

The Understanding of Body and Soul in Matthew 10:28 espoused by Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Abstract

The body/soul contrast has been a hot topic of discussion. Matthew 10:28 is one of those biblical text that talks about body and soul, though not in an extensive manner. From the text, it seemed like Jesus understood that body and soul can be destroyed separately. Does this mean that body and soul are two separate and independent entities? The Seventh-day Adventists believe that there is no immortal and separate entity, called soul, living within the physical human body. It is more fitting to say that a human being is a living soul rather than to say that he has a soul. The purpose of this study is to bring harmony between Jesus' saying in Matthew 10:28 with the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventists regarding body and soul. A review on the word "body" and "soul" and also a review on the context were conducted to solve the problem of this study. In truth, Matthew chapter 10 is not a discourse on body and soul but rather a record of Jesus' mission charge to the twelve disciples. Thus, verse 28 should be evaluated from the lenses of mission. The study has shown that the audience of Jesus could be the ones who possess that wrong concept of body and soul, whereas Jesus did not contradict the Seventh-day Adventist belief that states the soul is not an immortal, separate entity living within the body. The result of the study has shown that the Seventh-day Adventist's belief regarding body and soul is valid. In this particular text, Jesus is using a common concept to point to the truth that God is more powerful than human oppositions.

Keywords: *Body, Soul, Mission, Fear, Power*

Introduction

Background of The Study

In the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, an account of Jesus sending out His disciples to proclaim the message to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (v.6) that "the kingdom of heaven has come near" (v.7) was recorded. Jesus further gave instructions on what they ought to do. Jesus further assured the disciples that the Spirit of God will be with them to help them speak to their arrestors. The difficult reality about proclaiming the message was that the disciples will be hated by everyone because of Jesus. Jesus' logic was that if people hated Him, people would hate His disciples too. Upon this background, Jesus gave the counsel to the disciples: "And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (v.28, NASB).

Though normally Scripture sees souls as inseparable from bodies, Pope Leo X paired verse 28 with John 12:25 ("life eternal") as a proof text for the immortality of the soul at

the Eighth Session of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17).¹ This issue has piqued the interest of the researcher. The researcher sees that Matthew 10:28 cannot be used as a proof text for the immortality of the soul nor does the text prove soul is separable from the body.

The Seventh-day Adventist belief² states that in the beginning, God created man from the dust of the ground. When God breathed the breath of life into Adam's nostrils, he became a living soul – a living creature – because of God's breath. We stop breathing and rest when we die. The Bible makes no mention of the soul being separate from the body. There seems to be an apparent contradiction between Jesus' statement in Matthew 10:28 and the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding the body and soul. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believe that the Bible does not mention that the soul can separate from the body. However, since Jesus seem to understand that body and soul can be destroyed separately, does this mean that the body and the soul are two separate and independent entities?

Methodology

This research will begin by exploring the Seventh-day Adventist Church's understanding on the body and the soul to get a foundation for the whole research. Then, this research will proceed to look at the context of Matthew 10:28. After that, the researcher will attempt to interpret Jesus' saying about body and soul in Matthew 10:28.

Literature Review

Review On The Grammar

Dr. Raoul Dederen, “one of the most-beloved professors at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan,”³ explained that Paul's description of the resurrection body can be found in the book of first Corinthians, in the fifteenth chapter, and from verse thirty-five down to verse fifty. He further said, “Four words are important here: flesh, body, soul, and spirit. In no case does Paul use any of these terms to refer to a part of a human being as distinguished from the rest. Rather, in each case Paul has various expressions of the whole person in view.”⁴ Dederen pointed

¹ Howard Clarke, *The Gospel of Matthew and Its Readers: A Historical Introduction to The First Gospel* (Bloomington, Indiana: INDIANA University Press, 2003), 137.

² Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Death, the State of the Dead, and Resurrection,” What Really Happens When We Die?, <https://www.adventist.org/death-and-resurrection/#meaning> (accessed March 30, 2022).

