

## Satan's Monumental Lie

By

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When Jesus confronted the Jews for refusing to believe the truth, He said to them, "You are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar and the father thereof" (John 8:44).

Here Jesus links together the two principle characteristics of Satan: murderer and liar. It was by lying that he accomplished the death of Adam and Eve. God had warned them of the penalty for breaking His law when he said, "Thou shall surely die," or more correctly translated, "Dying, you shall surely die." Shortly afterwards Satan came along and said, "You shall not surely die" (Gen. 2:17, 3:3-4).

Was it God who told the truth, or was it the devil? According to a survey made by a Lubbock, Texas preacher, 99.9 percent of the people surveyed said they agreed with this statement: "I believe there is an eternal existence after this life, heaven or hell." People are continually told from the pulpits across the land that they have "an immortal soul" that must live forever either in heaven or hell, or as one preacher said at a funeral, "We have an immortal part within us which shall never die."

Not only does this endorse Satan's lie, but it is a doctrine that cannot be found anywhere in the Bible. Neither was it taught by the early Apostolic Fathers, the Christian writers who lived nearest to the last of the apostles: Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Irenaeus of Gaul, all reveal in their writings that immortality was not a natural or inherent quality, but a gift to be conferred to the faithful by Christ.

According to the Jewish Encyclopedia (Vol. VI, pages 564-565) the concept of the immortal soul "came to the Jews from contact with the Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato." This was also true of some early theologians, such as Athenagoras, Origen and Tertullian. For example, Tertullian (155-220 AD) wrote: "For some things are known even 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. III). In spite of the influence of Origen, Augustine and Tertullian, the immortality of the soul did not become part of church doctrine until the Lateran Council of 1513. After this council Pope Leo X place a condemnation on "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."

William Tyndale and Martin Luther tried to eradicate the false doctrine of an "immortal soul," but the Pope's decree held the people in fear of calling "these things in question."

**CREATION OF A SOUL.** It may surprise many to learn that the Bible gives a record of the creation of a soul. It is found in Genesis 2:7, "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.”

Consider the fact that man was formed of the dust of the ground, not out of spirit, and the whole man “became a living soul.” The Bible does not say that God breathed a soul into man, nor that man receive a soul, but it does say that **man became a living soul**. A soul is what man is, not something that man has!

The Hebrew word translated as “soul” in Genesis 2:7 in the King James Version is *Nephesh*, and designates a living, breathing creature. It is used frequently in the first chapter of Genesis in reference to animals also. It is also used with reference to a dead body (Lev. 21:11, Num. 6:6, Haggai 2:13). Clearly *Nephesh* has nothing to do with an immortal spirit essence. Ezekiel 18:4, 20 declares that a soul can die: “The soul that sins, it shall die.” If the soul were immortal it certainly could not die. No wonder the scholars have to quote Plato in support of the immortal soul doctrine!

In the New Testament, “soul” is a translation of the Greek word *psuche*, which is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, and like *nephesh* it is frequently rendered “life” as well as “soul.” It is also used of animals and sea creatures. In no way does it connote “spirit essence” or “immortal soul.” In fact, Jesus said that God is able to destroy one’s soul (Greek *psuche* or *life*) in Gehenna fire (Mt. 10:28).

**WORDS GIVEN NEW MEANINGS.** The belief in an “immortal soul” which must live forever gives support to the various teachings about the lost being sentenced to suffer perpetual torture forever. If the soul is immortal, then the simple statement that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) must not mean death, but everlasting life in pain and suffering. Similarly, Ezekiel 18:4, 20, “The soul that sins, it shall die,” cannot mean one actually dies, but lives in torment.

Because of the devil’s monumental lie, orthodox theologians are forced to invent new meanings for many plain words. Another example is John 3:16, the precious Golden Text, and best known verse in the New Testament. “For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” According to Robinson’s Greek and English Lexicon, the Greek word for “perish” means “to destroy utterly; to perish utterly...to put an end to...to come to an end.”

Thus, what Jesus said was that whoever believes on Him should not utterly perish and come to an end, but should have everlasting life. But if the soul is immortal it cannot come to an end, therefore “perish” must mean life, although in some form of misery. And when Paul in Philippians 3:18 spoke of the “enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction,” “end” must not mean “end,” but “beginning,” and “destruction,” must not mean “destruction” but something else. They have had to find a new meaning for fire, which utterly destroys everything combustible place into it. The Gehenna fire now must mean a mysterious thing which inflicts burning pain, yet never destroys the substance it burns.

Even the word “death” has a new meaning. In order to accommodate the immortal soul doctrine, death is said to be “spiritual death,” although this expression is found nowhere in all of the Scriptures.

There are 37 different Hebrew words used in the Old Testament to describe God’s stated purpose for the ungodly, and all but two indicate a total destruction or cessation of

life. The two exceptions imply “to break” or “to overthrow.” No Hebrew word meaning “torment” or “torture” is used or implied as God’s purpose for the unsaved. If these words do not express what God intended, as so many contend, why did God choose them?

In the New Testament there are 21 Greek verbs God chose to declare His purpose for the unsaved. All but ONE clearly indicate a complete extinction or cessation of life. The one exception is *basanizo*, in Revelation, and it means the torment of one who is put to the test. The Greek word *tumpanizo*, meaning torture, and used in Hebrews 11:35 of how saints were treated by the wicked, is never used or implied as part of God’s purpose for the ungodly. If God meant for us to understand that the unsaved were to live forever in a state of torture, there are plenty of words in the Greek to express this. Instead He deliberately chose the words expressing final and total death of the whole person.

**RESURRECTION ESSENTIAL.** The widely accepted commentary by Jamieson, Fausett and Brown, with reference to II Corinthians 5:4, states: “Nowhere is the immortality of the soul distinct from the body taught, a notion which may erroneously have been derived from heathen philosophers. Scripture does not contemplate the anomalous state brought about by death as the consummation to be earnestly looked for, but the resurrection.”

Satan’s lie is aimed at the very purpose of God, wrought in Jesus His Son when He died, for “he poured out his soul (life) unto death” for our sins (Isa. 53:12). If, as popular tradition teaches, death does not affect the basic life of man, then the death of Jesus would be meaningless, and man’s resurrection would be unnecessary.

But man is not immortal. Only God and Jesus have immortality (I Tim. 6:16–17). According to scripture, the unsaved will finally and truly perish, never to live again. The only way man can obtain immortality is for it to be conferred to him by Christ when He comes again (I Cor. 15:51–53). **This is our blessed hope, and the crowning glory of Christ’ great work.**

**Yes, “The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).**

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