

Do you have an Immortal Soul?

By

Kenneth Fortier

Is it true that a person will either go directly to heaven or hell when they die? Is it true that there is some immortal part of a person that will never die? Most people say YES! What about you, do you believe these statements? If so, why do you believe that?

Because of this belief that is ingrained in the mind of most Christians since their early childhood, and because one is also taught that doing wrong requires a penalty and that doing right brings a reward, there entered into this belief a concept of a hell for the bad and a heaven for the good.

One should ask themselves if this kind of belief is unique among Christianity, and if it is something that was revealed by God, Jesus, and his Apostles. Did Christ Jesus teach that a person has an immortal soul? Did his Apostles teach this in their writings? Does the Hebrew Old Testament have anything to say about this sort of thing? What about the New Testament? Is this type of belief found in non-Christian religions? How old is this belief? We know from history that the ancient Egyptians, Persians, Babylonians, and far Eastern religions taught about a hereafter way before Christianity existed—by thousands of years.

Leaving the question of immortality out of the equation for a moment, does one even have a soul? If you have a soul, what is it? When did it become a part of one's body? Can you point out its location in your body? Can you feel it? What "proof" do you give that you even have such a thing as a "soul?" Have you ever given any thought about where, when, and how this belief entered into the beliefs of Christianity? Do you want to know? If so, read on. If not, stop reading—it may offend you.

The word "soul" is an English term and in actuality does not do justice to the original meaning of the Hebrew term. That Hebrew term is "nephesh." Let's start this by looking at how a few authorities define this term.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, in the appended Hebrew Dictionary, number 5315, says: "nephesh, a breathing creature, i.e., animal or (in the abstract) vitality: used very widely in a literal, accommodated or figurative sense (bodily or mental); appetite, beast, body, breath, creature, dead, desire, contented, fish, ghost, greedy, he heart, life, (jeopardy of life; in jeopardy), lust, man, me, mind, mortality, one, own, person, pleasure, (her, him, my, thy) self, them (your) selves, slay, soul, tablet, they, thing, will, would have it." Notice all the English words that it is translated with. It's a veritable jungle of words. The English word "soul" is also present—although never defined in itself. But also notice that all these words have a relationship to a creature's "vitality," an animating or basic force or principle regarded as the source and cause of life in living organisms. (Notice that the primary meaning is "a breathing creature.")

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words has this to say:

"Nephesh is 'the essence of life, the act of breathing, taking breath.... The problem with the English term 'soul' is that no actual equivalent of the term or the idea behind it is

represented in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew system of thought does not include the combination or opposition of the body and soul which are really Greek and Latin in origin” (1985 Edition, pages 237–238). (Again, notice that the primary meaning is “the essence of life, the act of breathing, taking breath.”)

Why would Strong’s Concordance inject the term “soul” into his list of English words to define “nephesh?” Believe it or not, there is a very reasonable answer to that question. When the King James Version of the Bible was translated from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the King insisted that “The Old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz. the Word Church not to be translated Congregation &c.” While this was mainly said because of the Puritans not using the ecclesiastically approved words used by the Roman Catholic Church, changing them to what they considered more appropriate words, King James insisted that they be retained in this new translation named after him. Some of these terms were “church, communion, bishop, deacon, baptism, etc.” Soul was not used consistently and often changed into various other words more appropriate to the context by them. This led to confusion. A prime example is found in Matthew 16:25–26 where the term “psuche”—the Greek word translating the Hebrew “nephesh”—is translated by two different English words. Let’s look at this now.

“For whosoever will save his *life* shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his *life* for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own *soul*? or what shall a man give in exchange for his *soul*?”

As you should know, the same term “psuche” is used in all 4 of the highlighted words that Jesus used. Why weren’t the translators more consistent in their rendering of the Greek word? Does rendering the Greek word “psuche” with the English word “life” detract or change the meaning that Jesus spoke of? Absolutely not. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own *life*? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his *life*?” To be fair and honest in using the Greek word it should have been rendered by the same word in both verses!

The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible has this to say on the Hebrew word nephesh: “The word soul is English, though it has to some extent naturalized the Hebrew idiom, frequently carries with it overtones, ultimately coming from philosophical Greek and from Orphism and Gnosticism which are absent in nephesh. In the Old Testament it never means the immortal soul (soul as an entity in the body), but it is essentially the life principle, or the living being, or the self as the subject of appetite, and emotion, especially of volition” (Vol. 4, 1962, on the subject of “Soul”). (Again, notice that the primary meaning is “the life principle.”)