³ Adventist Review, “Raoul Dederen, 91, longtime Seminary professor and dean, passes to his rest,” Adventist Review, <https://adventistreview.org/news/raoul-dederen-passes-to-his-rest/> (accessed April 17, 2022).

⁴ Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology: Commentary Reference Series Volume 12* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 395.

out that Paul used these terms to draw attention to different aspects of the human life, and not to endorse separableness. In addition to that, he discussed:

As J.A.T. Robinson showed in his study of the concept of body in Paul's thinking, both "flesh" and "body" can refer to the whole human person, but there is a difference in emphasis. "Flesh" (Greek: *sarx*) emphasizes humans in contrast with God—humans in mortality and in worldliness. It shows human solidarity with earthly existence. It can be neutral, showing that humans live in the world, or can denote sinfulness as humans living for the world (Robinson 19–25). Herold Weiss (106) puts it well when he says that "flesh emphasizes the fact that men and women live in an ecological system in which sin and death are part of the life cycle."¹

According to Robinson, the term "body" (Greek: *soma*) stresses the human that may be developed and is akin to the word "personality" in English. He added, "While *sarx* represents man, in the solidarity of creation, in his distance from God, *soma* stands for man, in the solidarity of creation, as formed for God."²

Moving on to the second group of terms, regarding soul and spirit, Dederen continued to explain the following:

"Soul" is most often used simply for the whole human being in the sense of "person" or "human life." Yet it too has a distinctive emphasis. H. Weiss (106, 107) sums this up by saying that "soul" "designates the kind of life peculiar to Adam and all his descendants. Basically, it is a life that is fragile, capable of being extinguished by a small accident." "Soul" emphasizes human fragility and vulnerability more than sinfulness, as "flesh" often does. Finally, the word "spirit" has a distinctive meaning in Paul as well. It does not emphasize the immaterial, or nonphysical. Instead, it points to human life empowered by God. "Spirit" is unique to God and is made available to humans through Jesus Christ. In contrast with "flesh," it is life under the power of God rather than the power of sin and death. In contrast with "soul," it is life that participates in God's power rather than Adam's vulnerability.³

What is seen from the discussion presented by Dederen is that Paul's usages of flesh, body, soul, and spirit in the book of first Corinthians does not represent a part of the human that can be separated. Instead, it pointed to different aspect of the human life, while having the whole person in view at all times.

¹ Ibid, 395.

² Ibid, 395.

³ Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology: Commentary Reference Series Volume 12* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 395.

The word “soul” in the Old Testament is derived from *nephesh*, a Hebrew word that appears 755 times in the Bible. It is most commonly translated as “soul,” but it can also be translated in a variety of ways. The root of *nephesh* is *naphash*, a verb that appears only three times in the Old Testament (Ex. 23:12; 31:17; 2 Sam. 16:14), each time meaning “to revive” or “to refresh.” The verb appears to regress back to its basic meaning of breathing.¹

A definition for *nephesh* can be found in the Bible's account of man's creation (Gen. 2:7). According to the record, when God breathed life into the body He had created, the man “became a soul of life.” The “soul” did not exist previously, but it did so when Adam was created. Every time a child is born, a new soul enters the world. Each birth represents a new unit of life that is distinct and unique from others. The new unit will never be able to merge with another unit. It'll always be itself. There may be a vast amount of people who look like it, but none who are exactly the same. The Hebrew term *nephesh* seems to emphasize the idea of uniqueness of individuality.²

The Seventh-day Adventists further claimed, “It is therefore more accurate to say that a certain person is a soul than to say he has a soul.”³

If we then ask, "What exactly is man?" When try to answer it not in the old theological, but in the modern physiological way, we will see that for the Hebrew, man is a unity, and that that unity in a body is a complex of parts, receiving their life and activity from a breath-soul, which has no existence separate from the body.⁴

Review On The Context

Cousland understood that “An appreciation of Jesus’ ministry to the crowds will ... have the additional benefit of helping to characterize the crowds by using Jesus’ actions toward them as a sort of mirror.”⁵ So, what Cousland is pointing out is that the sayings and actions of Jesus do not necessarily reflect what He believes to be true. On the other hand, it could reflect the crowd’s belief and what they accept to be true. The researcher concurs with Cousland that knowing the crowd will definitely help to understand Bible passages.

