

A STUDY OF THE SPIRIT OF MAN
Gen.1:26,27; 2:7; Eccl.12:7
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. There are many misconceptions about and much error taught concerning the spirit of man; such as:
 - a. That man is not a dual being composed of body and soul or spirit.
 - b. Man is wholly mortal.
 - c. At death man ceases to exist.
 - d. After death there is no conscious existence.
 - e. Man does not have a soul; rather, he is a soul.
 - f. The spirit of man is mere breath, an active force, or physical life.
 - g. Man's soul or spirit dies at death, and remains in an unconscious state until resurrected.
 - h. "Until one becomes a new creature, he is entirely human, there is no spirit about him." – B. M. Cole, in debate with Roy J. Hearn, July 6,7, 1950, as quoted in Hearn's "*Handbook On Materialism*" A Discussion Of The Question: "Does Man Have An Immortal Spirit?", p.35.
 - i. Men today have no personal control of their spirit when the Holy Spirit moves them with a direct operation.
2. The only reliable information we have about the spirit or soul of man is that which is revealed in the Scriptures, the inspired word of God, the Bible, to which we now call your attention.
3. What does the Bible say about the soul or spirit of man?

II. DISCUSSION

A. FIRST, DEFINITION OF TERMS SO ALL WIH UNDERSTAND OUR USE OF TERMS.

1. "Spirit"
 - a. "The vital principle by which the body is animated."
 - b. "The spirit is that which animates, and gives life; the BODY is of no profit (for the spirit imparts life to it, not the body to the spirit). The power by which a human being feels, thinks, wills, decides.

- c. “As sometimes used interchangeably with soul, as *opposed to the flesh*. 1Cor.2:11. A human soul that has left the body.” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, p.520)
- d. The part of man of which God is the Father. (Ac.17:28,29; Heb.12:9)
- 2. “Mortal” –“Subject to death; destined to die.”
- 3. “Immortal” –“Incorruptible, not liable to corruption or decay. Imperishable. (Thayer) The spirit as opposed to the flesh Defined as opposed to ceasing to be; that which does not cease to exist at death of the body.
- 4. “Death” – “The separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul, spirit, from the body by which life on earth is ended.” (Thayer, p.282) (e.g., Gen.35:18: “...as her soul was departing, for she died.”)

B. THE BIBLE DECLARES MAN HAS A SPIRIT THAT IS WITHIN HIM

- 1. Elihu, in Job 32:8, declared, “But there is a spirit in (within) man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”
- 2. Solomon, in Eccl.3:21, said, “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward...”
- 3. Job 7:11, “...I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.”
- 4. Job 32:8: “There is a spirit in man: And the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”
- 5. Psa.142:3, “When my spirit was overwhelmed within me...”
- 6. Ps.143:7, “Hear me speedily, O Lord, My spirit faileth...”
- 7. Isa.26:9, “With my spirit have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early...”
- 8. Dan.7:15: “I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.”
- 9. Zech.12:1: “...the Lord...formeth the spirit of man within him.”
- 10. 1Cor.2:11 says, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him??

C. THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT GOD FORMED THE SPIRIT OF MAN WITHIN HIM, THAT GOD IS THE FATHER OF SPIRITS.

- 1. Num.16:22, “And they (Moses and Aaron) fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh.”

2. Num.27:16, Moses said, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation."
3. Eccl.12:7, "...and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
4. Isa.57:16, The High and lofty One saith, "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit shall fail before me, and the souls which I have made." Cf. Gen.2:7.
5. Zech.12:1, "The burden of the word of the Lord of Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."
6. Heb.12:9, "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"

D. A FEW MISCELLANEOUS FACTS ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF MAN THAT SERVE TO REFUTE SOME OF MAN'S FASE IDEAS.

1. No man has power over the spirit to retain it!
 - a. Eccl.8:8 says, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death."
2. Men may follow or walk after his own spirit or prophesy out of their own hearts.
 - a. Ezek.13:2,3, "...prophets of Israel that prophesy...out of their own hearts...Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing."
 - b. Although they claimed they were speaking God's word, they had neither seen nor heard anything from God; they were speaking vanity and lies.
 - c. They were "seducing" God's people with their lies.
 - d. They were following or walking after their own spirit or their own heart.
 - e. The same is true of many preachers and other false teachers today
3. The spirits of the prophets are (and were) subject to the prophets, i.e., under the control of the prophets themselves.
 - a. In 1Cor.14:32 the apostle Paul declared, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."
 - b. When the Holy Spirit moved men to speak, he did not override their own spirit and force them to do things against their own will
 - c. In other words, the Holy Spirit was **never (and is not ever)** responsible for any improper conduct or actions of any person! I.e., any action that is contrary to God's will.

