

The Human *Nephesh* (Soul) Mortal or Immortal?

ARTICLE SERIES

QADESH LA YAHWEH PRESS

COPYRIGHT © 2022

One of the greatest disputes among the various Jewish, Christian, and Muslim factions regarding the composition and nature of man is whether the *nephesh* (soul) of a human is mortal or immortal. Despite the doctrines held by most of these groups and their numerous subdivisions, the evidence will show that the *nephesh* is mortal and that the idea of an immortal *nephesh* (soul) derives not from Scriptures but from pagan religious teachings.

The *Nephesh* is Mortal

Like the *nephesh* of any animal, bird, or fish, the human *nephesh* is mortal (subject to death). Any *adam* who is alive is a “חַיָּה (*khayah*; living)¹ *nephesh*,”² but the *nephesh* of every *adam* will suffer מוֹת (*muth*; death).³ A close examination of Scriptures will prove that the human *nephesh* is mortal and not immortal, as many religionists falsely assert. The essence of death is to lie in “ruin” and to be “destroyed,”⁴ while the essence of life is to be “vigorous” and to possess “health.”⁵

A close examination
of Scriptures will
prove that the human
nephesh is mortal
and not immortal as
many religionists
falsely assert.

The human *nephesh* is mortal; that is, it can both suffer death and be destroyed.⁶ This fundamental doctrine is announced throughout Scriptures. In the book of Hebrews, for example, we read that, “it is apportioned to men to DIE ONCE, and after this (will be) the Judgment.”⁷ The apostle Saul (Paul) informs the assembly at Corinth that, “by man is death” and “in Adam ALL DIE.”⁸

Therefore, all humans who spring forth from the flesh of father Adam must die because it was by this first man that death was brought into the world.⁹ Even Yahu-

shua the messiah, a descendant of Adam on his mother’s side, on account of this curse was mortal and could to submit to death.¹⁰ That death comes to all humans is also taught in Psalms. It states:

For Yahweh is the government and ruler among the nations. All the fat (prosperous) ones of the land will eat and prostrate; all that go down

¹ The Hebrew term חַיָּה (*khayah*) means, “to live, whether lit. or fig.; causat. to revive:—keep (leave, make) alive,” “vigorous” (SEC (*Strong’s’s Exhaustive Concordance*), Heb. #2421, 2422); “. . . health, safety, vigour,” “lively, strong” (HEL; *Hebrew-English Lexicon*. Zondervan Edition, 1970. , pp. 83f). חַיָּה (*khayah*) is translated into Greek as ζῶω (*zao*), also meaning, “to live (lit. or fig.)” (SEC, Gk. #2198), “metaph. to be in full life and strength, to be fresh, be strong” (GEL; *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968., p. 343).

² Gen., 2:7.

³ The Hebrew term מוֹת (*muth*), plural מוֹתִים (*muthim*; their deaths), מוֹתִים (*muthim*; dead ones), means, “to die (lit. or fig.); causat. to kill,” i.e., “death . . . fig. pestilence, ruin:—(be) dead ([-ly]), death, die (-d)” (SEC, Heb. #4191–4194; HEL, pp. 141f). The Greek translation of מוֹת (*muth*) is the class θνήσκω (*thnesko*), “to die (lit. or fig.)” (SEC, Gk. #2348.), from which comes θάνατος (*thanatos*), “death (lit. or fig.)” (SEC, Gk. #2288) and θανατώ (*thanatoo*), “to kill (lit. or fig.)” (SEC, Gk. #2289); and such terms as ἐπιθανάτιος (*epithanatos*), “doomed to death” (SEC, Gk. #1935), and ἀποθνήσκω (*apothnesko*), “to die off (lit. or fig.)” (SEC, Gk. #599). Also the Greek word ἀποκτείνω (*apokteino*), “to kill outright; fig. to destroy” (SEC, Gk. #615), is used to translate מוֹת (*muth*).

⁴ See above n. 3.

⁵ See above n. 1.

⁶ Cf., Matt., 10:28.

⁷ Heb., 9:27.

⁸ 1 Cor., 15:21f.

⁹ Gen., 2:9, 16f, 3:1–24. One receives death if he eats from or even touches the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen., 2:9, 16f, cf., 3:3); and one receives eternal life if he eats from the tree of life (Gen., 3:22).

