

Bible Cosmology 303B:

Immortality, Consciousness, Hell, Universal Salvation



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Life Is an Inherent Property of Spirit

One of the fascinating traits of spirit is its inherent relationship to life. Or, to put it another way, in scripture life seems to be an inherent property of spirit. In fact, the more spirit a being is endowed with, the more life-giving properties that being has. Angels and men are endowed with enough spirit to be not only alive, but also sentient. But angels are comprised more of spirit than men are. As we will see, angels have spirit bodies equivalent to the spirit bodies that Paul says saints will receive in the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). As a consequence, angels are immortal, while men are mortal. But eventually, men will be endowed with enough spirit to transform our mortal bodies into immortal, spiritual bodies. Based on the incident at the Pool of Bethesda and other passages of scripture, angels seem to be comprised of enough spirit to heal and perform miracles. And throughout scripture, we find individual men who are described as “filled with the Spirit of God,” in which case God endows them with additional spirit that gives them the ability to work miracles or enables them to be wise. According to Genesis 7:22, animals also have a measure of spirit, although not enough to make them sentient. In all these ways, we see that the measure of spirit endowed to any particular being not only gives them life, but effects things like consciousness (sentience), capacity for wisdom, the ability to spread life or healing to others, and the ability to bestow immortality on certain beings (such as angels, for example).

God, of course, is spirit and the origin of spirit. When God visits Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:16 and Moses asks for God’s name, God identifies himself with the phrase “I am that I am.” Then God commands Moses to tell the Israelites, “I AM hath sent me unto you.” In Hebrew, God’s name is “Yahweh,” which is derived from the Hebrew word “hayah.” “Hayah” means “to be, to exist.” Consequently, the Online Bible Greek Lexicon defines the name “Yahweh” simply as “the existing One.” As scripture declares, God is life and God is also all-powerful and all-knowing – none of which is surprising for a Being that himself is both spirit and the origin of all spirit.

During this section of our study, we will focus our attention on demonstrating that life is an inherent property of spirit. And this factor is important to our overall study. If spirit is inherently life, life-causing, and life-sustaining then the notion of killing or destroying spirit will be proven invalid. On its own, this doesn’t mean

that God cannot cause a living being (such as a man or angel) to utterly cease to exist. But it will limit the options for how this cessation of existence could be accomplished. If spirit is inherently life and life-giving, then the only theoretical possibility for God to cause a spirit being to cease to exist is by removing that spirit in a process that reverses the way that breathing into Adam's molded body caused Adam to become a living being. No doubt this process is what happens when animals die. Whether scripture will affirm or disprove that theoretical possibility when it comes to men (or wicked angels) remains to be seen, but if life turns out to be an inherent property of spirit, then destroying spirit itself will not be an option for causing a living being to cease to exist. In simple terms, removing spirit will be possible, but destroying spirit will not.

Outlined below are several scriptural proofs that life is an inherent property of spirit.

Evidence #1 – Spirit and Body, Mortality and Destruction in the Creation of Adam

First, from Genesis 2:7 and 7:22 we see that it is the act of breathing spirit into the lifeless body that causes Adam to become a living being. This fact actually demonstrates that life is an inherent property of spirit in two ways.

Number one, there is the obvious fact that it is the impartation of spirit that gives life to the body. This inherently shows that spirit is life.

Number two, the fact that the body is not alive before the arrival of spirit presents the body as inherently made of non-living matter. This fact fundamentally demonstrates that it is the human body which was created mortal, not the spirit. So, the same passages teach that spirit is life and that it is the human body which is mortal.

The fact that mortality is uniquely associated with the body but never associated with spirit is further attested to in Genesis 3:19.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto **the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.**

When God pronounces to Adam the consequence for sin, there is no direct comment regarding what happens to the spirit imparted to Adam. The phrase “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” refers to the destruction of the body. More specifically, the bodily arrangement of Adam would decompose back into soil. But there is no depiction of spirit “decomposing” or being destroyed. Perhaps it returns to God without any trace of Adam's consciousness or identity, but in Genesis 3 it is clearly not spirit that is destroyed. So, right from the very beginning, spirit is depicted as inherently life-producing while mortality is solely associated with the body that was made from soil.

Evidence #2 – Spirit, Body, Mortality, Destruction, and Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul provides further evidence that it is the body alone that is susceptible to utter destruction through the processes of decay and decomposition. Notice in particular that in the quotation of 1 Corinthians 15 below, we have also included verses 46-54, which describe Adam’s body as “earthly,” “mortal,” and “corruptible.”

1 Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, **The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.** 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 **The first man is of the earth, earthy:** the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 **As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.** 49 **And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.** 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed,** 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and **the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** 53 **For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.** 54 So when **this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,** then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory.**

We’ve reviewed 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 in depth earlier. At the time, we noted that the Greek words translated as “natural” was “psuchikos,” which meant, “of or belonging to breath.” Not only does the Greek word perfectly parallel the Hebrew language in Genesis, which indicates that Adam’s body was brought to life when spirit was breathed into it, but Paul’s comments here also directly contrast Adam’s body with the resurrected body. In Paul’s terms, the resurrected body will be a body of spirit, whereas Adam’s body was a body of soil that merely had spirit breathed into it. In fact, Paul goes on to repeatedly highlight the fact that Adam’s body was made of soil in verses 47-49, where he describes Adam’s body as “earthly” in contrast to the body of the resurrected Jesus Christ, which the context defines as a spiritual body or “body of spirit.”

In this discussion, Paul provides three proofs that life is an inherent property of spirit.

Number one, throughout the passage, Paul’s theme is that the natural (“breathed into”) body will be transformed into a body of spirit, the body made from earth will be transformed into a body resembling the body of Jesus Christ, and the mortal, corruptible body will become an immortal, incorruptible body. These aren’t three different transformations of three different items. To the contrary, Paul is using two sets of synonyms to describe the same transformation of the

body that occurs at resurrection. The “psuchikos” or “breathed in” body is the same as the earthly body, which in turn is the same as the mortal, corruptible body. Like Genesis 2 and 3, by defining the earthly body as the mortal part of man, Paul is by contrast necessarily inferring that spirit is not subject to destruction. In other words, there is a consistent depiction that only the natural, mortal, earthly body is destroyed. Only the body ceases to exist through a process of destructive decay or decomposition. There is no mention of spirit ceasing to exist through a process of destructive decay or decomposition.

