both good and evil; (3) the life principle found within both man and animals; (4) disembodied spirits; (5) breath; (6) wind; (7) disposition or attitude; (8) the seat of emotions; and (9) the seat of mind and will in men (1907, pp. 924-925). In the Old Testament of the King James Version, *ruach* is translated variously as the Spirit of God (i.e., Holy Spirit) 105 times, man's spirit 59 times, spirit (an attitude or emotional state) 51 times, spirits (angels) 23 times, wind 43 times, and several other items (Morey, 1984, p. 51).

The word *ruach*, like *nephesh*, has a wide range of meanings. First, it seems originally to have referred to the wind, which was viewed as being invisible and immaterial (Gen. 8:1). Second, since God is invisible and immaterial like

the wind, He is described as "spirit" (Isa. 63:10). Third, since the angels of God are invisible and immaterial, they are called "spirits" (Ps. 104:4, KJV; cf. Heb. 1:14). Fourth, since the life principle which animates man and animals is invisible and immaterial, it is also called "spirit" (Gen. 7:22). In this sense it was viewed as the "breath" of life which departs at death. Fifth, since man has an invisible and immaterial self or soul which transcends the life principle by its self-consciousness, man's "mind" or "heart" is called his "spirit" (Ps. 77:6; Prov. 29:11, KJV). The invisible side of man which is called "spirit" cannot be reduced to the mere principle of physical life or the breath of the body because man's transcendent self is contrasted to those things in such places as Isa. 42:5. Also, man's self-awareness as a cognitive ego obviously transcends the life principle which operates in animals. At death, this transcendent ego or disincarnate mind is called a "spirit" or a "ghost" (Job 4:15). This is parallel to *rephaim* or disembodied spirit (Job 26:5). Thus at death, while the life principle or breath of life ceases to exist in man or animals, the higher self or spirit of man ascends at death to the presence of God (Ps. 31:5; Eccles. 12:7)... Sixth, since attitudes and dispositions such as pride, humility, joy, or sorrow are invisible and immaterial, they are described as being someone's "spirit" (Prov. 11:13; 16:18). The Holy Spirit is described as the "sevenfold Spirit" in the sense that He gives people the disposition, attitude, or spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear and holiness (Isa. 11:2; cf. Rom. 1:4; Rev. 3:1) [Morey, 1984, pp. 52-53].

The Greek term for "spirit" is *pneuma* (from *pneo*, to breathe). In their *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, language scholars Arndt and Gingrich noted that *pneuma* has seven different meanings, depending on the specific context. *Pneuma* may refer to: (1) wind or air; (2) that which gives life to the body; (3) disincarnate souls; (4) human personality or ego which is the center of emotion, intellect, and will; (5) a state of mind or disposition; (6) an independent, immaterial being such as God or angels; and (7) as God—as in the Holy Spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, etc. (1957, pp. 680-685). In his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*,



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Thayer provided five definitions for *pneuma* (1958, pp. 520-524). In the King James Version of the New Testament, *pneuma* is translated variously as Spirit (Holy) 165 times, Ghost (Holy) 88 times, spirits (good/evil, angels) 55 times, spirit (man's) 45 times, spirit (attitude) 22 times, spirits or ghosts (man's disincarnate soul) 7 times, spiritual (adjectival use) 23 times, life and wind 1 time each (Morey, 1984, pp. 60-61).

