

PROJECT TITLE: HOPE AFTER DEATH
PROGRAM TITLE: IMMORTAL SOUL
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'Tis impossible to be sure of anything but Death and Taxes.

That's what Christopher Bullock said, 300 years ago. He was the English dramatist who first coined that phrase. We've all heard it as a light-hearted acknowledgement of the inevitable.

True, some people find ways to cheat the tax man. Some get caught.
Some get away with it.
But nobody has yet found a way to cheat death.

No matter how you spin it, death is the ultimate certainty. The clock is ticking, and people are dying. More than 100 per minute. Over 150,000 every day. Sooner or later you and I – well, you know what I'm saying. It's inevitable.

It's like that old country song, Everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die.

But maybe you find comfort in the hope that death is the doorway to a new form of life – that when you die your immortal soul will live on forever. In other words, you'll never REALLY die.

Sounds pretty good, right? Besides, it's straight out of the Bible . . . isn't it?

Actually, no.

Get yourself a stack of Bibles like this. Several different versions, old and new. Start reading and keep it up until you find the two words "immortal soul." Here's what I found: Zero. Nada. Nothing. You won't find immortal and soul together in the Bible – not once. That's right. Never.

"Yes but wait a minute!" you say. "That can't be right. The SOUL is a big deal in the Bible. And what is the soul, if not IMMORTAL?" Fair question.

Let's take a look – right here at the beginning. This is Genesis chapter 2 verse 7 in the classic King James Version:

"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."

See? There it is! Man became a living SOUL.

Now, hold on, not so fast. What did we just read? Did you notice the sequence? First, God forms a man.

Second, God breathes into him the breath of life. Third, man becomes a living soul.

Did you see that? Did you see the Creator forming man's physical body, breathing into him the breath of life, and then implanting a soul? Nope. That's not happening here in Genesis two. In fact, let's be precise. With body and breath man BECAME a living soul.

Get this, now. The soul is what God MADE when He created man. Dust of the ground. Breath of life. Voila! Living soul.

This isn't rocket science here.

There's no secret meaning – no mystery hidden in the original language of the story. It's obvious in its simplicity.

Like one plus one equals two. Body plus breath equals SOUL

So, from the Genesis point of view, you don't HAVE a soul. You ARE a soul – a CREATURE. In fact, modern versions of the Bible reflect this meaning more clearly.

“Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living creature” (Genesis 2:7 ESV).

Confused? You're not alone. Thankfully, it all becomes clear when we look at the Hebrew word for soul. It's NEPHEESH, literally CREATURE. According to the Creation story, every fish in the sea was a NEPHEESH. Every bird in the air, every land animal, every creepy-crawly thing – a living NEPHEESH. And man is NEPHEESH as well.

The Creator designed creatures for life, not death. Immortality was REAL for Adam and Eve. They could live forever – never die – on one condition: Trust the One who gave you life. “You see that tree? Don't eat its fruit.”

Was there something wrong with the tree? Was its fruit poisonous? Not at all. The tree was a test. A test of their trust. “Trust Me,” God said.

“Don't eat the forbidden fruit, for,” quoting God in Genesis, “In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17)

Now the serpent – the devil's proxy – urged Eve to doubt the word of God. “He's wrong. Eat the fruit. You won't die. You'll live forever, and you'll live even better.”

There it is - the first lie. You won't die. But we do. And we have. And we will. All of us. So why do so many of us believe that when we die, we don't really die?

Truth is, the modern notion of the immortal soul is an extension of that original lie. We can track it back through the myths and the fables and the legends of ancient China, India, and Egypt.

Greek philosophers – Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and their ilk – were charmed by this notion, and their theories and speculations had wide and lasting appeal. So that today, belief in the immortal soul is all but universal.

It features prominently in eastern religions, in primitive tribal beliefs, in witchcraft and pagan cults, in Judaism and Islam, and throughout most of Christianity.

Sure, there are plenty of agnostics in the world, but how many of them are secretly hoping their souls really are immortal.

Truth is, the belief in an immortal soul isn't true, it isn't biblical.

Does that mean that the Bible holds no hope of an afterlife? Certainly not! While you can't find the immortal soul in the Bible, you can find a wealth of promises about eternal life. You see, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Son of God, has broken the bonds of death. And He said, "This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life...and I will raise him up, [I will raise her up,] on the last day" (John 6:40).

Jesus resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all who believe in Him. Which is why you don't have to be afraid of death.

Because of the Immortal Soul? No. But because of Jesus' promise of eternal life.

No death. No taxes. Eternal life.

And the good news is, it's yours, He is yours, for the asking.