

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## ***The Make-up of "Man"—An Excursus, Pt 2*** **Selected Passages**

**Keywords:** Spiritual Gifts, Tongues, Anthropology, Spirit, Soul, Body

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:** In this second part of his excursus Pastor Henry addresses the idea of how is man constituted. Is he a two-part or three-part being. In the end he shows that the preponderance of evidence is that man is body and spirit/soul. But more importantly, that the bible does not divide up man, rather it, and God, looks at man wholistically and deals with man wholistically.

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. Last week I wanted to help you understand theologically the nature in which the bible describes us.
  - 1. We read in the bible many terms related to the human being there is often a lack of clarity on what they mean and what conclusions we might come to. As I said last week, what makes us "human?"
  - 2. I want to make three quick points about last week and then take you to the next step in this little excursus. I know some of you were wondering how you could ever remember all that I took you through.
  - 3. In reality all I really want you to try to remember are these three points.
    - a. First, we must not think of man as being made up of parts. Rather we should see man as having different aspects. We can examine and consider the various aspects of humanity but then we must step back and consider the whole.
      - (1) So when David speaks of his soul panting after God, he is not merely referencing his soul but himself in totality
      - (2) The soul simply is that aspect of him that is the center of his will, emotions and intellect.
      - (3) But it is never considered as separate from the body.
    - b. Second, the terms used, such as flesh or soul, carry quite a bit of subtle meaning in them and it is good to remember that as you read or study the bible.

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- (1) The term for flesh in the Old Testament often carries with it the idea inherent weakness because we are creatures and so it is often used in contrast to the power of God.
  - (2) Whereas in the New Testament the same English word is often used for that selfish, man-centered aspect of man that is sinful and it shows a reliance upon self rather than upon God.
- c. Third, there is never a time where it is proper to see the body or the material aspect of a person as being something less than the spiritual aspect.
- (1) That is Greek dualism and is utterly contrary to the bible.
  - (2) In the same way you cannot merely dismiss man as a physical being with no spiritual dimension.
- B. Today I want to work through another facet closely related to what we learned last week. The question is simply this, is a person made up of a body and soul or a body, soul and spirit? The fancy terms for this are dichotomy or trichotomy.

## II. Aspects of Man.

- A. There is a popular thought that man is made up of three parts or aspects.
1. The first is obvious, the body. There is usually seen nothing different between a human and a animal. The only difference is the complexity of the physical body. The second is the soul. This is usually seen as the seat of the emotion and mind. And the third is the spirit and this is the part that relates to the spiritual realm, however it might be defined.
  2. On the other side if the issue is the view that is also the oldest view within Christianity, that man is made up of two aspects, the material and the immaterial.
    - a. This position, **which is mine**, holds that when you look at the many passages mentioning either the soul or spirit you find them to be essentially equivalent.
    - b. And example, Luke 1:46-47, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Note the parallelism that makes them synonymous.
  3. Here we need to remember how the bible uses its terms.

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- a. *Nephesh* speaks to the seat of our emotions and will and usually is "soul". But remember that the term "mind" and "heart" also do that. It is what makes us human.
- b. *Ruah* simply speaks to the immaterial aspect of a human. It is often used in relation to us toward God.
- c. In the New Testament *psuche* and *pneuma* are their equivalent. The only extra is that the "soul" *psuche* is shown to be able to exist apart from the body.

## B. Dichotomy arguments.

1. The terms "soul" and "spirit" are often interchangeable when referring to the immaterial aspect of man. Essentially they seem to speak in a different way of the same thing.
2. Three basic arguments:
  - a. First, the term "soul" seems to be used with making a distinction between man's immaterial aspect versus the material or natural aspect of himself or his realm of existence.
  - b. Second, the terms "spirit" seems to be used to refer to the immaterial aspect of man in relation to the immaterial or spiritual realm.
    - (1) Either word can refer to the whole immaterial part of man.
      - (a) Matthew 10.28.
      - (b) 1 Corinthians 7.34.
    - (2) Either word may designate the disembodied immaterial part of man.
      - (a) Acts 7.59.

Acts 7:59 And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

- (b) Revelation 6.9.

Revelation 6:9 And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

- (3) In 1 Corinthians 15.44 [turn to it] we have a unique rendering, "it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual

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body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."

- (a) "Natural body" is literally "soulish body."
- (b) This current "soulish" body is uniquely designed to operate here in our current world. It is not fit for the world to come. The spiritual body is uniquely designed to operate in the world to come.

c. And third, the scriptures seem to teach that man has two basic elements—the soul/spirit and the body.

(1) Genesis 2.7.

NAS Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

(2) 2 Corinthians 5.1-10.

d. **However** these elements do not authorize us to break man into parts that operate distinct from one another. They interact together in a seamless fashion that truly defies distinction.

e. "Scripture indicates that there is an intermediate state involving personal conscious existence between death and resurrection. This concept of an intermediate state is not inconsistent with the doctrine of resurrection. For the intermediate (i.e. immaterial or disembodied) state is clearly incomplete or abnormal (2 Cor. 5:2-4). In the coming resurrection (1 Cor. 15) the person will receive a new or perfected body. The full range of the biblical data can best be accommodated by the view which we will term 'conditional unity.' According to this view, the normal state of man is as a materialized unitary being" (Erickson, 2:536-37).

C. Passages commonly used to support a trichotomy position. I will give you the passage and then my reasons why the passage does not teach this position.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5.23.

