

free from harmful effects upon their soul or upon the resurrection body they will have at the judgment. They will feel pain, sorrow, and weariness (Revelation 14:11) while the righteous will have no **"sorrow, nor crying"** and **"there shall be no more pain"** (Rev. 21:4). The ungodly will be eternally subject to *corruption.*

In non-biblical writings these words are used in the more *conventional* way we often apply them. Greeks, Jews, and early Christian writers spoke of all men having "immortal souls" (see e.g. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.1:3). However, when dealing with *biblical* doctrine we must always be careful to let God's word set its own definitions lest we apply words in ways that God has not. When we do this the false premises upon which doctrines advocating the annihilation of the spirit (or soul) crumble.

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Faithful Sayings



Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:
Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:
Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:
Kyle Pope

"Immortal" and "Incorruptible"

By Kyle Pope

Homer Hailey released a book before his death entitled *God's Judgments and Punishment.* In this book, Hailey takes the position that hell is annihilation of the spirit (or soul). When I was younger, I myself held that view for a time until a good brother in Christ sat down and studied Revelation 14:9-11 with me.

In studying this issue in the years since that time it has become evident to me that some of the problem rests in our use of some *conventional* rather than *biblical* definitions of two words: 1. *Immortal*, and 2. *Incorruptible*. While the Bible clearly teaches that all human beings have an eternal spirit (or soul) that survives the death of the body and will have a continued existence in the age to come, the Bible does not speak of



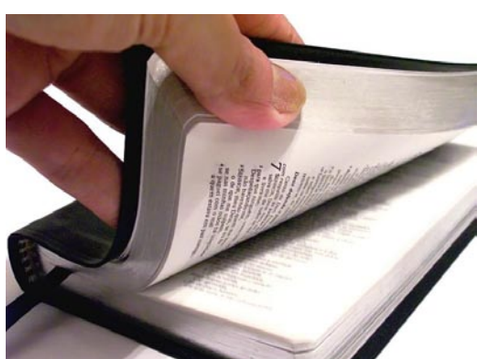
the spirit (or soul) of the ungodly as "immortal" or "incorruptible."

"Immortal"

The King James Version uses the words **"immortal"** or **"immortality"** six times in the New Testament. Three of these instances translate the word *athanasia* (ἀθανασία). This word is formed from the prefix *a-* (which equals the English prefix un-) and the word *thanatos* ("death"), with an *-ia* ending which indicates a quality in its abstract sense (i.e. "the condition of dying"). In the three texts where it is found two of them speak of the reward given to the righteous, they "put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53; 15:54) and one describes a condition, which in its purest sense belongs only to God (1 Tim. 6:16). The remaining three translate the words *aphtharsia* (ἀφθαρσία) or its adjective *aphthartos* (ἄφθαρτος). It is formed, also from the *a-* prefix and the word *phthartos* meaning "perishable" with the *-ia* abstract ending or *-os* ending for an adjective. Romans 2:7 uses it of a quality that the godly seek. 2 Timothy 1:10 tells us that it has been brought **"to light through the gospel."** Finally, 1 Timothy 1:17 speaks of it as a quality that belongs to God.

"Incorruptible"

The King James Version, eleven times uses one of the terms "in- (not or un-) corrupt - ion (-ness or -ible)." Each of these is translated from *aphtharsia* or *aphthartos* referred to above. 1 Corinthians 9:25 uses it in reference to the **"crown"** the righteous seek. 1 Corinthians 15:42 and 15:52 each use it to describe the condition of the righteous at the resurrection, they are **"raised in incorruption** (or - ible)." In 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 15:54 it is what the righteous **"put on"** at the resurrection. In the same context, 1 Corinthians 15:50 tells us **"corruption does not inherit incorruption."** 1 Peter 1:4 uses it in reference to the nature of the heavenly inheritance that **"does not fade away"** (NKJV). In 1 Peter 3:4 it is used with gentleness and quietness to describe the modest character of the **"hidden person of the heart"** with which a Christian woman should adorn herself. This may refer to moral incorruptibility, as is also seen in Titus 2:7 and Ephesians 6:24 which translate it **"sincerity."** Finally, Romans 1:23 speaks again of it as a quality of God and 1 Peter 1:23 as a quality of His word.





Biblical Distinctions

In our own discussions of the eternal nature of the spirit (or soul) we often use these words in reference to the ungodly. Consider a few reasons that this is not accurate:

1. Prior to Judgment All Souls Are Subject to Death. The Bible speaks of physical death as the separation of the body and spirit (Jas. 2:26) and spiritual death as the separation of the spirit from God (Eph. 2:1-3). Eternal punishment is described as the **"second death"** (Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8). In Biblical terms it is not accurate to claim that the ungodly have an "immortal" soul, because in the age to come they will be eternally subject to death. For the righteous, on the other hand, **"there shall be no more death"** (Rev. 21:4).

2. God Alone is not Subject to Death. 1 Timothy 6:16 claims that God **"alone has immortality."** In Biblical terms God is the only Spirit in its purest sense that is "immortal." Even the sinful angels can be subject to separation from God (i.e. spiritual death, cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Matt. 25:41). God cannot be separated from Himself, so He is never subject to spiritual death.

3. The Ungodly Will Experience Eternal Corruption. The moral use of the word *incorruptible* illustrates the fact that *corruption* refers to harmful influences upon someone. Something *corruptible* can break, decay, or be spoiled. In Biblical terms it is not accurate to speak of the ungodly as *incorruptible* because they will never be