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LIFE

The Bible student is often puzzled with the question, How many kinds of life are there; and what is the difference between them? Our authorized version answers the question vaguely, if at all.

The word *life*, as found in the New Testament, is, in most places, a translation from one of the two Greek words, *Zoe* and *Psuchee*. The rendering of both by the one English word *Life* covers up a clean-cut difference of meaning between the two.

The word *Psuchee* has several significations. When it refers to *life*, and is so translated in our New Testament, it invariably alludes to the natural, fleshly, or blood-life. Liddell and Scott, in their lexicon, give the meaning as follows: "*Psuchee, breath; Latin, anima—life—spirit. It leaves the body with the blood. Periphr for the man himself. The life of animals, &c.*"

Zoe refers generally, in the New Testament, to the spiritual life, either in this age, or after the resurrection. Liddell and Scott give, *Zoe, a living, i.e., means of life; life* opposed to death. It sometimes, at least, as in the definition, "means of life," seems to indicate an inherent or independent life power; thus opposed to *psuchee*, which is dependant on the breath.

In the New Testament, we find *eternal, or everlasting, life (zoe)* over forty times. Also, *endless life; resurrection of life; word of life; book of life; water of life; crown of life, &c.* Also, our Lord is called the Prince of Life; Author of Life; Bread of Life, &c.—All from *zoe*. *Psuchee* is *never* found in any such connection.

In reference to *psuchee*, and its corresponding Hebrew word, *nephesh*, an able critic remarks: "Perhaps it may be worthy of notice, that in all the seven hundred times in which *nephesh* occurs, and the one hundred and five times of *psuchee*, not once is the word immortal, or deathless, or never-dying, found in connection, as qualifying the terms."

We will quote as samples the occurrences of *psuchee*, wherever translated *life* in Matthew: "They are dead who sought the child's *life*;" "Take not thought for your *life*, what ye shall eat;" "He that finds his *life* shall lose it, and he that loses his *life* for my sake, shall find it;" "For whoever will save his *life*, shall lose it; and whoever may lose his *life* for my sake, shall find it."

These last two passages are made still clearer by John 12:25, where, apparently, the complete remark of Christ is given, and *psuchee* and *zoe* are brought into direct contrast: "He that loves

his life (*psuchee*) shall lose it; and he that hates his life (*psuchee*) in this world, shall keep it unto life (*zoe*) eternal.”

We reserve last occurrence of life—from *psuchee*—in Matthew, for the present.

We are never taught to hate the *zoe*, but the *psuchee* is to be held in comparatively low estimation. For instance: “If anyone comes to me and hates not his father, ... and even his own life” (*psuchee*), &c. Barnabas and Paul were called “men who have hazarded their *lives* for the name of Jesus.” Paul said, “neither do I count my *life* dear to myself” &c. When Eutychus fell from the third loft during Paul’s preaching, and was taken up insensible, the apostle said: “His life (*psuchee*) is in him.” It is applied to beasts: “The third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life (*psuchee*) died.”

We will look at a few passages in which *zoe* occurs. “Straight is the gate, and narrow the way, which leads to life (*zoe*).” “If thou desirest to enter into *zoe* keep the commandments.” “He that believes on the Son has everlasting *zoe*, and he that believes not the Son shall not see *zoe*. “Ye will not come to me, that ye may have *zoe*.” In John, chapters 5 and 6, every occurrence of *life* is from *zoe*.

From *Psuchee* we obtain the adjective, *Psuchikos*; which occurs six times in the New Testament, is twice translated *sensual*, and four times *natural*, as follows:

“But the *natural* man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.” It is sown a *natural* body, it rises a spiritual body. If there is a *natural* body, there is also a spiritual ... but the spiritual is not first, but the *natural* (*psuchikos*) and afterward the spiritual.”

In perfect harmony with this last scripture we find in relation to the two Adams, the corresponding heads of the natural and spiritual planes: “The first man Adam was made a living *psukeen* (natural man); the last Adam a life (*zoe*) giving Spirit.” We have probably quoted sufficient to render clear the distinction between the two Spirit inspired words, let us now look at their force and bearing on the question of the atonement, which has been agitating our people lately.

