

A RECIPE FOR LIFE

Genesis 2:7 - We get an equation for what makes a living human.

$$\frac{\text{Dust}}{\text{Body}} + \frac{\text{Breath}}{\text{Spirit}} = \frac{\text{Living Being}}{\text{Living Nephesh}}$$

You are body from below and breath from above; soil and spirit.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - What happens when you die?

Your existence is the combination of these two things. If you break them apart, what they came together to create ceases to exist.

It's like a lightbulb. You have the bulb, and you have electricity, this animating force. Together they make light. But if you disconnect the bulb from the electricity, the light doesn't go anywhere. It just ceases to exist.

This is how the Bible thinks of death.

(see Psalms 115:17, 146:4; James 2:26; Ecc. 9:5, 10; Acts 2:34)

Most Christians believe that you go to Heaven when you die,
so where did this thinking come from?

THE "SOUL" ISSUE

The English word "**soul**" appears over 200 times in the Bible, but this word unfortunately comes with a lot of unbiblical baggage. Many people think of a soul as your living "essence" which is contained inside your body. When you die, this "soul" part of you departs somewhere.

This dualistic thinking is not biblical. It comes from Greek philosophy.

The Bible teaches that humans are an indivisible unity of body and spirit that together make a living *nephesh* (often translated as "soul").

But in the Bible—you don't have a *nephesh*, you are a *nephesh*!

Your soul refers to all of you—your whole living being, the combination of physical and spiritual. When you die, your soul—your *nephesh*—ceases to exist, like the light in a lightbulb.

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BUT WHAT ABOUT...?

There are **four or five** verses that always get used to back up the belief that you go to Heaven when you die. These are outweighed by **dozens** that refer to death as nonexistence in the grave.

One of the most popular ones is Jesus' words to the thief on the cross:
"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Didn't Jesus say the thief would be in Heaven with Him that very day?

Well there's a problem. Not only does this contradict the rest of the Bible, it also conflicts with Jesus' own words. In John 20:17, He says that He hasn't yet ascended to the Father. So if Jesus stayed in the grave when He died, did He lie to the thief on the cross?

Punctuation isn't in the original Greek, so translators have to add it later. A comma can make a big difference!

(e.g. "Let's eat grandma." vs. "Let's eat, grandma.")

Notice what happens when you move the comma...

"Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in paradise."

On that day, Jesus promises that he will be with Him in paradise.

Choosing this interpretation is not based on personal bias, but on biblical bias. The evidence all points to this understanding.

RESURRECTION HOPE

The Bible calls death is called a **sleep**. (1 Cor. 15:6; Job 14:10-12; Acts 13:36-37; Luke 8:52) Why this metaphor? Well if you're sleeping, it implies you're going to **wake up!** (Ps. 17:15, Dan. 12:2)

The biblical writers never try to comfort people that their loved ones are already in Heaven. They always place their hope in the resurrection.

We grieve death, but we **grieve with hope** (1 Thess. 4:13-14).

One day, God will swallow up the grave forever (Is. 25:7-8).

1 Cor. 15:50-54 - Because Jesus died and rose from the grave, death is defeated. And God's people will not be held captive by it.

*"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)*

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