

## **CAN BELIEF IN THE HUMAN SPIRIT BE SUPPORTED BY THE BIBLE?**

Let's look at GENESIS 1:26,27 –

*“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our like-ness’...27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.” NASU*

**We were made in the IMAGE OF GOD.**

- That image is God's fingerprint of design.
- The Triune nature of God, His trinity/tri-unity, is reflected in our design as triune beings.

**THE TRI-UNITY OF MAN IS REFERRED TO IN 1  
THESSALONIANS 5:23:**

*“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be pre-served complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” NASU*

***Every one of us has three parts –  
the spirit, the soul and the body.***

**So, in this way, we REFLECT THE IMAGE  
OF GOD – We're designed as a trinity, a  
triune being: one being with three parts,  
not three separate beings.**

Obviously, all of us have:

### **1). A BODY - the material side of us;**

The physical vehicle in which we live in this material world.

- The state of this body right now is only temporary; believers will be given a new, glorified body someday which will last for eternity.
- When we die, our physical body turns to dust but the spirit and soul go on living.
- The Bible speaks of death as the separation of the soul and spirit from the body.

The Scripture also says that we have:

### **2). A SOUL**

Our soul is not material like our bodies.

Take our mind & will for example:

- The brain is a physical organ, part of the body, but our memories, our thoughts and choices are not material.
- Our emotions are not physical, – they can be physically expressed through our bodies (tears, laughter, etc.), but the emotions, themselves, are immaterial.

The Bible also says that we have:

### **3). A SPIRIT**

***Our existence is only one-third material. The other two-thirds is spiritual!***

- Two thirds of the real you, YOUR SOUL AND SPIRIT, is not visible, -- not subject to death and is eternal!

**THAT'S WHY IF YOU IGNORE THE SPIRITUAL PART OF YOUR LIFE YOU CAN NEVER BE COMPLETE.**

Inside each one of us, is a “*God-shaped vacuum*” which only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can fill.

- Some people believe that when the Bible talks about a person's spirit it is only referring to their breath.
- But a closer examination of the Scriptures doesn't support this.

**THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PERSON'S BREATH & SPIRIT.**

ISAIAH 42:5 ESV- *“Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:”*

The Scriptures reveal that:

1). A person's SOUL and SPIRIT are more than breath, they have emotions.

As **JOB** was going through his trials, he felt anguish in his spirit (not his *breath*!)

This is what he said – Job 7:11:

*“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will*

*complain in the bitterness of my soul.*" Job 7:11 NASU

## JESUS' SPIRIT FELT EMOTION.

- It has a sense of deep compassion, empathy as He saw Mary's grief and loss at the death of her brother Lazarus.

JOHN 11:33 says that:

*"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled."* ESV

## 2). People's SOULS also feel EMOTION.

- For example: the PSALMIST expressed the hopelessness and terror that sailors experience in a terrible storm.

*"They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; their soul melted away in their misery."* Ps 107:26 NASU

## 3). A person's SPIRIT has INTELLIGENCE.

- The Apostle Paul taught that God's thoughts are only known by God's Spirit, likewise, a person's thoughts are only known by that person's spirit.

- In 1 CORINTHIANS 2:11 he writes:

*"For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the*

The 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of the gospel of John records Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan Woman.

- Though there are many spiritual lessons to learn from this incident, one of the unexpected ones is that:

#### **4). JESUS TAUGHT THAT WE HAVE A SPIRIT.**

- This woman, because she was a Samaritan, was despised by the Jews. She was also an outcast among her own people because of her immorality.
- Jesus' heart went out to her, so He made a point of passing through Samaria just to reach this poor woman!
- He knew that deep inside her, she had a longing to know and be right with God.

Their conversation turned to the topic of worship – of relationship with God.

- She was all caught up in the material, physical world; ...worshiping God, in her mind, was all about a physical place.
- She didn't understand how to have a personal, spiritual relationship with God.

Jesus' words went straight to her heart; they transformed her life:

*"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in and truth."* JOHN 4:24 NASU

Now note this: It says that ***“God is spirit... and she is to worship in spirit.”***

- Definition of ‘spirit’: ***“pneuma; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ’s spirit, the Holy Spirit:***

(Biblesoft’s New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

- Those who don’t believe in the triune nature of man emphasize the translation of the word ***“pneuma”*** as **“breath.”**
- But, this doesn’t make any sense in John 4:24. God is not a **“breath”**; He is Spirit.

