

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Do You Have A Soul?

(Jerry Fite)

One religious group, Jehovah's Witness believe you are a soul, but you do not have a soul. They offer Scripture to show that “soul” refers to the individual person, and life. For example, when God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, God's new creation “became a living soul” (*Genesis 2:7*). When the widow's son died, his “breath” left him (*I Kings 17:17*). When Elijah brought him back to life, the “soul of the child came into him again” (*I Kings 17:22*). So, the Jehovah's Witnesses believe man's soul is the person. And, they acknowledge the soul is also the breath that is in man, and it departs when the person dies.

The problem with the Jehovah's Witness doctrine is that they do not consider ALL of what God says in His word concerning man's soul. For example, when God says man's makeup is “spirit, soul and body” (*I Thess. 5:23*), there is in man's makeup more than the outward physical body, but his inward man is soul and spirit. If the soul is merely the breath in man, what is the spirit? If the life force in man is the spirit, what is the soul? There is more to man's makeup than a body and breath.

If the soul is merely the life in man, Jesus did not believe it. He says, “*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 and body in hell*” (*Matthew 10:28*). If a person is a soul, and does not have a soul, how could one kill the body, but not kill the soul? If the person is killed, then according to Jehovah's Witness logic, the soul or the person is killed. If soul is merely the life, how can one still be breathing or have the soul still in them when the body is killed? One cannot kill the soul because the soul, though departing from the physical body at death, does not end or cease to exist.

Jesus allows us to see what happens to us the moment we die. The rich man and Lazarus both died. They quit breathing, and their bodies were dead, but they were coherent in the realm called Hades. While the body was dead, Lazarus “was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom” (*Luke 16:22*). Lazarus is identified apart from his body. His body was not carried away, but “he” was carried away. Was this merely his breath? Did his breath receive comfort in Abraham's bosom, or did “he”? The

soul that is not killed at death continued with the capacity to feel comfort and even remember. The rich man was also in Hades feeling anguish. He was asked to remember his life while in the body and the circumstances in Lazarus' life (*Luke 16:24, 25*). Though apart from the body, the rich man remembered his brothers who needed to hear of the reality of man's destination immediately after death and heed God's word in order to avoid his present torment (*Luke 16:27-28*).

Some say this account is merely a “parable.” The Holy Spirit does not identify it as a parable. But in what parable of Jesus does he ever present a “non-literal truth”? Even if it were a parable, Jesus is offering us the literal truth helping us understand how one can kill the body, or bring the body to death, but not kill the soul.

The Jehovah's Witness organization falls into a common trap of false teachers. They will teach you some truth, but not THE WHOLE TRUTH, which leaves you in error. Like Paul, we should “shrink not from declaring the whole counsel of God” (*Acts 20:27*). Arm yourself with the whole counsel of God so you can avoid error (*Eph. 6:10*).