

Man as Flesh and Spirit: A Living Soul

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, today we examine a foundational truth in Scripture — what it means to be a living soul. In Genesis, we find that man did not receive a soul as something separate, but became a living soul when God breathed into him. This truth helps us understand who we are in relation to God and how we are called to love Him with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Man Became a Living Soul

Genesis 2:7 tells us, "Then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and so the man became a living being." Notice it does not say God gave man a soul, but that man became a living being — a living soul. The word 'soul' here is **nephesh** in Hebrew, meaning a living, breathing creature. It is the body made alive by the breath of God. Without that breath, the body is just dust. Thus, man is not a spirit living in a body, but a unified living soul.

The Role of the Spirit

Ecclesiastes 12:7 explains, "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." The spirit (**ruach** in Hebrew, **pneuma** in Greek) is the breath of life that comes from God. It is not a conscious being apart from the body, but rather the animating force. When the breath leaves, the soul — the living body — dies. Psalm 146:4 confirms this, saying, "His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." There is no ongoing consciousness or action. The soul ceases because the breath is gone.

Loving God with All Our Being

Jesus affirmed the greatest commandment in Luke 10:27: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Each part of this command relates to an aspect of our human nature:

- **Heart**: The center of our desires and emotions. Proverbs 4:23 teaches, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."
- **Soul**: The whole of our living being, our life. It encompasses who we are as a person animated by God's breath.
- **Mind**: Our thoughts, reasoning, and understanding. Romans 12:2 calls us to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind."
- **Strength**: Our physical ability and willpower. We are to use our bodies in service to God, as in Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men."

Conclusion

Man is a living soul — a body made alive by the breath of God. We are not spirits housed in flesh but unified beings. Our worship and love for God must reflect this unity: with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, and through Jesus Christ, we are being renewed for eternal life.

To God be the glory for His mercy and truth, revealed fully in Jesus Christ our Lord, who said:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." — John 14:6 (LSB)

Reference Scriptures (LSB)

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Luke 10:27 – ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’

Proverbs 4:23 – Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

Romans 12:2 – And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Colossians 3:23 – Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.

John 14:6 – Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."