

Man Became a Living Person



SABBATH—OCTOBER 8

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 2:7, 19; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Ecclesiastes 12:1–7; Ecclesiastes 9:5; 1 Kings 2:10.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Then the Lord God took dust from the ground and formed man from it. The Lord breathed the breath of life into the man’s nose. And the man became a living person’ ” (Genesis 2:7, ICB).

IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, God warned Adam and Eve, “ ‘You will die!’ ” But Satan promised them, “ ‘No, you for sure will not die!’ ” (Genesis 3:3, 4, NLV). God’s warning and Satan’s promise give us two different views about death and dying. These different ideas continue to this day.

Some people say that Satan’s promise is the same as God’s warning. They argue that the warning “ ‘You will die’ ” only talks about the body, which can be killed. These same people say that Satan’s promise, “ ‘You for sure will not die!’ ” is talking only about the spirit, which they say lives forever.

But this thinking is false. Can God’s words and Satan’s lies have the same message? Do we have a spirit that can live after we die? Many thinkers and scientists have tried to answer this question. But as Bible-believing Christians, we must understand that our God who made us knows everything about us (read Psalm 139). So, if we want answers, we must look to the Bible and the Bible only.

This week, we will learn what the Old Testament says about how God made humans and what happens when we die.



Do we have a spirit that can live after we die? Many thinkers and scientists have tried to answer this question.

“A LIVING PERSON” (Genesis 2:7, 19)

Read about how God made the animals and humans in Genesis 1:24–27 and in Genesis 2:7, 19. What is the same about the way that God made both man and animals? What is different? What makes a human a living person? Read Genesis 2:7 for the answer.

The Bible teaches that God made the earth and the sky in six days. On day 6, the Lord made land animals and a man and a woman (Genesis 1:24–27). The Bible says, “The LORD God used dust from the ground and made every animal in the fields and every bird in the air” (Genesis 2:19, ERV). God also “took dust from the ground and made a man” (Genesis 2:7, ERV).

God made both animals and man alike from the ground. But God made man different in two special ways. First, God made a body for the man. Then the man became a living person (Genesis 2:7). So, Adam had a body before he was alive. Second, God made humans to look and feel much the same as God Himself (Genesis 1:26, 27). Humans were copies of God in many ways. Animals were not.

Genesis 2:7 explains that God breathed the breath of life into Adam’s nose. God’s breath changed Adam’s lifeless body into a living person or soul. This Bible truth is important. Do you see that we don’t **have** a soul that lives separate from the body? Each one of us **is** a living soul or person. The Bible doesn’t teach us that the soul or spirit can live separate from the human body at all. This teaching is a lie. When we understand how God made humans, we will not accept the popular teaching that says the spirit continues living after the body dies.

Life is a mystery. Scientists don’t agree on when a person’s life starts and ends. A bigger mystery is our spirit. How do the cells and chemicals in our brains make thoughts and feelings? The scientists who study this question say that they don’t really know. So, we shouldn’t try to guess the answers to questions that the Bible doesn’t ask or answer.

Life is a powerful and wonderful miracle! Why should we feel joyful for the gift of this life? Why should the promise of everlasting life fill us with more joy than we feel for the gift of being alive now?



God’s breath changed Adam’s lifeless body into a living person or soul.

**“ ‘THE PERSON WHO SINS WILL DIE’ ”!
(Ezekiel 18:4, 20, ICB)**

Read Ezekiel 18:4, 20 and Matthew 10:28. How do these verses help us understand the meaning of the Bible truth that “man became a living person” (Genesis 2:7, ICB)?

Humans are the same as grass and flowers. They live for only a short time (Isaiah 40:6–8). Sin is the reason for our short lives. “One man [Adam] did a wrong thing. And the wrong thing he did made him die. So all men die because all have done wrong things” (Romans 5:12, WE). Sin started death. Sin changed all life on earth.