- d. See Vv.26-32 in this context.
 - e. This fact is of course contrary to the claim of the Pentecostals of our day who claim they have no control over themselves or of their actions once the Holy Ghost hits them with a direct operation!
4. One can and is required to rule his own spirit. In addition to 1Cor.14:26-32 we have other evidence to support that fact.
- a. Prov.16:32, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.
 - b. Prov.25:28, “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.” (Unprotected.)
 - c. Jas.1:19, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” See Vv.20-26.
 - d. We are held responsible for ruling or controlling our own spirits!
 - e. See 1Cor.9:27; Mt.12:34-37; 2Cor.5:10; 2Pet.1:5-11.
5. When the spirit leaves the body, the body, not the spirit dies, Jas.2:26; Gen.35:18.

E. SEVERAL THINGS THE SPIRIT OF MAN MAY BE OR CAN DO WHICH PROVE THE SPIRIT OF MAN IS NEITHER MERE “BREATH,” “ACTIVE FORCE,” NOR “PHYSICAL LIFE.”

According to the following passages:

1. It may be “filthy,” 2Cor.7:1.
2. It may be “holy,” 1Cor.7:34.
3. It may be “grieved,” Isa.54:6.
4. It may be in “anguish,” Job 7:11.
5. It may be “guileless,” Psa.32:2.
6. It may be “saved,” 1Cor.5:5.
7. It may “glorify God,” 1Cor.6:20.
8. It can be “vexed,” Eccl.2:26. Also see 2:11,17.
9. It can be “troubled,” Dan.2:3; Jno.13:21.
10. It can be “stirred up,” Hag.1:14.
11. It can be “stirred in him,” Ac.16:17.
12. It can “fail,” Psa.143:7.
13. It can “err,” Isa.29:24.
14. It can “know,” 1Cor.2:11.

15. It can “will,” or “be willing,” Mt.26:41.
16. It can “seek the Lord,” Isa.26:9.
17. It can “pray,” 1Cor.14:14,15.
18. It can “serve God,” Rom.1:9.
19. It can “rejoice in God,” Lk.1:47.
20. It can “be refreshed,” 1Cor.16:18; 2Cor.7:13.
21. It can and will “go upward,” Eccl.3:21.
22. It can and will “return to God who gave it,” Eccl.12:7.
23. It can be “received by the Lord,” Ac.7:59.

F. DETAILED SCRIPTURAL INFORMATION AND ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF MAN IN CONTRAST TO THE BODY OF MAN.

1. Gen.1:26,27: Man is made or created in the image of or after the likeness of God.
 - a. Points of likeness noted.
 - (1) Knowledge, 1Cor.2:11.
 - (2) Intellect, reason, Ac.17:2.
 - (3) Emotions, Ac.17:2; Phil.4:4, etc.
 - (4) Will, Mt.26:41.
 - b. It’s a matter of law: Like begets like; produces like (Cf. corn, wheat, ox, man).
 - (1) God is immortal spirit, Jno.4:24; Cf. Lk.24:39; Jno.1:18.
 - (2) God is the Father of our spirits, Heb.12:9; Exo.33:20.
 - (3) Therefore, our spirits are immortal, being in the likeness of God.
 - (4) It is the spirit part of man that is in God’s image.
2. Ac.17:28,29: The spirit of man is the offspring of God.
 - a. It is the spirit part of man that is in the image of God, Gen.1:26,27.
 - b. God is an immortal spirit and the Father of our spirits.
 - c. Since we are created in the likeness of God and like begets like, the spirit part of man is in God’s image; therefore, our spirits are immortal, being in the likeness of God and being the offspring of God.
3. Gen.2:7: “Man became a living soul” when God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”
 - a. The “breath of life” breathed into man’s nostrils that resulted in man’s becoming “a living soul” can’t be the same kind of air that

men breath or the common air we take into our lungs as a living soul.

