

Romans 14:19
So then let us
follow after things
which make for
peace, and things
whereby we may
edify one another.



John 8:32 and
ye shall know
the truth, and
the truth shall
make you free.

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“IMAGE IS EVERYTHING”

Jim Everett

This is the third article in a seven article series on the subject of “Conditional Immortality” taught by those who believe in annihilation of the evil on judgment day.

Man as a special creation made in God’s image differs significantly from the rest of animal creation — there is more to him than a living, animated body — “IMAGE IS EVERYTHING!”

Are all men infused with an immortal soul? Can God annihilate the spirit (soul) He has given or, once brought into existence, is it indestructible? “Immortality” means “not subject to death.”

“Conditional immortality” affirms that the soul can sustain its existence only as it is connected to and cared for by God — left alone it will perish as a coal of fire dies when separated from its source.

“Conditional immortality” affirms that only the righteous will be raised to immortality. On the other hand, the unrighteous, perchance they be raised, will be annihilated as their bodies are oxidized in “Gehenna’s” unquenchable fire that will be quenched after it has burned up their bodies and the soul will become nonexistent. “Conditional immortality” necessarily makes “gehenna” a physical fire — a literal place filled with dead bodies being eaten by worms and being oxidized by “unquenchable fire.” Besides other problems, such a physical interpretation presents a conflict between the bodies being consumed in a lake of fire and being eaten by worms.

Proper definitions of the Hebrew words “ruach” and “nephesh,” and the Greek words “psuche,” “zoe” and “pneuma” give us an idea of the flexibility of these words. Consult a lexicon for detailed definitions. Our English words “soul,” “spirit,” “life,” “person,” “being,” “breath,” etc., are translations of the Hebrew and Greek. Now, whether or not “ruach” means “breath” is not the issue, for it does sometimes carry that simple idea. But, it is inaccurate to say that since “ruach” means “breath,” then it must mean that exclusively. In fact, the definition of the Greek word “pneuma” as “air” or “wind,” since it is used in reference to the Holy Spirit, is the basis for some denying that the Holy Spirit is a part of the Godhead. Nor is the issue whether or not “nephesh” and “psuche” can simply mean a person, a living animated being, for the words convey that thought at times. The real issue is whether or not there is an inner man, made in God’s likeness, which exists after the body is dead. The “inner man” is called both “soul” and “spirit,” but to people who want to quibble about meanings of words, Paul used neither “pneuma” nor “psuche” when he referred to the “inner man” that is renewed day by day while the “outer man” was decaying — there is an “inner man” and an “outer man,” (2 Corinthians 4:14-5:4).

There are generally two positions postulated about the “soul” of man: (1) that the soul is just the life that animates the body and when the body dies man ceases to exist; or (2) that the real man is the spirit or the soul which tabernacles, temporarily, in a

living animated body and continues to exist, even when separated from the physical part. For years The Watchtower has denied the existence of an “inner man” by a simplified form of argumentation. Their arguments are stripped of the flare of intellectualism, devoid of philosophical reasoning, missing the reciprocal name dropping of respected, fellow scholars so common in current times; but, none the less, presenting man as a soul — not having a soul — which soul simply ceases to exist at death in the same way that animals die. I doubt that any so-called scholar of our times would wish to be identified with Charles Tazz Russell, nor would they accept him as a scholar, but in the later 1800’s and early 1900’s he was making arguments similar to those made by some who have embraced “conditional immortality” in our time.

Man as a special creation differs significantly from animals that have soul (“nephesh”). *“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 being,”* (Genesis 2:7, NKJV).

Genesis 2 describes in detail what **Genesis 1** revealed in general terms. But **Genesis 1:26-27**, contains essential information in relating God’s creation of man in order to give a correct interpretation of **Genesis 2:7** — *“Let Us make man in Our image, According to Our likeness...So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them,”* (NKJV). “Image” and “likeness” make a difference in how we understand who and what we are. “Image” is not said of beasts of the field nor birds of the heaven, though it is said of them that they have “soul” (“nephesh,” “life,” in **Genesis 2:19**). Simply put, God is spirit (**John 4:24**); man is created in God’s likeness (**Genesis 1:26-27**); therefore, the likeness man has with God is spirit. If we accept the spirit nature of God, then we are forced to accept that image in man. In reference to the nature of God, one who believes in conditional immortality will not argue that God is just “breath” or “life,” because if he did, he would reduce God to being just as extinguishable as he conceives of man’s spirit being.

What is there about man that differentiates him from animals, if he is just alive as the animals are alive? Since God imparted “spirit” to man, is He, consequently, powerless to annihilate the spirit? I would hesitate to affirm what God could not do — that is like asking, “Could God not force man to be good?” or “Could God not have forgiven sin in some other way than through the death of Christ?” God must act consistent with His very nature; hence, I would not answer the question in that form. Rather, since God cannot deny Himself, I would answer that God has conveyed to us what He has done and what

He has done is make man in His image and after His likeness. God is both eternal and immortal — man is not eternal, because he had a beginning but his inner part, made in God’s likeness, is necessarily immortal. The issue is whether or not the Bible teaches that the soul part of man survives death. An appropriate question here would be, “Is God powerless to fulfill His threat of an eternal, conscious torment of the unrighteous?”