Notice how in all three references cited above that “soul” is not a very good word to use in place of the Hebrew word “nephesh.” The same applies to the Greek word “psuche.” If the word “soul” had been defined to mean the same as either the Hebrew or Greek term, one could more readily justify its use. But that is not the case; the English term carries with it so much baggage that no justifiable case can be made for using it in the Bible—other than it has become an “Ecclesiastical” term with a long tradition of usage. It was a very sad day when the pagan philosophy of an immortal soul was accepted as coming from God. It should be stricken from our English language—

especially in the Bible! The Bible is very explicit in telling us that only Christ is immortal! (See 1 Tim. 6:16.) The argument you may have on this is **not with me, but with what God has to say about it.**

Years ago in a television series there was a show called “Dragnet,” featuring a character named Sergeant Joe Friday. Sergeant Friday, a police detective, was involved in investigations of crime, and one of the things he looked for is emphasized in a statement that became his trademark: “Just the facts, Ma’am, just the facts.” This is what we are doing; asking for facts in this short and abridged investigation of the question asked in the title of this article. Like a good detective we seek out facts, just the facts, to base our conclusion on. Like Sergeant Friday, we don’t want emotions and hearsay watering down this investigation.

“Facts” are hard things to explain away. One man, John Wenham, in his book, *The Goodness of God*, page 29, has these words of wisdom for any Bible student to consider: “For a Christian one simple sentence of revelation must in the end outweigh the weightiest conclusions of man-made philosophy.” The plain and simple sentences concerning “soul,” if one believes what God through his spirit moved his servants to say, are filled with facts on this issue. Turning to Genesis 2:7 in the Bible we see Moses recording what God did to create man: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and **man became** (not received) **a living soul.**”

In this brief sentence are three “facts” anyone should be able to readily perceive. 1) The body of man was formed out of the dust of the earth. The word for dust is the Hebrew word “ophar” which means powdered clay or mud. Add a little water (man is said to consist of 90% water) and man’s name is MUD. 2) This body of man needed something to make it live: that was accomplished when God breathed into his creation the “breath of life.” The breath of life is the Hebrew word “neshamah” which means “wind” or “vital breath,” i.e., the animating factor of life. 3) Because of facts 1 & 2, man “became” a living being, i.e., a breathing creature that has life—a “nephesh,” translated by the English term “soul” in many versions of the Bible.

These three facts reveal that man himself (male or female) is a “soul,” a breathing creature. Fact #3 tells us what man “becomes,” not something added to man that is called a soul. But there is more revealed in this simple sentence than meets the eye. Genesis 1:20 and 24 uses the same terms, “nephesh chay,” to describe all living, breathing creatures of the sea and air, and all of the land creatures. Every creature on the earth that breathes is called a “soul,” i.e., a “nephesh.” This Hebrew term technically means a “vital force”—vitality—animating living creatures. All living “souls” are made of two things: 1) earthy material and 2) God’s breath.

These three facts should be the end of all speculations concerning the term God moved Moses to use—nephesh, what every creature God created when their body was made and received God’s “breath of life” (neshamah, a word closely related to nephesh). As I said before, it was a sad day when translators chose to use the term “soul” in place of “nephesh.” When the Bible was written there was no such a word as “soul.” This English word is easy to trace to its origin. It is from the Eight Century AD. It is a Germanic term coined in the Fourth Century as a translation of the Greek word “psyche.” The word “soul” is from the Old English “sawol,”(Eight Century) which came from the Germanic

word “seele, (siewa) that belonging to the sea: from the early belief that souls originate in and return to the sea. As you can again see, its origin is from pagan myths.

God created the body of man and breathed into it “life”—and the body became (not received) a soul (a living being). That’s how simple it is! But mankind doesn’t seem to like things so simply stated. It seems that if something is complicated it is more readily believed; and philosophy is prone to make things appear to be complicated.

About 100–120 years after our Lord Jesus was resurrected from among the dead a strange new idea began to make headway among Christians. The early Christian Fathers held to a fairly scriptural viewpoint and denounced the philosophical speculation of false teachers and paganism. Among these were Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Shepherd of Hermas, Polycarp (a student of the Apostle John), Tatian, and Irenaeus. Most of these were within a single generation from the Apostles of Christ. They opposed the teachings that man has an immortal soul that at the body’s death goes to be with God. In their writings they point out that immortality is conditioned on one’s faith in Christ Jesus.