Number two, throughout the passage “spirit” is associated with life, not destruction. The resurrected body is not only a “spiritual body” but is immortal and incorruptible. The word Greek word for “incorruptible” (and “incorruption”) in verses 50, 52, and 53 is “aphthartos” (Strong’s Number 861), which means, “not liable to corruption or decay, imperishable.” What makes this resurrected body unyielding to corruption? It is incorruptible because it is no longer a body made of formerly inanimate, mortal, earthen soil but a body that is made of spirit. Here we see that life is a property of spirit. It is the endowment of spirit that makes the body immortal. And not just immortal, the fact that the body is a spirit body also makes it indestructible, incorruptible. Spirit is inherently resistant to destruction and when endowed in sufficient quantities it even makes other things indestructible.

Number three, verse 45 contrasts Adam to the resurrected Jesus Christ. The text states, “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” This reference to the resurrected Christ Jesus as a “spirit” in verse 45 follows directly after verse 44, which twice uses the phrase “spiritual body” as a description of the resurrected body. Consequently, we know that “spirit” in verse 45 is intended specifically as a reference to the fact that through the resurrection Jesus Christ has a spiritual body. In addition, we’ve already noted that the Greek word for “quicken” as “zoopoieo” (Strong’s Number 2227), which means, “to cause to live, make alive, give life, restore to life.” By applying the term “quicken” to the spiritual body of the resurrected Christ, verse 45 is identifying that the life-giving property is derived from this endowment of spirit. Although it could be argued that it is the amount of spirit that is resulting in this life-giving power, nevertheless, life is shown to be a property of spirit even if it requires a certain measure of spirit before that property accumulates to the point of making an impact.

Evidence #3 – Spirit and Life in Romans 8

We have already seen Paul define the spiritual body as an immortal and incorruptible body in 1 Corinthians 15. With that in mind, we can examine some additional comments that Paul makes in Romans 8 about this transformation to a spiritual body. In the process, we’ll discover other proofs that life is an inherent property of spirit.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For **the law of the Spirit**

of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death...10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.** **12** Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. **13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. **14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. **15** For **ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption**, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.** **18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which shall be revealed in us.** **19** For **the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.** **20** For the creature was made subject to vanity (3153), **not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,** **21** Because **the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption (5356) into the glorious liberty of the children of God.** **22** For we know that **the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.** **23** **And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.** **24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? **25** But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. **26** Likewise **the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:** for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: **but the Spirit itself maketh intercession** for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is **the mind of the Spirit,** because **he maketh intercession** for the saints according to the will of God. **28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. **29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. **30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, **them he also glorified.**

As we can see, throughout the passage Paul associates the terms “spirit” and “life.” However, it should be noted that Paul is not just talking about “spirit” in general as a substance. Instead, he is specifically referring to the Person of the Holy Spirit. This is most evident in verses 16, 26, and 27 where the Spirit is shown engaged in personal activities. In verse 16, the Spirit bears witness just as we do. In verse 26, the Spirit helps us and makes intercession for us. Verse 27 talks about the “mind of the Spirit.” Since Paul is talking specifically about the Person of the Holy Spirit and not spirit as a substance in general, the frequent association between the term “spirit” and “life” throughout Romans 8 cannot be used as a proof that the substance of spirit in general is immortal.

However, the passage still contains proof that life is an inherent property of spirit. That proof stems from the fact that this passage is clearly discussing the resurrection of the saints. Verse 11 exhibits this focus when it explains, “if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. “ Since we know that the resurrection of the saints is in view, we know that when Paul describes what it will be like to be resurrected here in Romans 8, he is inevitably describing the qualities of what Paul calls a “spiritual body” in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

Number one, we should note the repeated use of the word “glory” verses 17, 18, 21, and 30. We have already established from the Old Testament that the ancient Israelites used the term “glory” as a description of the substance of God’s body. Consequently, descriptions of the resurrected saints having “spiritual bodies” that are comprised of the same “glory” as God’s body would, in turn, strongly suggest that life is an inherent property of that “glorious” spiritual body. (We have already seen an examples of this where Moses’ natural body was affected by being exposed to the life-giving, glorious body of God.)

Number two, in verses 23 Paul refers to the resurrection as “the adoption” and “the redemption of our body.” But what is the body redeemed from? Verses 20-21 are explicit. We are delivered from “vanity” and from “bondage to corruption” into a state of “liberty” from that vanity and corruption. In short, a resurrected body is a spirit body and a spirit body is liberated from “bondage to corruption” and “vanity.” So, what does Paul mean by the terms “corruption” and “vanity?” As we will see, both “vanity” and “corruption” denote the physical process of decay and decomposition which the mortal parts of creation are subject to. However, the Greek word for “vanity” is “mataiotes” (Strong’s Number 3153), which can refer to “devoid of truth” or “perverseness” or “frailty” and “want of vigor.” The possible range of meaning here is significant. How do we know which one Paul has in mind?

First, “vanity” is virtually synonymous with “corruption.” We can see the parallel nature of the two terms because of the similarity between the phrase “subject to vanity” in verse 20 and the phrase “bondage to corruption,” which appears in the very next verse. The Greek word for “corruption” is “phthora” (Strong’s Number 5356), which means, “destruction, perishing.” Since “vanity” is presented in a phrase with parallel structure, we can infer it is intended with similar meaning.

Second, we know that “mataiotes” means “frailty” here because of the phrase “him who hath subjected” the creation. By identifying who subjected creation to this “vanity,” we can also confirm that “vanity” means “frailty” and “want of vigor.” Although it might be tempting to suggest that the Devil or even Adam (by his sin) subjected the world to corruption, such conjecture is not compatible with the details of verse 21. Thankfully, verse 21 says a little more about this subjugation. Verse 21 tells us that creation “was made subject to vanity by reason of him who subjected the same in hope.” In other words, the person who subjected it to vanity is the same who provides hope to creation. And verses 23-24

even identify the hope that Paul mentions here as the hope of the redemption of our bodies from mortality. Now that we know the hope, we can clearly identify God as the one who is behind that hope. The redemption of our bodies is God's purpose. God, and God alone, is the one who projects that hope. And since God is the one who provides that hope of redemption from mortality, according to this verse we know that it is also God who subjected the creation to mortality and corruption in the first place. The relationship between the "vanity" and the "hope" (as well as God's motivation for both) is easy enough to explain. If there was no mortality to begin with, then God could not hold out redemption from mortality as a reward to motivate obedience. For this reason, foreknowing there would be sin, God intentionally made part of creation subject to corruption and mortality so he could offer redemption from corruption and mortality as a reward to the repentant.

