

The Doctrine of Soul & Spirit

I. Introduction & Definition (1st Thess. 5:23)

A. Soul: that which makes a human or animal body alive. In this sense, “soul” & “life” are interchangeable. When the soul departs, the body dies (Gen. 35:18; 1st Kgs. 17:19-23).

1. נֶפֶשׁ nephesh #5315: *soul, living being, life, self, person.*
2. ψυχή psuche #5590: *life, soul.*

B. Spirit: that which makes a believer alive unto God. When the spirit departs the believer’s body, the believer’s body dies (Ps. 146:4; Lk. 8:55; 23:46).

1. רוּחַ ru^ach #7307(7308Aram.): *breath, wind, spirit.*
2. πνεῦμα pneuma #4151: *spirit.*
3. Important Note: ru^ach & pneuma are also used of the Holy Spirit, and spirit beings (both good & evil).

C. Other terms for the invisible part of man

1. Heart: the center. largely synonymous with “inner man” as the center of man’s physical, mental, emotional, moral, & (if he has one) spiritual life. The heart of the unbeliever is entirely focused on self, and God must create a new and clean heart for the believer.

- a. לֵב leḅ #3820 (3821Aram) & לֵבָב lebab #3824 (3825Aram): *inner man, mind, will, heart.*
- b. καρδιά kardia #2588: *heart, inner self, mind, will.*

2. Mind: the intellectual center of man.

- a. δίανοια dianoia #1271: *mind, understanding.*
- b. νοῦς nous #3563: *mind, thought, reason, understanding.*

3. Inner Man

- a. קֶרֶב qereḅ #7130: *inward part, innermost being.*
- b. ἔσω ἄνθρωπον #2080 + #444: *the inner being, inner nature.*
(ἔξω ἄνθρωπον *the outer man (body)*)

4. Terms related to emotions: רַחֲמִים rach^amiym #7356 (#7359Aram) & σπλάγχχνον #4698.

D. Body

1. בָּשָׂר basar #1320: *flesh, body.* (בְּשָׂר b^esar #1321 Aram)
2. σῶμα soma #4983: *body.*
3. σὰρξ sarx #4561: *flesh.* The aspect of the body that is fallen & weak. The no good thing within the body that motivates and manufactures personal sin.

II. The Soul: Development & Application¹

A. The creation of Adam (Gen. 2:7).

1. He formed Adam’s body out of the dust.
2. He breathed into him the breath of lives (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים nishmath chayyiyim).
3. Man became a living soul (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה nephesh chayyah, ψυχήν ζῶσαν psuchen zosan (1st Cor. 15:45)).

B. The soul is essentially the person. As a result, the word “soul” often refers to the entire person (Lev. 4:2; 5:1ff.; 7:20; 19:8; Acts 2:41; 7:14; 27:37).

C. The soul is the invisible part of man that recognizes unmet needs.

1. Food & drink (Dt. 12:15,20,21; 1st Sam. 2:16; Ps. 107:5,9; Prov. 6:30).
2. Personal possessions (Dt. 14:26).
3. Sexual activity (Gen. 34:3,8; Song. 3:1-4).
4. Children (1st Sam. 1:15).
5. Intimacy with God (Ps. 42:1,2; 63:1; 84:2).
6. The Lord meets the soul’s every need (Ps. 19:7; 23:3; 63:5; 131:2; Jer. 31:25).

¹ Broad outline developed from The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1979 revised edition.