Jim R. Everett taken from
insearchoftruth.org

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

“And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you. And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled” (Mark 5:18-20).

Water and boats continue to be prominent in Mark’s narrative. *“The country of the Gadarenes”* places Jesus in Gentile territory, on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. **Mark five** probably provides the most information about demon possession we have in the NT (**see also Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-39**). Jesus’ continued mastery over the storms and sicknesses and even death will soon elicit Peter’s declaration: *“You are the Christ.”* The excising of the demon whose name was Legion released the man from bondage and agony. The change in his countenance frightened the onlookers. When they saw this man *“sitting and clothed and in his right mind,”* they were afraid. So much so, that they even implored Jesus to leave town.

Not so, though, of the man who had been possessed. He wanted Jesus to stay with him. He wanted Jesus *“to be with him.”* The twelve were *“with Jesus”* (**Mark 3:14**); now this man, finally free of his demon, wanted close contact with Jesus. The man wasn’t afraid. Interestingly, even though Jesus said no to the man’s invitation, the Lord did tell him to go and tell others what had happened. Earlier commands about being silent (**Mark 1:44; 3:12; 5:43**) applied to the Jews; because of their Messianic misconceptions, the time was not right for Jesus to openly declare Himself. Not so, however, for the Gentile world. The sinister plots of the Jews stood in contrast to the open declaration of who Jesus was; that good news was spread throughout the Decapolis, or “ten cities.” When the man did

what Jesus told him to do, all marveled. But there is an absence of “conversions” in this story. In spite of this miracle from Jesus, the gap between credulity and true faith remained.

Is it saying too much to say that we must put the entirety of our lives in Jesus’ hands? This demon-possessed man toiled daily with chains and shackles and cuttings and caves and loneliness. When he began to broadcast what Jesus had done for him, he was preaching “the good news.” There is a lesson learned about the trials of life. Temptations to sin don’t come from God; trials of faith do. Trials force us to depend on God; trials build faith when we trust in God rather than ourselves. If there is any doubt about Jesus’ power to save even the worst sinner, consider His power over the demon that possessed this poor man in **Mark five**. Christ’s authority as demonstrated over demons and nature and even death surely means He can save you and me from sin. Demons seek to destroy; Jesus seeks to heal and restore. While Satan is a roaring lion, let us remember that he is lord only over this world (**2 Corinthians 4:4-5**). Faith is risky because faith asks us to trust in someone else. The tormented man, even in his distress, worshiped Jesus. But what of you and me? Could it be that we are not distressed enough? Do we say as they did: Jesus, please, just get away from us?

Randy Harshbarger

“Husbands, love your wives”

Paul, the one the so-called feminists call a “male supremacist and chauvinist pig” wrote to Christians in the first century, *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it”*, **Ephesians 5:25**. There it is men, plain as day and as bold as brass: If you want to go to heaven you must love your wife. It is written in the imperative mood, which makes it a command so there can be no arguing whether or not we are supposed to do it. We can’t say that it’s just a suggestion or a recommendation.

You may ask, “How can God command us to do something we have no control over?” Well, actually, you have a lot of control over your emotions but there is an even more fundamental point to be made. Paul, in giving this command, uses the word for the love of the will, AGAPE. This is not the love of the emotions but the love that is an act of the will, the **John 3:16** kind of love, the love which leads to sacrifice on behalf of the welfare of the one loved. Jesus died for the church and history is full of men who sacrificed themselves for their wives.

Some may say that is a pretty drab existence but it really isn’t. See, emotions make very good followers but exceptionally poor leaders. When a

man practices AGAPE toward his wife then his emotions will, in time, necessarily follow his actions and flourish toward her. However, if you spend all your time addressing emotions then what happens when she figures out you don’t have her best interests at heart? How will she ever respect you? Isn’t that what YOU need?

Let it begin with YOU practicing AGAPE.

Cleveland Reddinger

AN INCONSISTENT LIFE

Jim Stauffer

Several years ago in a conversation with one who claimed to be a child of God I learned he did not believe in the inerrant accuracy of the Bible as an expression of God’s will to man. This man had been baptized into the death of Jesus the Christ. He worshiped with the local congregation of saints. Yet as the discussion progressed, he really did none of these things with the conviction it was taught by the expressed will of God in the Bible.

What an inconsistent life! How can one give reason for his believed relationship with God and Christ without such reason coming from God’s word, the Bible? How can you worship the God of the Bible without consultation with that very document?

Well, the truth of the matter is, people do this every day. Anywhere you go you will find people who when questioned will tell you they are believers in Jesus the Christ and have been saved by His grace. Yet, when you begin to question them about how that salvation came about and compare it to what the Bible says about salvation, the two are not in agreement.

How can a person claim to be a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, when he has not been baptized, that is immersed in water for the remission of his sins like every biblical example we have? The Book of Acts is filled with examples of conversion; salvation, with all of them demonstrating the willingness to accept the command to be baptized, yes immersed in water for the remission of sins.

How can a person claim to worship God as a servant in His kingdom when they ignore specific teaching about what one is to do in worship to Him? Today nearly every church you enter will have instrumental music in its worship. Where is this taught in the Bible? It is not. How then can a person claim to worship God when he does so in contradiction to what the Bible teaches?

God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

Friends, we are not God’s children when we are following the ideas and concepts of men (**Mat. 15:9**).

Psalm 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10