The same Greek word is used by Jesus when he declared that we are to worship in spirit (*pneuma*).

- Obviously, this is *not* referring to the air we breathe in and out!
- It is ***“a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul”***

The Scriptures also teach that:

**5). God works through a person’s spirit**

In sharing His supernatural wisdom, King Solomon declared:

***“The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the innermost parts of his being.”***  
Proverbs 20:27 NASU

The Bible teaches that:

## 6). Our **SPIRIT IS ETERNAL.**

### ■ You're spirit never dies.

*“But what about 1 Timothy 6:16?”*

It says that *“[God] alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light...”*

**Yes, this is saying that God is deathless; --not subject to death.**

### ■ Man is subject to death, but God is not.

*“He alone possesses immortality in the sense that He is inherently immortal. Angels and men, having come into existence, will exist forever. There immortality, however, derives from God.”*

Mac Arthur

**Our immortality is imparted to us from God.**

**Nearly 40 yrs. ago, a bomber called the Enola Gay carried two bombs that forever changed the world.**

**The destruction wrought by the atom bombs on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was horrible beyond description.**

**The Atom bomb ushered the world into a time of unprecedented fear and insecurity. Today, there are stock-piles of over 60,000 hydrogen bombs, giving the human race the power to destroy the earth 17 times over through nuclear flames reaching 130 million degrees in one blinding flash!**

**Countries as unstable as nitroglycerin have nuclear bombs!**

**The potential destruction is unthinkable. I'm sure**

when they dropped that first Atom bomb they had no idea of the far-reaching ramifications of that act.

**The Bible tells us that when Adam sinned, he detonated the equivalent of a spiritual atom bomb!**

He caused such destruction that everything he came in contact with was polluted.

- We're still experiencing the fallout from that blast!
- **ROMANS 5:12** tells us what happened when sin came into the world:

*“When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.”* Romans 5:12 NLT

**WHEN ADAM SINNED A SPIRITUAL BOMB WENT OFF! THEOLOGICALLY, WE COULD CALL IT, *“THE ADAM BOMB!”***

- This spiritual explosion radically altered life on planet earth! What he did was much more destructive than any nuclear bomb that has ever been developed. What he did has maimed every human being who has ever lived, except One.

**AS A RESULT OF ADAM’S SIN EVERY PERSON HAS BEEN AFFECTED.**

**EVERY PART OF OUR BEING HAS BEEN AFFECTED:**

- 1). Our **BODY**
- 2). Our **SOUL**
- 3). Our **SPIRIT**

As a result of Adam's sin:

## 6). Our PHYSICAL BODIES BECAME MORTAL.

- The human body became subject to death, disease, and degeneration.
- This has been the tragic result of Adam's sin – physical death & decay.

Another result of Adam's sin is that:

## 7). The SPIRITUAL TIE THAT UNITED OUR BODY & SPIRIT HAS BEEN BROKEN.

- This means when our bodies die our spirit and soul will separate from our bodies.
- The term "death" which is "**thanatas**" in Greek, *does not* mean to be non-existent or unconscious, it rather means to be separated.

Think about this:

Look at COLOSSIANS 2:13:

*"And when you were dead (separated from God -- NOT "unconscious") in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions..."*

The Scriptures teach that:

## 8). WHEN THE SOUL LEAVES THE BODY, THE BODY SLEEPS.

- The term "sleep" is never applied to the soul or the spirit, but only to a believer's body.
- The soul and the spirit continue to exist after death. The body "sleeps" and goes back to dust.

