

The Whole Counsel of God
Study 10

BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

***“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely:
and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete,
without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

(1 Thessalonians 5:23)

In this study, we are following up on our previous study of the created constitution of man. We saw that Gen 2.7 presents man as formed of dust from the ground (i.e., his physical body) into which God breathed the breath of life with the result that man became a living soul. The whole human being is thus presented with three reference points commonly known as body, spirit and soul. Genesis 2 only shows us how man was set up and puts the focus on the ways in which man is related to the ground, to God and to other living souls. This creation account does not open up to us what the body, soul and spirit are in man's existence and what they mean in his experience. This we will look at in the present study.

A. THE KEY BIBLICAL TERMS FOR THE HUMAN CONSTITUTION

1Thessalonians 5.23, which we have quoted above, presents the total view of the human being through three labels: spirit, soul and body. The order in which the three are viewed is different from Gen 2.7. The account of the creation of man begins from the bottom, the absolute bottom in the dust of the ground. 1Thessalonians 5.23 begins with what is given from above, the spirit and moves down to the body.

The creational passage represents the perspective that governs the OT. In the scriptures before Christ, man is always viewed as a creature of the ground who stands apart from the divine nature. Within this view, the prophetic vision pointed out the chronic failure of man to live for God and to be established in life, and through this weakness and failure, the vision of salvation opened up in which God will give his Spirit to all flesh (Joel 2.28). By this gift of the Spirit of God mankind would be established in holiness and true life. The church of the NT was born in the fulfillment of this prophetic vision at Pentecost. The believer in Christ lives in the Spirit and the Spirit is in him. His identity is defined from above, by God's relationship with him, and in his created constitution this is given in his spirit. The logic of the order of spirit, soul and body is the order of life presented in Gen 2.7. Man was given the spirit of life, and this made him a living soul and made the dead dust become living flesh. By the gift of the Spirit, this order of life from God becomes the order of our identity. In our study we will follow this order.

As we explore how the scriptures present the human spirit, soul and body, we will discover that each is viewed from two perspectives. The first we might call the ontological (i.e., having to do with the being of things) perspective. This views the objective fact of the existence and nature of the spirit, soul and body. The second can be called the psychological perspective. In this view we see the subjective state involved in the spirit, soul and body. Here we are made to look at how spirit, soul and body are experienced in our life.

1. Spirit

In the OT two Hebrew terms are used for the human spirit. In Gen 2.7, the word *nishmah* is used, which means breath. The more common word in the OT is *ruach*. The basic meaning of this word is air in motion, and it refers to breath, wind or spirit. In the NT the Greek word *pneuma* is used for spirit. This word too has the basic meaning of air in motion, and is used for spirit. Translations vary in the words used to render these terms depending on the context, sometimes using the word breath and other times the word spirit. This is, no doubt, due to the fact that in our language the word spirit has a narrower sense than the biblical terms. The Bible does not make a clear cut difference between the life in all living things, i.e.,

human beings and animals, and the higher life that sets human beings off from animals. For our study, we will simply use the word *spirit*.

a. The existence of spirit in us

Spirit is in all living beings or souls. It is in animals (Gen 7.15; Ps 104.29; Eccl 3.21) and is held in common by mankind and animals (Gen 7.15). All human beings have it (Ish 42.5; Job 27.3).

The creation of man in Gen 2.7 shows that spirit is from God in contrast to the dust out of which the physical body is formed. The OT is consistent in the view that spirit is from God and in God's hand (Job 12.10; Ish 42.5).

Human beings have spirit in a different way than animals. In Gen 1.24 and 2.19, we are told that God made animals simply from the ground. This does not mean that animals do not have spirit, as other scriptures make clear. Psalm 104.29-30 shows us how animals receive spirit. Animals die when God takes away their spirit (v 29). They come to life when God sends forth his Spirit (v 30). This is the creative Spirit or breath of the LORD's mouth by which all the host of heaven was created (Ps 33.6). This Spirit of God hovered over the formless and void earth in Gen 1.2. He is the power of God pervading the universe by which the word of God was put into effect. When God decreed that the waters team with marine life (Gen 1.20) and that the earth bring forth living creatures (v 24), it is understood within the setting of Gen 1.2 that the Spirit who was imminent within creation was making them alive. In contrast to the creation of animals, God imparted spirit directly from himself to man (Gen 2.7).

The difference between the spirit of animals and of human beings is seen in what happens at death. In Eccl 3.20-21 the wise man ponders what happens at death to man and animals. What happens to the dust, the physical side of living beings on earth, can be seen under the sun (the perspective of Ecclesiastes, v 20). The sage also knows that both man and beast have spirit, that invisible side that is experienced and the effects of which can be observed. So, he asks, "Who knows that the breath (spirit) of man ascends upward and the breath (spirit) of the beast descends downward to the earth?" By scientific observation, the question cannot be answered with certainty. At the close of his reflections he comes through to an answer. He says of the moment of death, "...then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Eccl 12.7). Here he transcends the philosophical view of examining what can be seen under the sun. He now has the vantage point of man's relationship with God who will bring man into judgment for all things (11.9) and who is his creator to be remembered and lived by (12.1).

In Eccl 12.7 we see the reversal of Gen 2.7, and this stands to reason. Man's death is the undoing of his creation. As the spirit was directly given to man from God, so it returns to God when the dust returns to the earth as it was before it was taken up to form the body of man. Animals are not brought into this view. They are left as mere creatures of the dust with the thought that their spirit "descends downward to the earth" (Eccl 3.21). This perspective agrees with the view presented in Genesis 1 and 2 that animals were simply made out of the ground.

As revelation develops, the view of people surviving beyond death as spirits becomes clearer. The vision is clear and undisputed in the NT. The saints in heaven are "the spirits of the righteous made perfect" (Heb 12.23). Those who were disobedient in the days of Noah are "the spirits in prison" (1Pt 2.19), and the believers who have died received the gospel in their lifetime, "... that though they are judged in the flesh as men (i.e., they died), they may live in the spirit according to...God" (1Pt 4.6). Jesus who came from heaven and was appointed as judge of all made it abundantly clear with the full authority of his divine person that the human being survives death in this world.

