

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE WE?

“What is man that you are mindful of him?”

~ King David

In Yeshua’s parable in Luke 16, a cold-hearted and selfish rich man died and his body was buried; but his soul is described as going to Hell (Hades). While in Hades, he asked for a little water but was told no one could come to him because there was a great ravine separating him from those who were comforted with Abraham so that neither could cross over to the other (Luke 16:19 – 31).

Someone who could escape the bars of Sheol and cross the great ravine would certainly have accomplished the greatest prison break this world has ever seen!

A natural line of questions might be: Who has gone to hell? Who has gone to heaven? What will happen to me and my loved ones when we die? Another good question is HOW is it possible to have a decaying body lying in a grave while our soul has life in a distant location, be it Sheol (Hell) or Heaven? To understand these questions, we must understand who and what we are. This is our own personal truth and the roots of our heritage.

While encouraging His followers to bravely spread the Good News without fear of death or persecution, Messiah taught us that even if the body dies, the soul continues to live.

...Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Matt 10:28).

This is the kind of plain talk that needs no interpretation, but what an amazing statement! How can we have a dead body while our soul remains alive?

The truth is that we are a complex creation – a blending of the physical with the spiritual. Our soul is spiritual in nature. It is not anatomic or biological in

any way. It is spiritual life breathed directly from the mouth of God. Our bodies are physical, made of the dust of the earth – earthly and physical. This relates to the truth of our heritage.

It is said that the dwelling of the dead, in Sheol, is far away from their places of burial (Ps 49:14). This also confirms Messiah's teachings that there is a distinction between the body and the soul and that distinction allows the separation of the body from the soul, and that the life of the soul is not from the body or any physical element. Our souls live by God's will and God alone has the power to end that life.

James taught that the body dies when the spirit departs from it – not the other way around. The spirit does not die when the body dies, because like the soul, the spirit does not get its life from the body. The body derives life from the spirit – not the other way around. God's spirit IS life.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so
faith without works is dead also (James 2:26).

Since we are made in God's image, we must turn to His words, His Torah, for understanding.

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 being (Gen 2:7).

The Hebrew verb translated *formed* has a double Hebrew letter *yad*. Hebrew sages and scholars say this double *yad* denotes a double creation. This is lost in the translation to English but it is in the original Hebrew. It's almost like reading, *And the LORD God formed **formed** man...* or *made **made***. What is this double forming or duality of creation? Notice the two parts of God's creation – one physical and one spiritual: “God formed man of the dust of the ground...” God *formed* (Heb) ‘*Yasar*’ our bodies out of the physical elements of this earth like a potter would form a vessel out of clay. Indeed, the same Hebrew word, ‘*yasar*’, was used to describe God as the Master Potter and us as the clay being formed and then refashioned again (Isa 29:16, Isa 45:9).

Now let's notice the second part of our creation – the spiritual part of our creation – from Genesis 2:7: God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” God breathed life into man. The newly formed body which was made out of dust did not have life until God breathed life into it! The words

for *breath* and *breathed* in Genesis 2 are the same words used for spirit, as well as for the angelic “four winds.” God breathed His Spirit right into our beings and gave us life. It was literally the breath of life! Notice the result of God giving Adam and Eve His Spirit – they became living souls! The soul is the spiritual part of our creation, but it is housed in our physical bodies. That’s why the double *yad* was used in the original Hebrew.

- 1 God formed a body for us from dirt.
- 2 God breathed spirit life into us and we became living souls – a dual creation.

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Matt 10:28).

The Hebrew word translated into the English word ‘soul’ is ‘*nepesh*’, which literally means: *life, inner most essence of life, the inner man, the seat of life.*

God’s spirit is called the *breath of life*, since He is a “life-giving Spirit.”

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Sheol, the resting place for the souls of the dead, is described as a place with bars, gates, locks and ravines from which no man can escape (Job 38:17 – 18, Ps 9:13 – 17, Ps 107:18).

We have record that Messiah's body was laid in a tomb, but His soul was taken to hell – to Hades – behind the bars of Sheol. Notice this very important passage:

Acts 2:22-31

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know —

23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

25 For David says concerning Him: *'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.*

26 *Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.*

27 *For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

Peter here is quoting the prophet David, that God would not leave Messiah's soul in Hades (hell). He repeats this fact for emphasis again in verse 31:

he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption (Acts 2:31).

Clearly Messiah's soul had to have been in Hades, Hell or Sheol, in order for it not to have been left there. It was not possible for Messiah to be held by the gates of death. How did He escape? How does this relate to us today?

