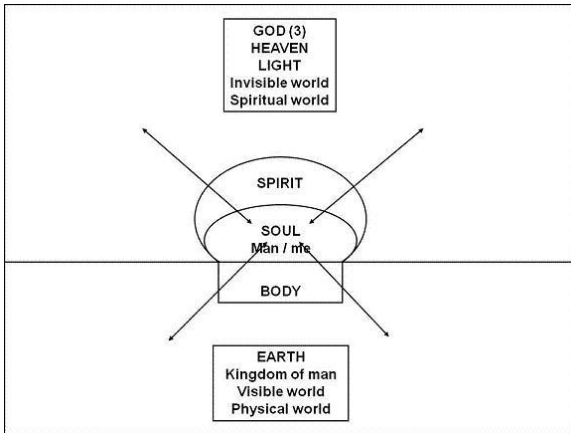


In the study 'God created mankind'¹ we explained that a human being is a soul. Following the discussion on the translation of the notion of 'soul' in a number of Bible verses from the O.T.², this study looks at a few verses from the N.T.



In the study 'God created mankind' we explained that Adam was created and that we, people, are born, as spirit, soul and body.

We also explained that the soul expresses who a human being is, as a personality. Furthermore, that a body has been given to humans, so that the soul, I, am able to express myself in the visible world and a spirit has been given, so that the soul, I, am able to express myself in the spiritual, the invisible world.

In this study the notion of 'soul' is discussed on the basis of a few Bible verses from the New Testament.

The Greek for soul is: '**psuche**'.

This word appears 105 times and is translated in different ways.

Translation as 'soul'.

The word '**psuche**' is translated as '**soul**'.20 x

Jesus said:

- *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the **soul**. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both **soul** and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)*

People are indeed able to kill the body, but they cannot kill the **soul**, which is eternal. It is God who decides how a person (as a soul) will spend eternity.

A person (a soul) who lives on in eternity, in God's presence, is regarded as a living soul.

A person (a soul) who lives on in eternity far removed from God is regarded as a dead soul³.

It is not clear what Jesus meant, when He said that God can also destroy the body in hell.

- *What good will it be (what would be useful for a person) for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their **soul** (in other words: to the disadvantage of his soul)? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their **soul**? (Matthew 16:26)*

A human being lives only a short time in a body, after which eternity in the spiritual world follows. Jesus asked what the use is of someone striving to acquire wealth and riches in the world, to the detriment of his soul, to the detriment of 'riches' in the spiritual world.

Spending eternity in God's presence cannot be purchased with material goods.

1 Study: God created mankind - Adam.

2 Study: The translation of the 'soul' in Hebrew.

3 Study: Life and dead. (abridged)



Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments as follows:

- *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your **soul** and with all your mind.*
(Matthew 22:37)

God does not desire an outward pretence of love. He seeks love that stems from the deepest emotions, desires and feelings of the heart, of the soul.

Jesus was overcome by very intense sorrow before He was taken prisoner.

- *Then he said to them (His disciples), "My **soul** is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."* (Matthew 26:38)

Jesus was sorrowful, deep in His heart, in his emotions, which threatened to rob Him of all power.

Translation as 'life'.

The word '**psuche**' is translated as '**life**'.

The angel told Joseph:

- *Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's **life (the soul)** are dead.* (Matthew 2:20)

King Herod had tried to kill Jesus, not in order to take a life, but to prevent Jesus, as a personality, from becoming King.

Jesus said about worry:

- *Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your **life (soul)**, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not **life (soul)** more than food, and the body more than clothes?* (Matthew 6:25)

Someone can cherish desires for everything the world has to offer and worry about whether he will get what he wants.

Jesus says that we are not to worry about that.

Attending to the soul's welfare is more important than material wellbeing.

Paul says of himself:

- *I consider my **life (soul)** worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*
(Acts 20:24)

Paul aimed at bringing the ministry He had received from Jesus to a good conclusion, even at the cost of his life. He subordinated his soul, his personal wishes and desires completely to that ministry.

On following Jesus:

- *Whoever finds their **life (soul)** will lose it (also: destroy - kill), and whoever loses (also: destroy - kill) their **life (soul)** for my sake will find it.* (Matthew 10:39)



This is a quotation from the parable in which a rich man speaks to his **soul**, to **himself**. He addresses his sentimental life, his soul, and tells his soul, himself, not to strive for even more riches, but to follow his heart and his desires and to celebrate.

- *But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your **life** (in Greeks: your **soul**) will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:20-21)*

Those who aim at living according to personal desires, the soul's desires, do not build up a relationship with Jesus in the spiritual world.

However, those who push aside personal desires, the soul's desires, in life, and subordinate them to Jesus' will, will experience unimaginable joy and peace forever, after this life, deep in their soul.

