

Seventh-day Adventist FUN-da-MENTALS 7

The Nature of People

WE ARE NOT FREAKS

What kind of animal are you? I am a human being, and you probably are too.

Human beings are:

- quite similar to God (*made in His image*)
- a complete person (*body and mind and spirit*)
- a being with an intelligent, conscious mind
- dependent on God for life and breath
- smaller than gorillas



AMAZING INVENTION

WE'RE ALL COUSINS

Every human being is related to all the others. The human race began with Adam and Eve and has continued on from them. Genesis 5 lists a bunch of fathers and sons that goes from Adam down to Noah. And Luke 3:23–38 lists all the generations from Adam to Jesus. So Adam is our great-great-great-something grandfather.



WE STARTED OUT OK

God made the first human being out of materials (“dust of the ground”), rather than just saying, “Let there be . . . a man.”

He made each person to be an individual—a unique being, one of a kind!

And He made a male and female version of the human being. **How exactly are they both “in the image” of God?** We don't know yet.



The human being is God's most impressive creation on earth. He not only made us with flexible bodies encased in skin, filled with precise organs and complicated systems that adjust for changes, but He also gave us a brain, the most sophisticated computer in the world. Every human being comes with one!

God gave us a face to give a sense of identity, and eyes that not only see but also show emotion.

He made us aware of ourselves and our surroundings. We can make observations and judgments. We laugh and cry and write poems and music. We plant gardens and solve math problems; at least, some of us do.

You know that men and women are different. God created them that way on purpose. Men and women were made to need each other.

God created human beings to have their own children. “Be fruitful and multiply,” He said. Have lots of kids!



SPIRIT AND SPIRITS

Some people think that when life goes out of a person at death, the “spirit” leaves the person and goes back to God. After all, doesn't the Bible talk about body, soul, and spirit?

Yes. When the apostle Paul talks about body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23), he means that (a) the SOUL is the instincts and emotions built into people, the SPIRIT is the intelligence and consciousness that allows God to communicate with them, and the BODY is the physical container that holds it all together.

When a person dies, the spark of life that God put into them goes out of them (see Luke 23:46). They're dead. That is all. No floating spirit; the dead person is “out of order” until Jesus returns to planet Earth.



AND A JOB TO MATCH

God created the perfect home for His new invention, the man and woman. “The Lord God planted a garden in Eden” (Genesis 2:8).

He gave the new people a job: “[He] took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it” (verse 15). Adam and Eve were not the ranch hands. They were the onsite managers, put in charge!

These are God's work orders: “You have made [people] to have dominion over [be in charge of] the works of Your hands; You have put all things under [their] feet” (Psalm 8:5). That does not mean we stomp all over everything and pollute the earth. We are careful with God's resources. Remember the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–29)? At the Second Coming, Jesus will ask us to explain how we took care of His world.

Here are our work hours: “Six days you shall labor and do all your work” (Exodus 20:9).

MADE FOR EACH OTHER



Right after Adam came to life, God said, “It is not good that man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). He made Eve as Adam's life partner and companion. He made them to be parents and grandparents. People were designed to enjoy each other and not be alone.

THE BIGGEST OOPS EVER

Human beings were made to live forever—they were designed to be immortal. And people are not robots. They can choose whether to live forever or disobey God and die.



Adam and Eve would die for only one reason: eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan, the first being to rebel against God, brought sin to the human race by tricking Adam and Eve into distrusting God. They ate the fruit and became mortal—they died.

Every child they had was mortal (will die), because every child had Adam and Eve's sin in them. That continues to this day. Every human being needs to be rescued from sin and mortality.

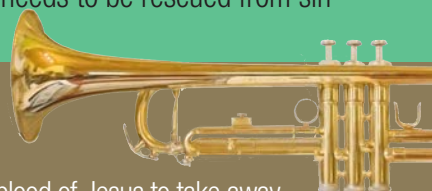
BACK TO THE FUTURE

Jesus became a human being and died without ever sinning. That solved the problem of our mortality, so we can be immortal again. When do we become immortal? “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” at Jesus' second coming to earth (1 Corinthians 15:54).

In that single moment, human beings who

accept the blood of Jesus to take away their sins will become like Adam and Eve before they sinned. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates” (Revelation 22:14).

After that, people will be immortal. Death will never happen again. They will live forever with God in His beautiful city in perfect happiness.



HOW GOD MADE PEOPLE

God put together the first man with the “dust of the earth” and then “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” which produced “a living being” (Genesis 2:7).

A person becomes a person only when God puts body and life together. He did not place a previously alive “spirit person” into the body!

The Old Testament word for “living being” is *nephesh* (whoa!). This Hebrew word refers to living beings of all kinds, including fish, insects, reptiles, mammals, and birds. God made them living beings by breathing life into them.

The New Testament word for a living being is *psuche*. Just like *nephesh*, this Greek word can mean a human being or any other living creature.

Sometimes the Bible uses these words for the whole person (a man or woman) and sometimes for part of a person (emotions, appetites, the heart, etc.). It does not mean that a person is two separate pieces (a body and a spirit) put together.