Polycarp (69–155 AD), a martyr of the generation after the Apostle John, strongly rejected and reputed those who were teaching the Platonic idea that man had an immortal soul. He also rejected the pagan notion of an everlasting torment for the wicked dead. His teacher, the Apostle John, taught him well, and warned him that false teachers would invade Christianity and bring their teachings into the church. Among these false teachers were the ones who he called “those of the Synagogue of Satan—apostate Jews.

Even while Polycarp lived, we find Justin Martyr (100–165 AD) saying that “If you meet some who say that their souls go to heaven when they die, do not believe that they are Christians.” Justin wrote in Greek and the word for “souls” was “psuche.” (*Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 80.) One has to admit that Justin was of the opinion that a person has an immortal soul, but he didn’t believe that it went to heaven when a person died. He also believed that the soul’s immortality rested upon God allowing it to live. In other words, God can destroy the soul just as easily as the body is destroyed. (See Matthew 10:28.) Right before Justin made this astounding statement, he said to Trypho the Jew that “Moreover, I pointed out to you that some who are called Christians, but are godless, impious heretics, teach doctrines that are in everyway blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish.” What Justin was referring to was that false Christian teachers were becoming more prevalent in introducing the myths of non-Christians into Christianity. But this didn’t stop Justin from warning that punishment would be accomplished by “fire” in the end.

Clement of Alexandria (160–202 AD) and Tertullian (160–240 AD) both openly endorsed an everlasting punishing in a fiery hell. In this they followed Justin Martyr as far as the soul being immortal. Then there was Origen (185–254 AD), who for awhile was contemporary with Tertullian and Plotinus, but didn’t follow the belief of an everlasting punishing in hell-fire. Rather, he was perhaps the first one to teach a form of universalism—sinners in hell will eventually be saved because of God’s mercy.

Then there were Cyprian (200–258 AD) and Plotinus (205–270 AD). Cyprian endorsed the views of Clement during the first half of the Third Century, and this affected the next generation of Christian beliefs. Plotinus, who was considered the greatest philosopher of the Neo-Platonist school at Alexandria, Egypt, and contemporary of Origen, was the next to expound and accept the Greek myth and philosophical ideas in a

speculative manner. His main thought was to produce minds that would incorporate the Platonic ideas of man, soul, and final punishment into what the Old and New Testaments scriptures had to say.

In 312 AD, the Emperor Constantine put out the *Edict of Milan*, which declared that Christianity was free to worship their own God, along with the other gods of the empire. Shortly after, in 325 AD, Constantine called and presided over the First Ecumenical Church Council which produced the *Nicene Creed*. That Creed dictated the “orthodox” teaching of Christ, including, sadly, a denial of his real and complete death at Calvary; and endorsed a vague form of Origen’s universalism.

Next in line were two men name Gregory: Gregory of Nazianzus (363–384 AD) and Gregory of Nyssa (331–396 AD). Both of these men were from the Alexandria, Egypt, school of Philosophy which taught Plato’s ideas on the immortality of an imagined soul. They also taught and held to a form of Origen’s universalism. This went along with the Council’s decree of 325 AD.

During the time of the last two men mentioned, Damasus I became the Bishop of Rome. He reigned from 363–384 AD. He also was the first Bishop to declare himself “Pontifex Maximus.” This was done in the political realm. The Roman Emperor had moved to Constantinople and left a vacancy in the Government of Rome—making it just another city of the Empire. This didn’t sit well with the elite of Rome, and Bishop Damasus put on the crown to give the people a ruler. As head of the Roman Church and also ruler of Rome, he can be considered the one who set up the government of the church based upon the Roman form of government. By declaring himself the Pontifex Maximus, the Lord of man’s body and soul, he used his new power to enforce the Nicene Creed as a belief among Christians. One of the things he accomplished was getting Jerome (340–420 AD) to make a Latin translation of the Greek Bible, which was later called the Latin Vulgate. In doing this he also sought to suppress and do away with all other versions of the Bible—this resulted in the Latin Vulgate being the Bible of Western Europe for the next 1200 hundred years. However, most people did not read Latin, and had to rely on the few priests and theologians of their time who could. Copies of this Bible were chained in the churches and off-limits to the ordinary people who sat in the pews. This resulted in Rome controlling the only source of the teachings of Christ in Western Europe.