Aside from the crowd, the researcher also sees the importance of knowing the literary context of Matthew 10:28. In his book, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction*, Hagner stated the following:

¹ Herbert E. Douglass, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 366.

² Ibid, 366-367.

³ Ibid, 367.

⁴ Ibid, 368.

⁵ J.R.C. Cousland, *The Crowds in The Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 116.

Matthew is the only Gospel that records Jesus' startling words that restrict his and his disciples' immediate ministry to Israel. When he sends out his disciples he tells them: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:5–6 [cf. 10:23]). Jesus himself responds to the entreaties of a Gentile woman, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24).¹

In another book, Hagner explained that the Church's mission is the same as Jesus', for the Church, too, proclaims the coming of God's kingdom. However, partaking in Jesus' mission demands accompanying him into rejection and hostility. As a result, Jesus prepares his disciples for the difficulty they will face. The disciples will be mistreated in the same manner as their Master, but they should not be afraid. Nothing is more important than the mission they had been entrusted.²

Regarding the literary context, R. T. France puts it well when he explained that Matthew 10:28 is part of the mission discourse which begins in 9:35 up to 11:1 starting with the dispatching of the disciples, who were also the primary audience for the first discourse, on a mission to spread Jesus' message throughout Galilee. From being recipients of his ministry, the disciples are now to become its agents, participating not only in the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven, but also in the works of mercy and power that the preceding chapters have shown to characterize the Messiah's authority. Jesus' reform movement takes its first strides toward becoming a structured group under which the radical new principles of the heavenly kingdom might begin to be played out, starting with the formal acceptance of the Twelve as his close entourage.³

The possibility of martyrdom for the cause of Jesus, already raised in v. 21, is now squarely faced. The body/soul contrast (see p. 399, n. 4), when used in relation to execution, presupposes that there is a true life which goes beyond mere physical existence, so that the real "self" is untouched by the death of the body alone. And that is all that human opponents can touch, whereas both body and "soul" are subject to God's power, and therefore also to his judgment. Under that judgment it is not only the body but the true life of the person which is liable to destruction in hell ... In this passage it is spoken of as a place of destruction, not of continuing punishment, a sense which fits the origin of the term in the rubbish dumps of the Hinnom valley, where Jerusalem's garbage was destroyed by incineration. On the basis of this text alone it would therefore be better to speak of true life (the "soul") not as eternal but as "potentially eternal," since it can be "destroyed" in hell;⁴

¹ Donald A. Hagner, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), 231.

² Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Volume 33A Matthew 1-13* (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1993), 650-651.

³ R. T. France, *The New International Commentary on The New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 364.

⁴ *Ibid*, 390-391.

Based on what R. T. France explained, the researcher thinks it is clear that Matthew 10:28 is connected to mission. Further, in mission, there will be oppositions. However, the disciples should not fear human oppositions because “The fear of human opposition rather than of God renders the disciple liable to eventual repudiation before God.”¹ Plus, the power of humans are not great in comparison to the power of God. According to R. T. France, humans can only kill, but not touch the “life”. However, both body and soul are subject to God’s judgement. That is why, in mission, the disciples should not fear humans who are lesser in terms of destructive power, but rather fear God who is way more powerful. Thus, the counsel of Jesus’ could also be interpreted this way: in mission, do not misplace the fear for God.

The researcher also found out that Howard Clarke concurs with R. T. France’s idea when he explained that “Chapter 10 is Jesus’ ‘Mission Charge’ to the twelve disciples.”² Without a doubt, the researcher sees that the context is about mission and thus Matthew 10:28 must be examined through the lenses of mission.

¹ Ibid, 391.