And, now that we've identified who subjected the earth to "vanity," we can further confirm what "vanity" refers to. Since God is the one who subjected part of creation to "vanity," "vanity" cannot refer to a state of being "devoid of truth" or a state of "perverseness." After all, Paul had already declared earlier in chapter 1:18-32 of Romans that God created the world in such a way that knowledge of truth was evident. And we also know from Genesis 1 that God created the world "good," not perverse. Given the language of verses 20-21, we must conclude that God himself deliberately made part of creation subject to frailty and lack of vigor in order that he could offer mankind the hope of redemption from such frailty and lack of vigor. Moreover, this frailty and lack of vigor is precisely what makes part of creation subject to decay and decomposition. In its current condition, it lacks sufficient vigor (or life) to endure indefinitely and, therefore, it eventually dies and begins to decay and lose function. By contrast, however, spirit is never described as "frail" or "lacking vigor" or as yielding to corruption and decay. To the contrary, spirit is depicted as the remedy for the mortal body's lack of vigor and frailty and susceptibility to cessation of existence by means of the forces of decay.

The picture is clear and complete. When the bodies of the saints are transformed so that they are bodies of spirit instead of bodies from earthen soil, those bodies of spirit are freed from frailty and a lack of vigor. Vigor is inherently a property of spirit. Being inherently resistant to destruction is also a property of spirit. Consequently, when a mortal body is transformed through the resurrection into a spiritual body, through that infusion of spirit it no longer lacks vigor and it instead becomes indestructible.

Evidence #4 – Spirit and Life in John 4 and 7

Earlier we examined John 4 and 7 in which Jesus compares the Spirit to "living water" that will eventually "spring up" or "gush up" to everlasting life.

John 4:13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: **14** But **whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** 39 **(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)**

Of course, here Jesus is talking about the Person of the Holy Spirit, not just spirit in general as a substance, as we can clearly see in John 7:39. However, we have also established that the Holy Spirit does not dwell bodily inside each believer, but instead the Holy Spirit “deposits” a measure of spirit in each believer. This “measured deposit” is synonymous with the imagery of the spring or well before it gushes forth to produce eternal life. Admittedly, these passages do indicate that the deposit of spirit does not produce everlasting life until it reaches a full “gushing” measure. But this doesn’t mean that spirit lacks life as an inherent property. We know that spirit has life as an inherent property because John 7:38 describes this metaphorical water as “living water.” By applying the term “living” as a description for the metaphorical water, John has informed us that “life” is a property of the “water.” Consequently, spirit does not acquire “living” properties only at larger measures. Rather, it is only at larger measures that its “life-giving” property accumulates to a level where it overcomes the inherent mortality of the earthly body.

Evidence #5 – Spirit and Life in 2 Corinthians 5

We’ve touched on portions of 2 Corinthians 5 before regarding its use of the word “earnest” in verse 5. However, 2 Corinthians 5 also provides evidence that life is an inherent property of spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that **if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved**, we have **a building of God, an house** not made with hands, **eternal in the heavens.** 2 For in this we groan, **earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:** 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but **clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.** 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

First, it is important to identify what Paul means by “our earthly house” and “this tabernacle” in verse 1. There are multiple clues to Paul’s meaning.

Number one, John 1:14 describes the incarnation of Jesus saying, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” In the Greek, the word “dwelt” is the verb

“skenoō” (Strong’s Number 4637), which means, “to fix one’s tabernacle” or to “abide (or live) in a tabernacle (or tent).” In 2 Corinthians 5:1, the English word “tabernacle” is translated from the related Greek noun “skenos” (Strong’s Number 4636), which means, “a tabernacle, a tent.” This comparison demonstrates that Paul is using the word “tabernacle” to refer to our human bodies.

Number two, in verse 1 Paul begins by discussing the possibility of our “earthly house” or “tabernacle” being “dissolved.” The Greek word for “dissolved” is “kataluo” (Strong’s Number 2647), which means “to dissolve, destroy.” In other words, Paul is talking about the death and decomposition of our mortal bodies. Paul’s discussion of the death of the body is paralleled continues in verses 7-8 where Paul refers to being “at home in the body” and being “absent from the body.” Like “dissolving” our “earthly house,” the phrase “absent from the body” speaks of the death of the body. And the parallel between them also affirms that the words “home” and “tabernacle” refer to our bodies.

Second, we also have to consider the phrases “building of God,” “eternal house” that is “in heavens,” and “house from heaven” in verses 1-2. If the dissolvable “earthly body” and “tabernacle” refer to the mortal body, then the “eternal house from heaven” must refer to our spiritual body or heavenly body, both of which are terms that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15:44-49). This is where we pick up the trail of life as an inherent property of spirit.

Third, notice that verse 2 states that we “earnestly desire” to be “clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.” The narrative here is one in which the mortal body dies and then at some point after death that same mortal body is transformed into a “body from heaven” by being imbued with life. We can compare this language to similar language in 1 Corinthians 15. In 1 Corinthians 15:48, Paul explains that “as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” The “heavenly” refers to “the Lord from heaven” as Paul noted in 1 Corinthians 15:47. When will we bear the image of the Lord from Heaven? Just a few verses earlier in 1 Corinthians 15:44, Paul has already provided the answer. Paul begins verse 44 with the phrase “it is sown a natural body.” Like the word “dissolved” in 2 Corinthians 5:1, the phrase “sown a natural body” refers to the death and decomposition of the body with the word “sown” referring metaphorically to burial. Verse 44 of 1 Corinthians 15 continues with the phrase “it is raised a spiritual body.” This phrase is equivalent to the notion of being “clothed” with our house from heaven” in 2 Corinthians 5:2. Consequently, both passages are a description of the death of the mortal body followed by the resurrection through which that same mortal, earthly body is transformed into a body of spirit, which Paul declares is immortal and incorruptible in 1 Corinthians 15:52-54.