Around the Fifteenth Century the discovery of the Greek Scriptures were beginning to make their appearance in Western Europe, and many men were enthralled to be able to verify if the Latin Vulgate Bible was a reliable version for Christians. To their surprise, they found many errors in Jerome’s translation, and that what the Western Church was teaching didn’t go along with what the Greek Scriptures of the Bible had to say and teach. This resulted in many people wanting a new version. This led to the Reformation started by Luther and others.

Going back to the beginning of Post-Apostolic Fathers, we find that many Christians had warned their fellow Christians to beware of the philosophies of men contradicting what Jesus and his Apostles taught. Among these teachings was the teaching of Plato that man has an immortal soul. This was in direct contradiction to what some other Christians believed, such as Justin Martyr concerning a soul, and in contradiction to the Old Testament Scriptures that man himself is a soul. Not only that, but that the soul could never die—a statement that is blatantly opposed to what Jesus

himself stated in John 5:28–29 (compare Rev. 20:11–15 and 21:6–8). Jesus was very specific when he said that “No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of man” (John 3:13 ff). John the Baptist has this to say about those who will be given immortality: “Whoever puts his faith in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see that life, for God’s wrath remains on him” (John 3:36).

The words “eternal life” used in Scripture introduce the use of the word “immortality.” “Eternal,” as my book, *Church Doctrines: Right or Wrong? (You Decide)*, points out, is an adjective that describes a period of time to the word it is attached to—in this case, “life.” The great majority of Christians think of the word “eternal” as being endless life, and the same is thought of the word “immortality.” These thoughts, while somewhat true, are also very deceptive when applied to a human being who is thought to have an “immortal soul.” No human being HAS a soul, much less an immortal soul. A human being is a living, breathing soul, just as any living, breathing creature on this earth is a soul. In fact, every living creature is a soul, man included, and the Bible makes no distinction between them in this regard.

The word “immortality” is only found five times in the entire Bible in our English language: 1) 1 Tim. 6:16—a plain statement showing us that Jesus Christ is the only one who is immortal; 2) 2 Tim. 1:10—a verse that tells us immortality was made known in Jesus Christ; 3) Rom. 2:7—this verse tells us that mortal man has to seek immortality (and notice that immortality equals “eternal life”); 4) 1 Cor. 15:53—man must “put on” immortality. This happens at the resurrection spoken of by Jesus in John 5:28–29 and other verses of the New Testament; and 5) 1 Cor. 15:54—Paul reveals that believers in Christ will be made immortal at resurrection day when “death is swallowed up in victory!”

One of the greatest deceptions to ever enter into the teachings of Christianity is the belief that a person has a soul and that it is immortal. The whole of the Bible does not teach such a thing. In fact, it teaches that living beings are themselves “souls.” And as concerns immortality, it is only given to those who believe in their heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This gift of immortality is a promise from God and will only be given at the resurrection on the last day (See 1 Cor. 15:53–54). Therefore, immortality is not a part of human life, nor is it a part of the makeup of the body, but is strictly a condition to be given by the source of life, God.

A belief in the immortality of an imagined entity (the soul) in man that came unto its own at the death of a man’s body was a very important aspect of the ancient Egyptians. Around 1600 BC the Egyptian religious leaders united all the various tribes in their area under a catch-all religion, culminating in the writing of their *Book of the Dead*. Then around 400 BC, when Alexander the Great conquered the known world and introduced Greek mythology (along with Babylonian myths) into the realm of religious philosophy, a belief that all men had an immortal soul became the norm among most philosophers.

The philosopher Socrates, at this time, introduced his explanation of death, saying “Is it not the separation of the soul and body? And to be dead is the completion of this; when the soul exists in herself, and is released from the body and body is released from the soul, what is this but death?” Socrates went on to explain that one’s immortal soul,

after being released from the body, is either rewarded or punished depending upon its good or evil deeds done while in the body.

Plato, a student of Socrates, continued and sought to enlarge Socrates teachings in his teachings. He reasoned, using the arguments of his teacher, that the soul, being immortal, must have been pre-existent in an “Ideal” world before entering into a newborn man in this world. He also reasoned that man was meant to attain goodness through the transmigration of the soul. His philosophy spread the idea of an immortal soul being a separable entity in man. Believe it or not, the Bible teaches something very different.

Around 380 BC Alexander the Great set up in the city, named after him, a school of philosophy. Plato taught at this school. During this century a multitude of Jews made this city, which had become a great cultural and trading center, their home. Many of them attended this school and put on the robes of a philosopher. In doing this the Jews took on many of the teaching of their pagan teachers and soon introduced pagan beliefs into their religion.

