

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW"

The Value Of A Soul (16:26)

INTRODUCTION

1. After telling His disciples and others nearby the cost of being His disciple, Jesus asked...

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" - [Mk 8:36-37](#)

2. In these words of Jesus we are reminded of the value of the soul...
 - a. It is the most valuable possession one has
 - b. All the wealth and power one might gain is not worth the price of one's soul!
3. It is a lesson we do well to remember, and so in this Sunday School lesson we shall examine three questions...
 - a. Does the Bible teach that man has a soul?
 - b. Why is one's soul so valuable?
 - c. What will one give in exchange for his or her soul?

[Because of error taught by some, it is important to provide a Bible answer to the first question...]

I. DOES MAN HAVE A SOUL?

A. SOME TEACH OTHERWISE...

1. Such as members of the Watchtower Society (i.e., "Jehovah's Witnesses")
2. Who say man "is" a soul, not "has" a soul
3. The controversy revolves around the multi-faceted use of the words for "soul"
 - a. The Hebrew is "**nephesh**", and at times it may refer to:
 - 1) Animal life - [Gen 1:20-21](#) ("living")
 - 2) The person - [Num 31:19](#) ("killed any person")
 - 3) The body - [Num 6:6](#) ("a dead body")
 - 4) Something distinguished from the body - [Isa 10:18](#) ("soul and body")
 - 5) Breath - [Job 41:21](#) (referring to Leviathan)
 - b. The Greek word is "psuche", and at times it may refer to:
 - 1) The person - [1Pe 3:20](#) ("eight souls saved by water")
 - 2) Life itself - [Jn 13:38](#) ("lay down your life")
 - 3) Something distinguished from the spirit - [He 4:12](#) ("soul and spirit")
 - 4) Something distinguished from the body - [1Th 5:23](#) ("spirit and soul and body")
 - 5) That which exists after the body is dissolved - [Mt 10:28](#) ("kill the body but not the soul")
- Those who deny that man "has" a soul fail to consider that words may have many different meanings and applications

B. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT MAN EXISTS AFTER DEATH...

1. In the teaching of Jesus
 - a. Man is both body and soul, and the soul can survive murder by a fellow man - cf. [Mt 10:28](#)
 - b. The story of Lazarus and the rich man - cf. [Lk 16:22-23](#)
 - 1) Some say this is only a parable
 - 2) Even if it is (which is highly unlikely), parables were "true to life" stories, not fantasy!
 - c. His promise to the thief on the cross - [Lk 23:42-43](#)
 2. In the teaching of Paul
 - a. There is "the inner man" that can be renewed, even while "the outer man" decays - [2Co 4:16-18](#)
 - b. One can be with the Lord, while absent from the body - [2 Co 5:6-8](#)
 - c. There is a part of man that can be "out of the body" - [2 Co 12:3](#)
 - d. One can be dead, yet still be with Christ - [Php 1:23](#)
 - e. Reference is made to the "spirits of just men" - [He 12:22-23](#)
 3. The teaching of Peter
 - a. He wrote of those who are "dead, but live in the spirit" - [1Pe 4:6](#)
 - b. He described the body as a tabernacle to be put off...if the body is a tabernacle (dwelling place), what dwells in it? - [2Pe 1:13-14](#)
 - c. The unjust are under punishment, just like some angels - [2Pe 2:4,9-10](#)
 4. John, in the Revelation given to him, saw "souls of those slain", and they were capable of crying out with loud voices, and being comforted - [Re 6:9-11](#)
- There is also much material in the OT

[So while one may say in the right context that man "is" a soul, we must also be willing to say that the Bible teaches man "has" a soul. Now let's consider the next question...]

II. WHY IS THE SOUL OF MAN SO VALUABLE?

A. IT IS MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE...

1. Man was created in the image of God - [Gen 1:26-27](#)
 - a. Yet God does not have a physical body like ours - [Jn 4:24](#); [Lk 24:39](#)
 - b. Therefore it must be our soul, or spirit, that is in God's image
2. This is what enables us to comprehend abstract concepts as:
 - a. Life, death, eternity
 - b. Things of beauty
 - c. A moral sense of ought, right and wrong, good and evil-- Making us more than just animal creatures - cf. [Ps 8:3-8](#)

B. IT IS THAT PART OVER WHICH WE HAVE MUCH CONTROL...

1. The body is mostly the result of genetics
 - a. We might be able to change a little through exercise, plastic surgery, etc.
 - b. But we cannot stop the eventual aging and dying process
2. The soul, however, is different...