- *Anyone who loves their **life (soul)** will lose it, while anyone who hates their **life (soul)** in this world will keep it for eternal life. (John 12:25)*

This Bible verse corresponds to the previous verse discussed.

Hating the soul, detesting the soul, means that one does not wish to live according to one's own desires, the desires of the soul.

It is clearly stated here that 'finding' the soul means that true life is found in eternity.

- *... just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his **life (soul)** as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28)*

Jesus did not come to this world to be served, i.e. ask to other people to fulfil His personal desires. Jesus came to this world as a servant, to serve mankind.

To do so He had to give up His position and the glory He had in heaven, in order to live in this world as a human being, with all its limitations.

Everyone who trusts in Jesus is redeemed by Him from punishment for sin, not only because Jesus died in our place as a human being, but also because of His substitutionary death as the Son of the Living God.

Jesus said:

- *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his **life (soul)** for the sheep. ... just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my **life (soul)** for the sheep. (John 10:11 and 15)*

Jesus gave His **soul** for His sheep. Jesus denied **Himself** completely. As the Shepherd, He put aside His personal wishes and desires, in order to be available for the sheep (everyone who wants to follow Him), whenever they needed Him.

- *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's **life (soul)** for one's friends. (John 15:13)*

As Jesus gave His soul for His sheep, out of love for this world, someone's love for his friends will be apparent from the way in which He wants to be of service to them.

- *The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my **life (soul)** - only to take it up again. (John 10:17)*



It can be understood from the translation that Jesus laid down His life, surrendered Himself voluntarily to die, and that He Himself, after having spent three days in the grave, picked His life up again and returned from the dead.

However the Bible teaches clearly that the Father delivered Jesus from death, raised Him from the dead. (Acts 2:32 and many other verses)

So Jesus was not speaking of His death in this Bible verse.

He was saying that the Father loves Him because He laid down His **soul** in order to come to this world. Jesus subordinated His personal wishes and desires, and the position He held in heaven, to the Father's wish, in order to come to this world.

After His resurrection from the dead Jesus retrieved His glory in heaven, picked it up again.

He has promised to return to this earth in the future, in order to make everything new, completely in accordance with His **soul's** wishes. (Revelation 21:5)⁴

Other translations.

The word '**psuche**' is translated in different ways.

A prophecy about Jesus, spoken by Isaiah.

- *Here is my servant (Jesus) whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I (in Hebrew: my **soul**) delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.* (Matthew 12:18)

God could just as well have said: "... in whom I (my **soul**) delight", as saying: "whom I have chosen, and I shall put my Spirit on him."

God was very pleased with His Son, Jesus, and spoke here from His personal feelings, from His **heart**, from His **soul**.

From the parable of the rich fool:

- *And I'll say to **myself** (in Greek: to my **soul**), "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." (Luke 12:19)*

When this man's soul was claimed from him, he died and had to leave all the wealth behind that he had acquired for himself.

He lost everything - forever too -, because he was not rich toward God.

Opposition against Paul's preaching.

- *But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their **minds** (in Greek: their **souls**) against the brothers. (Paul and Barnabas). (Acts 14:2)*

The fact that it states that the **minds (souls)** of the Gentiles were stirred up and poisoned, means that they were touched in the depths of their feelings and emotions.

From the reaction of the apostles in Jerusalem:

⁴ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." (Revelation 21:5)



- *We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your **minds (souls)** by what they said, ... (Acts 15:24)*

The people were not only troubled because, in their heart, they no longer knew how to deal with what was said. They had become completely confused and uncertain.

- *The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living **thing (souls)** in the sea died. (Revelation 16:3)*
- *Altogether there were 276 **of us (souls)** on board. (Acts 27:37)*
- *There will be trouble and distress for every human **being (human soul)** who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. (Romans 2:9)*

Peter on a statement made by King David:

- *... Seeing what was to come, he (King David) spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that **he (His soul)** was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. (Acts 2:31)*

Jesus' body did not see any decay.

After His death, Jesus, His **soul**, spent three days in the realm of the dead, but He was raised from the dead, i.e. His **soul** returned to His body, which, at that moment, changed into the 'glorified body' - a body that remains forever. (See Philippians 3:21)⁵

Concerning slaves:

- *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart (also: simplicity), just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your **heart (from your soul)**. (Ephesians 6:5-6)*

In two other places the following is said of the relationship between masters and slaves:

- *Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, **so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.** (Titus 2:9-10)*
- *Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is **commendable (an expression of love, in this case from the slave) if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.** (1 Peter 2:18-19)*

Anyone taking account of God lives on the basis of love, the divine love poured out in his heart, in his **soul**, by the Holy Spirit.

So it is expected from everyone, even van a slave, that they will subordinate their own desires of the heart to the will of God.

To be continued in: Where is the soul to be found?⁶

5 ... the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Philippians 3:21)

6 Study: Where is the soul to be found.