The following verses refer to the state of the body at death as sleep:

- Matthew 9:24 records Jesus' words to the mourners gathered at the house of the synagogue official:

*"He began to say, 'Depart; for the girl has not died, but is asleep.' And they were laughing at Him."*

- STEPHEN - Acts 7:59-60

*"And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord do not hold this sin against them!' And having said this, he fell asleep."*

- Acts 13:36 *"For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay."*

- In 1 THESSALONIANS 4:14 the apostle Paul declares: *"...if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus."*

**QUESTION:** "If the dead are asleep, isn't sleep unconsciousness?"

**ANSWER:** Sleep and unconsciousness are not the same condition. Sleep is never defined as unconsciousness.

W. E. Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words explains the meaning of two of the verbs translated "asleep" and "sleep":

**Verb, 2518, katheudo "to go to sleep," is chiefly used of natural "sleep," and is found most frequently in the Gospels, especially Matthew and Luke. With reference to death it is found in the Lord's remark concerning Jairus' daughter, Matt. 9:24; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52. In the epistles of Paul it is used as follows: (a) of natural "sleep," e.g., 1 Thess. 5:7; (b) of carnal indifference to spiritual things on the part of believers, Eph. 5:14; 1 Thess. 5:6,10 (as in Mark 13:36), a condition of insensibility to Divine things involving conformity to the world (cp. hupnos below).**

**Verb, 2837, koimaomai is used of natural "sleep," Matt. 28:13; Luke 22:45; John 11:12; Acts 12:6; of the death of the body, but only of such as are Christ's; yet never of Christ Himself, though He is "the firstfruits of them that have fallen asleep," 1 Cor. 15:20; of saints who departed before Christ came, Matt. 27:52; Acts 13:36; of Lazarus, while Christ was yet upon the earth, John 11:11; of believers since the Ascension, 1 Thess. 4:13-15; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 7:39; 11:30; 15:6,18,51; 2 Pet. 3:4.**

**Note: "This metaphorical use of the word sleep is appropriate, because of the similarity in appearance between a sleeping body and a dead body; restfulness and peace normally characterize both. The object of the metaphor is to suggest that, as the sleeper does not cease to exist while his body sleeps, so the dead person continues to exist despite his absence from the region in which those who remain can communicate with him, and that, as sleep is known to be temporary, so the death of the body will be found to be. ...**

**"That the body alone is in view in this**

metaphor is evident, (a) from the derivation of the word koimaomai, from keimai, to lie down (cp. anastasis, resurrection, from ana, 'up,' and histemi, to cause to stand); cp. Isa. 14:8, where for 'laid down,' the Sept. has 'fallen asleep;' (b) from the fact that in the NT the word resurrection is used of the body alone; (c) from Dan. 12:2, where the physically dead are described as 'them that sleep (Sept. katheudo, as at 1 Thess. 5:6) in the dust of the earth,' language inapplicable to the spiritual part of man; moreover, when the body returns whence it came, Gen. 3:19, the spirit returns to God who gave it, Eccl. 12:7.

"When the physical frame of the Christian (the earthly house of our tabernacle, 2 Cor. 5:1) is dissolved and returns to the dust, the spiritual part of his highly complex being, the seat of personality, departs to be with Christ, Phil. 1:23. And since that state in which the believer, absent from the body, is at home with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5:6-9, is described as 'very far better' than the present state of joy in communion with God and of happy activity in His service, everywhere reflected in Paul's writings, it is evident the word 'sleep,' where applied to the departed Christians, is not intended to convey the idea that the spirit is unconscious....

"The early Christians adopted the word koimeterion (which was used by the Greeks of a rest-house for strangers) for the place of interment of the bodies of their departed; thence the English word 'cemetery,' 'the sleeping place,' is derived."

From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine. p. 172.  
(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words,  
Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

But the Scriptures teach that:

## 9). THE SOUL IS CONSCIOUS AFTER DEATH

Let's look at REVELATION 6:9-11:

*"And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also."*

- Obviously, a person's soul is more than his breath. These souls under the altar are not "breaths" that are robed and crying out to God!
- Note that these souls are conscious after death. They were martyred and after death are very much alive in heaven.
- They have the ability to cry out to God and to wear white robes. God Himself tells them that more of their brethren will join them after they are killed.

Jesus taught that the soul was:

## 10). CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER DEATH.

### Luke 16:19-31 - The Rich Man and Lazarus –

This is not a parable, but a story that really happened. Every time Jesus uses a parable it is introduced to us as a parable. One must ask the question: "If Jesus believed and taught soul-sleep, why would he use a story like this which has both main characters alive and conscious AFTER death?"

### MATTHEW 22:31-32:

*"But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not the God of the dead but of the living."*

- Jesus' point is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still alive right now.