The reason why human beings survive the event of dying while animals do not is not a matter of having or not having spirit. It is a matter of the way God gave spirit to the creature. In the case of man, God gave spirit in a direct and intimate way, and this answers to the fact that God made man in his own image. Man has spirit in a way that answers to the characteristics of God's nature as Spirit, and one of these characteristics is that man's spirit will not cease to exist. Animals, as we inferred from Ps 104.29-30, only have spirit by the action of the Spirit who pervades the universe with his creative power. It is tempting to

say that the difference between the spirit of animals and mankind is only one of degree. But, we must restrain ourselves. The fact that man is the image of God who is to rule over the animals and the fact that death does not terminate his spirit's existence is so substantial that it suggests that his spirit is different in kind from that of animals.

The picture of God breathing into man's nostrils the breath or spirit of life in Gen 2.7 might suggest to our minds the idea that the spirit in man is not a creation like the physical things of the world but an infusion from the divine being. If this were the case, the spirit in man would be divine, a particle of the divine being. Then man would have immortality within himself, and the divine nature within him would be trapped in a physical body. This set of notions is utterly unbiblical, and this way of thinking comes from pagan thought in which the divine and the creaturely natures are confused. To read infusion of the divine nature into Gen 2.7 is a case of the Bible presenting a picture or scene and the mind with its unbiblical assumptions filling in the picture. This is the way heresies are developed, and a study in doctrine is to guard against heresies and to discipline the mind to think in terms of the whole revelation of God given in all of scripture.

What we have gathered about the spirits of animals speaks against the idea that spirit in a creature is divine. Animals have spirit and all that the Bible suggests about the life of animals points to the fact that the spirit life in flesh is not divine. We also have the witness of the order of creatures that are higher than mankind. We saw in our study of the doctrine of angels that angels are spirits (and not flesh) and that they were created. They are not particles of divine substance or nature. Zechariah 12.1 gives us the positive statement of revelation: "*Thus* declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him." The spirit of man within man was formed by God just as in Gen 2.7 the body was formed (the same Hebrew word is used) of the dust. Man is a creature through and through. There is nothing in him that is uncreated. This is a foundational conviction of the whole Bible.

We should also add an insight from the revelation of God. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that God has a substance in a way that is analogous to matter, like a highly rarified matter, that can be infused. Such a view of God is part of the same pagan outlook that sees the divine in the human. God is Spirit, but the Bible does not disclose to us what Spirit consists of. It only presents to us the dynamic nature of spirit the effects of which we experience. Spirit is real and is in contrast to matter, and this means that in spirit we are dealing with a reality that cannot be conceived of as a rarified matter. So, all materialistic conceptions about God's act of breathing into man the spirit of life must be gotten rid of.

Now that we have established that the human spirit is a creation, we can take another look at God breathing into man the spirit of life. The Bible is not speculative or metaphysical (like the Greek mind was). Rather, it focuses on the dynamic realities of existence and the relationships in which things have their place and function. The fact that spirit came directly from God is to be understood in contrast to the dust from the ground. Life is in God, and the power of life come from him. This power of life is not in matter. Whether it be human or animal life, the Bible is consistent that life comes from God (Job 12.10; Ac 17.25) instead of physical matter. Life in us has its seat and organ of operation in the flesh. When God imparts spirit, he gives by his creative power a participation in life. This is not an infusion of substance but a creative giving of the vital state of being that is eternally and inherently only in God. That God gave this intimately and directly to man in Gen 2.7 answers to the fact that God turned within himself to make man in his image in Gen 1.26. When we think of God making man in his image we do not think of the infusion of a divine substance but of the formation of a being with the characteristics of God derived directly from God and imparted to man.

b. The experience of spirit in us

So far we have focused narrowly on the existence of spirit in man. Our spirit is not simply an ontological fact. It is also an experiential or psychological reality.

Spirit in animals gives to animals the kind of life that they have—animal life. In human beings, life is experienced at a higher or fuller level, and we must see the full extent of human life in the life of breath and living soul of Gen 2.7. We are not just to see the spirit of life in Adam in terms of the physical life and movement seen in his body. The spirit of life brought about in him his full life as the image of God.

In the Bible, the human experience of spirit is presented in terms of the mental life of human beings. Job 32.8 and Prov 20.27 highlight the function of spirit in us in our consciousness. In Job 32 Elihu observed that the older men, men of long years of experience, failed to arrive at wisdom, and undertakes to share his insights with them. He begins his speech as follows:

I am young in years and you are old; therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think. I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom. But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding. The abundant *in years* may not be wise, nor may elders understand justice.

His point is that it is not years but spirit (*ruach*) in man and the breath (*nishmah*, as in Gen 2.7) of the Almighty that gives understanding. In effect he is saying that God has given to man a spirit, and through this God gives to man understanding, so a young man may have wisdom where those who are old and simply speak from years of experience fail to understand. The wisdom that is given to man through his spirit is a wisdom that does not come out of his experience. It comes as the wisdom from God, given to man in that created faculty by which he has the connection of life with God.

Proverbs 20.27 gives another insight into the function of the spirit within us. It says, "The spirit (*nishmah*) of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the innermost parts of his being." The apostle Paul takes up this function of spirit in 1Cor 2.11. He writes, "...for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God." In our modern terms, we might call this function of the spirit self-consciousness, but this term does not express fully what Prov 20.27 is saying. The spirit is not the lamp of man making man self-conscious. Rather, it is the lamp of the LORD. The spirit is given by God and functions to make man participate in the light that God shines in on the interior life. In his spirit, man has that active and vital component from God that gives him a light from God within him. In this inner experience of spirit, man participates in God's work who declares, "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds" (Jer 17.10; on this theme see Jer 11.20; 20.12; Prov 17.3; Ps 139.1,23; 1Sam 16.7; 1Chr 28.9; Rev 2.22). God examines the heart to judge man, but he has created man with a spirit so that man will consciously participate in this in his own inner life. The call to self-examination in light of God's judgment of us is given in Lam 3.40 and 2Cor 13.5.

The apostle Paul brings in this function of the human spirit into his exposition of the gospel in Romans 1 and 2. All sinners know, contrary to their own delight in those who do evil, the righteous ordinance or decree of God that those who practice sin, the very deeds they practice, are worthy of death. The sinner must go on sinning in full self-consciousness of this divine judgment (Rom 1.32). The searching lamp of the LORD in Prov 20.27 is presented as the work of the law written in the hearts of Gentiles, and their conscious bears witness to this as well as their thoughts accusing and defending them (Rom 2.14-15). This human activity within will finally be met with the fact announced in the gospel, that God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ (Rom 2.16).

Paul points out, in 1Cor 2.10-11, an interesting feature of this activity of the spirit within us. Our spirit's searching within to know all within us answers to the activity of the Spirit in the Godhead. Here we see an aspect of what it means for man to be made in the image of God and according to his likeness.

