

# The Nature of Man

## Introduction:

There is something which sets man apart from the rest of God's creation. Man is the "crown" of creation, different from any animal because he possesses "God-consciousness." Man is primarily a spirit being in vital union with a material, organized body. The immaterial and material parts of man are distinct from each other, but together they constitute the whole man.

See. Genesis 35:18; Numbers 16:22; I Kings 17:21; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Matthew 10:28; I Corinthians 2:11; 5:5; James 2:26; III John 2.

## I. Man is a Tripartite Being

Just as God is a Trinity of Persons, so man is a "tri-partite" being — consisting of body, soul, and spirit.

- I Thessalonians 5:23 — "spirit and soul and body"
- Hebrews 4:12 — "soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow"
- Genesis 2:7 — "dust of the ground" (body); "breath of life" (spirit); "living soul."

Note: Man is not a "trinity" in the sense of God because each part of man is not man in and of itself.

### A. The Body of Man

The body is the material part of man. In reality it is the "house" of the real man, the "earthly tabernacle."

See: II Corinthians 5:1; II Peter 1:13-14

At the time of physical death the body returns to the dust from whence it came. See: Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Physical Death is the separation of the soul and spirit of man from his body.

1. See: James 2:26; Genesis 35:18
2. Compare: Genesis 49:33 with Genesis 50:2
3. See also: Job 19:26; 21:26

### B. The Soul of Man

The word "soul" implies self-conscious life, as opposed to plants which have unconscious life,

In this limited definition, animals may be said to have soul — Job 12:10; Revelation 16:3.

A city is also said to have a soul (life) — Revelation 18:14.

The Bible also uses the word "soul" on occasions to refer to a man in general terms without reference to his material and immaterial parts, e.g. Genesis 12:5; Acts 27:37.

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In the common Biblical usage, the soul of man refers to that immaterial part of man we may call “self-consciousness.” It is the “real you!” The soul of man is a unique creation of God.

It is the seat of the intellect and emotions.

### 1. Other Terms used in the Bible for the Soul.

#### a) The Heart

In only a few place does the Bible refer to the heart as a vital blood pumping organ. Most of the time the heart refers to that part of man out of which the issues of life are determined.

#### (1) Emotions are a function of the heart.

Gladness	Psalm 4:7; Proverbs 24:17
Praise	Psalm 9:1
<u>Desire</u>	Psalm 10:3
Fear	Psalm 27:3
Trust	Psalm 28:7
Anger	Psalm 39:3
Lust	Psalm 81:12
<u>Pride</u>	Psalm 101:5
Heaviness	Proverbs 12:25
Bitterness	Proverbs 14:13
Happiness	Proverbs 15:13

#### (2) The heart and soul exhibit the same characteristics.

	<u>Heart</u>	<u>Soul</u>
Poured Out	Psalm 62:8	Psalm 42:4
Broken	Psalm 51:17	Psalm 119:20
Rejoicing	Psalm 13:5	Psalm 35:9

The conclusion is that the words “heart” and “soul” are used in the Bible to refer to the same immaterial part of man.

The “heart” is also used to describe the inward condition of man: as either wicked (Jeremiah 17:9; Psalm 58:2; 78:37; Proverbs 22:15; Mark 7:21), or upright (Psalm 11:2; 32:11; 94:15.)

#### b) The Mind

The Bible uses the term “mind” synonymously with the heart (and thus the soul.). This is demonstrated by the following:

#### (1) Thoughts are a function of the heart.

Proverbs 23:7; Psalm 35:25; 53:1; 77:6.

#### (2) Decisions are made in the heart

Proverbs 4:23; 16:9; Romans 10:9-10

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Heart, soul, and mind are distinguished in Matthew 22:37, but this does not mean they are essentially different. Hebrews 4:12 also distinguishes “joints” and “marrow;” these are different parts of the bone with differing function, but both are part of the same entity — the BODY.

### C. The Spirit of Man

The “spirit” is that unique part of man which exhibits “God-consciousness.”

See: Proverbs 20:27; John 4:24; Romans 8:16; I Corinthians 14:14-15.

It must be remembered that the word “spirit” is used in several different ways throughout the Bible. For example:

- The Holy Spirit — Luke 11:13
- The spirit of man — Job 32:8
- Ministering spirits (Angels) — Hebrews 1:14
- Evil spirits (Devils) — Mark 5:13
- An attitude of body or mind — Joshua 5:1; Judges 15:19; I Samuel 30:12; Philippians 1:27

There is much difference of opinion amongst theologians as to whether the soul and spirit of man are the same (i.e. man is bipartite) or separable (i.e. man is tripartite.). This difference arises because the soul and spirit must manifest themselves through the same body, and many times the Bible does not distinguish the two. There certainly is a connection between the two — Proverbs 15:13.