² Howard Clarke, *The Gospel of Matthew and Its Readers: A Historical Introduction to the First Gospel* (Bloomington, Indiana: INDIANA University Press, 2003), 134.

Result of Study

What Did We Learn From The Literary Context?

It is important to note that “Chapter 10 is Jesus’ ‘Mission Charge’ to the twelve disciples.”¹ That would mean that verse 28 is connected to mission. The researcher’s thought processes led him to consider a few things: (1) who was giving the mission, (2) to whom the mission was given, and (3) what comes next after receiving the mission.

Consideration number one is easily answered. From the narrative, it is clearly seen that Jesus is the one who gave the mission. The mission involves going to the lost sheep of Israel, proclaiming the message that the kingdom of heaven has come, and doing miracles such as healing, raising the dead, cleansing people off of leprosy, and exorcism (Matthew 10:6-8, NASB). The point here is that Jesus was the one who gave the mission. Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16), the bread of life (John 6:35), the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), the I AM (John 8:58) which alludes to Exodus 3:14, and Jesus is also one with the Father (John 10:30). In other words, Jesus is God. Thus, it can also be said that God was the one who gave the mission.

Consideration number two is also easily answered. It is clearly stated in Matthew 10:1-5 that Jesus called the twelve disciples and gave them the instruction to go out; Jesus gave to the disciples the mission. Therefore, in this particular chapter, the people who will do and engage with people in mission are the twelve disciples of Jesus.

Consideration number 3 is answered by the narrative as well. Aside from the work that the disciples are required to do, what comes next after receiving the mission are threats, risks, hazards, perils, and other appropriate or equivalent terms. In mission, some people will not be welcoming, and others will not listen (10:14), there will be people who will try to arrest the disciples (10:18-20), some will hate them (10:22), persecution is also to be expected (10:23) and death (10:28). Thus, the researcher has seen that the next things to expect after receiving the mission are, on the one hand, responsibilities and obligations, and on the other hand, dangers and risks. The researcher believes that Matthew 10:28 is leaning more towards the latter category. Interestingly, benefits and rewards were not extensively expounded in Matthew chapter ten.

Previously in Chapter two, Cousland explained that an appreciation of the ministry of Jesus will give us an additional benefit of understanding the crowds.² The researcher agrees with Cousland. In the first part of Matthew 10:28, where it says, “And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul,” the researcher does not think this is what Jesus held to be true. The researcher argues that another strong clue why this first part is not what Jesus believe to be true is because Jesus clearly said, “Do not”. In other words, this is not what Jesus wants the disciples to believe in, to hold to, or to embrace.

Were the disciples about to adopt this view or have they adopted it? The researcher believes this is where Cousland’s understanding comes in handy. The researcher further argues that this first part of Matthew 10:28 must have been what the disciples believed,

¹ Howard Clarke, *The Gospel of Matthew and Its Readers: A Historical Introduction to the First Gospel* (Bloomington, Indiana: INDIANA University Press, 2003), 134.

² J.R.C. Cousland, *The Crowds in The Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 116.

held to, or inclined to feel in their hearts. It is understandable because, previously, Jesus explained the perils that come along with accepting the mission. The researcher sees that it is natural to fear human oppositions, especially if they are so determined in opposing up to the point of killing. The researcher reasoned that fear would cause a person to stop and run away. Despite the apparent dangers, should the disciples stop doing mission and run away from it? The researcher believe that this is the argument that Jesus is trying to develop.

Jesus is trying to reason with the disciples that the person sending them to mission, which is God Himself, is stronger and has more power over any human opposition. And how does Jesus measure the power of God? He used the body and soul as an illustrative measurement to make a point: God, who is more powerful than anything in the world, is sending them to do mission and they should not abandon the work because in comparison with human opposition, God is more powerful.

The main focus of Matthew 10:28 should be God, the researcher argues, and not on the body and soul. The text is not even a discourse on the body and soul. However, in it, the researcher claims that we can see what is right and what is wrong about the belief of body and soul. If the first part is a wrong idea held by the crowds of Jesus, which are the disciples, the researcher reasoned that the second part must then be the right concept of body and soul.