The word *pneuma* in its various forms is found 406 times in the New Testament.... First, the New Testament writers carry on the precedent set by the translators of the Septuagint by using the Greek words for wind such as *animas* instead of *pneuma*. The only instance where *pneuma* definitely refers to the wind is in John 3:8 where there is a poetic play upon the sovereign movement of the divine Spirit and the wind. Second, *pneuma* refers to the life principle which animates the body. This is actually a very rare usage in the New Testament. For example, the false prophet who accompanied the Antichrist in the last days will make an idol "alive" (Rev. 13:15). Third, *pneuma* is used to describe the immaterial nature of God and angels (John 4:24; Heb. 1:14). Christ defined a "spirit" or "ghost" as an immaterial being (Luke 24:39). Fourth, *pneuma* refers to the disposition which characterizes a person, such as pride, humility, fear, etc. (1 Pet. 3:4). Fifth, *pneuma* is used to describe the disincarnate spirit or soul of man after death (Matt. 27:50; Luke 24:37, 39; John 19:30; Acts 7:59; Heb. 12:23; 1 Pet. 3:19).... Sixth, man's transcendent self, or ego, is also called *pneuma* because of its immaterial and invisible nature (1 Cor. 2:11). It is described as the center of man's emotions, intellect and will (Mark 8:12; Mark 2:8; Matt. 26:41). Since man's *pneuma* transcends his mere physical life, it is frequently contrasted to his body, or flesh (Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 24:39; John 3:6; 6:63; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:17; 6:8,9; James 2:26). It is man's *pneuma* which ascends to God at death (Acts 7:59) [Morey, 1984, pp. 61-62].

Since *ruach* and *pneuma* both derive from roots meaning "to breathe," it should not be surprising that on occasion they are used synonymously, as the information in Table 1 documents.

SPIRIT	REFERS TO	SOUL
Genesis 6:17; 7:15; Ecclesiastes 3:19	Breath	Job 41:21
Genesis 7:22	Animal/Human Life	Genesis 9:4; 37:21 Matthew 2:20; 6:25
Ecclesiastes 12:7; 1 Corinthians 5:5	Entities Separate from the Body	Isaiah 10:18; Matthew 10:28
Mark 2:8; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 14:15	Seat of Man's Intellect	Hebrews 12:3; Philippians 1:27
Genesis 41:8; Proverbs 16:18; 17:22; Mark 8:12; Acts 18:25; 1 Corinthians 4:21; 2 Corinthians 2:13	Feelings and Emotions	Exodus 23:9; Psalm 42:1-6; Proverbs 12:10; Matthew 26:38; Luke 2:35; Acts 4:32; 17:16; 2 Peter 2:8
Genesis 1:2; 6:3; Matthew 12:18; John 4:24	God's Nature	Leviticus 26:11; Matthew 12:18; Hebrews 10:38
Psalms 51:10,17; Luke 1:46-47; John 4:24; Romans 1:9	Man's Place of Inner Worship and Reverence Toward God	Psalms 42:1-2,4-6; 103:1; 146:1; Matthew 22:37
Psalms 31:5; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1; Luke 8:55; 23:46; Acts 7:59; 1 Corinthians 5:5	Part of a Person that Lives on after Death of the Body	Genesis 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21-22; Psalms 41:4; 49:15; Micah 6:7; Matthew 10:28; Hebrews 10:39; James 1:21; 5:20; 1 Peter 1:9,22; 3 John 2; Revelation 6:9

Table 1. Synonymous Use of Spirit and Soul in the Old and New Testaments

Writing in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* about both the similarities and the differences between the Old Testament words *nephesh* and *ruach* as compared to their New Testament counterparts *psuche* and *pneuma*, J.I. Marais noted:

In the NT *psuche* appears under more or less similar conditions as in the OT. The contrast here is as carefully maintained as there. It is used where *pneuma* would be out of place; and yet it seems at times to be employed where *pneuma* might have been substituted. Thus in Jn. 19:30 we read: "Jesus gave up His *pneuma* to the Father," and, in the same Gospel (Jn. 10:15), "Jesus gave up His *psuche* for the sheep," and in Mt. 20:28 He gave His *psuche* (not His *pneuma*) as a ransom... (1956, 5:2838).