- a. Despite one's genetics, there is much that can be changed
- b. By cooperating with God, we can change attitudes, dispositions, character - [Ro 12:1-2](#); [Ga 5:21-22](#); [Col 3:12-15](#)

C. IT DOES NOT CEASE TO EXIST AT DEATH...

- 1. The body dies, and soon returns back to the dust
 - a. The soul, or spirit, returns back to God - [Ec 12:7](#)
 - b. Awaiting the resurrection of the body - cf. [1Co 15:35-58](#)
- 2. After which comes the Judgment - [He 9:27](#); [2Co 5:10](#)
 - a. The soul, in its resurrected body, will bear the brunt of that Judgment
 - b. Either eternal life, honor, glory, and immortality - [Ro 2:7](#)
 - c. Or indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish - [Ro 2:8-9](#)
- Which is why we need to evaluate all things (possessions, decisions, actions) from an eternal perspective, from the soul's viewpoint - [Mt 10:28](#); [16:26](#)

D. THE COST REQUIRED TO REDEEM IT...

- 1. What price was required to redeem our souls from the wrath of God's judgment?
- 2. Nothing less than the blood of the Son of God! - [1Pe 1:18-19](#)
- Even if we cannot fully comprehend why Jesus had to die, we should be able to see that the souls of men must be extremely valuable if His death was necessary

[So the Bible teaches that the soul is more valuable than the whole world! And yet, many people "sell their souls" for what surely are petty bargains...]

III. WHAT WILL ONE GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?

A. WHAT IT MEANS TO EXCHANGE SOMETHING FOR YOUR SOUL...

- 1. The word "exchange" pictures a business transaction in which one is bartering for something else
- 2. "Barter" means "to trade or exchange one commodity for another"
- Thus it means to trade your soul for something else

B. THINGS FOR WHICH PEOPLE TRADE THEIR SOULS...

- 1. For some people, it is earthly riches and fame
 - a. In their quest for riches, they neglect their service to God - [1Ti 6:10](#)
 - b. Yet they have traded their souls for that which is corruptible and can be stolen - [Mt 6:19-21](#)
- 2. For others, it is the "passing pleasures of sin"
 - a. Like the young man tempted by the harlot - [Pr 5:1-14](#)
 - 1) In a moment's passion, lives are destroyed (AIDS, unwanted pregnancies)
 - 2) Marriages and families are ruined
 - b. Young people like Joseph, Moses, and Daniel should inspire us to make the right choices - cf. [Gen 39:7-9](#); [He 11:24-25](#); [Dan 1:8](#)
- 3. Then others allow their souls to be sold for some convenient false doctrine

- a. Of which we need to beware - [Col 2:8,18](#)
- b. For the devil is a master at this - [2Co 11:13-15](#)
- c. Through our own lack Sunday School, of Bible study, we can lose the most valuable thing we have! - cf. [Hos 4:6](#)
- 4. Finally, many will trade their souls through simple laziness!
 - a. They will not use the opportunities the Lord has given them - cf. [Mt 25:24-30](#)
 - b. They fail to apply the diligence necessary to grow spiritually - cf. [2Pe 1:5-11](#)

CONCLUSION

1. How valuable is your soul...?
 - a. Think of what the rich man in Hades would tell you - cf. **Lk 16:22-24**
 - b. Think of what the souls of the redeemed would say to you - cf. [Re 7:13-17](#)
 - c. Think of what God has done to save your soul! - [Jn 3:16](#)
2. It matters not what else you do in this life, if you do not save your own soul, you have been a complete failure...
 - a. You might gather about you great riches and fame, and leave thousands of friends to mourn your departing, but if you have not saved your soul, you have been a miserable failure!
 - b. On the other hand, you may die in a charity home for the poor, and be buried in a potter's field without a single friend to mourn, but if you saved your soul, your life was a marvelous success!
3. You can't afford to lose your soul, for if you lose it, you lose all...
 - a. To the faithful will be given the place of eternal rest
 - 1) There will be no pain, sickness, or death there
 - 2) It is the inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away
 - 3) It is that city built by the living God
 - b. On the other hand, there is the place of eternal punishment
 - 1) It is where the wicked will be tormented day and night forever
 - 2) It is where you will bemoan (lament, regret, morn your great Foolishness for having sold your soul for such petty things!
4. Dear friends and brethren, you don't have to lose your soul...
 - a. Humbly submit yourself to the will of God
 - b. Let His Word guide you, and let no man beguile (entice, lure, woo, fascinate) you of your reward
 - c. Overcome temptations, and suffer for His cause with rejoicing
 - If you do these things, you will save your soul, and heaven will be yours, because God who cannot lie, has promised it!