¹⁰ E.g., Matt., 28:7; Mark, 15:44f; John, 2:22, 19:33, 21:14; Acts, 3:15, 4:10, 10:41, 13:30, 34, 17:3, 25:19; Rom., 4:24, 8:11; and so forth.

into the *'aphar* will bow in front of him; AND NONE CAN KEEP ALIVE HIS OWN NEPHESEH.¹¹

In Ezekiel, we are twice told that “The NEPHESEH that transgresses the Torah (Law), it will *muth* (die).”¹² This verse takes on its fuller meaning when we place it in context with other passages from Scriptures.

In the Torah, for instance, we read, “and whatsoever NEPHESEH it be that does any manner of work in that same day (the Day of Atonement), I (Yahweh) will אָבַד (*abad*; destroy)¹³ that NEPHESEH from among his people.”¹⁴

In 2 Chronicles, 6:36, as another example, it states that “there is not an *adam* who does not sin.” According to the apostle John, “everyone that practices sin, also practices the violation of the Torah; and sin is the violation of the Torah.”¹⁵

Saul adds that “everything which is not from out of trust is sin,”¹⁶ a reference to sinning against the Torah of Trust and not the Torah of Moses,¹⁷ and if you cause another to sin, “you sin against the messiah.”¹⁸

John reports that “all unrighteousness is sin,”¹⁹ and James adds that those who “have respect of persons,” i.e., who show favoritism based upon outward circumstances and not their intrinsic merits, “work sin.”²⁰ He also notes that even if you keep the entire Torah of Moses yet stumble only in one (point), you have “become guilty of all (offenses).”²¹

For these reasons, Saul writes, “all have sinned and have come short of the glory of Yahweh”;²² “death passed to all mankind, for that all have sinned”;²³ and “the wages of sin is death.”²⁴ Therefore, all are not only mortal but must die, for all things are transitory. Saul further informs the Romans:

So then, brothers, debtors we are, not to the flesh, to live according to flesh; for if according to flesh you live, you are about to die.²⁵

Put another way, Saul is saying that all flesh, especially all of mankind, will die. Similarly, in Ecclesiastes we read that one event befalls all humans, whether those humans are good or bad—all suffer death:

All that happens does so to all; one event is

to the just AND to the wicked, to the good and clean AND to the unclean, and to the sacrificer AND to him who does not sacrifice. As to the good is also done to the sinner; the swearer of oaths as to the respecter of oaths. This is an evil that is done among all under the sun, that one event is to all. And also, the inner self of the sons of *ha-adam* is full of evil and madness is in their innermost selves throughout their

Similarly, in
Ecclesiastes we read
that one event
befalls all humans,
whether those humans
are good or bad—
all suffer death

¹¹ Ps., 22:28f.

¹² Ezek., 18:4, 20.

¹³ The Hebrew term אָבַד (*abad*) means to “wander away, i.e. lose oneself; prop. to *perish* (caus. *destroy*)” and to suffer “destruction” (SEC, Heb. #6-8); “made to stray, dispersed, laid waste, ruined, destroyed” (HEL, p. 1).

¹⁴ Lev., 23:30.

¹⁵ 1 John, 3:4.

¹⁶ Rom., 14:23.

¹⁷ Rom., 3:27f; and see FSDY, 1, pp. 87f.

¹⁸ 1 Cor., 8:12.

¹⁹ 1 John, 5:17.

²⁰ James, 2:9.

²¹ James, 2:10.

²² Rom., 3:23.

²³ Rom., 5:12-14.

²⁴ Rom., 6:23.

²⁵ Rom., 8:12f.

lives. And after that (i.e., after having lived) they go to מוֹתִים (*muthim*; their deaths).²⁶

There are numerous other examples from Scriptures also proving that the *nepesh*—translated into Greek as “ψυχή (*psuche*)”—dies and can be destroyed.²⁷ Further, that the *nepesh* dies is also verified by the fact that a dead human body is often referred to as a dead *nepesh*.²⁸ Accordingly, the *nepesh* remains connected with the physical body upon death.