The spirit within us gives to us a conscious participation in that transcendence over ourselves that belongs to God. This is seen in that we can look down on ourselves and search out the hidden inner thought life that God alone can fully see and judge. Paul was aware of his own capacity to search himself and of his limitation in this. In 1Cor 4.4, he declares that in light of the fact that God will examine him he has examined himself and is conscious of nothing against himself. But, he also knows his limitation. He is not the final judge. God will judge him, and though Paul was not conscious of a charge against him he could not acquit himself. We must participate in the self-examination before the God who examines us, but we cannot carry out that examination fully and conclusively.

The sense of human transcendence and participation in God's perspective as well as the creaturely limitations imposed on us is brought out beautifully in Eccl 3.11. It says that God set eternity in the heart of people. This means that we can, in our minds, transcend time. We are conscious of past, present and future and search out the first causes of things and their final outcome or end. We are not locked in the moment. In this transcendence over time, we participate in God's position who works all things from beginning to end. But, here we realize our limitation: God put eternity in our hearts in such a way that we know that there is a beginning and an end but in such a way that we cannot know what God has done from beginning to the end. This forces us to accept life in the present as our lot (vv 12-14), and God has worked it so that we should fear him (v 14). We have a consciousness of transcendence over time only to make us aware that we are not God so that we will fear him.

c. The Spirit of God and the human spirit

We have seen that in his spirit man receives from God a participation in what belongs to God and comes from God: life, understanding and wisdom, the searching of ourselves to know and evaluate ourselves in the light of God and eternity in the heart. The way our human spirit connects with what is of God is taken up in Paul's teaching on the believer's experience of the Spirit of God. By the Holy Spirit, we are made the children of God. The Spirit sent by God into our hearts cries within us, "Abba Father" (Gal 4.6). This cry of the Spirit of God is the cry of our own spirit in Rom 8.14-16. The Spirit of God leads us as the sons of God, and he is a spirit of adoption in us by which we cry, "Abba Father." As Paul says, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (v 16). In the act of worship and response to God as our Father, the Spirit joins our spirit to him.

Paul gives us a closer look at the work of the Spirit in relation to our spirit in 1Cor 14.14-16. The subject is the exercise of spiritual gifts, given by the Spirit (1Cor 12.4,7). When a person spoke with tongues by the Spirit, his spirit prayed (v 14) and gave thanks (v 16) but his mind was unfruitful, i.e., did not work to render what was expressed in the human spirit into terms that others can understand and join in the prayer or thanksgiving. In the church Paul preferred speech that was understood by all. But, he never contemplated speech that only engaged the mind and not the spirit. He said, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also" (v 15). The prophets spoke with the mind engaged to communicate the message from the Spirit in intelligible terms. But, for them too the exercise originated and moved out from the Spirit's operation on their spirit (v 32).

What Paul shows us about the role of the human spirit in the exercise of worship and speech by the Holy Spirit builds on what we saw from the OT. Before Pentecost, the Spirit was only with people, but after the outpouring of the Spirit the Spirit is in the disciples of Christ (Jn 14.17). The gift of the Spirit brought about a great difference. Now we do not simply have created spirit which makes us alive. We have within us the Spirit of God and in him the full personal presence of God. This means that in the indwelling Spirit we have the very eternal life of God in us, and this life springs up within us (Jn 4.13-14; 7.37-38). The Spirit from within leads us (Rom 8.14) and gives us his gifts by which we can speak by the Spirit (1Cor 12-14). In this work, the Spirit works in a manner that is congruent with our created constitution. He can work within us as the Spirit of God for we have the created capacity for this in our created spirit.

We have so far looked at the way God connects with us through our spirit. This is only one side of the truth. The spirit is our own spirit, and in the OT it is identified with the thoughts, moods and dispositions that come over us and control us, whether good or bad (Num 5.14; 14.24; Deut 34.9; 1Kings 21.5; 2Kings 19.7; Ps 77.3; Prov 17.27; Eccl 7.8; Ish 57.15; Ezk 11.5; 20.32; Dan 5.20; Rom 8.15; 2Tim 1.7). In these cases, the spirit still functions in its role of being that which acts on us to determine our life, but now we learn that it can act for good or evil. Paul makes it clear in 2Cor 7.1 that the Christian's spirit can be involved with what is unholy and wrong. He says, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Paul is concluding his call for the believers not to be involved with unbelievers in that which is incompatible with our spiritual life (2Cor 6.14-18). He has participation in idolatry in view principally, but with idolatry came the other prevailing vice of sexual immorality. Involvement in idolatry is defilement of spirit, for it engages our spirit by which we are open to the realm of God and spirits. Sexual immorality was defilement in flesh.

The fact that what is of our spirit has a governing force over our behaviour does not leave us without responsibility. Proverbs 16.32 points out that to rule our spirit (in this case the spirit of anger that controls our behaviour) is better than to capture a city. The way a person's spirit acts as a force to govern his behaviour is acknowledged in this proverb, but that we can have the strength to rule our own spirit is also suggested. Paul takes up this idea in 1Cor 14.32. The prophets were moved in their own spirits, and the immature ones thought that they had to speak when moved. Paul is calling them to control themselves in this, and this is based on the fact that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Paul taught the prophets the will of God on the subject of the order to be observed in the church meetings, and the prophets were to be governed by this truth rather than solely by the experience of having something revealed to them.

We can observe a unity in all that we have uncovered in the Bible about the human spirit. In creation, through the granting of spirit, man became alive. The spirit gave man a share in what God has—life. The life in man is more than animal life. It takes in all that it means for man to be in the image of God. By imparting spirit, God gave to man the capability to know divinely given wisdom. Man's spirit, however, is not a part of God. It is a creation, and can act upon man in good or sinful ways. Through Christ, the Spirit is given to live within us. In his indwelling and work within us, he works through our created constitution. The fact that we have a spirit provides the link by which the Spirit can take over within us and work through us. The Spirit indwells and the Spirit-filled believer has in him that which is divine and more than human, but this does not compromise his human constitution. The Spirit works on his spirit, but he does not suspend or override it. The Spirit's work is true to our created humanity and raises it to its highest potential.

2. Soul

The Hebrew word for soul is *nephesh*. The root idea of this word is to breathe, and this idea relates this word to the words for spirit in the OT, *ruach* and *nishmah*. The word for soul in the Greek of the NT is *psuche*. The verb form, *psucho*, means to breathe or blow. This idea of breath connects the word *psuche* to the NT word for spirit, *pneuma*. The word *psuche* is the true equivalent of the Hebrew term *nephesh*. The linguistic connection between the words for soul and spirit points to the interrelatedness of the soul and the spirit in the phenomenon of life which was seen in the ancient world in the breath of living creatures.