What Did We Learn From The Literature Review?

As we have seen, Adventist Bible scholar, Dr. Raoul Dederen, explained on the usage of body and soul in the writings of Paul and he claimed that “In no case does Paul use any of these terms to refer to a part of a human being as distinguished from the rest. Rather, in each case Paul has various expressions of the whole person in view. These terms are used to point to different aspects of human existence.”¹ The researcher agrees with Dederen.

Dederen pointed out that even Paul, when writing about body and soul, exhibits the unity and oneness of the subject. In fact, the Seventh-day Adventists believe that it is more precise to say that a person is a soul rather than that he has a soul.²

Further inspection was done on the Greek terms for body and soul that was used in Matthew 10:28. The researcher discovered that for body and soul, the Greek words *soma* and *psyche* was used respectively. According to Englishman’s Concordance, there are seventy occurrences of the word *soma* in the New Testament, one hundred and forty-two occurrences if including its variations such as *somati*, *somaton*, *somatos*, etc.³ Further, the researcher has counted and found out that at least fourteen occurrences are from the

¹ Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology: Commentary Reference Series Volume 12* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 395.

² *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 367.

³ Englishman’s Concordance, “σῶμα,” Bible Hub, https://biblehub.com/greek/so_ma_4983.htm (accessed April 16, 2022).

book of Matthew. On the other hand, Englishman's Concordance presents that *psychen* appears forty-one times in the New Testament, one hundred and four if including variations,¹ with at least seventeen of those occurrences coming from the book of Matthew.

Below are the lists of where those terms appear in the book of Matthew (NASB): Body – 5:29, 5:30, 6:22, 6:23, 6:25, 10:28, 26:12, 26:26, 27:52, 27:58, and 27:59. Soul – 2:20, 6:25, 10:28, 10:39, 11:29, 12:18, 16:25, 16:26, 20:28, 22:37, and 26:38.

In the Gospel of Matthew, the word *soma* was used seven times in the nominative case. Only four occurrences were in the accusative case, one occurrence in the dative case, and twice in the genitive case. Each time Matthew used *soma* in connection with humans, it always seemed to refer to the material, physical and literal body of a human being regardless of the grammatical case.

In conjunction to that, the word *psychen* in the book of Matthew was used three times in the nominative case, nine times in the accusative case, four times in the dative case, and only once in the genitive case. Interestingly, the researcher found out that this word was more commonly translated, both in the King James Version and the New American Standard Bible, as “life” rather than “soul”.

For the sake of this study, the researcher replaced the word “soul” in 11:29, 12:18, 16:26, 22:37, and 26:38 with the word “life”. The researcher found out that, indeed, Matthew's usage of the word “soul” in 11:29 suggest the very being or human existence of the person – in short, life – and not a separate entity within the body. The researcher argues that 11:29 speaks of the rest that a person would receive *in his life* once he takes the yoke of Christ (emphasis added). The researcher further argues that this particular text does not give the idea that only a separate entity within the body will receive rest once he takes the yoke of Christ. Instead, it gives the idea that the person will wholistically experience rest, specifically in connection with the Sabbath, in his personal life.

The “soul” in 12:18 seems to fit the word “heart” better than “life”. The researcher discovered that “heart” is a valid translation because the word *psychais* in Hebrews 12:3 is translated as heart as well in the New American Standard Bible and not soul. In addition, the tone and context are fitting for the usage of heart in replacement of soul. Nevertheless, even with the usage of heart, life, or soul, the researcher sees the same basic idea: that soul in 12:18 is referring to the whole being and not a separate nor independent entity. The New International Version puts it well when it says, “In whom *I* delight” (NIV, emphasis added). The researcher realizes that “my soul” (KJV, NASB & NRSV) in 12:18 is simply equivalent to “I”, which the latter was used in the NIV translation.