Someone dead is not alive. Yet those who believe in an immortal soul—holding that it eternally survives death as a conscious, mentally active being—suffer from Orwellian double-think, i.e., believing two opposites are true at the same time. Yet the Scriptures plainly state, “מוֹתִים (*muthim*; dead ones) DO NOT LIVE!”²⁹ In death, there is no mental activity whatsoever. King Solomon writes:

For whoever is chosen to all the living, there is hope, because a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die; but the dead, they know nothing and there is no reward for them anymore; for their memory is forgotten. Also their love and their hatred and their envy has already perished and there is no part for them anymore belonging to the world-age in everything that is done under the sun.³⁰

Likewise, in Psalms 88:11–12, Heman the Ezrahite makes a plea to Yahweh for life, noting that nothing can come from the state of death.

Simply put, a *nepesh* which is to be saved and gains eternal life must first suffer death and for a time it will perish, lying in ruin and decay.

Will your mercy be declared in the sepulcher, your faithfulness in destruction? Will your wonders be known in the חֹשֶׁךְ (*khoshek*; darkness) and your righteousness in the land of נְשִׁיחַ (*neshyah*; oblivion)?³¹

This verse refers to the state of death as a land of darkness and oblivion, i.e., a place where all things perish and are forgotten.³²

We will have more to say regarding the lack of mental activity of the dead in a later topic.³³ For now, it is only important to note that every *nepesh*, including those that will be saved, must first die. This fact is indicated by the statements mentioned above that all men must die once and that no one can keep his *nepesh* alive.

Even Yahushua the messiah suffered death while he was a fleshly man. It is further verified by such statements as the one found in Psalm 119:81, where one who will find salvation is said to remark to Yahweh: “My *nepesh* כָּלָתָה (*kalathah*; perishes) for your salvation; I hope in your word.” The term translated as “perishes” is כָּלָתָה (*kalathah*) and means “to end,” “to cease, be finished, perish,” “was wasted, ruined, decayed,” “waste, ruin, destroy.”³⁴ Simply put, a *nepesh* which is to be saved and gains eternal life must first suffer death, and for a time it will perish, lying in ruin and decay.

²⁶ Eccles., 9:2f.

²⁷ Josh., 10:35; Psalm, 78:50, 89:48; Jer., 18:20; Ezek., 22:27; Rev., 16:3.

²⁸ E.g., Num., 6:6, 9:6, 7, 10, 19:11, 13, 16, and so forth.

²⁹ Isa., 26:14.

³⁰ Eccles., 9:4f.

³¹ The Hebrew term נְשִׁיחַ (*neshyah*) means, “oblivion:—forgetfulness” (SEC, Heb. #5388); “forgetfulness” (HEL, p. 175); “forgetting . . . land forgotten by Y, i.e. of the dead” (CHAL; *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 248).

³² That this verse refers to *sheol* (the state of the dead), see NBD (*The New Bible Dictionary*. W.B. Eerdmans Pub., Grand Rapids, MI, 1971), p. 388. Also see article titled *Sheol*.

³³ See articles titled *Sheol*, *Sleep and Samuel*, and *Tartaros*.

³⁴ SEC, Heb. #3615; HEL, p. 124; CHAL, p. 158.

Other examples showing that those who are to be saved will first suffer death are found in such passages as Psalm, 44:22, "For your sake (Yahweh), we are slain all the days; we are counted as sheep of the slaughter"; Psalm, 116:15, "Precious in the eyes of Yahweh is the death of his pious ones"; and many other like passages.³⁵ We will deal with this subject in-depth while discussing the resurrections.³⁶

For now, we should merely point out that there is no need for a resurrection of the dead if the *nephesh* is immortal.

Indeed, if we die and have an immortal soul that goes off to heaven or, as some would have it, if we are merely raptured off to heaven in our present form, we have hope without any resurrection.

