**Eternal Life**: is the most important life mentioned in the Bible, because this is the life that God has within Himself. This life has no beginning or end. It is exclusively the life of God. Creatures do not have this life, since they have a beginning.

**Everlasting life**: this is the life that God gives to all creatures, human and angelic. This life begins for angles at their creation in eternity past and continues into eternity future. For the elect angels this involves life in the new heavens and new earth, mentioned at the end of the book of Revelation. For the fallen angels and Satan this means life in the lake of fire. For believers this life is given at salvation and can never be removed, lost, taken back, or changed in any way. It is the life all believers live forever in the future with God. Unbelievers have everlasting life in the lake of fire with Satan and the fallen angels.

**Biological life**: this is the life possessed by organic plants and animals, controlled and reproduced by genetic reproduction. This is the physical life that is perpetuated by man and animals in their procreation. This life was first created by God and given to animals…

(Gen 1:20-25, “Then God said, ‘Let the waters abound with an innumerable amount of living creatures, but let birds fly over the earth on the surface of the expanse of the heavens.’ Then God [Holy Spirit] created out of nothing the great sea creatures and every living creature which abounds, so that the waters abounded according to their species and every bird of wing according to its species. And God saw that it was good. Then God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and become numerous and fill the waters in the waters, and let the birds become numerous on the earth.’ And it became evening; and it became morning; the fifth day. Then God said, ‘Let the earth cause to bring forth living creatures according to their species: large-domesticated animals and small animals and non-domesticated animals according to their species.’ And it was so. Then God made the wild animals of the earth according to their species and the domesticated animals according to their species and all the small animals of the ground according to their species. And God saw that it was good.” Note: this is not the original creation by the Lord Jesus Christ, but the restoration of the earth and our Lord’s creation by the Holy Spirit, after Satan ruined the creation of our Lord, as described in Gen 1:2 “But the earth became *a waste place and an emptiness*, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was radiating heat over the surface of the waters.” God doesn’t create ‘a waste place and an emptiness; Satan does.)

…and to man.

Gen 1:27“And God created the man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Gen 2:7 “Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground; and He breathed into his nostrils a breath of lives; and the man became a living being.”

Notice the plural phrase ‘breath of lives’. How many ‘lives’ were there? Physical/biological life, soul life, and spiritual life. (The explanation of soul life is next and then spiritual life.)

Obstetricians have noted that when the fetus exits the womb, the first thing it does is exhale a cry. It does not inhale the breath of life, but exhales what God has inhaled into it. The still born fetus does not exhale what God has not given it to exhale. Therefore, it appears that the still born fetus never has soul life. This raises the question, whether God gives soul life at conception. If He does, then He must take it away at some point in the case of the still born. However, since God never takes away any immaterial life He gives in the case of any other creature at any time for any reason, we must assume that God does not do so in the case of the still born baby. The historical precedence of Adam indicates that God did not give him immaterial life at conception, since there was no conception. The precedence is immaterial life given at birth (see Gen 2:7 cited above).

**Soul life**: this is the immaterial life that is given to all creatures, angelic, human, and animal. This life animates the physical body of all creatures. This is the life that leaves the body at death. This is the life that produces our thinking, reasoning power, judgment, decision making, etc. Combined with physical life, soul life is the life we know and live as unbelievers. It is also combined with spiritual life given to the believer at the moment of salvation. Once given by God this life continues forever in various states of existence (resurrection from the dead, temporary residence in Hades awaiting the last judgment, the eternal lake of fire, or heaven for believers).

