LESSON 1
What is the Soul?

The Roman Emperor Hadrian lived around 200 AD. He is still regarded as one of the greatest Caesars of all time. He was an incredibly busy and industrious builder. Perhaps no man in history built so many architectural structures and left such a mark upon the world as Hadrian. He was still building a 750-acre tract at Tivoli when he learned that he was dying. He was quoted as having said, “O fleeing little soul, where do you go now?”

Many people worry more about their body than their soul. The body may live for several decades, but the soul lives on forever in either heaven or hell. The word soul appears 473 times in the Bible! You receive your soul at the moment of your conception (along with the sin nature Ps 51:5). Your soul is invisible and lives inside of your body.

Your soul inside your body is the real you (your personality, thinking, affections, desires and feelings). Genesis 2:7 says, “The LORD God formed man …and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” The Bible adds in I Cor 15:45, “The first man Adam was made a living soul.” You have a body, but you are a soul. The soul is the real you. It is your soul that loves. In Matthew 22:37, “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.” It is the soul that feels sadness. Matthew 26:38 says, “Then saith (Jesus) unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful.”

Your soul leaves your body at death. Genesis 35:18 says, “And it came to pass, as her (Rachel’s) soul was in departing, for she died” … The Bible says in Acts 7:59, “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (soul).”

When the soul leaves the body, the body is lifeless and no longer feels or thinks. James 2:26 says, “The body without the spirit (soul) is dead.” There’s a soul inside of you just waiting to get out! It is invisible and lives inside your body. Our bodies are just a ‘motel’ the soul is temporarily living within. One day at death our soul will ‘check out’ permanently. A Swedish doctor in a book he authored says he discovered the human soul weighs around 21 to 25 grams. He placed terminally ill patients on sensitive weight scales and saw the needle drop as soon as the patient died. Evidently the soul even weighs something. The same findings were documented by an American doctor.

Your soul cannot die. In Matthew 10:28 Jesus said, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.”
Your soul is more valuable than anything the world can offer. In Matthew 16:26 Jesus said, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Many people neglect their soul for the temporal things of the world. In Luke 12:20, “God said unto him (unsaved man), Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided” (We’re going to leave all our possessions behind one day when we die).

Your soul will live on forever in either heaven or hell. Four hundred years before the birth of Christ, Socrates, the renowned Greek Philosopher was condemned to death. He drank the poison hemlock and lay down to die when a friend asked him, “Shall we live again?” The dying philosopher could only reply, “I hope so, but no man can know.” According to God’s Word, we can know for sure!

Your soul needs to be ‘converted’ sometime during your life. Psalms 19:7 says, “The law of the LORD (Bible) is perfect, converting the soul.” Apparently our soul needs a time when it is saved or converted by the gospel taught in God’s Word.

According to the Bible, you will go to hell forever if your soul is not converted. In Luke 16:22-23 Jesus said, “The rich man also died, and (his body) was buried; And in hell he (his soul) lift up his eyes, being in torments”. This man’s soul was never converted and went to hell where it remains suffering to this day.

Your soul immediately goes to heaven at death if converted. In II Corinthians 5:6, 8, Paul the apostle said, “While we (the soul) are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are …willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (in heaven). In Luke 16:22 Jesus said, “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and (his soul) was carried by the angels into (paradise or heaven).” In Mark 9, Jesus speaks with Moses & Elijah who reappear on earth hundreds of years after they had lived and died (their soul is still alive and in heaven). In I Samuel 28, the prophet Samuel is alive and speaking from paradise (heaven) years after his body had died.

You can know for sure your soul is going to heaven… 1 John 5:13, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.”

If your soul is saved (converted), it goes to heaven immediately upon death. *Please note the following examples of Christians who died and went to heaven immediately. In Revelation 6:9-10, (John the apostle gets a vision of heaven and says) “I saw the souls of
them that were slain (martyred) for the Word of God” (they were alive & well and even speaking up in heaven). Jesus told the thief on the cross who got saved just before his death, “Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Hebrews 12:1 says, “We also are compassed about (surrounded) with so great a cloud of witnesses (the many deceased Christians named in the previous chapter)...let us (survivors on earth) run with patience the race (life) that is set before us” (there is a ‘great grandstand’ in the sky and our saved deceased loved ones are in it watching us!)

In John 5:24, (Jesus said) … “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (purgatory or hell); but is passed from death unto life” (i.e.- at death, the soul of a Christian goes straight to heaven). In Philippians 1:23, (Paul the Apostle said) “For I am...having a desire to depart (from this world), and to be with Christ; which is far better.” Also, note Acts 7:59, “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (soul).” Like all born again Christians, Stephen went straight to heaven!

In Mark 12:27 Jesus was confronted by clergymen who didn’t believe in an afterlife (imagine that!) Speaking of His heavenly Father Jesus said, “He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.” (Jesus was referring to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob who had died hundreds of years earlier, still being alive in heaven). God makes it clear in the Bible. If someone has been saved the Bible way, they go straight to heaven as soon as their heart stops. They don’t need to be “purged” from their sins before qualifying for heaven. The Bible says, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (when we’re born again, I Jn 1:7).

According to the Bible, there is no such thing as purgatory. It was invented by Pope Gregory V in 593AD (over 500 years after Christ). Since that time untold amounts of money have been given to get people out of a place that doesn’t exist. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (heaven or hell). Also note from this verse that there is no such thing as reincarnation. Where we will spend eternity is determined before we die based on whether our soul has been converted or not... Revelation 21:24 tells us that, the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of (heaven). Once again...

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