Nevertheless, according to Scriptures, we are incapable of inheriting eternal life in our present corruptible, fleshly form.³⁷

In fact, Saul contradicts the popular notion of an immortal soul by saying our only hope is in a resurrection from the dead:

If the dead are not raised, neither has messiah been raised; useless is your trust; you are still in your sins. And then those that fell asleep in messiah perish. IF IN THIS LIFE WE HAVE HOPE ONLY IN THE MESSIAH, WE ARE MORE MISERABLE THAN ALL MEN.³⁸

Further, if there is no need to have a body to save or a body to be destroyed in *gehenna* fire, why does Saul state in 1 Thessalonians that he wishes that "your entire *pneuma* and the *psuche*

and the *soma* (i.e., *ruach* and the *nephesh* and the *gewiyah* [body]) will be preserved blameless unto the coming of our sovereign, Yahushua the messiah."³⁹ In the book of Romans, Saul hopes that father Yahweh, "who raised up the messiah from out of the dead will also QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL BODIES on account of the (sacred) *ruach* that dwells in you."⁴⁰

Matthew similarly warns us to be fearful of "him (father Yahweh) who is able to destroy both the *nephesh* and the *gewiyah* in *gehenna* (fire)."⁴¹ This statement means that, after the General Resurrection, we will have a mortal body that can still be destroyed in the great fire at the end of Judgment.

These statements and others like them clearly point to a flaw in present-day religious thinking regarding the after-life. These problems will be addressed as we proceed.

Pagan Origins

The first great deception was told by the *satan* to Eve,⁴² when he advised her that if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "you will NOT מוּת (muth; die)."⁴³ Indeed, the idea of an immortal soul is prevalent throughout pagan religions, from Hinduism to the Greek philosophers.

Nevertheless, scholars have known for some time now that this pagan doctrine was never part of early Yahwehism. Rather, many Jews and Christians have been drawn to its precepts by forces outside of Scriptures.

To begin with, the false notion of an immortal soul has been encouraged because the Hebrew word *nephesh* has been translated into Greek by the term *psuche*. For the Greeks,

The first great deception was told by the satan to Eve, when he advised her that if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "you will NOT מוּת (muth; die)."

³⁵ John, 11:25–26; Rev., 5:9–10; Matt., 10:21–22.

³⁶ See articles under the Section titled *The Resurrections*.

³⁷ 1 Cor., 15:50.

³⁸ 1 Cor., 15:16–19.

³⁹ 1 Thess., 5:23.

⁴⁰ Rom., 8:11.

⁴¹ Matt., 10:28.

⁴² John, 8:44; 1 Tim., 2:14.

⁴³ Gen., 3:1–5, cf., 2:8–3:13.

besides being a reference to the person himself, *psuche* is used to describe various phantoms, demons, and spirit beings possessing the human body. Although the original Christian translators used the Greek word narrowly, over time, the full Greek meaning of *psuche* was superimposed upon the original Hebrew thought.

To understand this backwash effect, we must realize that the Greeks thought highly of being demon-possessed.

Not only were great kings and heroes considered possessed by spirit beings, but even their poets, musicians, and other artists were not considered competent unless they were under the power of a demon.

Democritus, for example, “denies that any one can be a great poet, unless he is mad.”⁴⁴ Plato characterizes “poetic inspiration” as the “state of being possessed by the Muses” when one “is not in his right mind.” One’s poetry would never attain perfection if he is in his right senses, and his poetry would surely be “eclipsed by the poetry of inspired madmen.”⁴⁵

In another place, Plato writes that “it is not by art, but by being inspired and POSSESSED, that all good epic poets produce their beautiful poems.”⁴⁶ The pagan notion of an immortal soul or *nepheesh* (forced to fit the idea of a disembodied soul) is not a scriptural doctrine. As *The Jewish Encyclopedia* candidly admits:

The belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body is a matter of philosophical or theological speculation rather than of simple faith, and is accordingly nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture.⁴⁷

This section of *The Jewish Encyclopedia* further points out that the *nepheesh* (translated as “soul”) was never ascribed immortality by Scriptures. It was, in fact, part of pagan “ancestor worship” and “necromancy,”⁴⁸ which were practiced by the Israelites when they rebelled against Yahweh. This text continues:

Plato writes that
 “it is not by art,
 but by being inspired
 and POSSESSED,
 that all good epic
 poets produce their
 beautiful poems.”

