

Heaven and the Afterlife
Lesson 1 - The Nature of Man and the Death of the Body
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Introduction: We must clearly understand our limitations on this subject.

- A. We hear much about people testifying about special revelation and near death experiences. All men are limited in what they see. (**Col 2:18; Jn 3:30-33**)
 - 1. Without the revelation of God we can know nothing of these things!
 - 2. Even when Paul spoke of seeing things, it was by the Spirit of God and revealed to us by God through Paul. (**2 Cor 12:2-4**)
 - 3. One woman made millions of dollars through writing and speaking of her experiences.
- B. What a blessing to have Jesus bear testimony of things we could not know without His revelation! (**Jn 1:18**)
 - 1. What can I know about the future glory of the righteous? I need to simply listen to Jesus and His revelation! (**Jn 14:6, 9-10**)
 - 2. This is the approach we should take on every Bible subject! (**1 Pt 4:11**)

I. Body, Soul and Spirit

- A. Man can be described as consisting body, soul and spirit. (**1 Thess 5:23**)
 - 1. The words soul and spirit can vary greatly in their meaning depending on the context!

THAYER'S Greek-English Lexicon, p. 677 presents the following points of definition and usage:

- 1. breath (Lat. anima) i.e.
 - a. the breath of life; the vital force which animates the body and shows Itself In breathing...
 - b. Life...also...the life which is lived on earth...
 - c. that in which there is life; a living being: a living soul...
- 2. The Soul (Lat. animus)
 - a. The seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions, (our soul, heart, etc.. R.V. almost uniformly soul)...
 - b. the (human) soul in so far as it is so constituted that by the right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain Its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life:
 - c. the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death (distinguished from TO SOMA, as the other part of human nature...) ..the soul freed from the body, a disembodied soul...

From: **Jehovah's Witnesses Volume 2** by Maurice Barnett

- 2. In the creation of man we can see that we are created in God's image and we are more than just a body! (**Gen 1:26-27; 2:7**)
- B. Consider passages the essence of man is separate from the body.
 - 1. There are two different places at death for the body and the spirit. (**Ecc 12:7**)
 - 2. It is possible to kill the body and not the soul! (**Mt 10:28**)
 - 3. We can leave our body and have another one with the Lord. (**2 Cor 5:1-2, 8**)

4. Our present bodies will be discarded! (**Phil 1:22-23; 2 Pt 1:13-14**)

Questions

1. How can we know anything about the unseen world and its future?
2. What do the words body, soul and spirit mean in 1 Thess 5:23?
3. What does it mean for man to be in the image of God?
4. How can we know that we are not just a body with life?
5. How can we “prove” this to unbelievers? (**Acts 2:27-32**)

II. Death and the Afterlife

A. Physical death came as a result of sin.

1. God had provisions for man to live through the tree of life.
2. Because of sin death would be experienced and the tree of life would be denied man. (**Gen 3:19, 22-23**)
3. Because of Adam’s sin the curse of death has spread to all men.
(**Rom 5:12**)

B. Physical death occurs when the body and the spirit separate. (**James 2:26**)

1. We will continue to exist and have consciousness after death.
2. Without knowledge and assurance of our place after death, men have rightly feared the mystery of death.
3. Satan took advantage of this but Jesus through his incarnation and defeat of death has given us freedom from Satan’s fearful bondage.
(**Heb 2:14-15**)

C. Consider the incarnation and death of Jesus.

1. Jesus became like man so that He could best help us.
2. He took on a body but was never just a body! (**Heb 10:5**)
3. When He died his body was in a tomb while His spirit went to Hades.
(**Acts 2:27-31**)

Questions

1. Why did death come into the world? How is this profitable for us?
2. What is physical death?
3. How does Satan use death to his advantage? How was Jesus able to defeat Satan’s use of man’s fear of death?
4. Did Jesus exist apart from His body? When did Jesus receive a body?
5. Did Jesus continue to exist after the death of His body and before his resurrection?