We see the way the soul answers to the spirit in Gen 2.7. The spirit or breath of life is the dynamic reality that makes man alive. The effect of this life force is that man is a living soul or being. The relationship between the breath of life and the living soul is that between the life that I have been given that makes me live and the individual, living person that I am. The spirit and the soul are clearly to be distinguished, but they are not to be separated. Without spirit, man would not be or have a soul. The soul cannot be separated from the spirit. At the same time, we cannot conceive of a person's spirit without the person, i.e., the soul. Without the soul, the individual self, there would be no spirit of the person.

In the Bible, the word soul is used in three basic ways: 1) in the sense of a person, an individual, 2) for the life that an individual being has and 3) for the desires, passions and feelings of the person that make up the experience of living. The first two usages concern the ontological perspective on the soul and the last the psychological reality. The soul is an objective reality in being our personal self and life and a subjective reality in our personal experience of life.

a. The soul as the individual or person

Animals are on occasion called living souls (Gen 1.20,21,24). In Rev 8.9 the living creatures of the sea are said to have souls.

The word soul is commonly used for human beings in the sense that we would use the word person. The person who comes to the tabernacle to make an offering is called a soul (Lev 1.2; 2.1; 4.2; 5.1,2; 7.20). When people are enumerated, they are counted as souls (Ex 1.5; 12.4; Jer 52.28-29); we would say persons. The NT word *psuche* is used with the sense of person in Ac 2.41,43; 3.23; 7.14; 27.37; Rom 2.9; 1Pt 3.20.

A dead person represented in his corpse is also called a soul (Lev 19.28; 21.1,11; Num 5.2; 6.6,11; 9.6,7,10). The word soul here is used in the same way we use the word person to identify someone who has died.

The use of the word soul for the person sets the idea of the soul off radically from the spirit. In the Bible, a person living on earth is not called a spirit. The human being on earth has a spirit but is not a spirit.

b. Soul as individual life

The word for soul is also used in the sense of the life that an individual being has. It is used for the life of an animal in Lev 24.18 and in the same way of a human being in Ex 21.23 and Deut 19.21. For further examples of this use of the word, see Ex 30.12; Jdg 12.3; 1Kings 19.3; 2Kings 1.13; Ps 49.8,15. This use of the word for soul is found in the NT in Mt 2.20; Mk 3.4; Ac 20.10 and Ac 27.10.

Leviticus 17.11 gives this sense of the word for soul a profound theological significance. It says, "For the life (soul) of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life (soul) that makes atonement." The life in the blood is not the life as it is in the breath or spirit of life. The word life in the expression, "the breath of life," is the plural term, *hayyim* (Gen 2.7). As a plural noun, it refers to life not as an individual life but as the life that makes the living alive. The life as soul (*nephesh*) is life as the individual life of the animal or the human being. Jesus used this idea of life given in sacrifice when he spoke of his act of giving his life for us. In Mk 10.45 he said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." The Greek word translated life here is *psuche*, the soul. On other occasions when Jesus speaks of his act of self-sacrifice, he uses this word as well (Jn 10.11,15,17; 13.37-38; 15.13; see also 1Jn 3.16). Jesus is taking up the language of Lev 11.17: the life that is given for the ransom, or the atonement, is the life as the soul. We must give the word soul its full sense. It has the both the sense of Jesus' own person (himself) and of his life, the life that he had as a person.

c. The soul and personal desire, passion and emotions

Many OT references to the soul identify it with personal desire, passion and loathing. The references are far too many to cover in this study. We will only give a few indications. The word *nephesh* is used with the meaning of appetite (Deut 23.24; Ps 78.18), hunger (Prov 10.3; 16.26) or desire, i.e., what one wants to have happen (Ex 15.9; Esk 16.27; Ps 27.12; 41.3; Prov 13.2; 19.2). The word *nephesh* is also used for the subject of desire, i.e., the desire of the soul whether for good or evil (Deut 12.20; 14.26; 1Sam 2.16; Jer 2.24; 2Sam 3.21; Prov 21.10; Job 23.13). The passion of love for one's beloved is the love of the soul (SS 1.7; 3.1-4; Gen 34.3; Jer 12.7). The longing for God (Ps 42.1; 62.1; 63.1), his law (Ps 119.20), his salvation (Ps 119.81) and his courts (Ps 84.3) is also the longing of the soul. The soul also hates (2Sam 5.8; Ish 1.14; Ps 11.5) and abhors (Lev 26.11,15,30,43) and loathes (Num 21.5).

The soul also experiences emotional states of joy (Ps 86.4) and experiences pleasantness, sweetness and delight (Prov 2.10; 16.23; 29.17). The soul can also experience bitterness (Job 27.2; 1Sam 1.10; Judg 18.25) and sorrow (Jer 13.17).

The OT does not know of an abstract soul life. The individual's life is experienced in the desires, longings, and passions that the person has. When a person is denied the desires of life and loses the experience of vital life, the soul needs restoration. We see this in the case of Naomi. She refused to be called Naomi (pleasant) and insisted on being called Mara (bitter) because of the way the LORD afflicted her in the losses inflicted on her (Ruth 1.19-21). When Ruth bore a son to raise up the seed of the deceased, the people gave her the blessing that the son would be a restorer of life or soul to her (Ruth 4.15). All that Naomi had lost, the full portion of life, would be restored to her, and this fullness of life in which desires are rekindled and the passion to life is revived and satisfied is the restoration of the soul (see also Lam 1.11,16 and Prov 25.13).

We find the personal subjective experience of the soul in the NT as well. Souls can be made to be evil against others (Acts 14.2), be troubled by unsettling teaching (Ac 15.24) or left in suspense and indecision

(Jn 10.24). The soul can be strengthened to stand firm (Ac 14.22) or faint (Heb 12.3). The fainthearted in 1Thess 5.14 are called in the Greek, “little souled”. The soul can experience joy (Lk 12.19) or sorrow (Mt 14.34; Lk 2.35; Jn 12.27). The soul seeks rest, and Jesus offers the way to find rest for our souls (Matt 11.29).