The belief in a continuous life of the soul, which underlies primitive ANCESTOR WORSHIP and the rites of necromancy, practised also in ancient Israel (I Sam. xxviii. 13 et seq.; Isa. viii. 19; see NECROMANCY), was discouraged and suppressed by prophet and lawgiver as antagonistic to the belief in YHWH [Yahweh], the God of life,

the Ruler of heaven and earth, whose reign was not extended over Sheol until post-exilic times (Ps. xvi. 10, xlix. 16, cxxxix. 8). As a matter of fact, eternal life was ascribed exclusively to God and to celestial beings who “eat of the tree of life and live forever” (Gen. iii. 22, Hebr.), whereas man by being driven out of the Garden of Eden was deprived of the opportunity of eating the food of immortality.⁴⁹

The notion of an immortal soul that can disembody itself after one dies infected Jewish and later neo-Christian doctrine, not from the Scriptures but directly from pagan Greek philosophy. For example, *The Jewish Encyclopedia* freely admits that this pagan doctrine entered into Jewish thought via the Greeks in the years prior to Yahushua the messiah’s earthly ministry:

⁴⁴ Cicero, *Divin. (De Divinatione)*, 1:80.

⁴⁵ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 245A; *Laws* 719C.

⁴⁶ Plato, *Ion*, 533E–534D.

⁴⁷ JE (*The Jewish Encyclopedia*. KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1964), 6, p. 564.

⁴⁸ Necromancy is the art of bringing up and being possessed by demons who pass themselves as souls of the dead.

⁴⁹ JE, 6, p. 564.

The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato, its principle exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended, as the Semitic name "Minos" (comp. "Mino-taurus"), and the Egyptian "Rhadamanthys" ("Ra of Ament," "Ruler of Hades"; Naville, "La Litanie du Soleil," 1875, p. 13) with others, sufficiently prove.⁵⁰

James Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* similarly writes:

The Greeks thought of the soul as naturally immortal. This idea was **BORROWED** by the Alexandrian-Jewish writers.⁵¹

Immortal Soul Doctrine in Christianity

Beginning in the second century C.E., a few Christian groups began accepting the pagan doctrine of an immortal soul, acquiring it in part from the Greeks, especially Plato, but within the backdrop that a number of Jewish religious leaders had already adopted its premise. Compounding the problem, many of the Pharisaic Jews coming into the ranks of Christianity already held to this view, spreading it to other Christians.⁵²

To demonstrate, the doctrines of the Pharisees (who as a group opposed Yahushua the messiah) supported the idea of an immortal *nepesh*, holding that good people ascended to

heaven upon death. In contrast, bad people descended into *hades* (*sheol*) to be punished for eternity. Good people who have gone to heaven would later return to earth at the end of the age to be reconstituted into a new body. In discussing the Pharisaic view, Josephus (a Pharisee himself) states:

Every ψυχήν (*psuche; nepesh*), they maintain, is imperishable (i.e., immortal), but that of the good alone passes into another body, while that of the wicked suffers eternal punishment.⁵³

Again, while speaking of the crime of suicide, Josephus gives the Pharisaic view:

... they who depart this life in accordance with the law of nature and repay the loan which they received from the deity, when he who lent is pleased to reclaim it, win eternal renown; that their houses and families are secure; that their ψυχαί (*psuchai; nepeshim*) remaining spotless and obedient, are allotted the most sacred place in the heavens, whence, in the revolution of the world-ages, they return to find in chaste bodies a new habitation. Yet as for those who have laid hands upon themselves, the darker regions of *hades* receive their ψυχαὶς (*psuchas; nepeshim*).⁵⁴

According to the Pharisees, therefore, after the death of a wicked man, his *nepesh* goes to *sheol*, which they interpreted as being the region of *hades* spoken of by the Greeks (being the Greek notion of an underworld for the dead). A good man, on the other hand, would

The Greeks
thought of the soul
as naturally immortal.

This idea was
BORROWED by
the Alexandrian-
Jewish writers.

⁵⁰ JE, 6, pp. 564f.

⁵¹ ERE (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. James Hastings, 11, p. 843.

⁵² That large numbers of Pharisees were coming into the ranks of Christianity, see Acts, 23:6, 26:5; Philip., 3:5; John, 3:1, cf., 19:40.

⁵³ Jos., *Wars* (Josephus, *History of the Jewish Wars Against the Romans*), 2:8:14.