#### 1. The Apparent Unity of Soul and Spirit.

Both the soul and the spirit constitute the immaterial part of man, and both were given to man at the time of creation, Genesis 2:7.

- a) The spirit is sometimes equated with the heart.
  - (1) Hardened spirit — obstinate heart  
Deuteronomy 2:30
  - (2) Willing spirit — stirred heart  
Exodus 35:21, 26 (See also: Ezra 1:5; Acts 17:16)
  - (3) Right spirit — clean heart  
Psalm 51:10
  - (4) Broken spirit — broken heart  
Psalm 51:17
  - (5) In the spirit — of the heart  
Romans 2:29
  - (6) Meek and quiet spirit — hidden man of the heart  
I Peter 3:4
  - (7) Contrite spirit — contrite heart  
Isaiah 57:15
- b) The spirit sometimes exhibits qualities of the soul
  - (1) Sadness — I Kings 21:5
  - (2) Faithfulness — Proverbs 11:13
  - (3) Hastiness — Proverbs 14:29
  - (4) Haughtiness — Proverbs 16:18

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- (5) Humility — Proverbs 16:19; 29:23
- (6) Self-control — Proverbs 16:32; 25:28
- (7) Excellence — Proverbs 17:27
- (8) Endurance — Proverbs 18:14

- c) The spirit is sometimes categorized with just the body.  
The soul is not mentioned.

I Corinthians 6:20; 7:34; II Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 2:5; James 2:26;  
Ecclesiastes 12:7.

2. The declared distinction between soul and spirit.  
Hebrews 4:12 clearly asserts that the soul and spirit are divided asunder by the Word of God, so we are bound to look for this division in the Bible.

### II. Man is Made in the Image and Likeness of God.

According to Genesis 1:26, man is created in the image and likeness of God. This term is defined by Genesis 5:1, 3. It does not refer to any physical similarity, but to the nature and character of man.

#### A. Man has a Volitional Likeness to God.

Like his Maker, man has a will which he can exercise. He can choose and decide things, for example, whether to love or hate.

See: Romans 7:18; I Corinthians 9:17; Leviticus 1:3

This is one of the great differences between man and the animal kingdom. Man is a free moral agent, whereas animals are bound by instinct and training.

The Bible refers to a willing:

- Heart — Exodus 35:5
- Mind — I Corinthians 28:9. Check
- Spirit — Matthew 26:41

The “will” may be defined as the power to choose the end and the means of attaining that end. It is evident that God desires our will to be controlled by His Spirit (Psalm 143:10; Matthew 6:10; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 4:12; Hebrews 13:21; I Peter 4:2; I John 2:17; etc), but the fact is our will may also be controlled by the flesh (appetites) or soul (emotions).

The believer experiences a warfare in his mind for control of the will. One who is saved, but controlled by the flesh is described as being “carnal” — I Corinthians 3:1-3. One who is saved, but controlled by the world may be described as “worldly” — I Corinthians 3:18-19. One who is saved and controlled by the Holy Spirit is described as being “spiritual” — I Corinthians 2:15; Galatians 5:16-25.

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### The Will of God and the Will of Man

A conflict arises in the thinking of Calvinists over this matter. Calvinists believe that a sovereign God could never will something that would not come to pass. In their reasoning, if God desires to save certain men then these men will be saved; if God is willing, then man must be willing also — if man is unwilling, then it must be because God was unwilling to make that man willing!

The fact of the matter is, the Bible clearly teaches that Man can willfully refuse that which God desires:

#### **God's Will**

Deuteronomy 30:16, 19  
Joshua 24:14  
I Samuel 8:10-18  
Nehemiah 9:13  
Psalm 81:10  
Proverbs 1:23  
Isaiah 1:18-19  
Isaiah 28:12a  
Isaiah 30:15a  
Jeremiah 6:16a  
Jeremiah 7:25  
Jeremiah 11:7  
Zechariah 7:8-10  
John 5:39

#### **Man's will**

Deuteronomy 30:17  
Joshua 24:15  
I Samuel 8:19  
Nehemiah 9:16-17  
Psalm 81:11  
Proverbs 1:24-25, 29-30  
Isaiah 1:20  
Isaiah 28:12b  
Isaiah 30:15b  
Jeremiah 6:16b  
Jeremiah 7:26  
Jeremiah 11:8  
Zechariah 7:11  
John 5:40

See also: I Kings 18:21; Isaiah 65:2, 12; 66:4; Jeremiah 5:3; 7:13; 13:10; 29:19; 35:14-15; Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; I Timothy 2:4

#### B. Man has a Intellectual Likeness to God

God is an intelligent being — man is an intelligent being.