The Bible teaches us two important ideas about death and sin. (1) Both humans and animals die. King Solomon says, “The same thing happens to animals and to people. They both have the same breath. So, they both die. People are no better off than the animals. The lives of both are soon gone” (Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20, ICB). (2) When someone dies, he or she stops being a living person. In Genesis 2:16, 17, God warns Adam and Eve that if they sin, they will die.

We see this same warning in Ezekiel 18:4, 20: “ ‘The person who sins will die’ ” (ICB). This warning teaches us two things. First, we are all aging and dying because we are all sinners (Romans 3:9–18, 23). Second, the idea that the spirit continues to live after the body dies is false. If the spirit can’t die, then what happens to the spirit when our bodies die?

The Bible doesn’t teach that we float around with no body after we die. We also don’t go to heaven or hell the same day we die. When we die, our spirit sleeps. We wait for Jesus to wake up His followers from the dead at the Second Coming. Jesus says, “ ‘My Father wants everyone who sees his Son and believes in him to live for ever. I will raise him up on the last day’ ” (John 6:40, WE).

Why is the Second Coming so important to our beliefs? What happens to our hope if we don’t believe that Jesus will come back?



Humans are the same as grass and flowers. They live for only a short time.

**“YOUR SPIRIT GOES BACK TO GOD”
(Ecclesiastes 12:7, Nlrv)**

Compare Genesis 2:7 and Ecclesiastes 12:1–7. What Bible truth do these verses teach us? How can they help us to understand better what happens to us when we die?

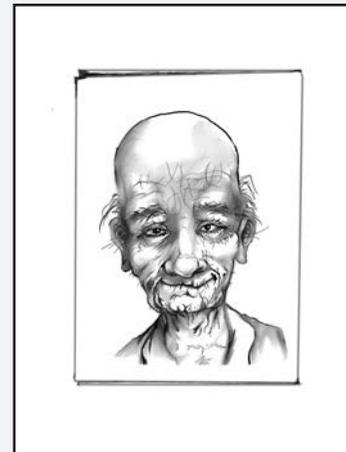
As we saw already, the Bible teaches that the human is a living person. Another name for a living person is a soul (Genesis 2:7). A person or soul has two parts: (1) a body and (2) a spirit. The Bible also teaches that a person or soul stops living when the body dies (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

But what happens to the spirit? Does the spirit stay alive after the body dies? Many Christians believe this idea. They use Ecclesiastes 12:7 as proof. This verse says, “Remember your Creator [God who made you] before you return [go back] to the dust [the ground] you came from. Remember him before your spirit goes back to God who gave it” (Nlrv). This verse does not say that the spirit stays alive when it goes back to God.

Ecclesiastes 12:1–7 talks about how we grow old and die. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that death is the reverse of what happens in Genesis 2:7. As we saw, God made the sky and earth in six days. On day 6, “The Lord God took dust from the ground and formed man from it. The Lord breathed the breath of life into the man’s nose. And the man became a living person” (Genesis 2:7, ICB). But Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us that “your spirit goes back to God who gave it” (Nlrv). So, this verse shows that the breath of life, or spirit, that God breathed into the nose of Adam goes back to God. In other words, when we die, the breath of life from God stops flowing into our bodies.

We should remember that Ecclesiastes 12:7 talks about how all humans grow old and die. This verse doesn’t say that evil people grow old and die in a different way than saved people do. So, when evil people die, their spirits do not stay alive in heaven with God. This idea doesn’t match what the Bible says. All humans and animals grow old and die (Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20). Death is the end of life. A psalm writer says, “When you turn away from them [humans], they become frightened [scared]. When you take away their breath, they die and turn into dust” (Psalm 104:29, ICB).

We often say that death is a part of life. Why is this idea wrong? Death does not support life. Read 1 Corinthians 15:26. What promise in this verse gives us hope?



All humans and animals grow old and die.

**“THE DEAD DON’T KNOW ANYTHING”
(Ecclesiastes 9:5, ERV)**

What happens to humans when they die? How do Job 3:11–13; Psalm 115:17; Psalm 146:4; and Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 help us answer the question?