- a. There is an assumption that the separate enumeration of spirit, soul, and body demand that they be taken as separate entities.
- b. Arguments against:

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- (1) In reality all Paul is doing is piling up these terms to emphasize his desire that the church be fully sanctified/made holy unto the Lord.
  - (2) "So important is this sanctification that Paul repeats the prayer in another form, this time praying that the whole man may be preserved entire and without blame. There are some who see the reference to spirit, soul, and body an indication that man is a threefold being. . . . But this is probably to press the language beyond what is warranted. Paul is not at this point giving a description of the nature of the human constitution, but engaging in prayer. He uses this graphic form by way of insisting that the whole man, and not some part only, is involved. . . . In different ways Paul emphasizes that sanctification applies to the whole of man, and is not to be restricted to any segment" (L. Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NIGNT, pp. 180-81).
  - (3) To put it another way, this is nothing more than a figure of speech involving parallelisms to build and enrich a statement. By saying what Paul says, he has given the reader a real sense of how much he means by the adverb "entirely."
2. Hebrews 4:12.
- a. Here again is the assumption that the word "division" referred to is "division between" the "soul" and the "spirit." The result is the they must be treated as separate entities.
  - b. Arguments against:
    - (1) There is no "between" in the Greek text.
    - (2) Note that this passage is filled with couplets (living and active; soul and spirit; joints and marrow; thoughts and intentions). The other couplets are usually not treated in the same manner as soul and spirit.
    - (3) When the passage is looked at as a whole the point the author is making seems to be that the Word of God is so powerful that it "separates" that which is inseparable.

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- (4) The emphasis is not upon the separation but on the instrument, the Word. In other words, God's Word is able to cut to the innermost part of a person.
- (5) Nothing can search out a man and define a person like the bible. It is both ruthless and gracious at the same time.

### 3. Additional observations.

- a. The terms spirit and soul often seem to be used interchangeably. . . . The basic components of man are designated body and soul in Matthew 6:25 (psuche, "life") and 10:28, but body and spirit in Ecclesiastes 12:7 and 1 Corinthians 5:3, 5. Death is described as giving up the soul (Gen. 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21; Acts 15:26 [psuchas, "lives"]) and as giving up the spirit (Ps.31:5; Luke 23:46). At times the word soul is used in such a way as to be synonymous with one's self or life: "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life [psuchan]?" (Matt. 16:26). There are references to being troubled in spirit (Gen. 41:8; John 13:21) and to being troubled of soul (Ps. 42:6; John 12:27)" (Erickson, Theology, pp.521-22).
- b. Too much emphasis is made on select texts to push for the trichotomist's position. Consider the following passages as examples of trying to argue that separate descriptions/enumerations equal different parts of man:

- (1) Mark 12.30.

Mark 12:30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

This would require a quadracotomy.

- (2) Matthew 22.37.

Matthew 22:37 And He said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

Creates a different trichotomy.

### III. Conclusion.

- A. ". . . Paul consistently infers that human nature is dichotomous. The person is a complex unity consisting of 'spirit' and 'body' (Rom. 8:10; 1Cor. 5:3, Col. 2:5), the 'inner being' and the 'body' (Rom. 7:22-23; cf. 8:23), and the inner and outer person (Rom. 2:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:16). Two principal Pauline doctrines, namely, the

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doctrine of redemption and the intermediate state, establish dichotomy. According to Romans 8:23, salvation in this life is applied to the inner or immaterial self, whereas in the life to come it will be applied to the outer self or the body. Philippians 1:22-24 attests Paul's longing to leave this earthly body (sarx) to be with Christ in the disembodied state" (Lewis and Demarest, Integrative Theology, pg. 138).

- B. It is important to train ourselves to not think of man in the sense of 'parts.' Rather, it is more biblical to see man from different 'aspects.' These aspects do not create separations within man, they maintain the wholeness of man and they help us see how these aspects are all interrelated.
1. An example of this is seen in the realm of apologetics. It is not uncommon for a person who affirms the total depravity of man as an absolute truth, yet believe that through rationalistic arguments or evidences that a person can be persuaded to seek Christ. The way this is done is by making an unbiblical distinction between the heart (totally depraved) and the mind—nothing more than a distinction between the soul and spirit.
  2. Another major way this view affects the current state of Christianity is in the attempt to integrate psychological philosophies into the Church. It is not surprising that the trichotomy position came into popularity at the rise of psychology.
- C. What is my point behind all of this? 1 Corinthians 14:14.
1. It is often taken out all by itself and then the argument is made that the value of tongues is that it builds up your spirit even though the mind is unfruitful.
  2. Never, in any other passage is the term for "unfruitful" used as a neutral or positive thing. It is always bad.
  3. But a simple solid theology of how the make-up of man is to be viewed let's the reader already be suspicious of seeing verse 14 as a positive point.
  4. But by simply looking at the context of verse 14 we find it confirmed that this is not Paul's point.
    - a. Verse 13 begins the point—pray for interpretation.
    - b. Verse 14 is why he says what he says in 13.
    - c. Verse 15 is the conclusion. Paul wants the totality of the person to be fruitful.

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## Small Group Questions

- What challenges are raised in this sermon for you personally?
- Can you think of other ways that we can make an inappropriate distinction between the mind and soul or spirit and soul like was pointed out regarding psychology is for the mind and emotions or that we can pre-evangelize the mind while the spirit or soul remains dead in sin?