

WAS MAN CREATED IMMORTAL?

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Was man created in a state of immortality, to never die? This question has been around longer than any of us care to remember, and the answer is both yes and no. However, before one can come to the proper understanding of what the Bible teaches on this subject, he must first understand the nature of man.

God created man as a triune or three part being. Paul told those in Thessalonica, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). When we imagine a loved one, friend, or acquaintance, we usually picture their physical presence in our minds, the shape of their face, the color of their eyes or hair, their stature, or any other aspect of their appearance. That is the physical part of man that Peter alluded to when he said, “Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me” (2 Pet. 1:13-14). Also, each of us has a life force sometimes referred to as a soul (Gen. 2:7; cf. 1 Cor. 15:45), but it is not peculiar just to humans. Animals, insects, and plants are all alive and have souls in the sense of a life force (Gen. 1:30; 2:7; Psa. 72:13; Psa. 74:19), but unlike humans they are two part entities; they have a physical body and a life force, but that is where they cease to be like humans. Man also has a spirit, the eternal part that, once created, never ceases to exist. Man has a physical housing which is his body, a life force which is sometimes called the soul, and an eternal spirit which differentiates him from other living creatures.

How can one say that man is both mortal and immortal? He is mortal in that his physical body was never intended to live on forever. When God created Adam and Eve it was never with the intent that they inhabit the earth eternally. They were placed in a situation that would allow them to live forever as long as they obeyed God’s commandments and were allowed access to the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:22). One must keep in mind that in order for man to live forever, he would have had to have been able to eat from the Tree of Life; therefore, their physical bodies were not created to live forever without the miraculous effects of that fruit. However, God understood they would sin (Eph. 3:11) and would need the justification that can only come through Christ Jesus and His blood-bought church (Acts 28:20).

This is the point where the Jehovah’s Witnesses make a critical error. They teach that man was created immortal and therefore God always intended for them to inhabit the earth for eternity. It is clear, with an open minded study of the scripture, that God never intended for man to be immortal and that Adam and Eve walked out of the Garden of Eden in the same bodies God created for them at the beginning of time. In the physical sense, man was created very mortal and his time on earth was never intended to be eternal.

Since man is a triune being, a part of him was created immortal. Apart from man’s physical body and his life force, which all living creatures possess, he also has a spirit. The Spirit of man is really who we are. It is the seat of our emotions, memories, characteristics, and all the qualities that we hold dear. Notice that, when the rich man “lifted up his eyes being in torments” (Lk. 16:23), he was the same person as when he lived on earth. The difference in the rich man as he existed in the hades realm and when he lived on earth is that he had no physical body or physical life force, everything else remained the same. He had the same memories (Lk. 16:27-28), he had the same attitude (Lk. 16:24) of superiority toward Lazarus and self-centeredness, and he could experience the pain and discomfort of

torments. On the other hand, Lazarus was also blessed with an immortal soul, but one that was allowed to enjoy the rest and comforts of Paradise because of his faithfulness during life on earth.

Man has a mortal and an immortal part of his person. The immortal part will be the part that reaps the judgments passed based upon our existence on time's side of eternity. Our goal should be to prepare for eternity and to secure the blessings of heaven through faith and obedience in Christ.