While the "spirit" (*pneuma*) is recognized as man's individual possession—that which distinguishes one man from another and from inanimate nature—on occasion the same may be said of the soul (*psuche*; cf. Matthew 10:28 and Revelation 6:9-11). The *pneuma* of Christ was surrendered to the Father in death; His *psuche* was surrendered, His individual life was given, "a ransom for many." His life "was given for the sheep." In Acts 2:27, Luke quoted Psalm 16:10 regarding Christ's physical death: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption." The word that Luke used for "soul" is *psuche*, which is employed here not only as the Greek counterpart to the Hebrew *nephesh*, meaning body, but representing specif-

ically a *nepshesh meth*—a dead body (cf. Numbers 6:6, 9:6, and Ecclesiastes 9:5). Thus, Christ's body was not abandoned to hades.

Hades is used in Scripture to refer to at least three different places: (a) the general abode of the spirits of the dead, whether good or evil (Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14); (b) a temporary place of punishment for the wicked dead (Luke 16:23; Revelation 20:13); and (c) the grave (1 Corinthians 15:55; cf. Acts 2:27). In Psalm 16:10 (the passage quoted by Luke in Acts 2:27), the writer stated: "Thou wilt not leave my soul (*nepshesh*) to sheol." In the Old Testament, sheol also is used to refer to three different places: (a) the unseen abode for spirits of the dead (Job 14:13-15; Ezekiel 26:20; Jonah 2:2); (b) a temporary place of punishment for the wicked dead (Psalm 9:17); and (c) the grave (Davidson, 1970, p. 694; Harris, et al., 1980, 2:892; cf. Numbers 16:30-37 where the conclusion of the rebellion of Korah [and those sympathetic with him] against Moses is described in these words: "The earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. So they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into sheol."). In Acts 2:27 (hades) and Psalm 16:10 (sheol), the context seems to require the latter usage—i.e., the grave. Thus, both David and Luke were making the point (to paraphrase): "You will not leave my body in the grave, nor will you allow your Holy One to see decay." In fact, just four verses later, the inspired writer referred back to David's declaration and commented that "he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (2:31).

In referring to the death of the physical body, Solomon wrote that "the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). The psalmist addressed the same point when he wrote: "The dead praise not Jehovah, Neither any that go down into silence" (115:17) and "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (146:4). When Christ yielded up His soul/life (*psuche*, cf. *nepshesh*, Psalm 16:10), His dead body was headed for the grave and therefore was in the condition that it could "know not anything" and "praise not Jehovah." [The spirit (*pneuma*) that had vacated the body was

alive and well in Paradise (Greek *paradeisos*, Luke 23:43). Paul addressed this principle when he said that Christ's disciples always should be "of good courage, and willing rather to be **absent from the body**, and to be **at home with the Lord**" (2 Corinthians 5:8; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:14).] Woods observed:

Death, mortality, corruptibility, decay, destruction are never affirmed of the spirit. It is, in the nature of the case, impossible for a spirit to die. The scriptures affirm deathlessness of the angels; and the angels do not die because they are angels, but because they are spirits (1985, 127[22]:692).

Yet it also is impossible for a soul to die (Matthew 10:28; Revelation 6:9-11).

However, as Hebrews 4:12 documents, there are times when the words spirit and soul are **not** used synonymously. The word spirit sometimes refers to wind or air (Genesis 3:8; 8:1; John 3:8); the word soul does not. The word spirit sometimes refers to demons (Mark 5:2; Luke 9:39); the word soul does not. The word soul sometimes refers to both the inner and outer man (i.e., a whole person; Exodus 1:5; Ezekiel 18:20; Acts 2:41; Romans 13:1); the word spirit does not. The word soul sometimes refers to a corpse (Numbers 5:2; 6:6; Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27); the word spirit does not. The word soul on one occasion refers to an odor, fragrance, or perfume (Isaiah 3:20); the word spirit does not.

Thus, while it is true that on some occasions the words "soul" and "spirit" are used interchangeably, in other instances they are employed in a non-synonymous fashion. As Woods observed, under certain conditions within Scripture "lexically, logically, and actually these terms differ and must not be confused" (1985, 127[22]:692). In any study of these two terms as they occur within God's Word, the context and intent of the writers are the deciding factors that must be considered and respected.