⁵⁴ Jos., *Wars*, 3:8:5; cf., Jos., *Apion* (Josephus, *Against Apion*), 2:31 §218.

first sojourn in a holy place in heaven until the “revolution of ages,” at which time they would return to life in “chaste bodies” and “a new habitation.” Why the souls living in heaven with the deity would want to return to fleshly bodies is never explained.

This same view of going off to heaven and then returning is continued today by those neo-Christians who believe in the “rapture,” the idea that either pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation, they will be carried off to heaven. Other neo-Christian groups merely believe that their souls go to heaven when they die.

Under this construct, there is no need for a resurrection. The wicked, meanwhile, all descend to Hell, an underworld of fiery torment where evil souls suffer eternally.

Yet they fail to answer a crucial scriptural question, “If one has already gone off to heaven or Hell, what need is there of a coming judgment? Have they not already been judged?” The contradiction created by this view with the scriptural expectation of a coming Judgment Day is never adequately addressed.

The introduction of the pagan notion of an immortal soul that goes to heaven upon death had already begun to infiltrate the early assemblies following the messiah as soon as the second century C.E.

For example, Justin Martyr, an early Christian of the Roman assembly, writing c.160 C.E., denounces those in the assemblies who had now come to believe that the *psuche* (*nepesh*) of a righteous man would go to heaven upon death. This doctrine, he points out, goes totally against the need for a resurrection. He explains:

For even if you yourselves have ever met with some so-called Christians, who yet do not acknowledge this, but even dare to blaspheme the deity of Abraham,

“If one has
already gone off
to heaven or Hell,
what need is there
of a coming
judgment? Have
they not already
been judged?”

and the deity of Isaak, and the deity of Jacob, who say too that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their *psuche* (*nepesh*) ascends to heaven at the very moment of their death—do not suppose that they are Christians, any more than if one examined the matter rightly he would acknowledge as Jews those who are Sadducees, or similar sects of Genistae, and Meristae, and Galileans, and Hellenians, and Pharisees and Baptists—pray, do not be vexed with me as I say all I think—but (would) say that although called Jews and children of

Abraham, and acknowledging the deity with their lips, as the deity himself has cried aloud, yet their inner self is far from him. But I, and all other ENTIRELY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS, know that there will be a RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH, and also a thousand years in a Jerusalem built up and adorned and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah, and all the rest, acknowledge.⁵⁵

In defense of the scriptural doctrine on the *nepesh*, the Christian writer Tatian, writing about 166 C.E., gives this argument against the pagan Greeks:

The *psuche* (*nepesh*) is not in itself immortal, Greeks, but mortal. Yet it is possible for it not to die. If indeed, it knows not the truth, IT DIES, and IS DISSOLVED WITH THE BODY, but it rises up again at the last, at the end of the world-age, with the body, RECEIVING DEATH by punishment in eternity. But, again, if it acquires the knowledge of the deity, it does not die.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Justin Mart., *Trypho* (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 80:4f.

⁵⁶ Tatian, 1:13.

What Tatian was trying to convey is the fact that, although all humans die, after the resurrection it is then possible for the *nepesh* to be quickened into a form that allows it to have eternal life, but only if it attains to the truth about Yahweh. If it does not, then it will perish for eternity.

The Christian writer Theophilus of Antioch (writing around 190 C.E.), likewise, disputes the immortal *psuche* (*nepesh*) concept of Plato. He points out the inconsistency in Plato's notions, writing:

And did not Plato, who said so many things about the sole rule of the deity and about the human *psuche* (*nepesh*), saying that the *psuche* is immortal, later contradicts himself and say that the *psuche* passes into other men and, in some cases, into irrational animals? How is it possible that his teaching will not seem evil and unlawful for those who possess reason, when he holds that one formerly a human being will become a wolf or dog or ass or some other irrational animal?⁵⁷

Theophilus further argues that Adam "was created in an intermediate state, neither entirely mortal nor entirely immortal, but capable of either state."⁵⁸ By this statement, he means that Adam could maintain eternal life only as long as he did not sin (the sacred *ruach* covering his nakedness or mortal self).⁵⁹ Remaining sinless, his mortal self had access to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, the fruit of which Adam would one day freely eat.⁶⁰ Therefore, Adam was not "entirely mortal" since he had not sinned and had access to the tree of life.