1. Adam possessed enormous intelligence to name animals. — Genesis 2:19-20
2. Adam required intelligence to exercise dominion. — Genesis 1:26-28
3. Adam used his intelligence to dress and keep the garden.

#### C. Man has a Moral Likeness to God.

By this we mean that man has the ability to discern the difference between right and wrong.

Romans 2:15 teaches that all men have a conscience.

#### D. Man has a Social Likeness to God.

1. Adam Communed with God. — Genesis 3:8
2. Adam Needed Human Fellowship. — Genesis 2:18

The fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God teaches the sanctity of human life. See: Genesis 9:6; Psalm 8:4-5; James 3:9.

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### III. Man is an Everlasting Being

By this we mean that the immaterial part of man (the soul and spirit) never ceases to exist, it never perishes into “nothingness.” The “real you” is everlasting.

#### A. The Teaching of Annihilation

Many of the cults hold to a doctrine of annihilation of the wicked dead. The “wicked dead” in their scheme of things means all those who do not faithfully embrace their particular teachings, and according to the teaching of annihilation, following physical death such people absolutely cease to exist.

The doctrine of annihilation is generally the outcome of rejecting a literal, eternal hell.

Usually, some verses are taken out of context from certain Books of the Bible to support this teaching. E.g. Ecclesiastes 3:18-22; 9:5, 10.

#### B. The Bible Answer to the False Doctrine of Annihilation.

1. A correct definition of key words is essential.

a) Mortal = subject to death

b) Immortal = not subject to death

Hence “immortality” cannot be the same as “eternal life.” Try substituting these words in I Corinthians 15:53-54 and note the change in meaning.

c) Life does not mean “existence.”

If the word “life” meant “existence,” then inanimate objects such as rocks, chairs, etc, would have life, for they exist. Try substituting the two words in I John 5:12.

d) Life = a condition of existence.

There are many forms of existence — life is the highest and best.

e) Death = a condition of existence.

This follows because death is the opposite to life. Death is simply another kind of existence.

f) Natural life and Eternal life are different states of existence.

All men have natural life, but only the believer on Jesus Christ possesses eternal life.

g) An examination of men at various points will summarize what is being taught here:

#### **UNSAVED MAN**

##### **In this life**

Endless existence,  
natural life, mortal,  
spiritually dead

##### **In the next life**

Endless existence,  
corruption,  
eternal death

#### **SAVED MAN**

##### **In this life**

Endless existence,  
natural life, mortal,  
eternal life

##### **In the next life**

Endless existence,  
immortality,  
eternal life

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2. The Bible meaning of the word “death” must be understood.  
Too often, the humanistic concept of death (“six feet under;” “the end”) colors our thinking and warps our right understanding of the subject. Regardless of what anyone thinks at the grave-side, death does not mean “the end!”
  - a) Physical Death:  
This is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body.  
  
Genesis 35:18; John 19:30, 33
  - b) Spiritual Death:  
This is the spiritual separation between the sinner and God.  
  
Ephesians 2:1, 5; Luke 15:18-19, 32; I Timothy 5:6; John 5:24
  - c) Eternal Death:  
This is the eternal separation of the sinner from God.  
  
Revelation 20:14-15; John 3:18, 36; Matthew 25:41, 46
3. Future resurrection depends upon the fact of NO Annihilation.  
There are many scriptures (e.g. Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29) which teach two future resurrections:
  - a) Of the Saved  
This is when all dead and living believers will receive their immortal bodies. See: I Corinthians 15:42-54; Philippians 4:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:14-17.
  - b) Of the Unsaved  
This is when the unsaved shall be given corruptible bodies to stand before God on the Day of Judgment. See: Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15

It stands to reason, that if people are going to be resurrected in the future they cannot be annihilated in the present. We might also ask, “If the wicked dead are to be annihilated after the Great White Throne judgment, why not at the time of death?”

To overcome this contradiction, sects like the Seventh Day Adventists have invented another false teaching called “soul sleep.”
4. Hell is said to be everlasting.  
Matthew 25:46.  
  
Punishment cannot be “everlasting” unless it continues for ever!
5. The Beast and the False Prophet will continue to exist in the Lake of Fire.  
Revelation 20:10 uses the word, “...are...” Note exactly when these two were cast into the Lake of Fire, Revelation 19:20.

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We understand both these personages to be men.

6. Many scriptures teach that death is not Annihilation.  
Job 19:25, 26; Matthew 3:12; 13:42; 18:8-9; 25:46; Mark 3:29; 9:43-48; 12:18-27  
with Exodus 3:6; John 5:29; II Thessalonians 1:8-9; II Peter 2:3-10, 17;  
Revelation 14:10-11; 19:20; 21:8