Austin Bible Class
June 2011

Fundamental Beliefs
Church of God, a Worldwide Association

Humanity (Nature of Man)
Handouts/Study Material

© 2011 Church of God, a Worldwide Association
Human beings, both male and female, were created in the image of God with the potential to partake of God’s divine nature as children in His eternal family. Humans are mortal beings relying on the breath of life and are subject to corruption and decay. They do not have an immortal soul nor do they possess eternal life at this time. Eternal life is a gift of God, given only to those who accept His calling and the terms and conditions expressed in the Scriptures. God gave Adam and Eve the choice of eternal life through obedience to Him or death through sin. Adam and Eve succumbed to sin by disobeying God. As a result, death entered the world. All humans have sinned and are therefore subject to death. In God’s plan it is appointed for man to “die once.”

**Scriptural support:** Genesis 1:26; 2 Peter 1:4; Hebrews 9:27; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23; 8:16-17.

**Summary:**

Humanity was created with a truly amazing potential. The destiny that our Creator has in store for us is to become His sons and daughters. (II Corinthians 6:18) The future of humanity is to be children in the family of God (I John 3:1-2, II Peter 1:4). The character of Almighty God is perfect. He is inherently good and cannot sin. Even God, who is all-powerful, does not create perfect character in humans by simply willing that result. The development of character requires a conscious decision by a free moral agent to take the responsibility to conduct his or her life based upon a knowledge of what is morally right and what is morally wrong. It also requires a decision to choose what is right and to not choose what is wrong.

When they were first created, our first parents, Adam and Eve, received a life of limited duration, a physical existence. "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." (Genesis 2:7) The Hebrew word *nephesh* translated "being" in Genesis 2:7 is used in the first chapter of Genesis four times in connection with animals (Genesis 1:20,21,24,30) and is translated as "body" in the phrase "dead body" in Numbers 6:6 The first man was later told, "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). The biblical book of wisdom known as Ecclesiastes contains this exhortation: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going" (9:10). Human beings are mortal, subject to corruption and decay. Human beings do not possess immortality in the form of a “soul.” They are without eternal life. A biblical prayer declares "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth?" (Psalm 30:9).

God desires to give to each and every human being the gift of eternal life as a member of His family. Eternal life is not something which anyone can earn. However, God will not grant this precious gift to anyone who does not yield to Him and His law (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Eternal life in the family of God is called salvation. God reveals to us, through the divinely inspired Scriptures, that salvation is not automatically granted to every human being. He will only bestow this blessing on those who have proven their willingness to obey Him (Revelation 21:7-8). God is not obligated
to preserve us forever as His children, enjoying life in the spirit realm but we know that God is love (I John 4:8).

Therefore, out of unselfish, outgoing concern for us, He has devised a plan whereby human beings can be given salvation, the greatest possible blessing that a loving Creator can bestow (Luke 12:32).

When God created the first human beings, Adam and Eve, He gave them access to the tree of life, symbolic of eternal life (Genesis 2:9; 3:22). He told them not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was symbolic of the human choice, apart from God, to determine what is right and wrong, to defy His revealed instructions, and by so doing, to sin (Genesis 2:9,16-17). Sin leads to death (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4,20; Romans 6:23). Every sin damages the character of the one who commits it. To commit sin harms both the individual sinner and society in general.

Adam and Eve were free moral agents who, under the influence of Satan, violated God's explicit command (Genesis 3:1-6). The first humans thus began to live in a manner contrary to the will of their loving Creator, placing themselves under the penalty of death about which God had warned them in advance. No human being except Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has lived a sinless life (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Hebrews 4:15). In spite of human sinfulness, God's ultimate plan for humankind has not been thwarted. In His omniscient wisdom, God provided a means by which human beings are able to be reconciled to Him (John 3:16-17). Human beings can still develop the godly character which is a prerequisite to receiving God's most precious gift of eternal life as His children (I Corinthians 15:22; Galatians 2:20). Apart from the deliverance that God has provided, death now reigns over all humanity because all have sinned (Romans 3:23).
“Immortality” used five times in scripture (KJV)

_Romans_ 2:7 “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life…”

_1 Corinthians 15:53-54_ “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

_1 Timothy 6:16_ “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom _be_ honor and power everlasting. Amen.”

_2 Timothy 1:10_ “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel…”

Man is a Living Soul:

_Genesis 2:7_ “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 soul.”

_Genesis 2:16-17_ “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

_Genesis 3:1-4_ “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which _is_ in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die…”

_Ezekiel 18:4,20_ “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

_Romans 6:23_ “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Scriptures that contain the Hebrew word “nephesh.”

_Genesis 1:24_ “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.”
Genesis 9:10  “And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.”

Leviticus 21:11 “Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother…”

Haggai 2:13 “Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.”

Leviticus 17:11-14 “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.”

Greek words in New Testament for soul, body, spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 “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.”

Body (flesh) = Soma:

Matthew 5:29 “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

1 Corinthians 13:3 “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

1 Corinthians 15:44 “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

Soul or Life = psuche:

Matthew 2:20 “Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.”

Luke 6:9 “Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?”
**Spirit = pneuma:**

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

**References to the Spirit in Man:**

Job 32:8 “But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”

Job 34:14 “If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath…”

Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?”

Psalm 31:5 “Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.”

Isaiah 42:5 “Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein…”

Zechariah 12:1 “The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.”

Ecclesiastes 12:7 “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Ecclesiastes 9:10 “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”
1. Where is the first mention of the word “soul” found in the Bible?

2. Provide a definition for the word “nephesh.”

3. List all the scriptures that refer to the “spirit in man.”

4. What are the three Greek words translated “body,” “soul,” and “spirit in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24? Define each word.

5. Explain the parable of Lazarus and the richman.

6. Explain Christ’s statement made to the thief at the time of His crucifixion as recorded in Luke 23:43.

7. Explain the “spirit in man.” What part does this spirit play in the resurrection and the gift of eternal life?