In continuation, the researcher learned that “life” fits just fine into 16:26, 22:37, and 26:38. The researcher claims that 26:38 can also employ the word “heart” in replacement for “soul”, or simply “I”, because the basic meaning is preserved, the tone and context fits, and it does not cause any doctrinal clashes as far as the researcher is aware of. So, what must then be the meaning of body and soul in Matthew 10:28? The researcher is convinced that the term “body” in 10:28 is referring to the literal and physical human body while the “soul” could simply mean the very being, existence, or life of the person and not a separate astral entity within the physical body.

In addition to that, the researcher agrees with R. T. France that when the body/soul contrast is used in relation to martyrdom, it presupposes that there is a life beyond the

¹ Englishman's Concordance, “*ψυχήν*,” Bible Hub, https://biblehub.com/greek/psuche_n_5590.htm (accessed April 17, 2022).

death on earth. What R. T. France is pointing out is that the soul in Matthew 10:28 is not a separate entity within the physical body, but life itself that is, in a sense, untouchable by humans. In mission, human oppositions can only do as much as killing you, but they can never touch this life that goes beyond death on earth. Interestingly, this life that goes beyond death on earth is not immortal because Jesus clearly said in the second half of Matthew 10:28 that it can also be destroyed. With this fact in mind, the researcher further concurs with R. T. France that, “On the basis of this text alone it would therefore be better to speak of true life (the ‘soul’) not as eternal but as ‘potentially eternal,’ since it can be ‘destroyed’ in hell.”¹

Coming back to what Dederen pointed out regarding the flesh, body, soul and spirit, the researcher argues that if all Bible writers are inspired by the same God as mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:16, should not Paul’s understanding and Matthew’s understanding be congruent? It does not make sense for Matthew to present Jesus possessing a view that body and soul are independent and separate from each other while Paul demonstrates an understanding that body, soul, flesh and spirit are united. In addition to that, soul has no existence separate from the body.² Furthermore, as we have established the identity of the one giving the mission, shouldn’t it make more sense that Jesus knows body and soul are one because that is what He Himself inspired the Bible authors, especially Paul, to write?

The researcher further argues that the only reason why Matthew 10:28 would seem to present Jesus possessing an understanding that body and soul are separate is because of human’s own shortcomings and misinterpretation. After all, humans are limited and are not immune to making error. Even philosophers and non-biblical scholars attest to this realization:

The philosopher Colin McGinn has argued in a series of books and articles that all minds suffer from “cognitive closure” with respect to certain problems. Just as dogs or cats will never understand prime numbers, human brains must be closed off from some of the world’s wonders. McGinn suspects that the reason why philosophical conundrums such as the mind/body problem – how physical processes in our brain give rise to consciousness – prove to be intractable is that their true solutions are simply inaccessible to the human mind.³

With the present knowledge, the researcher sees that the apparent contradiction in the beginning is now void and the belief held by the Seventh-day Adventists regarding body and soul are valid and biblical.

¹ R. T. France, *The New International Commentary on The New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 390-391.

² *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 367.

³ Maarten Boudry, “Human intelligence: have we reached the limit of knowledge?,” *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/human-intelligence-have-we-reached-the-limit-of-knowledge-124819> (accessed April 7, 2022).

At first glance, Matthew 10:28 did seem to portray that Jesus understood that body and soul can be destroyed separately. However, upon closer inspection, this might not be the case.

As mentioned previously, the researcher argues that the first half of Matthew 10:28 is what the disciples believe and the second half of verse 28 is the belief held by Jesus which says that there is someone who can destroy both soul and body in hell. It would make sense if Jesus understood that body and soul are not separated, but unitedly one. The researcher further argues that when Jesus said, “destroy both soul and body” (NASB), it was emphasizing that body and soul are actually one. The fact that body and soul are not separated means destroying one will destroy the other all together because they are actually not independent nor separate entities.

As mentioned previously as well, the researcher argues that the first part of verse 28 must have been what the disciples accepted as true or as the norm, and because of this wrong understanding of body and soul, fear would be misplaced. Instead of fearing the one who can utterly and completely destroy humans in hell, fear is placed on humans who can kill on earth, but does not have the power to completely destroy.

