

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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Man: Elohim or beast?

Yochanan (John) 10:34-35

34 Yeshua answered them, “Is it not written in your Torah, ‘I said, you are elohim?’

35 If He called them elohim, unto whom the word of YHWH came (and the scripture cannot be broken),

Yeshua was being castigated by the religious leaders of His day for saying He was the son of Elohim. Apparently, these men failed to understand what man is. According to Scripture, man is elohim. At least that is what he was created to be. However, many fail to walk in this and become nothing more than a beast. This comes to pass as a result of wrong choices in a person’s life.

2nd Thessalonians 2:11

And for this reason Elohim sends upon them a deluding influence, that they should believe the lie.

According to evolutionists, man is simply one among many beasts. As proof of this idea, the evolutionists point to DNA, in which a portion of all DNA is the same from one species of animal to another, including human DNA. The evolutionists are so sure of their theory that they have conjectured that man has evolved from lower life forms, and that in fact, he is continuing to evolve according to the common theory of evolution. Simply put, man is becoming something other than what he now is—something non-human.

It is this idea of “becoming” at which we want to take a much closer look in this study. As a spring board, let us carefully consider the following passage.

B’reshit (Genesis) 2:7

And YHWH Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man is becoming a living being.

Many English translations render the end of the verse to read something like “...man became a living soul.” However, וַיְהִי (vayhi) is in the imperfect tense, which means that this is an incomplete action—an ongoing action. Once a person understands this critical verb, he can begin to understand the ramifications of his own personal choices as to what those choices are helping him to become.

Before we continue our examination of “becoming” a living nephesh (soul or being), we need to have a better understanding of the nephesh itself. For example, not only does man have a nephesh, but animals also have a nephesh. And perhaps surprisingly, YHWH also has a nephesh, which really should not be surprising since man was created in the image of Elohim. Let us examine the Scriptural record to see that in addition to man, both YHWH and animals have a nephesh. First, we will examine the nephesh of YHWH.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 9:9

“Shall I not visit them for these things?” says YHWH; “shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”

Here YHWH is speaking through the prophet Yirmeyah. In this passage, YHWH makes a reference to His nephesh. We often think of YHWH being a Spirit, and He certainly is that. However, He is more than just a spirit. He also has a nephesh. Because this idea has largely been ignored, there are wrong ideas about man and YHWH floating around. It is time we allow Scripture to simply teach us what it says, and allow Scripture to form our ideas and thinking about who and what YHWH is, and who and what we are.

Not only does YHWH have a nephesh, but animals have a nephesh, as well. Please carefully consider the following passage.

B’reshit (Genesis) 2:19

And out of the ground YHWH Elohim formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man called every living creature (nephesh), that was the name thereof.

In this passage, it is clear, at least once one looks at the Hebrew text, that every living “creature” has and is a nephesh. This is not what is often taught. What is often taught, is that animals are without either a soul or spirit (these two are not the same thing), or at the very least, that an animal does not have a spirit. We shall digress for just a moment and show that animals also have a spirit.

B’reshit (Genesis) 7:15

And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath (spirit) of life.

This passage teaches us that animals have a body, soul, and spirit, very similar to mankind. In addition to this information, we can also learn that both man and beast also have a neshamah.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:16

“But of the cities of these peoples, that YHWH your Elohim gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes.”

In the Torah instructions about taking a city by siege, YHWH commands that nothing be left alive, and the context indicates that “nothing that breathes” includes both animal and man. The word “breathes” here is the Hebrew word נשמה (neshamah). All living things, both man and beast, have a body (besar), soul (nephesh), spirit (ruach), and breath (neshamah). Well then, just exactly what is the difference between man and beast?

B’reshit (Genesis) 1:27

And Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim created He him; male and female created He them.

Unlike animals, who were not created in the image of Elohim, man was created in the image of Elohim, which brings us back to the idea of “becoming” a living nephesh (soul) and what that means.

What does it mean to become a living nephesh? How do the choices I make determine what kind of living nephesh I become?

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:19

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your seed;

YHWH has set a choice before each and every person. Each person can freely choose either life or death. It is each person’s own personal choice. To obey the Voice of YHWH is to choose life. To disobey the Voice of YHWH is to choose death.

To choose to walk in humble obedience to the Voice of YHWH is to *become* more and more like Him. To choose to walk in disobedience to the Voice of YHWH is to become more and more like a beast, rather than like YHWH. The choice before each and every one of us is actually quite simple; one can either choose to become more like YHWH or more like an animal.

When a person chooses to follow his instincts and base desires, he is moving away from becoming like YHWH and more like an animal.

Galatians 5:19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties,

21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of Elohim.

“The works of the flesh” is another way of simply saying that one is walking after the animal side of his nature. These are at war with the works of the spirit. Remember, a person can only serve one master.

When it comes to judgment day, YHWH will look at the record to determine whether each person made choices to become more like Him, or more like an animal. If a person makes choices to become like Him, then he will enter into the olam haba (the world to come) and spend eternity with YHWH. However, if a person simply follows his animal nature, and does whatever he pleases and desires to do without any regard to the Voice of YHWH, then he will not enter into the olam haba, and he shall be cast out with the other beasts, since he is now one.

One additional thought on *becoming*.

B'reshit (Genesis) 2:16-17

16 And YHWH Elohim commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat:

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die."

From the very beginning of man's long and sordid history, it has always been about this one simple choice—to either obey the Voice of YHWH or to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When a person chooses to obey His Voice, he chooses life. If one chooses to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he chooses death. Choosing to eat of [the tree of knowledge of good and evil](#) is to feed the needs of the flesh.

B'reshit (Genesis) 3:6

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

Man has a long history of thinking he knows what is best for himself. He doesn't! The one thing we need to understand here is that the forbidden knowledge is choosing what is good, as well as what is evil. Man does not have the right or authority to determine what is good, any more than he has the right and authority to determine what is evil. Only YHWH has that right and authority. I can tell you, "Thus says YHWH..." and show you in Scripture what YHWH says about any given subject. However, I have no authority to determine for myself or for another, what is right or wrong. Neither do you!

Each one of us is in the process of becoming, through the daily choices we make. What are you becoming more like—YHWH or a beast?

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