The New Testament clearly teaches that our soul and spirit separate from our bodies when we die.

In 2 Corinthians 5:8 Paul said,

*"...we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."*

On death row, Paul writes the Philippians in PHILIPPIANS 1:23

*"But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better..."* Philippians 1:23

## This is Consistent with the Old Testament Witness:

Read Israel's taunt to the King of Babylon. It indicates an Old Testament understanding of consciousness after death.

### ISAIAH 14:9-11, 15-17

*"Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come; it arouses for you the*

*spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth; it raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones. They will all respond and say to you, 'Even you have been made weak as we, you have become like us. Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you, and worms are your covering.'*

**Verses 15-17:** *"Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities who did not allow his prisoners to go home?'"*

## **"BUT WHAT ABOUT ECCLESIASTES 9:5?"**

*"For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten."*

- The context of this verse is *"under the sun."*
- It is saying that the dead do not know anything that is going on *"under the sun"* -- that is, on earth after they die and are in heaven (Eccl.12:7).
  - Twenty nine times this phrase "under the sun" is used in the book of Ecclesiastes and it always refers to life on the earth. The dead do not know what is happening on the earth, though they are conscious after death.

■ How does soul sleep fit into Ecclesiastes 3:22?

*“Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?”*

■ Why does an animal’s breath go downward and man’s breath go upward?

*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s* notes on Ecclesiastes 9:5 explain that the verse well:

“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.”

For the living know - and may thereby be led "so to number their days that they may apply their hearts to wisdom" (Eccl 7:1-4; Ps 90:12).

But the dead know not - i.e., so far as their bodily senses and worldly affairs are concerned (Job 14:21; Isa 63:16): also, they know no door of repentance open to them, such as is to all on earth.

Neither have they ... a reward - no advantage from their worldly labours (Eccl 2:18-22; 4:9).

For the memory of them is forgotten - not of the righteous (Ps 112:6; Mal 3:16), but the wicked, who, with all the pains to perpetuate their names (Ps 49:11), are soon "forgotten" (Eccl 8:10).

(from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

**THERE IS A DESTINATION AFTER DEATH for a person's soul and spirit.**

**MATTHEW 10:28**

*"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both the soul and body in hell."*

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-8**

*"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- for we walk by faith, not by sight-- we are of good courage, I say... and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."*

**Our spirits are "dead in sin"**

The result of Adam's sin was not only physical death, but: **SPIRITUAL DEATH.**

*"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...we were dead in our transgressions"*  
Ephesians 2:1,5 NASU

Because our spirits are dead in sin,

**Jesus taught that we must be BORN AGAIN to be saved.**

You see, Jesus said that it's

**A PERSON'S SPIRIT that is REGENERATED**

Look at JOHN 3:6,7

*"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" John 3:6,7*

**The Scriptures we've read clearly teach that the soul and the spirit are more than breath.**

- *"He who loves his life (psuche) or soul loses it, and he who hates his life (zoe) in this world will keep it to life (zoe) eternal."*  
John 12:25

A person's soul and spirit are separated from their body when they die. The soul is conscious in heaven after death awaiting the resurrection of the body.

**Jesus' promise to Martha in John 11:25-26 is also very clear:**

*"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?'"*

**A literal translation of the Greek text clarifies even more:**

*"I am the resurrection and the life; the one believing in me even if he should die will live [or*

**'continue to go on living'**  
--future active indicative  
tense, which speaks of  
continuous action],  
***even if dies.***"

Clearly, Jesus is saying,

***"The one who believes in Me  
will continue to go on living  
even if he dies at a particular  
point of time."***

The tense here, (2nd aorist  
subjunctive, 3rd class conditional),  
denotes the possibility of dying in a  
point of time, but it concedes  
something: it concedes that even if  
he dies, he will continue to go on  
living.

**In other words, there is never a break in  
the life of a believer. A believer's life  
continues without any interruption by death.**

The text continues in verse 26:

***"And everyone living and  
believing in me shall never, by  
no means (extremely emphatic  
in the Greek) dies unto the  
age..."*** (The Zondervan Parallel New  
Testament in Greek and English, Zondervan,  
1975, p. 307).

**Eternal life does not stop and start. It  
is a life of such a quality that it never  
dies!**