Fourth and finally, in verse 4 Paul proceeds to explain that when we are “clothed upon” with this spiritual body, this house from heaven, then “mortality” is “swallowed up of life.” Here the term “mortality” refers to our mortal body, which is the “earthly house” that can be “dissolved” according to verse 1. In short, the spiritual body “swallows up” the mortal body. But Paul doesn’t just say that

the spiritual body “swallows up” the mortal body. He says that the spiritual body, the house from heaven, “swallows up” the mortal body with “life.” In other words, to be “swallowed up” up with a spiritual body is to be “swallowed up” with life. This parallels Jesus’ statements in John 4:10 and 14 where Jesus describes the life-giving power of spirit through the analogy of “drinking” “living water” which produces eternal life. Once again, all of these passages including 2 Corinthians 5 show that life is an inherent property of the spiritual body and that spirit is a substance.

Evidence #6 – Scripture Only Discusses Resurrection of the Body, Never the Human Spirit

In the New Testament, there are basically two types of passages that mention resurrection. First, there are those passages that mention the resurrection generally without much explanatory detail. And second, there are passages that comment on the resurrection with explanatory detail.

The bulk of the New Testament falls into the first category. However, those passages that do contain explanatory detail universally define the resurrection as something that happens to a body that has wasted away through decomposition. These passages never apply the concept of resurrection to the spirit or speak of the resurrection of the spirit. In other words, the scripture never describes resurrection as involving the spirit being brought back to existence or being reconstituted after passing into nonexistence. On the other hand, by their very nature those passages that contain only general mention of resurrection without explanatory details likewise provide no support whatsoever for the idea that resurrection entails bringing back into existence or reconstituting a destroyed spirit.

In order to ascertain these conclusions, it was necessary to survey the occurrence of relevant Greek terms and how they are used throughout the New Testament.

First, we surveyed common New Testament Greek words used in reference to resurrection. These Greek words include “anastais” (Strong’s Number 386), “anistemi” (Strong’s Number 450), “egersis” (Strong’s Number 1454), “egeiro” (Strong’s Number 1453), “anazao” (Strong’s Number 326), “zoopoieo” (Strong’s Number 2227), “sunegeiro” (Strong’s Number 4891), and “sunzoopoieo” (Strong’s Number 4809).

Second, we then cross referenced the terms for “resurrection” with the Greek words for “soul,” “spirit,” “body,” and “flesh.” As we have seen, the Greek word for “soul” is “psuche” (Strong’s Number 5590) and the Greek word for “spirit” is “pnuema” (Strong’s Number 4151). Greek words related to the concept of the body or flesh include “soma” (Strong’s Number 4983), “somatikos” as an adjective (Strong’s Number 4984), “somatikos” as an adverb (Strong’s Number 4985), “chros” (Strong’s Number 5559), and “sarx” (Strong’s Number 4561).

The cross-referencing involved in the first two steps of our survey process produced a total of 21 verses in which there was at least one Greek word for

resurrection combined with at least one Greek word for “soul,” “spirit,” “body,” or “flesh.”

Third, we then filtered out those occasions when two of these words appeared together in passages that had nothing to do with resurrection at all. Out of the 21 verses originally uncovered during our survey, only 8 connected the terms to each other in a manner that provided explanatory information about resurrection. In the remaining 13 verses, the relevant terms were used without being connected conceptually to one another.

Here a few examples might be helpful to further illustrate the criteria that were used to filter out passages as irrelevant. First, Acts 23:8 uses the Greek word “anastasis” for “resurrection” and the Greek word “pneuma” for “spirit” in a statement that reads, “the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit.” Obviously, the word “spirit” is not intended here as a description of resurrection any more than the term “angel” is. This is simply a list of distinct concepts that the Sadducees did not believe in. Second, Acts 11:28 uses the Greek word “pneuma” for “spirit” and the Greek word “anistemi,” which can sometimes refer to resurrection in the New Testament. But in this case, “anistemi” refers to simply standing up in a natural sense and these two critical words occur in a statement that reads, “there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth.” And third, in Colossians 2:13 we find the Greek word “sarx” for “flesh” and the Greek word “suzoopoieo” for “quicken together” in a statement that reads, “you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, that he quickened together with him.” As we can see, the word “flesh” here is specifically being used as a metaphorical reference to the sinfulness of our bodies, rather than to the bodies themselves. Moreover, the phrase “quicken together” is not applied to the “flesh.” In fact, “quicken” cannot be applied to the flesh here specifically because the term “flesh” is being used in reference to our sinful desires. Of course, Christ did not quicken or resurrect our sinful desires.

Ultimately, the vast majority of the New Testament texts did not conceptually connect the Greek words for resurrection directly with the words for “soul,” “spirit,” “body,” or “flesh.”

Fourth, all of the remaining 8 times when a Greek term for resurrection did overlap with terms like “soul,” “spirit,” “body,” or “flesh,” the text always affirmed that it is not the spirit or soul that dies or is resurrected or reconstituted, but only the body. Below we will examine the passages where such terms corresponded as part of a discussion of resurrection.

Number one, we find an early correspondence of these relevant terms in Matthew 27.

Matthew 27:52 And the graves were opened; and **many bodies (4983) of the saints which slept arose (1453).**

Here we find the Greek word “soma” for “bodies” and the Greek word “egeiro” for “arose.” And most importantly, the text employs these terms specifically to say that the “bodies” of the dead saints arose. To be clear, it is possible that their souls, spirits, or consciousness were in a state of non-existence due to the death of their bodies, but it is also possible that their soul, spirit, and consciousness continued to exist despite the death of their body and that these souls consciously awaited the resurrection of their bodies. Matthew 27:52 does not directly comment on the existence of the soul or spirit after death. But the more important point is that it only connects resurrection to the body. There is no mention whatsoever of the idea that their souls or spirits likewise had to be reconstituted or brought back to life.

Number two, 1 Corinthians similarly uses the Greek word “egeiro” for “raised up” and the Greek word “soma” for “body.”

1 Corinthians 15:35 But some man will say, **How are (1453) the dead raised up (1453)? and with what body (4983) do they come?**

In this verse, Paul asks “How are the dead raised up?” and “with what body do they come?” And it is clear from these questions that for Paul, the resurrection is something that happens to the body. In contrast, it is quite informative that Paul never asks, “with what spirit do they come?” as if resurrection happened to the spirit. Once again, there is no mention of the “spirit” being resurrected or brought back to existence after having been eroded into nothing.