Nevertheless, Adam and Eve sinned and were subsequently driven out of the garden of Eden, no longer being permitted either access to or the right to eat from the tree of life.⁶¹ They were stripped of the sacred *ruach* and left with only their mortal selves. He was cursed with death in the flesh. Theophilus explains.

For if the deity had made him immortal from the beginning, he would have made him a deity. Again, if he had made him mortal, it would seem that the deity was responsible for his death. The deity, therefore, made him neither immortal nor mortal but, as we have said before, capable of both. If he were to turn to the life of immortality by keeping the com-

mandments of the deity, he would win immortality as a reward from him and would become a deity; but if he turned to the deeds of death, disobeying the deity, he would be responsible for his own death. What man acquired for himself through his neglect and disobedience, the deity now freely bestows upon him through love and mercy, when man obeys him. For as by disobedience man gained death for himself, so by obedience to the will of the deity whoever will can obtain eternal life for himself. For the deity gave us a law and sacred commandments; everyone who performs them will be saved and, ATTAINING TO THE RESURRECTION, WILL INHERIT IMPERISHABILITY.⁶²

The Christian writer
Theophilus of Antioch
(writing around 190
C.E.), likewise,
disputes the immortal
psuche (*nepesh*)
concept of Plato.

⁵⁷ Theophilus, 3:7.

⁵⁸ Theophilus, 2:24.

⁵⁹ See the article titled *Born from Above* for a discussion regarding nakedness and being clothed with the sacred *ruach*.

⁶⁰ Gen., 2:8–3:24. That Adam never ate from the tree of life, see FSDY (*The Festivals and Sacred Days of Yahweh*. Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Garden Grove, CA, 2021) 1, App. E.

⁶¹ Gen., 3:22–24.

⁶² Theophilus, 2:27.

For Theophilus, as well as with the other orthodox Christians of this early period, man could only attain immortality for his *nepesh* if after death he rises up in the resurrection and, by keeping the law and the commandments, he receives as a reward from Yahweh an inheritance that will give his *nepesh* a nature of imperishability. As the apostle Jacob (James) writes to us:

Wherefore, having laid aside all filthiness and abounding of wickedness, in meekness accept the implanted word, which is able to save your *psuche* (*nepesh*).⁶³

By the mid-fourth century C.E., the original concepts held by the early orthodox Christians were set aside and the notion of an immortal soul was established as official Church doctrine by the Roman government, the Roman brand of Christianity now being the religion of the Roman empire. All earlier statements made by orthodox Christian writers were branded as being in error.

The neo-Christian writer Augustine, writing in about 420 C.E., a man heavily influenced by Plato and other Greek writers, demonstrates their complete turnabout on this issue when he writes that “the human soul is correctly said to be immortal.” He continues by explaining:

For when the soul is termed immortal, the meaning is that it does not cease to have life and feeling in some degree no matter how slight.⁶⁴

From this time forward, the concept of an immortal soul, which stands contrary to all the statements from Scriptures and is also against

the direct statements of all early orthodox Christian writers, remains in almost all of the neo-Christian Churches to this day.

Our Present Life is Transitory

Your life is not a permanent feature guaranteed by an immortal soul or spirit. Quite to the contrary, it is transitory, being temporal and fragile, a flesh-and-blood organism, a form not merely able to experience death but destined for it.⁶⁵ As Jacob, the brother of the messiah, observed:

For what is your life? It is a vapor, which for a little while appears, and THEN IT DISAPPEARS.⁶⁶

Job similarly makes the following comments:

Remember my life is like a wind; my eyes will not return to see good. The eye of him who sees me will not gaze at me; your eyes are on me and I WILL NOT EXIST. As the clouds fade and vanish, so he who goes down to *sheol* will not come up. He will not return again to his house and his place will not know him anymore.⁶⁷

Adam (mankind), born of woman, is short of days and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers; and he flees as a shadow and does not stand.⁶⁸

King Solomon also speaks of death as the sad termination of life, not as a happy transition to another life. While contrasting a visit to a funeral home with a visit to a home where feasting was taking place, he writes:

For what is your life?