The three ways that the soul is viewed in the scriptures combine to form a rich understanding of the soul. The soul is our ego, our individual being. It is not a self, a personal identity, as an abstraction. It is a living self and is the life as we possess it as our own. This life is experienced in the desires, longings, passions, loves, in the strong feelings against things and in the whole range of emotions. The idea of a life without the pulsating desires is not desired in the OT. Such a state, brought on by crushing loss, calls for a restoration of life, of soul.

d. The soul and the spirit

It has been said that the spirit is man related to God and the soul is man related to himself. Our study shows how inadequate this way of putting the matter is. The truth in this is that the soul is the individual life, the living self. But, the Bible does not see the soul as relating to self. The soul of the biblical saint with its personal desires longs for God and spiritual things and it longs for people and good material things. Our study on the function of the spirit suggests that it is the spirit by which we search ourselves and relate to ourselves. The soul is the living self relating to what is outside of the self.

We have already seen on an ontological level that the soul and the spirit are inseparable. They are also joined on a psychological level. In Job 7.11 we see the soul and spirit joined together in bitterness: “I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.” We see them in parallel in Ish 26.8-9:

Indeed, *while following* the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of *our* souls. At night my soul longs for You, indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; for when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Both the soul and the spirit are oriented toward God. The soul desires and longs and the spirit seeks. The parallel between the spirit and soul is again seen in Mary’s praise in Luke 11.46-47: “My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” Both soul and spirit are involved in the worship and joy. Paul calls for the engagement of both spirit and soul in Phil 1.27: “... standing firm in one spirit, with one mind (lit., soul) striving together for the faith of the gospel.” The Bible does not envision a soul-less stand in our spirit. Our position in our spirit must be joined with what we are in our soul, our personal striving.

We have seen how the spirit and soul are connected in life. They are also connected in death. We have already seen that death is seen as the departing of the spirit. The Bible also sees it as the departing of the soul. In Eccl 12.7 and Ps 146.4 we see that at death the spirit departs from the body. In Gen 35.18 it is the soul that departs. A dead child is brought to life by having the soul return to him (1Kings 17.21). In Heb 12.23 the departed saints are called the spirits of the righteous. In Rev 6.9, the martyrs in heaven are seen as souls.

3. Body

The Bible uses three terms for the physical side of our being: dust, flesh and body.

a. Man as dust

The first term the Bible uses for man as a physical being is dust. This perspective is set in Gen 1.26 in the name Adam which we have seen in an earlier study points to the ground from which man was made. This is followed up by Gen 2.7 where we are told that man was formed of the dust from the *adamah* or ground.

God closed his pronouncement on Adam for sinning by saying to him, “By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3.19). Notice that God says that Adam is dust, rather than simply saying he was taken from the dust. His coming from the ground and return to it defined what he is in his existence as he moved from dust to dust: he is dust. As we noticed earlier, the point of Gen 2.7 is that the dust, the chemistry of our body, does not have the power of life in it. Cut off from the tree of life, Adam is reduced to what he is apart from that which he received directly from God—life. So, he is dust. He does not have available to him that which will maintain him in life. Paul takes up the characterization of man as dust in 1Cor 15.47-49. This body of dust is in dishonour and weakness (v 43).

The term *dust* to describe man is first of all ontological—it refers to the stuff we are made of and presses the point that life is not inherent in our nature. The spirit of life and the living soul have their seat in the body of dust. Since the dust in itself has no life, the being of man is volatile. Psalm 103.14 points to the psychological side of this. The Psalmist recalls what God knows us to be: “For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust.” This fact underlies God’s compassion for us in forgiving us our sins (vv 12-13). Here we see a connection made between our frame as dust (with no power of life) and our moral weakness which God forgives in his compassion.

b. Flesh

The other term to describe man in his physical existence is flesh, *basar* in Hebrew and *sarx* in Greek. While the designation of dust focuses the mind on the lifeless material from which man was made, the word flesh looks at man’s material nature in its living state. The flesh has the breath or spirit (*ruach*) of life in it (Gen 6.17) and has its soul (Gen 9.4). Without spirit and soul, there would be no flesh. Man is flesh along with all animals (Gen 6.13,17,19).

The word flesh is used in the sense of the body in the OT (Num 8.7; 2Kings 4.34; Ps 16.9; Eccl 2.3). Paul uses it in this sense in 1Cor 6.16. This word is also used to point to the nature of living human beings (Gen 6.3; Ps 56.4; Ish 31.3; 40.6; Jer 17.5). In the OT the word flesh does not have the sense of sinful nature as it has acquired in Paul’s letters. The OT term only focuses on man’s weak and mortal nature in contrast to God. In the NT the word flesh is also used for man’s physical nature without any focus on his sinful nature. When John says that the Word became flesh, he using the word flesh in its OT sense of human nature in contrast to the spirit nature of God. In Jn 6.63 Jesus points out this difference between spirit and flesh: the flesh profits nothing, but the Spirit gives life. Paul uses the word flesh as the physical mode of existence without any reference to the sinful nature in Gal 2.20 and 2Cor 10.3. The Christian must live his life in the flesh by faith and walk in the flesh, i.e., his body with its weak nature. The fact that man is flesh and so is utterly weak suits him to be related to God who is powerful and life giving.

In Paul’s letters we have a significant development of the idea of the flesh beyond what we find in the OT. Here the flesh is presented as the sinful human nature that sets its desires against the Spirit and against which the Spirit sets his desires (Gal 5.17). The clash between the Spirit of God in us and the flesh is presented in Galatians 5 and Romans 7 and 8. To understand this development, we will have to look at the doctrine of sin. For now we will make two observations. The first is that the opposition is not between the human spirit as a higher principle of life and the flesh as a lower and sinful one. In Paul’s teaching, the opposition is between the Spirit of God who indwells us and leads us and the flesh. This is not a clash between two sides of the human being but between God and human nature as it seeks to control behaviour by its desires. The second observation is that God never intended that man be governed by his human nature as it is part of the physical world. Man was to let God be God who determines what is good and evil. Man was to act in obedience to God and enjoy the physical creation. He was not to determine his action by his physical nature and its desires as they were stimulated by the world around him. When the flesh, the human nature, was given the position of deciding on what was good and determining the course of action, human nature became the drive to sin.

c. The body

The idea of the body is introduced in Gen 2.7 in the formation of man out of the dust, which presents to the mind's eye the form of the human body. However, the focus is not on the body with its members but on the material from which the body is made. This sets the focus of the entire OT, which is not on the form of the body or on the body as a set of members for action but the frail nature of man.