**Human life**: this is the combination of biological life and soul life. It is created by God alone. Man cannot create this life. Since there is no direct statement in Scripture as to when human life begins, some argue that it begins at conception and others that it begins at physical birth. Physical death occurs when there is the separation of soul life from physical life. Soul life continues after physical death in some form or other with some type of ‘body’ to house this soul life. We know this from the following Scriptures (one example from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament):

1 Sam 28:7-15, “Then Saul said to his servants, ‘Seek for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.’ And his servants said to him, ‘Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor.’ Then Saul disguised himself by putting on other clothes, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night; and he said, ‘Conjure up for me, please, and bring up for me whom I shall name to you.’ But the woman said to him, ‘Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those who are mediums and spiritists from the land. Why are you then laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?’ Saul vowed to her by the Lord, saying, ‘As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.’ Then the woman said, ‘Whom shall I bring up for you?’ And he said, ‘Bring up Samuel for me.’ When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, ‘Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul.’ The king said to her, ‘Do not be afraid; but what do you see? And the woman said to Saul, ‘I see a divine being coming up out of the earth.’ He said to her, ‘What is his form?’ And she said, ‘An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped with a robe.’ And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and did homage. Then Samuel said to Saul, ‘Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?’ And Saul answered, ‘I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore, I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do.’”

Lk 16:20-24, “Now a certain poor man named Lazarus had been laid at his gate, being covered with sores, and longing to be fed from the things which were falling from the table of the rich man; yet even the dogs who kept coming were licking his sores. Now it came to pass that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s Place of Honor. Then the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, after lifting up his eyes, being in Torments, he sees Abraham from faraway and Lazarus near his breasts. And crying out he said, ‘Father Abraham, show mercy to me, and send Lazarus, in order that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am being tormented in this flame.’”

Both these passages indicate that the dead have some sort of body, which is capable of thought, feeling, movement, pain (in the case of the unbeliever), etc.

**Spiritual life**: this is the immaterial life given to all believers at the moment of salvation. It is a permanent and eternal gift of God, which cannot be destroyed, ruined, corrupted, lost, or taken back by God. This life combines with soul life to reproduce the original ‘lives’ given to Adam before his sin. This life was destroyed by Adam the moment he sinned and went from becoming a trichotomous being (body, soul and spirit) to a dichotomous being (body and soul). The human soul is saved from eternal death in the lake of fire by being combined with the human spirit at the moment of faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. The everlasting life of the believer in the new heavens and new earth (the eternal state) is the life of the physical life of the resurrection body plus the soul life and spiritual life, which are forever combined in the believer. Once spiritual life and soul life are joined together at salvation, they can never by separated. This is further evidence for the doctrine of eternal security of the believer. What God has permanently joined together, the believer cannot separate by sinfulness after salvation.

Now let’s deal with the Hebrew word YATSAR, first found in Gen 2:7 in the phrase **-** this is the WA conversive plus the third masculine singular qal imperfect from the verb YATSAR, which means “to form or fashion” and is used for the activity of a potter making things out of a lump of clay. God took the atomic material of the earth (the ground or clay) and added water, as a potter would do to form or fashion the human body of Adam. Notice that God does not create the material part of man out of nothing as He did man’s immaterial essence or soul, but God uses pre-existing materials (the atoms) which he already made out of nothing. With this we have the sacred name JHWH and the masculine plural noun ‘ELOHIM. The phrase is translated *“Then the Lord God formed.”* This same verb is used in the following passages, which are used by some theologians to argue that life begins at conception:

Jer 1:5, “Before I *formed you in the womb* I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Isa 44:2, “Thus says the Lord who made you and *formed you from the womb*, who will help you,”

Isa 44:24, “Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the one who *formed you from the womb*,

“I, the Lord, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone,”

Isa 49:5, “And now says the Lord, who *formed Me from the womb* to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him.”

The prepositional phrase “in the womb” simply locates the place where the physical body is developed during pregnancy. The proposition MIN in the phrase ‘from the womb’ “expresses the idea of *separation*, hence out of, from.”**[[1]](#footnote-1)** In other words it expresses what occurs from the time of the beginning of the development of the person in the womb or what God creates in the development of that person after separation from the womb. In either case there is no direct statement or proof here that soul life begins at conception.

In conclusion, here is what we know for certain from the Scriptures:

1. Biological life begins at conception and continues until physical death, whether inside the womb in the case of the still born child or outside the womb in the case of the rest of us.
2. Soul life begins when God imputes it to the fetus, creating birth.
3. Spiritual life begins at the moment we believe in Christ.
4. Everlasting life begins at salvation concurrent with spiritual life.

1. Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (p. 577). Oxford: Clarendon Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)