

MASTERS OR SLAVES?

INTRO

- In this unit we will look at what it means to have a soul and consciousness, and how this differs from AI we consider how our beliefs about the soul and consciousness impacts what people think could be developed in the future.
- We will begin to think about what might be lost in our humanness by having AI learn our skills.

BORN WITH A SOUL

- Hebrew word for soul (*nepesh*) occurs over 780 times in the Old Testament.
- Heb. means living being, conscious body – the real me rather than outward appearance. Our mind is part of the soul.
- Christians traditionally believed in substance dualism - the soul is the conscious part of us and is metaphysical.

- Dualism is challenged by scientific naturalism – Monism - soul is physical, a pattern emerging from the firing of our neurons. Some Christians subscribe to similar views but less reductionist.
- On this basis some believe it's possible to develop super-intelligence.

HARD TO EXPLAIN

- No one agrees what intelligence is let alone consciousness!
- Popular historian, Yuval Harari and others challenge this view and suggest we don't have a soul or free will.
- Relevant for how some think about AI and it's future as well as its impact on humans.
- Transhumanists' goal to see humans augmented by AI.
- If we give up on free will then easy to assign moral agency to a self-drive vehicle or even a dating app.

THE SOUL IS MORAL

- In unit 2 we learnt that God is a moral God with freedom to love and act (Isa. 46:9-10)
- We too, mirror that freedom to choose and we have a moral soul, even if our decision making is corrupted by sin (Rm. 2:14-16).
- Christ's saving work frees us from bondage to sin, and enables us to become more like him – mirroring God's image in us.

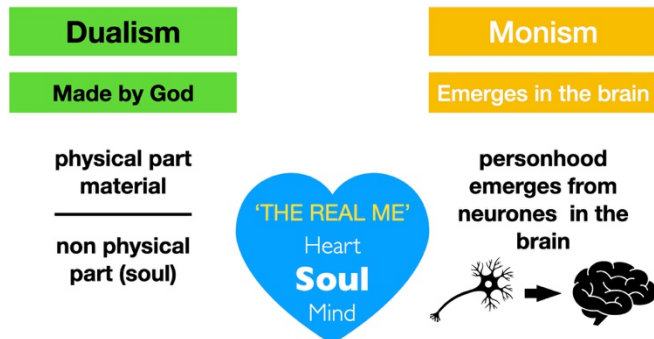
- When His image in us is diminished it is an affront to God.
- Christians of all people must take seriously the impact of AI on His image in us.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- In the next few units we will apply what we have learnt to look at 6 aspects of God's image that can be impacted by our engagement with AI.
- Start with AI learning our skills in this study.

AI BEATS HUMANS!

- AI used in the workplace to replace human skills because its seen as more efficient.
- E.g. Medical imaging, interviewing, criminal justice for bail setting, credit scoring.
- In some cases AI is more efficient but at what cost – what is lost?
- How far should we go in letting computers make decisions for us?
- Danger of dumbing down decision making skills and ultimately – *moral responsibility*.
- Training data can be biased – leading to *injustice* and there is not always a right of appeal – AI not transparent in how decisions reached (a black box).
- Can AI interviewing systems really do our job? They can change our view of relationships – a topic for next time.
- Some want to see RoboJudges because they will be more efficient and fairer than humans!



SOUL MIRRORS GOD'S IMAGE

- We must not allow God's image in us to be degraded.

Next Study – Love or deep fake
Now do the bible study for unit 3.

Read Genesis 2:7, Jeremiah 38:16, Ezekiel 18:4, 1 Cor. 15:45

Where does our soul come from?

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Read Genesis 35:18, Psalm 104:29,

What do these passages teach us about the difference between the soul and the body?

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Read Matthew 10:28, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Luke 16:19-31

How do we know that the soul is immortal?

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What is the consequence of monism – a belief that our ‘soul’ just emerges from the firing of our neurones?

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Read Isaiah 46:9-10

How does this passage show us that God is free to choose?

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Read Romans 2:14-16

Does everyone have a moral soul and free choice, even unbelievers?

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Where else in scripture, do we learn that we have free will – freedom to choose?

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Reflection

What are the consequences for us being moral beings?

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Should we let machines make decisions for us?

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Are there decisions that might we not want a machine make for us and why?

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How would you define intelligence?

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From a Christian perspective, why might it not be possible to develop super intelligence?

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The main purpose of this study is to explore what the bible teaches us about the soul and its nature versus the ideas from scientific naturalism that sees the soul as physical (our mind). The consequences of a soul being moral and free to choose, in allowing AI systems to make decisions, is discussed.

Read Genesis 2:7, Jeremiah 38:16, Ezekiel 18:4, 1 Cor. 15:45

Where does our soul come from?

- God, who breathed life into our body, that came from dust – the material world.

Read Genesis 35:18, Psalm 104:29,

What do these passages teach us about the difference between the soul and the body?

- The body is material whilst the soul isn't.

Read Matthew 10:28, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Luke 16:19-31

How do we know that the soul is immortal?

- Although the Hebrew word (*nepesh*) translated soul does not convey the sense that it is immortal, these and other scriptures show us that whilst the body dies and perishes, our soul lives on. [Note: the NT Greek word (*psyche*) translated 'soul' is used in a similar way to the Hebrew word].

What is the consequence of monism – a belief that our 'soul' just emerges from the firing of our neurones?

- It will die when the body dies. Morality becomes a social construct not an external absolute where our soul whilst corrupted by sin, mirrors God's moral being.

Read Isaiah 46:9-10

How does this passage show us that God is free to choose?

- There is no other God, He ALONE orders the affairs of man and the universe, bringing about what He desires (from this we get the doctrine of sovereignty).
- It follows that He must have moral freedom, but because He is Holy, He always does what is good and right (from where we get the attributes of the goodness and righteousness of God).

- God is also love but true love is only possible where there is freedom to choose to love.

Read Romans 2:14-16

Does everyone have a moral soul and free choice, even unbelievers?

- Gentiles who, unlike the Jews, didn't have God's law (an understanding of right and wrong behaviour), still know in their hearts right and wrong, even though their conscience isn't perfect.

Where else in scripture, do we learn that we have free will – freedom to choose?

- Gen. 3 – the fall resulted from freedom to choose.

Reflection

What are the consequences for us being moral beings?

- We are accountable to God, even unbelievers (see Rm. 2:14-16) so we cannot delegate that accountability to another ('it's her fault, she made me do it') nor to a machine (the computer made the decision not me).

Should we let machines make decisions for us?

- In answering the next two questions remind the group of the key questions from Unit 2 – what is gained, what is lost, what does it do for us and what does it do to us? Why this (the computer or machine) and not that (a human making the decision)?
- One of the prime reasons companies and individuals use AI for decision making is speed, efficiency, saving labour costs.

Are there decisions that might we not want a machine make for us and why?

- The idea is to get the group to think about what aspects of humanness we lose when we let a machine make decisions. These might be a sense of fairness and justice if a biased AI system impacts a person's life (there are examples in the book, like bail or parole decisions).

How would you define intelligence?

- There is probably no right answer here but it is good to get the group to think about it and note differences of opinion.

From a Christian perspective, why might it not be possible to develop super intelligence?

- The soul and consciousness is metaphysical and no scientist nor philosopher has yet been able to define it, nor consciousness. We would need to codify this in order to build a computer capable of emulating true human intelligence. AI systems that perform better than people are only simple pattern matching machines.