It is a vapor,
which for a little
while appears, and
**THEN IT
DISAPPEARS.**

(James 4:14)

⁶³ James, 1:21.

⁶⁴ Augustine, *City* (Aurelius Augustine, *City of God*), 13:2.

⁶⁵ Heb., 9:27.

⁶⁶ James, 4:14.

⁶⁷ Job, 7:7–10.

⁶⁸ Job, 14:1f.

Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting because it (the house of mourning)⁶⁹ is the פְּרִיט (*suph*; termination)⁷⁰ of all *ha-adam*, and the living will give it to his inner self.⁷¹

Conclusion

In contradiction to popular opinion, Scriptures teach that the *nephesh* that sins will die and at the same time all humans have sinned. Therefore, “it is apportioned to men once to die, and after this (will be) the Judgment.”

It is also apportioned for men to live a second time; otherwise, Scriptures would not proclaim the threat of a “second death” after the resurrection.⁷² A second death clearly indicates a first death and a second life.

No human has escaped his mortality, including the prophets Enoch and Elijah, whom many Christians like to believe have gone to heaven where they are dwelling to this day.⁷³ Even Yahushua the messiah, who never sinned, had to die.

As for humans going to heaven where father Yahweh presently lives, Yahushua the messiah straightforwardly tells us, “No man

has ascended up to the heavens, except he that came down from the heavens, the son of man who was in the heavens.”⁷⁴

Therefore, only Yahushua himself, when he preexisted as a deity living in the highest heavens, has been in that heavens, and he did not ascend again until after his resurrection from the dead.

The notion that humans have an immortal soul—which upon death either goes to live in heaven or goes to hell to burn in some kind of eternal torment—is of pagan origin and has nothing to do with scriptural teaching.

Accordingly, the English translation of the Hebrew term *nephesh* as “soul” is very misleading. Most understand the term “soul” from its pagan reference, such as the Greek word *psyche*, as an immortal entity dwelling inside the body.⁷⁵

To correct this problem, we will not use the term “soul” unless we are making reference to the pagan concept. Instead, we shall refer to the scriptural meaning with the word *nephesh*, a transliteration of the original Hebrew term.

In this way we will more easily divest ourselves of the false Greek notion of immortality which attaches itself to the word “soul.”

⁶⁹ The Hebrew term בֵּית אֵבֶל means, “he, it . . . this, the same” (HEL, p. 65); “the third pers. pron. sing., he (she or it)” (SEC, Heb. #1931). It is here a reference to the “house of mourning.” Therefore, NTB (A New Translation of the Bible) renders this verse, “for death is the end of all men”; NIV (New International Version), “for death is the destiny of every man”; NJB (New Jerusalem Bible), “for to this end everyone comes”; AB (The Amplified Bible), “for that is the end of all men.”

⁷⁰ The Hebrew term פְּרִיט means, “come to an end, perish . . . was completed . . . destroyed . . . end, termination, completion, result” (HEL, p. 179); “to snatch away, i.e. terminate . . . to come to an end . . . a termination:—conclusion, end, hinder part” (SEC, Heb. #5486f, 5490).

⁷¹ Eccles., 7:2.

⁷² E.g., see Rev., 2:11, 20:4–6, 14, 21:8. The second death is first indicated in Scriptures by the fact that all die, are resurrected, and then those remaining wicked are destroyed in the gehenna fire (the second death).

⁷³ For what happened to Enoch and Elijah, see the article titled *Enoch and Elijah*. Many Christians seem to have forgotten the direct testimony of Yahushua the messiah during the 1st century C.E. He reports that no man, except for Yahushua the messiah himself, and then only when he preexisted as part of the *eloahi*, has ever gone up into the heaven where father Yahweh dwells (John, 3:13). Furthermore, Scriptures remind us that father Yahweh lives in unapproachable light (1 Tim., 6:16), and no man at any time has ever seen, or is capable of seeing, the father’s form or has ever heard his voice (John, 5:37, 6:46; 1 John, 4:12; 1 Tim., 6:16).

⁷⁴ John, 3:13.

⁷⁵ *The Clementine Homilies* 2:30, shows that Christians were aware that what was believed by many pagans to be disembodied souls of the dead were actually deceitful phantoms, i.e., demons passing themselves off as deceased persons.