The Hebrew word for body is *gewayah*. It is used for 1) the living human body (Gen 47.18; Neh 9.37), 2) the body in which an angelic being appears (Ezk 1.11,23; Dan 10.6) and 3) a carcass (Judge 14.8-9) or a corpse (1Sam 31.10,12; Ps 110.6; Nah 3.3). This word is not a term of any doctrinal significance in the OT. The doctrinally significant terms in the OT are dust and flesh which we have already looked at.

It is in the NT that the body is given doctrinal significance. The resurrection of Jesus gave the body a central place in the doctrine of salvation. In Christ, the body of the believer is claimed for resurrection. The Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead indwells the believer and gives to him the life in Christ, which is resurrection life and so lays claim to the body.

In the doctrine of the NT, the body is the organ in which we are to live for God. It is not simply seen as flesh, the weak nature in contrast to the nature of God, but as the organism with its member in which we are to act and carry out the will of God (Rom 6.11). Our body is a member of Christ (1Cor 6.15) and the temple of the Spirit in which we are to glorify God (1Cor 6.19-20). We are to live in the body in view of the fact that "...we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2Cor 5.10). The body as the organ of our action thus has eternal significance.

In the OT the spiritual significance of our body as the organ of action was not brought into focus. There the vision was of the human nature that separated man off from God. This vision showed man in his distance from God and in his weakness and failure. In this view, the prophetic vision of the gift of the Spirit to make man alive and holy was set. When the Spirit was given through Christ, the body as the organ for action was seen in its great and eternal significance.

We can see the difference between the OT and NT views of the body in the different visions of resurrection. In the OT vision of the resurrection of the dead, the dead are seen as those who sleep in the dust of the ground to be awakened (Dan 12.2). This is true to the OT focus on man as dust, and flesh of the dust. In the NT teaching, there is the real continuity between our present mortal bodies and the resurrection state (Rom 6.11). What we become through the deeds carried out in the body will be manifested in our resurrection bodies.

The Bible points out a real contrast or dichotomy between dust and flesh (i.e., the physical nature of the body) and spirit. This contrast has been taken to divide man's being into two orientations: the spirit is oriented to God and the body to the world. There is a measure of truth in this. Through the spirit we are living and are open to God who is Spirit, and through the body as flesh we are part of the physical world. But, we must not stop with this insight. In the Bible the whole being of man is to be oriented to God. We see this set in Gen 2.7. It is not the case that only the spirit of man came from God. God created the earth from which he took the dust, and he formed man from the ground. So, the body is set in an immediate relationship with God. Also, the spirit was breathed into the body of dust to be life lived through the body. The body does not have a chemical life of its own, according to the doctrine of creation.

The fact that in creation man as a whole in body, soul and spirit is related to God is seen as in the experience of the saints in the Bible. Psalm 84.2 testifies to this. The Psalmist says, "My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God." His longing for God was the longing of soul and flesh, which is the OT word for the body. He did not want to be in the presence of God in his soul while wanting to be sunk in the world with his body. His whole being wanted to be in the presence of God.

Job gave vivid expression to the involvement of human nature as flesh in the longing for God:

Oh that my words were written!

Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
That with an iron stylus and lead
They were engraved in the rock forever!
As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.
Even after my skin is destroyed,
Yet from my flesh I shall see God;
Whom I myself shall behold,
And whom my eyes will see and not another.
My heart faints within me!
(Job 19.23-27)

Job's faith involved his whole being. In spirit he transcended what he saw with his eyes in his suffering. He longed for God with all the passion of the soul. He was the opposite of the stoic who disciplined himself in apathy, the passionless state that warded off all longing and suffering of the soul. He was also the opposite of the Buddhist who strives to extinguish the soul with its desires. He is also different from that Christian who wants to die to escape the body with its turmoil and suffering. Job's longing for God was a longing of his whole being. He wanted to see God from his flesh and with his eyes.

The apostle Paul works out this orientation of our whole being in the body toward God in Romans. The believer's baptismal commitment is to present himself to God as alive from the dead and the members of his body as instruments (literal translation, weapons) of righteousness to God (Rom 6.13). Because of sin in the body, this involves the Christian in a deep struggle, but he is to wrestle through to walking in his body according to the Spirit (Rom 8.1-13). The Spirit indwells the believer as the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead and this is the assurance that God will give life to the mortal body of the believer (8.11). The Spirit of God within and the believer groans for the redemption of the body (8.23). This view of the body as claimed by the Spirit for redemption and life leads to the call to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God as our spiritual service of worship (Rom 12.1).

B. VIEWING THE WHOLE HUMAN BEING

Genesis 2.7 and 1Thess 5.23 view the human being as a whole at the beginning in creation and in the whole Christian experience through to the end "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." These two scriptures testify to the view throughout the Bible: man is viewed as a whole. They also point out that man is not just one thing, a one dimensional being. The two scriptures before us would suggest that man is three dimensional. But, before we commit to such a view, we must weigh the whole testimony of scripture.

1. Viewing man from two sides

In scripture the usual way of viewing man as a whole is to see the two sides of his being. Sometimes he is seen as spirit and the physical side: spirit and dust (Eccl 12.7), spirit and flesh (Gen 6.17; Matt 26.41; 1Cor 5.3,5; 7.1) or spirit and body (1Cor 7.34; Jas 2.26). Other times man is viewed as soul and flesh (Gen 6.19; 9.4; Lev 17.11; Ps 16.9-10; 84.4; Ish 10.18; 1Pt 2.11) or soul and body (Matt 6.25; 10.28).

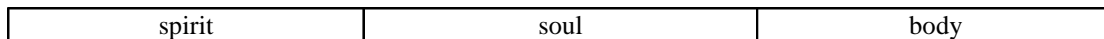
Earlier we noticed that the spirit of life and the living soul are interrelated in the OT. Both represent the life of man, but from two different ends—as given and as the controlling power or as possessed and lived out by the individual. In keeping with this, at the point of death, both spirit and soul leave the body.