Some Bible thinkers say that Job 3:11–13; Psalm 115:17; Psalm 146:4; and Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 can’t help us answer the question. These thinkers argue that these verses are parts of poems. Poems often can be hard for us to understand. But we can understand these verses. Their language is easy to read and understand. Their ideas match with the Old Testament teachings about death.

In Job 3, Job says he hates the day he was born because he suffers so much. (We often feel this way too, right?) Job understands that if he died when he was born, he would be sleeping in his grave (Job 3:11, 13).

Psalm 115 tells us the location where God keeps the dead. This place is silent because “The dead don’t praise him. Those [dead people] in the grave don’t praise the LORD” (Psalm 115:17, ERV). How can they? Dead people can’t praise God after they die.

Psalm 146 teaches us that dead people stop thinking and making plans: “When people die, they are buried. Then all of their plans come to an end” (Psalm 146:4, ICB). The NLV writes Psalm 146:4 this way: When a person dies, “his thoughts end on that day.” These verses explain what happens when a person dies.

In Ecclesiastes 9:5, Solomon adds, “The dead don’t know anything” (ERV). Solomon also says “In the grave there is no work. There is no thinking, no knowledge, and there is no wisdom” (Ecclesiastes 9:10, ERV). These teachings are proof that the dead are not alive after they die.

Christians should not panic at these Bible teachings. First, these teachings are proof that there is no everlasting hell where evil people are sent to burn forever after they die. There also is no “waiting room” between earth and heaven. There is no resting place for spirits to meet after they die. We do not get a second chance to be saved after we die. The Bible teaches us that Jesus’ followers will wake up at the Second Coming. Jesus will give His followers this reward when He comes again. Until that day, the dead must sleep. (Read Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 787.)



**“When people die, they are buried. Then all of their plans come to an end”
(Psalm 146:4, ICB).**

RESTING WITH THE FATHERS (1 Kings 2:10)

Read Genesis 25:8; 2 Samuel 7:12; 1 Kings 2:10; and 1 Kings 22:40. What do these verses teach you about death?

The Old Testament talks about death and burying the dead in graves. We read that Abraham was buried with his people: “Then Abraham breathed his last and died, after living a long and full life of many good years, and was buried with his people” (Genesis 25:8, NLV). Aaron and Moses also “joined” their people when they died (Deuteronomy 32:50).

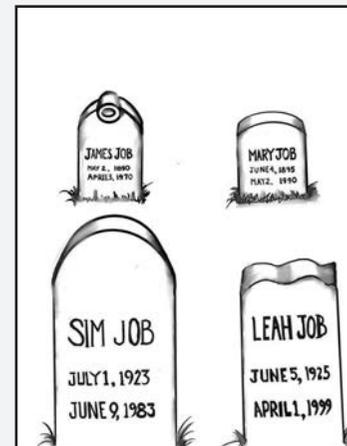
Both good and bad kings ended up in the same place when they died. They go to the grave (read 2 Kings 24:6 and 2 Chronicles 32:33). What does this information teach us about death?

The Bible uses the words “rested” or “buried” when someone dies. When King David died, the Bible says, he “was buried with his ancestors [family members who had already died] in Jerusalem” (1 Kings 2:10, ICB). The same words “buried with his ancestors” are used to talk about several other Hebrew kings, both good and bad.

We can learn at least three important ideas from the words “buried with his ancestors.” (1) We will die. We will rest from our work in this life. (2) Our family members already died before us. (3) When we are buried close to our dead family members, we are not alone. We stay together after death. This idea may be hard for us to understand today. But this idea gave comfort to people in Bible times.

When we die with Jesus in our hearts, we can be buried close by our loved ones. True, the dead do not communicate with each other or with the living. They stay dead until Jesus comes back. Jesus wakes them up from their deep sleep. Then they will join their loved ones who also died with Jesus in their hearts.