Because the Greek language had become the common language of the people, Jewish religious leaders commissioned 70 Greek speaking Jews to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language—this became the Septuagint, known as the LXX because of the 70 scholars who translated it. This happened around 280 BC.

From 280 BC up to the time of Christ’s appearance, there appeared many books which were called the Psuedepigrapha. Among these books we find 14 or 15 books and scrolls which are called the Apocrypha. A great number of these writings, if not most of them, incorporated Egyptian, Babylonian, and Greek religious mythologies. That these writings contradicted the Hebrew Scriptures didn’t seem to bother these writers, and most people of that time were, for the most part, ignored by them. However, a lot of the pagan ideas on the soul slowly made their way among Jewish leaders such as the Pharisees. The Sadducees weren’t impressed at all, and were the opponents of the Pharisees as we see during the time of Jesus Christ.

However, Christ literally condemned both groups of Jewish leaders during his time on earth. If Christ had come the way the Jews wanted and expected—a conquering King to bring back the glory they had under King David—they would most likely have accepted him. But, as the Gospel’s record, that was not the Kingdom their Scriptures portrayed! Read the Gospel’s recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Pay attention to how Jesus portrayed the Jewish leaders. He was rather harsh and blunt in a lot of what he said, but to the ordinary layman he was full of mercy and compassion. The Kingdom Christ came to bring in was not a worldly Kingdom, but a Kingdom founded in heaven. His citizens were those in which the Kingdom resided within their lives—within each individual believer. To those who believed in him was the promise of truly being made immortal, not just the body, but the complete person at the resurrection on the last day. (See 1 Cor. 15:1–58; 1 Thess. 4:13–18, 5:1–11; and 2 Thess. 1:6–12).

Not too long after the Apostles of Christ died we find false teachers and their teachings entering into the thoughts and beliefs of some Christians. Actually, the Apostle John had to warn Christians that this was already beginning to happen while he was alive! 100 years after Christ rose up to heaven finds many Christians writing and warning of individuals corrupting Christian teachings. But by the end of the second and beginning of the third century we find such noted individuals as Origen attempting to organize

Christian beliefs into a sort of Christian theology—mostly using philosophical arguments of the pagans.

Origen philosophized that human souls were in existence before the body, and that they were imprisoned in the physical world as a form of punishment. Physical life, he imagined, is a purification process to return humans to a spiritual state. He sure didn't get this idea from the Old or New Testament Scriptures! He admired Plato, by his own admission, and accepted Plato's teaching on the immortality of the soul and that it would depart from the body to an everlasting reward or everlasting punishment. He said in *De Principiis* that "The soul, having a substance and life of its own, shall after its departure from the world, be rewarded according to its deserts, being destined to obtain either an inheritance of eternal life and blessedness, if its actions shall have procured this for it, or to be delivered up to eternal fire and punishment, if the guilt of its crimes shall have brought it down to this..." (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 4, 1995, page 240).

Then after 100 more years had passed, we find that Augustine (354–430 AD) worked on the problem of the immortality of the soul and death. Death, Augustine said, meant the total destruction of the body. However, being caught up by the arguments of pagan philosophers, he ignored what the Bible had to say and insisted that the soul would be conscious and continue to live in either a blissful state with God or an agonizing state of separation from God in the fires of hell. In *The City of God* he wrote that the soul "is therefore called immortal, because in a sense, it does not cease to live and to feel; while the body is called mortal because it can be forsaken of all life, and cannot by itself live at all. The death, then, of the soul, takes place where God forsakes it, as the death of the body when the soul forsakes it" (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2, 1995, page 245).

Centuries later Thomas Aquinas added to the confusions created by the non-biblical notion of an immortal soul. He followed Aristotle and taught that the soul could exist apart from the body. His theory required that, since the soul is capable of knowing all material things, and since in order to know a material thing there must be no material thing in it, the soul was not composed of material earth as was the body. Thusly, he reasoned, the soul had an operation separate from the body and thusly could live without the body. He went further and said that the soul of human beings was self-sustaining and was not made up of matter and form, so it could not be destroyed in any natural process unlike the body. (There is more to this argument for the immortality of the soul to be found in "Question 75" of his *Summa Theologica*.)