To understand these things we will need to understand the truth of what we are, how we are made, and of what we are made – our own personal truth.

Since we are made in God's image, it is best to begin our quest for understanding by looking at our Father and the Rock from which we are hewn.

GOD HAS A SOUL, A HEART AND A SPIRIT:

Let's review a few passages so we understand just how much we are made in God's image:

Jer 32:41

Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good,
and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with
all My heart and with all My soul.'

The word 'soul' here is translated from the Hebrew word 'nepesh'. God has a nepesh, just like we do.

Heb 10:38

Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

Isa 42:1

"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

Matt 12:18

"Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

These passages clearly delineate between God's Soul and Spirit – He has both.

Luke 23:46

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, *'into your hands I commit My spirit.'*" Having said this, He breathed His last.

It was when Yeshua committed His Spirit to God that He breathed His last. The body cannot live without the spirit – the life.

The previous passages plainly teach us that God and Yeshua both have a soul and spirit and that they are distinguished from one another. Remember, we are made in God's image. Thus we share the common truth that we have both a soul and a spirit, like God does. But what about a body? Does God have a body which is in union with (God is one) but a separately described component from His soul and spirit?

GOD HAS A BODY

Phil 3:20-21

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

If our bodies are to be conformed to His glorious body, then clearly both man and God have bodies. Let's think about what makes up a body. Bodies have hands, feet, a face, a mouth, a head, a back, bowels, organs like the heart etc., they sit, they stand, they run etc... Messiah's face shown gloriously when viewed via the transfiguration into the spirit world (Matt 17:1 – 7).

We've already seen passages referring to God's heart. God sits on his throne, which requires a posterior to sit upon. God says His hands and arms are strong. The Bible describes God's eyes, ears, hair, chest, hands, feet, legs, arms, fingers, heart and even the garments He clothes Himself with. Clearly God has a body which is distinguished from His Spirit and Soul. Remember, we are made in God's image.

Rev 1:12-18

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

14 His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

15 His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength.

17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

18 I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

This is not unlike the description of our Father Most High – the Great Ancient of Days – as described in the book of Daniel (see Daniel 7). Our great God has a beautiful body, a deep rich loving Soul and He is a life-giving Spirit. Further, He is a Father (which is a family term) who lives forever. And He says He has given the keys of hell (Hades) to His Son Yeshua to free us, his sons and daughters, from hell and the grave. Hallelujah!

We can see that God reveals Himself to us by His own words as a Being that has a Spirit, a Soul and a Body. We see also that we are being made in His image. So before we go on to study the great escape, we need to review a few more things about our own personal truth. Let's understand the reality of what we are, how we are made, and of what we are made – this is our own heritage as sons of God.

Man has a spirit, a soul and a body – each distinct yet woven together as one.

Ps 31:9

Have mercy on me, O LORD , for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, *Yes*, my soul and my body!

David distinguished between his soul and his body. They are not the same. Paul clarified this truth very succinctly:

1 Thess 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice the words of your own Bibles, “your whole spirit, soul, and body.” You are a multifaceted being – a spiritual creation (spirit and soul) housed inside a physical body.

Daniel referred to his spirit being housed inside his body like a sword in its sheath (Dan 7:15). The body is

the receptacle or dwelling of the spirit, not the life of the spirit.

Further, God says that He is able to discern between the soul, spirit and body as three distinct elements of our beings. God can discern what comes from our carnal bodies with their hormones, oft imbalances and fleshly pulls – as compared to the more noble spiritual aspects of who we are.

Heb 4:12-13

12 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

God sees the division between our soul and spirit and between our bodies with their joints, bone, blood and marrow. God knows what comes from our heart (the inner man, or soul) and what is more driven by weaknesses such as high blood sugar or hormone driven, carnal fleshly lust.

The word translated as “body” in the English New Testament is from the Greek word *Sooma*. *Sooma* literally means *tent, house, body, slave* and *corpse* – i.e., something of a carnal servant housing that we dwell in.

I have lived in several houses and several tents. That is something that I can begin to relate with. We dwell in our bodies, but our life is from God and it is our soul.

As for our limitations, weaknesses and sinful nature that comes from being housed in our bodies, Sha’ul (Paul) described this as the inner battle between our will, which comes from the inner man, and the pulls of the flesh (Rom 7:14 – 25).

The prophet Micah asked the rhetorical question, “shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul (Micah 6:7).” Yes, there is a double creation. Our bodies were formed carnal – fleshly – physical; but our souls are spiritual.

In the next chapter, we’ll explore how our forerunner, Yeshua HaMashiach, escaped the pulls of hell and opened the way to freedom and eternal life for us.