What if the dead were really awake and saw everything that happened here on earth? This idea is awful. Why do people believe this false idea? How does sleep help us understand God’s plan for everlasting life?



When we are buried close to our dead family members, we are not alone. We stay together after death.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The First Great Deception,” pages 531–550, in *The Great Controversy*.

“What if the spirits of dead men went straight to heaven when they died? Then who would want to live? Wouldn’t it be better to die so we could go to heaven faster? Many people killed themselves because they believed they can go to heaven faster. Their hearts were filled with trouble. They felt confused and sad. So, they tried to take the easy way out of their problems. They thought it was better to die and go to heaven sooner.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 539, adapted.

“Saved people don’t go to heaven when they die. Also, evil people don’t go to hell when they die. The Bible doesn’t teach these false ideas at all. The men and women in the Bible don’t make us these false promises. Jesus and His followers also don’t teach these false ideas. The Bible teaches that the dead stay in the grave. The Bible shows us that the dead sleep until Jesus wakes them up from the dead at the Second Coming.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 549, 550, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



“The Bible shows us that the dead sleep until Jesus wakes them up from the dead at the Second Coming.”

- ① The Bible teaches that humans are a whole living person or soul. Humans only are alive while their body and spirit stay together. How does this idea help us understand better what happens after we die?
- ② Many people believe that the spirit doesn’t die after death. This false idea has become so popular that people everywhere accept it worldwide, except Seventh-day Adventists. Why is our message about what happens after we die so important? Why are so many Christians against this Bible truth?
- ③ How should our understanding about what happens after we die protect us from false beliefs about ghosts? Also, why is it wrong to believe that we can talk with our loved ones after they die? Why can’t we always trust what we see? What would you say to someone who believes that the spirit of a dead family member communicates with him or her? What Bible verses from our study this week can you share with this person? How can we share this news using soft words?

EVERY PENNY BELONGS TO GOD

Shyamala's eyes got big with surprise when she read the handwriting on the note. The note was sent in an envelope to Global Mission at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Global Mission workers start new churches in places where people don't know about Jesus. Two checks worth \$110.52 were inside the envelope.

The person who sent the note wrote, "I am sending this offering to Global Mission to help people learn about God's love. I love God and try to help share the Good News about Jesus in my neighborhood." The writer explained that the offering she sent to Global Mission came from pennies that she found on the street. When her jar of pennies got full, she took them to the bank. The bank gave her a check worth \$110.52 for the pennies.

"This gift comes from pennies that I collected for Jesus," the woman wrote. "I hope my gift will bring smiles to someone as you share the love of God."

A week earlier, another surprising letter arrived at Global Mission's office at the General Conference. The letter came from the West Coast of the United States. The letter had no note. But inside the letter, Shyamala found a check for \$165.00. The check came from a prison that sent the check for one of their prisoners. Prisoners only earned up to \$55.00 per month at the prison. So, the prisoner who sent the check had to work at least three months to earn enough money to send a check for \$165.00. Shyamala was shocked because this prisoner sent more than one check.

Shyamala works with Nimfa. Together they manage the offerings that people send to Global Mission. Nimfa opened up a letter from a man who called Global Mission a few days earlier. The man wanted to know if Global Mission had gotten the money he sent them online. Nimfa learned that the man's bank had refused to send the money. The man asked Nimfa about the best way to send the money to Global Mission. Nimfa told the man to send a check. A few days later, a check arrived in the mail for \$70,000.00. The money came from the sale of a piece of land. Nimfa said, "The man who sold the land made God a promise. The man said that if God helped him sell the property, the man would give God all the money from the sale."

Shyamala and Nimfa's hearts are touched by these stories. The stories help these women remember that every penny belongs to God. Some people can afford to send only a dollar. One person has sent three one-dollar bills for many years. Big or small, every penny that Global Mission gets goes to help finish God's work so Jesus can come.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



"This gift comes from pennies that I collected for Jesus."