[to be continued]

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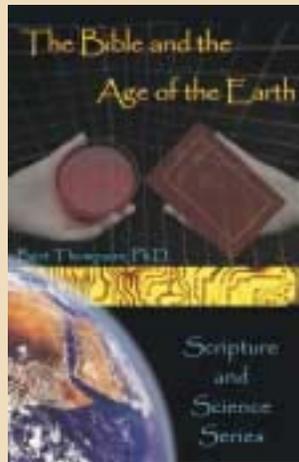
**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

**ANNOUNCING: VOLUME EIGHT IN THE “SCRIPTURE & SCIENCE SERIES”**

In my “Note from the Editor” in the September, October, and November 1999 issues of *Reason & Revelation*, I announced the first seven volumes in our new “Scripture and Science Series” of books. Those seven books included: (1) *The Christian and Medical Ethics*; (2) *The Global Flood of Noah*; (3) *In Defense of the Bible’s Inspiration*; (4) *The Many Faces, and Causes, of Unbelief*; (5) *My Sovereign, My Sin, My Salvation*; (6) *Satan—His Origin and Mission*; and (7) *The Scientific Case for Creation*. When I announced the printing of volume seven, I mentioned that an eighth volume was in preparation and would be released shortly. Since we have just received that book from our printer, I wanted to use my “Note from the Editor” this month to alert you to its availability.

The latest volume to date in the series is titled *The Bible and the Age of the Earth*. In its 126 pages, it contains seven different chapters that deal with such matters as the Day-Age Theory, the Gap Theory, the Modified Gap Theory, the Multiple Gap Theory, The Non-World View, the accuracy and reliability of the biblical genealogies, the doctrine of apparent age (also known as the doctrine of mature creation), etc.

The book also includes answers to some of the most frequently asked questions on the topic of the Bible and the age of Earth such as: (a) how long were Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?; (b) how did Adam name all of the animals in a single day?; (c) is God’s Sabbath rest (i.e., day seven) still continuing?; (d) does 2 Peter 3:8 (“one day is with the Lord as a thousand years”) mean that the days of Genesis 1 were eons of time?; (e) are the chronologies of the Bible trustworthy?; (f) do any of Jesus’ teachings relate to the issue of the age of the Earth; (g) and others.



In a year’s time, we receive literally hundreds of requests for assistance on a wide variety of topics. A large percentage of those inquiries, however, pertains to the singular topic of the age of the Earth. This hardly is surprising, considering that we, our children, and our grandchildren constantly are being bombarded with the notion of a multi-billion-year-old Earth. It may be a magazine to which we subscribe (like *National Geographic*) that routinely arrives in our mailbox. It may be a teacher or professor who is insistent upon an ancient Earth to bolster his or her personal belief in organic or theistic evolution. Or, it may just be a guide or ranger at a national park or forest that we are visiting while on vacation. But there can be no denying that we are fed a steady diet of the “fact” that the Earth is 4.6 billion years old.

*The Bible and the Age of the Earth* provides ammunition that can be used to counter such teachings and, equally as important, that can be used to inoculate our children and grandchildren against such false concepts. The book sets forth an irrefutable case for a young Earth by using clear and compelling evidence from God’s Word—and does so in an easy-to-read, non-technical, and inexpensive format. The book normally sells for \$4.95. However, until April 30 you may purchase it for just \$3.95 (\$1.05 s/h). And if you would like to purchase all eight volumes, we are offering a reduced price for the entire set as well. The retail price for all eight books is \$39.15. But you may purchase all eight for only \$34.95 (2.55 s/h). These books make great additions to personal libraries as well as wonderful (and much appreciated!) gifts. To purchase any or all of them via credit card, call us toll-free at 800/234-8558.

— Bert Thompson