It has been asserted that the life which Christ laid down for the world was not the *natural*, but that which he had with the Father; which—spiritual life—he laid down at his incarnation and took up at his resurrection; Wresting John 6:63. “The flesh profits nothing,” from its true position, the sacrificial death of Christ has been degraded, and the blood of the covenant counted an unholy [Greek *koinon*, common] thing.

The original Greek settles the question of the kind of life, clearly and unmistakably. While it is continually taught that in Christ we have *zoe*, even *zoe* everlasting, it nowhere says that he laid down his *zoe* for us. On the contrary it plainly and *invariably* states that the life he gave was the *psuchee* [natural, or blood life.] We will quote a few texts. “The son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his *life* (*psuchee*) a ransom for many.” Matt. 20:28, Mark 10:45. “The good Shepherd lays down his *psuchee* for the sheep.” John 10:11. This declaration is stronger when we notice that in the verse previous Christ says, “I came that they may have *zoe*,” &c. Following, he reiterates “I lay down my *psuchee* for the sheep. ... For this my Father loves me, because I lay down my *life* that I may receive (a) it again, no one forces (b) it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority (c) to lay it down, and I have authority to receive it again. This commandment I received from my Father.” Although Christ here speaks of receiving it again, it does not of necessity mean that when he rose from the dead he took again the blood life. Simply, he had authority, or an arrangement with the Father to live again. The nature of his resurrection life we learn from other scriptures. The passage in this respect is similar to John 12:25. “He that hates his *psuchee* in this world, shall keep *it* unto *zoe* eternal: when mortality shall be swallowed up by *zoe*.”

We have a strong contrast in the following. “We know that we have passed out of death into *zoe*, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother *abides in death* [During the enjoyment of the blood life (*psukee*), mankind are under the dominion of death.] ... In this we know love, that he laid down his *psuchee* for us; and we ought to lay down our lives (*psukas*) for the brethren.” “Greater love hath no one than this, that one lay down his *psuchee* for his friends.” No one is ever supposed to lay down the *zoe*.

What each of his lives (*psuchee* and *zoe*) do for us we have in Rom. 5:10. “For if being enemies, we were reconciled to God *through the death* of his Son, [the laying down of the blood life or *psuchee*] much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved [by the impartation of his spiritual nature, and the benefits that follow,] by his *zoe*. As to the origin of this higher life, and how it comes to us we have John 5:26, “As the Father has *zoe* in himself, so he gave also to the Son to have *zoe* in himself.” “For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting *zoe*” &c. By the arrangement above noted, Jesus our Lord has become “Author of *zoe*,” “Prince of *zoe*,” “Bread of *zoe*,” and mark it, “The resurrection and the *zoe*.” The *Resurrection* to all, the *Zoe* to believers. “Marvel not at this; for an hour is coming, in which *all* that are in the graves shall hear *his voice*, and shall come forth; they that did good, to the resurrection of life (*zoe*), and they that did evil, to the resurrection of judgment.”—*Am. Bible Union Version*. “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ (anointed,) the Son of God, and that believing ye may have *zoe* in his name.”

a.—Greek. Lambano. The original signification of the word is two-fold; one *to take*, the other *to receive*; (I) *to take, grasp, seize, to gain, win, &c.*; (II) *to have given one, receive, get, &c.*
b.—Greek, Aireo, *to take, grasp, seize, conquer, overpower, &c.* c.—Greek, Exonsia, *power, authority to do a thing, permission, resources, &c.*

W. I. M.

Remarks by the Editor. This is very satisfactory and we think should and will, end controversy as to what life Jesus gave for our ransom from death. Our natural life (*psuchee*) is forfeited. Our Lord became our substitute and gave his *psuchee* for ours and then *as a gift* offers believers his *Zoe* eternal.

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— November, 1879 —



Jeżeli zauważyłeś błąd w pisowni, powiadom nas poprzez zaznaczenie tego fragmentu tekstu i przyciśnięcie *Ctrl+Enter*.