- b. "The breath of life" of Gen.2:7 refers to the inward man, the spirit of man, that is in God's image. Cf. 2Cor.4:16-18; Lk.11:39; Rom.7:22; 2Cor.7:15.
4. Gen.35:18: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died)..."
 - a. Something departed Rachel's body when she died before her body was buried (V.19).
 - b. It certainly was not her body that left her body.
 - c. The text says it was her soul... "As her soul was in departing, (for she died)..." Something about her died. But when she died something left her body; the text says it was her soul that left.
 - d. Cf. 1Kgs.17:17-23 where the widow's son had died..."there was no breath left in him," V.17
 - (1) V.20 says, "O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?"
 - (2) Then, in V.21, Elijah "cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again." (marg. "into his inward parts").
 - (3) V.22, "And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."
5. Psa.22:26: "...your heart shall live forever."
 - a. Cf. Prov.23:7; Rom.10:10; Mt.13:15; Rom.1:9; 7:25; Eph.4:23.
 - b. The heart means the mind with which we believe, etc.
 - c. The mind refers to the spirit with which we serve God; therefore, the heart is the spirit; the heart shall live forever; so, the spirit shall live forever.
6. Eccl.12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." See Gen.2:7; Job 12:10; Isa.57:16; Zech.12:1; Heb.12:9; Lk.23:46; Ac.7:59; 1Th.4:14.
7. Prov.12:28: "In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death" (i.e., no ceasing to exist.) Cf. Jno.11:26; 8:51.52.
 - a. The part of man that believes is the spirit of man.
 - b. But the part that believeth in him shall never die.
 - c. Therefore, the spirit of man, according to Christ, will never die.

8. Prov.14:32: “The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.” Cf. Job 13:15; 2Tim.4:18; 1Cor.15:19.
 - a. Hope means desire plus expectation.
 - b. One who is unconscious or ceases to exist at death does not hope – desire or expect.
 - c. Therefore, in death we are not unconscious. And in death there is a part of man that does not cease to exist.
 - d. Hope cannot exist in the absence of consciousness, but the righteous have hope in death; therefore, they are conscious and able to hope in death.
9. Mt.10:28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.”
 - a. Man’s body and soul are two separable things.
 - b. One man can kill another man’s body but he can’t kill another man’s soul.
 - c. Here we learn that the soul of man continues to live after the body is dead, being killed by another man.
10. Mt.17:1-9. Cf. Lk.9:28-32. Moses and Elijah were long since physically dead, but still alive in the spirit world.
11. Mt.26:41: “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak.”
 - a. The spirit of man is different from the flesh of man.
 - (1) “The Lord...formeth the spirit of man withing him,” Zech.12:1.
 - (2) “I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body...” Dan.7:15.
 - (3) The spirit in man is the part that knows, 1Cor.2:11.
 - (4) It’s the soul or the spirit, not the flesh of man, that is purified, 1Pet.1:22; 3:21; Ac.15:9.
 - (5) It’s the soul or the spirit that departs and return to God, not the body, Gen.35:18; Eccl.12:7.
 - (6) The body apart from the spirit is said to be dead, so says Jas.2:26. No where do the Scriptures say the spirit dies or is dead physically when it is separated from the body.
12. Lk.16:19-31 prove beyond doubt there is life – conscious existence after physical death for both the righteous and the unrighteous.

13. Lk.20:27-38. The Sadducees try to trap Jesus on the question of the resurrection of the dead.
 - a. Jesus refuted the theory of the Sadducees by giving proof of the resurrection from the **FACT** that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob **are alive unto God** even though they died physically many years prior to the time of Jesus' personal ministry on earth. It is "**I AM**", not was, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob."
 - b. Syllogisms:
 - (1) God is the God of the living,,
 - (2) God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
 - (3) Therefore, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob are alive unto God (they are living).
14. Jno.2:19: "Destroy this temple (his body, V.21), and in three days I will raise it up."
 - a. Jno.10:17: "I lay down my life (my physical life), that I might take it again."
 - b. Jno.10:18: "I have power (authority) to lay it down, and I have power (authority) to take it again."
 - c. Jno.10:18: "This commandment (authority) have I received from my Father."
 - d. If in death there is no conscious existence, no power of action, there can be no exercise of power to become alive again. Therefore, Jesus Christ could not possibly do what he claimed he had the power or authority from the Father to do!
15. 2Cor.4:16-18 teach that man is a two-fold being. That he is composed of an "outward man" and an "inward man."
 - a. The outward man is the body of man, is seen, perishes, is temporal, is mortal.
 - b. The inward man is the spirit of man, is unseen, is renewed day by day, is eternal, is immortal.
 - c. Thus part of man – the inward man, the spirit of man – is not subject to death.
16. 2Cor.5:1-10. According to this section of scripture there is a "**WE**":
 - a. Who is separate from "our earthly house of this tabernacle (i.e., this present earthly body) which can be and will be dissolved," V.1a.
 - b. Who will then "have a building of God, an house not made with hands (a resurrected body), eternal in the heavens," V.1b.