There is much more that could be brought up to your attention, but I think you get the point of how these pagan thoughts of an immortal soul, slowly at first, then faster as more and more philosophers added them to Christian beliefs. You might want to ask if there was any protest against these pagan teachings being made a part of Christianity. There most certainly has been, and still are today. Many leaders and teachers raised their voices against the inroads pagan teaching made over the centuries, but they were persecuted and killed by the powerful church leaders of their days against whom they raised their opposition. In 1525 William Tyndale wrote about his understanding of salvation, saying that salvation from everlasting death depended upon the resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns to collect them and give them immortality to live thereafter. Because he stood up for the truth he was tortured and burned up at the instigation of "The Church" Hierarchy. What a sad witness that was to the claim that they were the only "true Church of Christ" on earth. However, at the end of the 20th Century we see that

even the Roman Catholic Church has been putting out statements soft-soaping the idea of a fiery hell. Pope John Paul II gave a speech wherein he stated that “The images of Hell that Sacred Scripture presents to us must be correctly interpreted. They show the complete frustration and emptiness of life without God. Rather than a place, Hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy” (Statement concerning the topic of Hell, July 28, 1999). Things are looking up, and the lie of Satan is being weakened, hopefully.

Let me now point out that, like history, the Bible is a great teacher, but only if we pay attention to what it reveals. If one has a soul instead of being a soul, and considers it to be immortal, then the plain and simple words of the apostle Paul in Romans 6:23—“The wages of sin is death”—are not true and shouldn’t be taken literally. The same goes for God’s statements in Ezekiel 18:4, and 20—“The soul that sins, it shall die.” Does death not mean death? Were Paul and God mistaken? According to the immortal soul theory, a soul cannot die. Satan must love this theory, for it backs up what he told Eve in the Garden of Eden concerning the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—“Thou shalt NOT surely die”—if they ate of it. Had not God told Adam and Eve that if they ate of it, “dying, thou shalt surely die?” Who was the liar, God or Satan? The immortal soul theory makes God the liar! And if one believes that theory, they are in a sense taking the side of Satan.

Because of Satan’s lie, theologians and philosophers are forced to invent different meanings for some teachings found in the Bible. To do this they have had to rely upon pagan teachings about their gods and what they say about an immortal soul. When God says a soul shall die, or unbelievers will be destroyed, or shall perish, excuses are made by changing the meanings of those words. “It is only the body that dies, is destroyed, or perishes. The soul lives on!” Then they add that a sinner’s death only means a “separation from God,” although in the fires of hell forever.

Jesus said that Satan is the father of liars (John 8:44). What then shall we say when we read in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, pages 564–565, concerning the theory of the immortal soul? “[It] came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato.” This was propagated by many early theologians such as Origen and Tertullian. Let’s read what Tertullian (155–220 AD) wrote: “...for some things are known by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many ... I may use, therefore, the opinion of Plato, when he declares: ‘Every soul is immortal.’” (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 3.) Admittedly, in spite of what Origen, Tertullian and Augustine promoted, the teaching that a person has an immortal soul did not get put forth as a doctrine of the Roman Church until the Lateran Council of 1513 AD. Shortly after this Council ended Pope Leo X condemned “those who call these things in question; seeing that the soul is not only truly, and of itself, and essentially the form of the human body and likewise immortal.” Satan’s lie gained a lot of ground with this proclamation!

Pope Leo would not have had to make such a powerful and dogmatic statement if there were no opposition to the immortal soul theory of pagans being introduced into Christianity. Think about that. Don’t get me wrong, there are multitudes of Christians in the Roman Church who, when you converse with them about these things mentioned within, do not go along with all the dogmatic assertions made on what they must believe.

The lie Satan told, which is still being spread today through this immortal soul theory, is really aimed at the purpose of God carried out when His Son died. Jesus “poured out his soul (life) unto death for our sins” (Isaiah 53:12). If death does not affect the inward life of man, then Jesus’ death would be meaningless and resurrection would be unnecessary. But man, his whole being, is not immortal. Man himself is a soul, and is mortal—so says the Bible! It is only Christ Jesus, at his resurrection, who is immortal—raised in an immortal and glorified body. According to what is recorded in the Bible, the sinner, unsaved, will truly perish, never to live again—it is nowhere even hinted at that he will be given immortality to be thrown into the Lake of Fire to suffer punishment endlessly. The only way a man can obtain immortality is for Christ to give it to him when he returns to earth again on the last day (1 Cor. 15:51–53). **THIS IS OUR BLESSED HOPE!** On this day the glory of Christ’s work will be done—forever! That is the real truth.

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