Number three, a short while later we find two more verses in 1 Corinthians 15 that contain critical Greek terms. We’ll start with verse 44 in which Paul continues to answer the question regarding what type of body the dead have when they are resurrected. Here we find the Greek word “soma” for “body,” the Greek word “egeiro” for “cause to rise,” the Greek word “zoopoieo” for “quicken” or “life-giving,” and the Greek word “pneuma” for “spirit.”

1 Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body (4983); it is raised (1453) a spiritual body (4983). There is a natural body (4983), and there is a spiritual body (4983). 45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (2227) spirit (4151).

Although we do see the Greek adjective “pneumatikos” (Strong’s Number 4152) used in the phrase “spiritual body,” it is important to note that “pneumatikos” is being used here not in reference to the human spirit or soul but as a description of the body. In other words, Paul is explaining that the body which dies is a “natural body” but when that same body is “raised” it becomes a “spiritual body.” Consequently, since “pneumatikos” is simply a description of the quality of the resurrected body, once again there is no statement about the spirit or soul being resurrected or brought back from non-existence. The resurrection continues to be a discussion of something that happens to the body.

Number four, Paul continues his thought into verse 45 where we find the Greek word “zoopoieo” for “quicken” and the Greek word “pneuma” for “spirit.” However, the grammar makes it clear that Paul is not talking about the quickening of the spirit. The verb “zoopoieo” is here rendered as a participle. As the Online Bible Greek Lexicon explains, “The Greek participle corresponds for the most part to the English participle, reflecting “-ing” or “-ed” being suffixed to the basic verb form. The participle can be used either like a verb or a noun or an adjective, as in English.” Consequently, just like “pneumatikos” is an adjective describing the condition of the body in verse 44, here “zoopoieo” is being used as an adjective to describe Jesus’ spirit. In other words, verse 45 isn’t saying that Jesus’ spirit was made alive. Instead, it is saying that Jesus’ spirit was transformed into a life-giving spirit. Or to put it another way, when Jesus was resurrected his mortal body was transformed into a spiritual body that was capable of giving life to others, which is why passages like Philippians 3:20-21 declare that Jesus will “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Therefore, it remains the case that the only thing resurrected throughout 1 Corinthians 15 is the body, never the human spirit.

Number five, Romans 8:11 contains the Greek words for “pneuma” for “spirit,” the Greek word “egeiro” for “raised up,” the Greek word “zoopoieo” for “quicken” or “cause to live,” and the Greek word for “soma” for “body.” As we can see from the text below, the only mention of “pneuma” in this verse is in reference to the Holy Spirit of God and his role in resurrecting both Jesus and the saints. Regarding what is resurrected, the verse is equally clear that it is the body that is “raised up,” not the human spirit.

Romans 8:11 But if **the Spirit (4151)** of him that raised up (1453) Jesus from the dead dwell in you, **he that raised up (1453) Christ from the dead shall also quicken (2227) your mortal bodies (4983) by his Spirit (4151)** that dwelleth in you.

Number six, 1 Peter uses the Greek word “pneuma” for “spirit” and the Greek word “zoopoieo” for “quicken” or “cause to live.”

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death **in the flesh, but quickened (2227) by the Spirit (4151).**

Just like in Romans 8:11, “pneuma” is only used in reference to the Holy Spirit of God and his role in resurrecting Jesus. Moreover, a comparison to Romans 8:11 also suggests that the phrase “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” is meant to convey that it was Jesus’ flesh which the Holy Spirit quickened at his resurrection. As such, once again Peter is describing resurrection as something that happens to the body, not the spirit. There is no mention of the human spirit or soul being resurrected, reconstituted, or being brought back into existence after death.

The fact that this passage and the other passages we've examined do not apply resurrection or the need for resurrection to the spirit or soul, but only to the body, infers that the spirit or soul does not need to be brought back into existence after death because they never cease to exist in the first place.

Number seven, Acts 2:31 uses the Greek word "anastasis" for "resurrection," the Greek word "psuche" for "soul," and the Greek word "sarx" for "flesh."

Acts 2:31 He seeing this before spake of **the resurrection (386) of Christ, that his soul (5590) was not left (2641) in Hell (86), neither his flesh (4561) did see corruption.**

We should also point out that this verse uses the Greek word "Hades" (Strong's Number 86), which is translated here as "Hell." Later we will see that the Greek word "Hades" was a common Greek equivalent used as a translation of the Hebrew "Sheol," which ancient Jews believed to be a subterranean location where both the righteous and wicked dead resided after the deaths of their bodies. At this point in our study, it would not be beneficial to take a detour into the Jewish concept of Sheol, but we will return to that concept later. When we do return to the concept of Sheol, we will see that the use of the phrase "left in Hell" here in Acts 2:31 provides further support for the notion that the soul is not destroyed by the death of the body.

But for now, we will focus on the difference between what is said here regarding the "soul" in contrast to what is said regarding the "flesh." According to this verse, it is the flesh of Jesus Christ that normally would have experienced corruption if God did not intervene and resurrect him. But this verse does not apply the term "corruption" to the soul. Instead, while the flesh is delivered from corruption, the soul is delivered from being "left in" Hell. The Greek word for "left" is "kataleipo" (Strong's Number 2641), which means "to leave behind." Of course, on its own this verse does not prove that the soul continues to exist consciously in Hell for an endless duration. The verse simply does not comment on whether or not remaining in Hell would or could result in the cessation of the soul's existence. This verse only affirms that the body is corrupted, while in no way asserting that the soul is corrupted or decomposed by death, which is the same pattern seen in all of the verses in our survey. In other words, this verse indicates that, unlike the body, the soul is not destroyed when a person dies.

Number eight, Luke 8 uses the Greek word "pnuema" for "spirit" and the Greek word "anistemi" for "arose." As we can see from the larger context, this passage records an occasion in which Jesus' resurrected the deceased daughter of the ruler of a synagogue.

Luke 8:49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from **the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead;** trouble not the Master. **50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered** him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and **she shall be made whole.** **51** And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the

mother of the maiden. 52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53 **And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.** 54 **And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.** 55 **And her spirit (4151) came again, and she arose (450) straightway:** and he commanded to give her meat.

The interesting thing about this passage is that it depicts the girl's spirit as returning to her. We see this in the phrase "And her spirit came again" in verse 55. The Greek word for "came again" is "epistrepho" (Strong's Number 1994), which means "to cause to return, to bring back." Although this passage does not discuss the fact that the body begins to decompose at death, it does demonstrate that the spirit does not decompose or dissolve when the body dies. Instead, the spirit simply departs from the body. In this sense, Luke 8 is perfectly consistent with 1 Kings 17:9-23, which we examined earlier and found explicit language that the soul departs the body when the body dies but is brought back into the body when the body is resurrected.