- c. Who while “in this (present earthly body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,” V.2.
 - d. Who “are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord,” V.6.
 - e. Who “are...willing rather to be absent from the body, and to present with the Lord,” V.8.
 - f. Who “...labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him,” V.9.
 - g. Who someday “must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one (the we) may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,” V.10.
 - h. The pronoun “**WE**” is used some 14 times in these 10 verses in the KJV; “us”, twice; “our”, once; “he”, once; “his”, once.
 - (1) Who is this “we” that is in this body or has this body?
 - (2) Who is this “we” who while in this earthly body groans, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with his house which is eternal in the heavens?
 - (3) Who is this “we” that is absent from the Lord while in this present earthly body?
 - (4) Who is this “we” who while in this present earthly body labors, that, whether present or absent, he may be acceptable of the Lord?
 - (5) Who is this “we” who must stand in judgment and give an account for the things he has done in this body, this earthly tabernacle?
 - i. If the “we” referred to in 2Cor.5:1-10 is not the spirit of man, the inward man, what could it possibly be?
17. 2Cor.12:1-4
- a. Here Paul refers to himself being caught up to the 3rd heaven.
 - b. “Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell,” V.2.
 - c. Either way, in or out of the body would show the possibility of consciousness – for he heard unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for him to utter, V.4.
 - d. Remember: Paul was caught up to the 3rd heaven, not down to the grave.
18. Phil.1:21-23; 2Tim.4:6-8.

19. Jas.2:26: “The body without the spirit is dead”
 - a. It’s the body that is dead, not the spirit.
 - b. The death of the body is the result of the separation of the spirit from the body.

20. 1Pet.3:1-4 speaks of the need of the wives of unbelieving husbands to adorn “the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,” as opposed to the adorning of the outward man or the body.
 - a. The heart is “the center and seat of spiritual life, the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, affections, purposes, endeavors.” – Thayer.
 - b. Thus the soul or the spirit is the heart. And Psa.22:26 says the heart shall live forever. It does not cease to exist.

21. 1Pet.1:22-25 the soul or the spirit of man is purified by obeying the truth, the word of God, the gospel of Christ.

22. Rev.6:9,10: “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge (vindicate) our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”
 - a. It was not souls that had been slain, but souls of THEM that had been slain.
 - b. Their bodies were slain, were dead; their souls or spirits were not!
 - c. their souls were alive and under the altar.

23. Rev.14:13: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labors...”
 - a. “Blessed” is from the Gr. means “happy.”
 - b. To say: An unconscious happy man, or happy unconscious man, is a contradiction of terms. One may as well speak of a happy rock!
 - c. The dead in Christ are happy, therefore conscious.

24. Psa.116:15: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

III. CONCLUSION

1. In this study of the spirit of man we have:
 - a. In our introduction called your attention to several misconceptions about and much error taught concerning the spirit of man.
 - b. Defined terms used in the study; such as: spirit, mortal, immortal, death.
 - c. Cited scriptural proof that man has a spirit dwelling within him, within his body.
 - d. Cited scriptural proof that God is the Father of spirits, that he formed the spirit of man within him.
 - e. Noted some miscellaneous facts about the spirit of man which refutes some of man's false ideas.
 - f. Considered several things the spirit of man may be or can do which prove the spirit of man is neither mere "breath," "active force," nor "physical life."
 - g. Offered detailed scriptural information and arguments about the spirit of man in contrast to the body of man.
2. Beyond reasonable doubt man is dual being composed of body and spirit; a body subject to death; a spirit that is not!
3. Thus when physical death occurs, there is a part of man that still live on. In death man does not exist in an unconscious state until resurrected.
4. After physical death of the body, the spirit continues to exist, to live in conscious existence.