- D. The soul is the invisible part of man that expresses various human emotions and experiences.
 1. The soul may be grieved (Job 30:25), bitter (Job 3:20; Isa. 38:15), troubled (Ps. 88:3), dismayed (Ps. 6:3), distressed (Gen. 42:21), unsettled (Acts 15:24), and unstable (2nd Pet. 2:14).
 2. The soul may despair (Dt. 28:65; Ps. 42:6), weep (Ps. 119:28), tremble (Isa. 15:4), and hate (2nd Sam. 5:8; Ps. 11:5).
 3. The soul may also rejoice (Ps. 35:9; Isa. 61:10), love (1st Sam. 18:1,3; Song. 1:7), be made glad (Ps. 86:4), be delighted (Ps. 94:19), bless the Lord (Ps. 103:1,2,22; 104:1,35), and remember (Ps. 103:2; Lam. 3:20).
- E. The soul-life of man is bound within the blood of his body (Dt. 12:23; Isa. 53:12).
- F. The soul of believers differs from the soul of unbelievers.
 1. It is purified for a sincere love of the brethren (1st Pet. 1:22).
 2. It may prosper regardless of what temporal circumstances the person experiences (3rd Jn. 2).
 3. It is strengthened through Bible teaching (Acts 14:22). It is pierced by diligent Bible teaching (Heb. 4:12).
 4. It is anchored in the hope set before us (Heb. 6:19).
 5. Is tended by spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:17), especially the Lord Jesus Christ (1st Pet. 2:25; 4:19).

III. The Human Spirit: Development & Application

- A. Spiritual life is true life, beyond anything in the physical realm (Gen. 2:7; Isa. 42:5; Jn. 6:63).
- B. Spiritual life is a creative act of God (Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9; 2nd Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:9-17).
- C. Unbelievers do not have a living human spirit^{**} (1st Cor. 2:14; Jude 19), only believers have spiritual life (Rom. 8:10; 1st Cor. 2:15; 1st Pet. 3:18; 4:6).
- D. Like the soul, the human spirit is capable of expressing human emotions and experiences.
 1. The spirit may be anguished (Job 7:11), grieved (Isa. 54:6), broken (Isa. 65:14), distressed (Dan. 7:15), & angered (rage) (Ezek. 3:14).
 2. The spirit may also be rejoicing (Lk. 1:47), moved (Jn. 11:33), troubled (Jn. 13:21), provoked (Acts 17:16), & refreshed (2nd Cor. 7:13).
- E. One must have a living human spirit in order to comprehend the Word of God (1st Cor. 2:13,15).
 1. Old Testament saints could learn the Word of God because the Holy Spirit taught them through their human spirit (Job 32:8).
 2. In addition to a human spirit, believers in the Church have the additional anointing of the Holy Spirit which provides the maximum teaching possible (“all things”) (1st Jn. 2:27).
- F. The human spirit is the place where our spiritual activity takes place.
 1. Worship (Jn. 4:23,24; Phil. 3:3).
 2. Service (Rom. 1:9).
 3. Watchful prayer (Matt. 26:41; 1st Cor. 14:14,15).
 4. Singing (1st Cor. 14:15).
 5. Blessing (1st Cor. 14:16,17).

IV. Soulful vs. Spiritual describes the unbeliever vs. the believer in perceiving spiritual truth (1st Cor. 2).

- A. The Soulful Man (Natural Man) (ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος) refers to the unbeliever with a soul, but no living spirit (1st Cor. 2:14).
- B. The Spiritual Man refers (πνευματικὸς [ἄνθρωπος]) to the believer with a spirit capable of learning God’s Word (1st Cor. 2:15).

V. Soulful vs. Spiritual describes the believer’s physical body (1st Cor. 15:44).

- A. The soulful body is the mortal body that perishes (σῶμα ψυχικόν).
- B. The spiritual body is the immortal body that abides forever (σῶμα πνευματικόν).

VI. Summary & Conclusion—the concerns of the temporal physical body are negligible compared to the concerns of the eternal soul (Matt. 10:28).

^{**} Some Bible teachers hold that unbelievers have no human spirit whatsoever, others hold that the unbeliever actually has a dead human spirit within them. Pharaoh’s spirit was troubled (Gen. 41:8), as was Nebuchadnezzar’s (Dan. 2:1,3). Ahab’s spirit was sullen (1st Kgs. 21:5). Pastor Bob understands these men to be unbelievers with dead human spirits. (Nebuchadnezzar & Ahab will subsequently become saved, and possibly even Pharaoh as well).