Now we can proceed to raise the question whether the biblical view of man is that he is trichotomy (consisting of three different components) or a dichotomy (consisting of two components). The overall view of scripture lends support to the latter. Gen 2.7 and Eccl 12.7 make it clear that in his creation and in the process of being taken apart, man consists of spirit and dust. But, the biblical view is not so simplistic. As a result of the union of spirit and dust, a third entity came about which is distinct from spirit and dust—

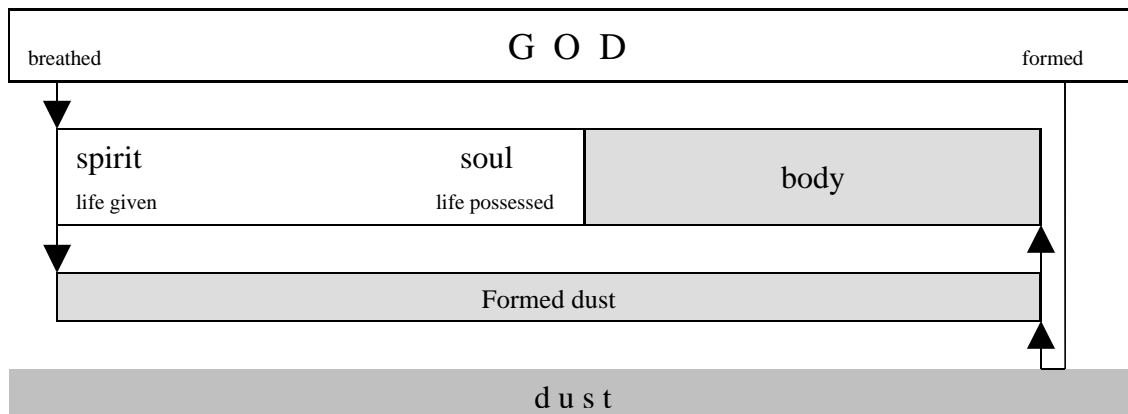
it is the soul. This soul is not a component of man since it did not come from anything that existed prior to the creation of man. Rather, it can about as a result of the union of spirit and dust.

The point we are pressing can be illustrated from chemistry. There is a difference between a mixture and a compound. A mixture happens when two chemicals are mixed together. While the two join to produce a common effect, at a chemical level they remain apart. We have this when we add sugar to water. The sugar dissolves and permeates the water to make sweet water, but in the solution the sugar and the water remain apart. In a compound, the two chemicals are united to form a new chemical. We have this in water that is the result of two hydrogen atoms bonding with one oxygen atom. Water is a chemical compound with its own properties which are different from both hydrogen and oxygen. The analogy only goes so far. At the point of death, it breaks down. We can reverse the process and separate the hydrogen and oxygen. Then we only have the two elements and no longer have water. In the case of the human being this is not the case. Our study has shown that the soul which is brought about by the union of spirit and dust is bonded to the spirit and in the dissolution of death it goes with the spirit. We should also add that the spirit-soul continues to be identified by the body, for they are the spirits or souls of those who died. In God’s view man continues to be defined by his whole being, and this means that the dead are destined to be raised.

The dichotomy in terms of the components of man is one of spirit and body. On the side of the life of man, the personal identity or soul is tied to the spirit. This means that we should not see man as made of three parts, like this:



Rather, we should view the constitution of man like this:



2. Maintaining the biblical balance

On the question whether man is a trichotomy or a dichotomy, we have given our support to the latter. But, we must be careful in the way we formulate our doctrine. The history of religions and philosophy shows that there is a strong tendency in human thought to think of man as being made up of two incompatible parts. The dichotomy thus turns into a dualism of two natures that do not fit together.

The root for this tendency is exposed in the Bible. Through the original sin, mankind was infected by Satan with the idea and vanity that he is a god through his knowledge. God confronted man with the fact that he is mere dust and not a god by the harsh experience imposed on the body—having to eat by the sweat of his brow only to return to dust. This sentence was not the act of grace by which the original sin was removed. Rather, it was imposed as a humbling yoke on the self-proclaimed god. The original sin and the humiliation

of man's life in the body provides a basis for the radicalized sense of dichotomy that man has. In the Greek philosophical mind of the West or the Hindu philosophical thinking of the East, the soul which is the thinking self is seen as immortal and divine and as incompatible with the humiliating reality of the body. Our study has shown how radically unbiblical this view of man is. We must also see the devastating consequences of this view for ethics and the doctrine of salvation. It divorces the soul and the body and provides no basis for the sanctification and glorification of the body. The resurrection of Jesus is the absolute rebuke to this position.

The first great movement of systematic heresy that threatened the church was Gnosticism, and the heart of this movement was the thrust to fit the Greek view of the dichotomous nature of man into the plan of redemption in Christ. This must serve as a warning to us. If we try to fit an unbiblical view of man into our doctrine of Christ and salvation, we will move toward fatal heresy. An orthodox view of salvation can only be held with a compatible and biblical view of man.

While we are on the subject of the idea of the divine nature in the human constitution, we should take note of Peter's statement in 2Pt 1.4 that we become partakers of the divine nature. Peter does not say that we have become partakers of the divine nature by creation but by God's promise given to us in the gospel. Through the gospel we come to faith and receive the Holy Spirit, and only through the indwelling Spirit do we partake of the divine nature. Our created constitution sets us up for this great gift of eternal life.

The Bible does not so much view the two sides of man as understand man from both of the sides of his being to present to us the whole man. Our study has shown how the OT views man in his spirit, soul and body as a unity. In death the two sides are taken apart, but insofar as death was looked at without the clear light of resurrection, death was seen as a dark enigma that challenged faith in God as the God who gives and preserves life. Man was taken apart. Faith in God as the God of those who had passed away could only move in one direction—that he is the God who raises the dead. Jesus clinched this reasoning of faith in his scriptural proof for the resurrection of the dead in Matt 22.29-30. The doctrine of resurrection affirms that before God man is ever what God made him: a unity of spirit and soul, on the one hand, and of body, on the other. This doctrine was seen as the height of folly to the Greeks in Athens (Acts 17). The pagan philosophical mind reasoned from man's refusal to accept what he is in the body, i.e., humiliated, and affirmed man's presumed sense of being divine in his thinking nature. Salvation thus, as in Hindu India and in Buddhism, was seen as release from the body.

Once we see the unity of man, we must contend against a false and fatal sense of unity of nature. This we see in the materialistic view of man which sees man only as a body of dust. When the body dies, nothing is left. The Bible shows how this view can arise quite naturally. If we try to determine the truth by what the eye can see, we only see man and beast having the same fate—they return to dust—and we cannot by observation verify the survival of the spirit after death. This is frankly noted and admitted in Eccl 3.18-21. This view was espoused by the Epicureans of Ancient Greece and was the basis for their philosophy of hedonism, to live to pursue personal pleasure without any sense of moral responsibility and prospect of reward or punishment after death. This materialist view is monistic as opposed to dualistic. It was the minority view in the ancient world but has become the officially dominant view due to the scientism (i.e., religious devotion to the scientific perspective) of the intellectual establishment in modern society. Against this monism, we must press the biblical dichotomy of human nature.