Number nine, in addition to the 8 verses found by our Greek survey, we can also add Philippians 3.

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the **Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change (3345) our vile body (4983), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,** according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

We have already examined Philippians 3 in depth earlier in our study and found that it refers directly to Jesus' resurrection and his ability to resurrect and transform the saints. In particular, we see this in verse 21 which describes how Christ will transform our mortal bodies to be "like unto his glorious body." With regard to our current question, the relevant portion here is the fact that this process clearly acts on the body, not the spirit.

Number ten, another passage that we should include is Romans 8.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you... 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which shall be revealed in us.** 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For **the creature was made subject to vanity,** not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be **delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.** 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.**

We have already discussed this passage in our examination of Evidence #3 above, so we will only need to briefly touch on it again here. Specifically, we'll focus our attention on verses 20-23. Like Philippians 3, these verses did not result from our Greek survey. However, not only does verse 11 directly refer to the resurrection of the mortal body, but the subsequent statement in verse 21 that we will be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" is also a reference to the transformation of our mortal bodies into a glorious, immortal condition. Lastly, verse 23 refers to this as transformation as "the redemption of our body." Consequently, here again we have another passage that describes resurrection as a process that acts on the body, but never mentions the soul or spirit being transformed or reconstituted or needing to be brought back from having wasted away to non-existence.

In summary, there are no passages in the New Testament describing the process of resurrection as something that happens to the human soul or spirit. It is true that the human spirit and soul are affected by the resurrection of the body. After all, when the body is resurrected the spirit and soul are return to the body. But as we will see later on our investigation, like Acts 2:31 the language regarding the spirit or soul is always a matter of movement or relocation of the soul or spirit. The language is never one in which the spirit or soul, are being brought back together or back into existence after having eroded away into nothing or passed into non-existence. And when language is used that does describe reconstitution from erosion or cessation of existence, that language is always applied only to the body. The 8 passages that we have examined here have demonstrated these points, as well as our inclusion of Philippians 3 and Romans 8. In other words, these passages indicate that while the body of man is in need of resurrection after death because it is subject to destruction, the spirit and soul of man are not presented as being destroyed or in need of reconstitution. On the contrary, we have already seen some indications that, unlike the body, the spirit and soul of man survives the death of the body. This conclusion warrants further support, which we will begin to present starting with our next passage.

Evidence #7 – Matthew 10:28, Them Which Kill the Body but Not the Soul

For our last passage, we will turn to Matthew 10, which provides additional proof that life is an inherent property of spirit.

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.

This statement in verse 28 is spoken by Jesus himself. In no uncertain terms, Jesus states that men can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul. This statement from Jesus is both a straightforward and profound declaration that the death of the body does not bring an end to the soul. Consider the fact that if the human soul ceased to exist when the body died, then anytime someone committed murder they would be killing the soul just as much as the body. In that case, Jesus statement would be false. Here, Jesus' unequivocally declares that the death of the

body does not likewise result in the death of the soul. Instead, Jesus' statement necessitates that the death of the body does not bring an end to the existence of the human soul. And that fact, in turn, demonstrates the resilience of the soul. It is so durable that even the death of the body does not bring the soul's existence to an end. And that resilient endurance which survives even the death of the body is itself another proof that life is an inherent property of spirit and that spirit does not yield to the forces of destruction that dissolve the body.

Of course, the astute observe will notice that the text of Matthew does not mention the term "spirit," only the term "soul." Thus, the question arises regarding how Matthew 10 can prove anything about the properties of spirit given that it nowhere mentions the term "spirit." But the fact of the matter is that when discussing a state after the death of the body, any discussion about the human soul is inherently a discussion of the human spirit. This fact is something we've already established during previous portions of this study.

Earlier in our study we demonstrated that the term "soul" refers to an individual being. However, we also showed that man was created as a living soul which is comprised of two components, an earthen body and an impartation of spirit from God.

In addition, our examination of Genesis 2 demonstrated that it was the impartation of spirit that caused the earthen body molded for Adam to become a living soul. Or in other words, Genesis 2:7 indicates that the impartation of spirit produces a living soul which, in man's case, includes a mortal, earthly body in which the spirit of man resides. But more importantly, the role of spirit in creating a soul demonstrates the close connection between spirit and soul. This closeness that is reflected in Hebrews 4:12, which exemplifies the sharpness of God's word in terms of its ability to divide even between spirit and soul. Furthermore, since body and spirit are the two components of a human soul, when the body dies the only component that remains of a human soul is the spirit. Incidentally, this is why the disciples' initial response to seeing the resurrected Jesus in Luke 24 was to perceive that they were merely seeing what the author of Luke referred to as a "spirit." As the text of Luke 24 clearly shows, it was only Jesus' demonstration that he had a body, which convinced him that he was no mere "spirit." For the ancient Jews and early Christians, when the body was dead the only thing that was left of the human soul was the spirit. As Genesis 3:19 declares, when man's mortal, earthly body dies it is subject to destruction and returns to dust. However, as Jesus' statement plainly requires, the soul which is produced by the presence of spirit does not itself expire even when the body dies.

Consequently, even though Matthew 10 uses the term "soul," not the term "spirit," we know that it is referring to the soul exclusively as comprised of spirit precisely because the context specifies that the body has died. Therefore, Matthew 10:28 does indeed provide evidence that life is an inherent property of spirit and that the spirit does not yield to the forces of destruction that dissolve the body.

This concludes our discussion of Matthew 10 for now. But we will return to this passage twice later on when we examine the questions of whether the human spirit and soul continue to consciously exist after the death of the body or after condemnation to Hell at the final judgment. For now, our interest in this passages is focused on the evidence it provides that, unlike the body, the spirit is does not yield to destruction.

Evidence #8 – Luke 16, John 5, and Revelation 14 and 20

In this study, we will return to Luke 16 and John 5 with regard to multiple issues. But here it is necessary to examine the evidence that these passages offer on the question of the indestructible nature of spirit. We'll begin with a discussion of Luke.

Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: **20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus**, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, **21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, **though one rose from the dead.****

First, this chapter will become relevant later when we explore the topic of human consciousness after the death of the body. At that time we will address why the details of this narrative should be taken as doctrinally accurate despite their occurrence inside the confines of a parable.

Second, in this chapter Jesus tells a parable in which two men die and are taken by angels to the place of the dead. Although basic, this is an important detail. It is clear from verse 22 that when the rich man dies, his body "was buried" in the soil of the earth. Yet, verse 23 describes how the rich men "in Hell" and "lifts up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham" and Lazarus. From these details, we can see that Jesus is depicting a scenario in which the disembodied spirits of the wicked and righteous dead are taken to Hell.

Third, we should also note that although the English text uses the word “Hell” is translated from the Greek word “Hades,” Strong’s Number 86, which corresponds to the Hebrew “Sheol” as a place within the earth where the dead resided.

Fourth and most importantly, while verse 23 states that the spirit of the rich man is “in torments,” verse 24 identifies the source of his discomfort when the rich man himself explains, “for I am tormented in this flame.”

Fifth, these details from Luke 16 become particularly critical once we examine Jesus words in John 5.

John 5:28 Marvel not at this: for **the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**

We will examine these verses in John 5 again later on. But for now, there are two things worth noting from Jesus’ comments. Number one, notice that as Jesus discusses the resurrection in this passage, he includes not only the righteous, but “all” the dead as seen in the phrase “all that are in the graves.” In verse 29, he even specifies “they that have done evil” will be resurrected. Number two, notice the order of these events as Jesus’ depicts them. The wicked, including the wicked dead, are “in the graves” when they hear his voice but before they come forth to resurrection. This indicates that “all” the wicked dead will continue to consciously exist the entire duration of time between the deaths of their bodies until the resurrection of their bodies. In fact, Jesus depicts the wicked as just as much consciously existing prior to resurrection as the righteous are.

Sixth, it should also be noted here that the timing of the resurrection of the wicked is identified in Revelation 20:5-15, which places their resurrection right before the final judgment at which point they are cast into the Lake of Fire.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. **6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection:** on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. **7 And when the thousand years are expired,** Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, **8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle:** the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. **9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.** **10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.** **11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.** **12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books**

were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

As we can see, verse 5-6 specify that there are two points in time when the dead will be resurrected. One group is resurrected at the start of Jesus' thousand-year reign and the other is resurrected after the thousand years have ended. Moreover, verse 6 specifies that those who are resurrected before the thousand-year reign of Christ are "blessed and holy," which implies that at least a good portion of those resurrected after the thousand years are neither blessed nor holy, but wicked. (It is conceivable that some righteous people could die during the thousand years and be resurrected and deemed righteous at the end of that period. But that is a subject for another time.) As we continue forward in the chapter, verse 7 begins to describe what happens "when the thousand years are expired." Verse 11 then describes the commencement of the final judgment before God. Verses 12-13 describes the resurrection of the dead. And finally verse 15 concludes that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Seventh, without Jesus' statement in John 5, it would be possible to read Luke 16's description of the rich man in the flames of Hell and speculate that at some point those flames will consume him to such a degree as to cause him to utterly cease to exist. But Jesus' statement in John 5 demonstrates that no matter how much time between the death of any individual wicked person, they will remain consciously existing right up until the day of resurrection. Some wicked men have been dead for centuries even millennia prior to their resurrection. Consequently, their continued conscious existence until resurrection demonstrates that the fires of Hell do not cause them to cease to exist. In turn, this provides evidence that the spirits of men are immortal, not even succumbing to the fires of Hell.

Eighth, there is a counterargument that could be raised to challenge these conclusions. It could be suggested that the rich man in Luke 16 is only placed in a location near the flames, but not in the flames. In other words, he is close enough to be "tormented" but not close enough for the flames to cause him to cease to exist. In contrast, perhaps after the final judgment, the wicked are placed directly into the flames, which at that point cause them to cease to exist. In short, it would be possible to maintain that the fires of Hell do cause spirits to cease to exist by asserting a difference in the proximity of wicked men to the flames before and after the resurrection and final judgment.

However, this speculative distinction in proximity is quickly and definitively prohibited by the text of Luke and Revelation 20.

Number one, when Luke 16:23 says that the rich man is “in Hell,” it uses the Greek word “en” (Strong’s Number 1722). Likewise, in verse 24, the Greek word “en” is also used when the rich man says, “I am tormented in this flame.” And when the rich man petition’s Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn the rich man’s brothers in verse 28, the rich man says, “I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” Here the Greek word for “into” is “eis” (Strong’s Number 1519).

At this point, three things are clear from the context. One, the rich man is “en” the flames of Hell. Two, the rich man does not want his brothers to come to the same place he is, which is “en” the flames of Hell. And three, when the rich man refers to his brothers being put into the flames of Hell where he is, he uses the Greek word “eis.”

Number two, we can compare these Greek words to the words used in Revelation to describe the final state of the wicked and their proximity to the eternal fires. Revelation 20:15, which we examined a moment ago, uses the Greek word “eis” when it says, “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” This is the same word that the rich man used to describe his brothers (and, by extension, himself) being placed in the flames of Hell. Although Revelation 20 does not use “en” with regard to the presence of the wicked and flames, Revelation 14 does.

Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,** **10 The same shall** drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and **he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: **11** And the smoke of their **torment** ascendeth up for ever and ever: and **they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

Verse 9 discusses the final status for those who worship the beast and his image. Verse 10 explains that such wicked individuals will “be tormented with fire and brimstone.” And verse 11 specifies that from this torment “they have no rest day nor night.” The details in these verses are relevant to several issues that we will cover in this study, particularly when we focus on the question of how long the wicked will continue to consciously exist in the fires of Hell. As such, we will return to this passage elsewhere. But for now, it is important simply to note that the Greek word “with” in verse 10 is the “en” (Strong’s Number 1722), which is the same word used by the rich man in Luke 16 when he says, “I am tormented in this flame.” Here we might also note that the Greek words “basanizō” (Strong’s Number 928) and “basanismos” (Strong’s Number 929), which are translated respectively as “tormented” and “torment” here in Revelation 14:10-11, are closely related to the Greek word “basanos” (Strong’s Number 931), which we see in used repeatedly to describe the rich man’s experience of the fire in Luke 16:23 and 28.