Reflection

The researcher reasoned that all killing that is done by a human takes place on earth, regardless of time, place, or method. Destroying a person in hell, however, only brings to mind one person – God.

Taking into consideration what was previously discussed regarding the context, it is clear that when we respond to God’s calling to do mission, it is crucial to understand that responsibilities and perils follow through. However, even though there are possible dangers, people should not let the fear override the necessity to do mission. After all, Humans can only do as much as causing you to stop breathing – dead – but God can destroy you and make sure that you stay that way. Sure, humans can kill you, but Jesus can resurrect anyone that he chooses such as Lazarus (John 11:38-44). Therefore, the researcher would say that the SDA church would understand Matthew 10:28 like so: do not be afraid of those who kill you here on earth but have no power in destroying your possible eternal life in Jesus, but fear God who can destroy you completely and deny you the possibility of eternal life due to misplaced fear.

Limitations Realized

Upon reaching this point, the researcher sees that the absence of extensive study on resurrection and salvation are a limitation to this study. Without these two, the understanding of the SDA church on the topic of body and soul cannot be fully maximized and synthesized. The researcher sees a strong connection between the three groups of subjects. Sadly, that glimpse of a connection between the three could not be confirmed because the researcher failed to develop more on resurrection and salvation. Furthermore, due to time restrictions, the researcher was not able to evaluate all occurrences and usages of body and soul in the Old and New Testament. In conjunction to that, the word study conducted by the researcher was also limited in nature because the researcher has not mastered parsing the Biblical Greek language. Thus, an in-depth word study in the original language was not achieved in this research paper.

Recommendations For Further Improvements

The researcher recommends adding a study on both resurrection and salvation into future research whenever a study on body and soul is to be conducted. In addition to that, the study of the word Gehenna could also improve the research, especially pertaining Matthew 10:28, because the text suggests that the second person that Jesus advocated should be feared instead of human opposition has a connection with Gehenna. In what ways? That is yet to be included in this research. Lastly, the researcher recommends to further research in the theme of wholeness and unity. The researcher believes that it is a worthwhile direction of study because the Bible seem to have that theme embedded in several places. For example, in the very existence of God. God is three, yet one – not separated but whole and united. Man and woman are two different genders, yet when they get marry, they become one. There are various expressions for humans (flesh, body, soul, spirit) yet they are one. Perhaps a study on the theme of wholeness and unity could improve this research even further.

Conclusion

The researcher sees that Matthew 10:28 do not present a human being possessing a separable entity within it called a soul. This particular text is not part of a discourse on body and soul but rather a part of a mission charge by Jesus to the twelve disciples. Although Matthew 10:28 do not explicitly explain about body and soul, however, a hint of the wrong and correct understanding can be seen.

The researcher found out that Jesus' description in the first half of Matthew 10:28 does not necessarily reflect the true reality of a human being but rather it reflected what the disciples might believe to be true. The researcher learned that the second half of Matthew 10:28 must be Jesus' belief on the body and soul. The text does not prove that soul continues to live on after death. The fact that both body and soul can be destroyed points to mortality. That means, soul is not immortal nor is the body.

Jesus does not believe that the body and soul can be destroyed separately. As mentioned above, the disciples are the ones who might have had this view. Because of this wrong concept, the disciples misplaced their fear, which could lead them to abandon the mission all together. Jesus was trying to lead the disciples to the truth by utilizing a common concept. The sole idea in this text is to highlight that God is above human opposition in terms of power. Thus, since God is above humans, the disciples should fear Him more. And since God is the one giving the mission, the disciples should do mission despite human opposition.

The Seventh-day Adventist church's belief regarding body and soul is indeed valid when it says that body and soul are not separable entities. The researcher claims that the SDA church would understand Matthew 10:28 as so: In mission, do not be afraid of human opposition who can only do as much as killing you here on earth, but fear God who can completely destroy you in hell and make sure that you do not come back into life.

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