We can apply the LORD's warning to Joshua. Joshua was to continue in the Law without turning to the right or to the left (Josh 1.7). On the doctrine of man, we dare not turn to the right, focusing on the spirit and soul and turning away from the body, and we dare not turn to the left of giving up on the idea of spirit and soul and reducing our understanding of man to the body. Both moves are fatal. If we continue in all of the word of God, we will be able to hold onto both sides of what we are in the true unity of our created being and live the truly full life, fulfilling all that God made us.

3. Keeping our eye on the whole human being

In the Bible the view of man from the two sides of his being is not pressed against philosophical views in the ancient world. Rather, it is taught as the perspective of true and healthy faith. This is brought out by Jesus. He presses the difference between body and soul in Matt 10.28: "Do not fear 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." He is addressing the fact that the disciples, like common human beings, tend to be controlled by a one sided focus on the life of the body when they are threatened with death at the hands of people. In the grip of fear of being killed, we suddenly develop a very narrow focus on life, and only see the physical side. Jesus points out that human hands can only touch the body. The soul, the whole life, is out of human reach. Jesus does not develop a dualism of soul and body out of this. If there is a dualism it is between God's power and man's. Man can only exercise power over the body and not over the soul whereas God will exercise his power over both soul and body. This means that only on the side of human power is the soul separated from the body. On the side of God's action, soul and body are seen as a unit. The disciples must keep this in mind. By killing the body, man cannot touch the real living self. This living self, the soul, is only in God's power, so that we must be true to God, and God will ever deal with us as he made us: a soul-body unit.

Jesus also stressed the unity of the soul and body in his teaching on faith in daily life. He said in Matt 6.25, "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life (the soul), *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" We saw earlier that in the OT the hunger and appetite for food and drink was a function of the soul. Jesus takes this view up here. The inner appetite as the craving of life is assigned to the soul, and the outer side of our being that is clothed is seen as the body. By referring to the two, Jesus is taking up the total needs of the whole person in his life on earth. Jesus unites these two sides of our being in the call to have faith in our Father to provide for both (vv 26-34).

Jesus affirmed the supreme value of the soul in Matt 16.26: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" The dichotomy here is not between the body and the soul but between the value of the whole world and a man's soul. Jesus is taking up a motif found in the OT. Satan pointed out the supreme value of the soul (*nephesh*, translated as life) for a man (Job 2.4). That the value of a man's soul far exceeds all the wealth a man could possibly have is pointed out in Ps 49.6-9. Jesus in Matthew 16 is considering the human effort to save his life or soul by his means in this world (v 25). The dichotomy he presents is not one of the soul verses the body but of saving one's soul or life in this world and finding it by losing it now. Man sees the supreme value of his soul in this world and so will give up all, including Christ, to save his personal life. But, this is the way to eternally lose the soul. If we look at the soul as being in the power of God we must seek our soul in such a way that we will find it before God's judgment, and here the Son will be the judge (v 27). This means that we can only find our souls truly if we follow him in his way of the cross. This finding of the soul is not about an eternal disembodied state. Jesus pointed out that his way of the cross, of losing one's soul, was the way to his resurrection (v 21). The human effort of saving the soul is the desperate attempt in which we give up all that is of eternal value to hang onto our soul in this body. Christ's way is the way of the cross to find our soul in the resurrection body.

Paul maintained this stress on the unity of spirit and body. He said that the woman who remains a virgin "...is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband." Holiness is in both body and spirit, and in this sanctification of both sides of our being the person is concerned about the things of the Lord with both the body and the spirit. The conflict here is not between body and spirit but between being concerned with the things of the Lord and of the world. This unity of the two sides of our being is also the concern of purity in 1Cor 7.1.

The two-sided view of the human being that the Lord and the apostle point out is not about choosing one side over the other but of being united as a whole person on both sides of our being. Our danger is that we tend to reduce our view of life to one side. In the grip of fear, we act only to save the body now and lose sight of the body and soul unit as it is in the power of God. We can seek a devotion in spirit that leaves the body as God made it behind in an unholy state, and this was a trend among the Greek-minded Corinthians. Now we can begin to see the practical value of the study of the human constitution. It checks our tendency to view our existence in a one-sided way which leads to an illusion of success: I save my body now but

lose the soul eternally; I am extremely devoted in certain immaterial preoccupations but leave the body in filth and unholiness; or, I can attend to cleanliness of body and leave my inner life a mess. The biblical doctrine of man points out the delusion involved in this. In the end, I am in the power of God and he will judge me as a whole with both sides of my being in one.

In considering man as a whole, we have so far only looked at man as a dichotomy, the spirit-soul and the body. But, the word of God also works with the difference between soul and spirit (Heb 4.12). We have worked out the balance between these two so that now we will only point out the practical value of working on both sides of our inner life. We have already referred to Phil 1.27 where Paul calls the Philippians to stand firm in the faith in one spirit and strive together for the faith of the gospel with one soul. Why does Paul press the parallel action in spirit and soul? The answer can be found in the problem Paul is dealing with. Paul saw the zeal of many Christians in Rome to speak the word of God without fear, but he also saw that some were preaching Christ from envy and strife (Phil 1.14-18). Paul appreciated the fact that all were proclaiming Christ. In spirit they were, in a sense, one. But, when it came to the soul, the personal self with its longing and striving, they were not one. Those who proclaimed Christ out of selfish ambition (v 17) were turned against others. This problem in Rome also troubled the church in Philippi. Two women who shared Paul's struggle in the gospel were involved in some personal rivalry in the church. Paul affirms their faithfulness to the gospel. There is no doubt about their zeal for the truth of the gospel. However, their unity in the faith had to be followed up with a personal unity of soul. Paul makes his appeal for this unity in Phil 2.1-4. Here he calls for being united in soul (v 2, translated as "in spirit" in the *NASB*). The appeal is for a united purpose or striving, and this answers to the striving together with one soul in 1.27.

Just like carnal Christians can divorce the body and the spirit in their idea of devotion to the Lord, so we can tend to divide spirit and soul. The Bible always sees us in our relationship with God as a whole person in all aspects of our being. This is beautifully expressed in 1Thess 5.23, with which we began this study. We will close it by quoting it again.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul
and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In your meditation on this benediction, you can bring in all that you have learned about the spirit, soul and body in this study. Think of what this means for our spiritual life. We are open to God to receive from the Spirit, and we give our whole personal life with all of its energies, its desires, striving and passion, to what we believe. This translates into full action in the body in the concrete deeds by which we carry out what we believe. Our whole being is involved in our Christian life which is now our whole life. This is total sanctification. God bless you.