Ultimately, if “en” and “eis” are interpreted as meaning simply “near” but not “in” the flames in Luke 16, then the occurrence of these same Greek words in Revelation 14 and 20 would require that the wicked are only placed “near” the flames even after the final judgment, never “in” the flames. At which point, what mechanism would be left to bring about the end of the existence of the wicked, if they are only “near” the flames and being “near” to the flames is not sufficient to end the existence of a disembodied human spirit? On the other hand, if we interpret the use of “en” and “eis” in Revelation 14 and 20 to refer to the wicked being placed directly within the flames, then the use of these same words in Luke 16 would require that the rich man and his brothers were likewise directly in the flames. And yet, John 5 demonstrates that the wicked, exemplified by the rich man and his brothers, continue to consciously exist right up until resurrection regardless of their contact with the fires of Hell. Consequently, the details of Luke 16, John 5, and Revelation 14 and 20 provided additional evidence that spirit, even the disembodied spirits of men, are immortal and their existence cannot be brought an end, not even by long-term exposure to the fires of Hell.

Summary of Evidence

In summary, we have seen multiple, biblical proofs that life is an inherent property of spirit and that spirit does not yield to forces of destruction and corruption. Those proofs can be itemized as follows.

Genesis 2:

- 1) Only Adam’s body was made from a non-living substance while his spirit was imparted from God’s own living Spirit. This associates mortality with only the body, never with the spirit.
- 2) It is the impartation of spirit that brings Adam’s body to life in Genesis 2.

1 Corinthians 15:

- 3) Only describes the earthly body as mortal and corruptible but never associates spirit with such things.
- 4) In contrast, the spiritual body is presented as immortal and incorruptible.
- 5) Asserts that the property of “giving-life” is not associated with an earthly body but Jesus’ body becomes “life-giving” by means of becoming a spiritual body through the resurrection.

Romans 8:

- 6) The resurrected body, which we know is a spiritual body, is said to be delivered from the earthly body’s lack of vigor and susceptibility to physical decay. This implies that a property of the spiritual body is inherently full of vigor and unyielding to destruction, or in other words, inherently life-giving.
- 7) The Old Testament Israelites used the word “glory” as a description of the body of God Himself, including in the Greek Septuagint. The repeated use of the word “glory” to describe the resurrected body indicates that the spiritual body which results from resurrection is composed of the very substance of God, which strongly implies that the substance of this body also has life as an inherent property just as God does.

John 4 and 7:

- 8) Jesus describes the impartation of the Holy Spirit as “living water.” Since we know that the Holy Spirit does not dwell bodily in each believer, but instead the Holy Spirit “deposits” a measure of spirit in each believer, Jesus’ use of the word “living” must be applicable to the deposit of spirit as well.
- 9) The fact that the resurrected, immortal body correlates to the “gushing” of the spring, the lesser measure of the deposit should also be understood to have life as an inherent property, even if that property is not sufficient to transform mortal matter into an immortal state until it reaches a certain amount.

2 Corinthians 5:

- 10) Consistent with Genesis 2 and 1 Corinthians 15, the earthly body is the only aspect of man that is described as susceptible to the possible cessation of existence while spirit is never described in such terms.
- 11) Receiving a spiritual body entails a process that “swallows up” mortality with “life,” which implies that life is a property of the spiritual nature of the new body just as mortality was a property of the “earthen” body that was formed from the inanimate soil.

Matthew 27, 1 Corinthians 15, Romans 8, 1 Peter 3-4, Acts 2, Luke 8, and Philippians 3:

- 12) Resurrection is always only depicted as a transformative process that happens to the body.
- 13) There are no passages in the New Testament describing the process of resurrection as something that happens to the human soul or to the human spirit, which in turn means that unlike the body the spirit and soul are not in need of being reconstituted or brought back from non-existence.

Matthew 10:

- 14) Jesus explains that the death of the body does not kill the soul or the spirit, which in turn shows that the spirit is so resilient and unyielding to destruction that it even survives the destructive processes that kill the body.

Luke 15, John 5, and Revelation 14 and 20:

- 15) Jesus depicts the disembodied spirits of the wicked dead being placed in the flames of Hell where they are conscious of their discomfort after their bodies are buried. Jesus also plainly states that no matter how much time passes between a man’s death and the resurrection, both the wicked dead and the righteous dead remain conscious as they wait for resurrection. Therefore, the human spirit is shown to be unyielding to destruction even after exposure to the fires of Hell for centuries and millennia.

Conclusion: Life Is an Inherent Property of Spirit and Spirit Does Not Yield to Destruction

These 16 passages provide 15 pieces of evidence that life is an inherent property of spirit and that spirit does not yield to destructive forces. Of course, some of the points outlined here are repeated in one or more of the other passages. Nevertheless, each recurrence of these basic principles in a separate text constitutes attestation to general principle. In lesser measures, that life-giving

property may not be sufficient to cause the transformation of the mortal body to an immortal one. In lesser quantities, it may only be sufficient to animate the mortal body or perhaps to heal others. But in all these cases, even in lesser amounts, the impact of spirit on the body is life. To borrow words from Jesus' metaphorical comparison of spirit to water, spirit is "life-giving water." Or in other words, life is a property of spirit.

Moreover, when we combine the fact that life is an inherent property of spirit with the fact that only the body is described as mortal in scripture, never the spirit, the resulting conclusion is that spirit is immortal. Perhaps this only applies to spirit as a substance but not to human beings. However, as we stated at the start of this section, because spirit is inherently life and unyielding to destruction, then the notion of killing or utterly destroying spirit itself is proven invalid. On its own, this doesn't mean that God cannot cause a living being (such as a man or angel) to utterly cease to exist. But it will limit the options for how this cessation of existence could be accomplished. If spirit is inherently life and life-giving and immortal, then the only theoretical possibility for God to cause a spirit being to cease to exist is by removing that spirit in a process that reverses the way that breathing into Adam's molded body caused Adam to become a living being. No doubt this process is what happens when animals die. Whether scripture will affirm or disprove that theoretical possibility when it comes to men (or wicked angels) remains to be seen. But because scripture has shown that life is an inherent property of spirit and only the body is ever described as mortal and in need of reconstitution from destruction, destroying spirit itself will not be an option for causing a living being (soul) to cease to exist. In simple terms, removing spirit will be possible, but destroying spirit will not.

In the next few sections below, we will move forward to examine the biblical concepts of death and resurrection during which we will investigate the concept of immortality as it is presented in scripture.