

PEOPLE

Creation

When people were created by God (Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden), God used inorganic matter (dust) to create a body. God then breathed into man's lifeless body placing a spirit in man. The result was the formation of a living person or living soul.

Genesis 2vs7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

We are also told in the book of Genesis that we are created in God's image.

Genesis 1vs27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

God is a spiritual being with a soul (will, emotions and mind) and man and woman were also each created as a spiritual being with a soul. We are therefore created in God's image. However, God also created a physical body in which the spirit of a man or woman could live in a physical world. When first created, we were also different to God in another way, we did not have a knowledge of good and evil because of God's protection over us.

When initially created, man and woman were also created to be holy like God is holy. Holiness is defined as being separated from sin and there was a time when man and woman were completely separated from sin and wholly devoted and set apart for God. The Holy Spirit was in the first man and woman created and they were therefore able to intuitively know God's will and obey it. There was no battle between their will and God's for they lived in full obedience to God. Their heart was pure in that it only loved God and their mind was in tune with God's mind. Because of all this, their conscience was clean and they lived in a close and loving relationship with God.

Their life in the fleshly body was directed by their spirit through their soul which was in God's image. The spirit was in turn directed by the presence of God's own Holy Spirit who was within them. The purity of life that man and woman possessed was not only the foundation for their relationship with God but also was the foundation for their relationship to each other.

People, created as spiritual beings, were created to experience continual fellowship with God through our common spiritual nature. Being in God's image, man and woman were able to relate to God in a far closer way than would have been the case if we were not created to be like Him. Man and woman's communication with God was intended to be mainly at the common spiritual level. They would however live in the earthly realm but also know, communicate with and experience the heavenly realm. They would live spiritually in God's kingdom while doing His will in the material earthly realm. As they multiplied, a holy nation of people dedicated to God, would be established.

One thing that was required of those that would form God's holy nation of people was that they were to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, who would live inside them, and be obedient to His guidance and teaching. This would give all who made up the

nation spiritual life in close fellowship with God, loving Him with all their being and living a life dedicated to Him and focused on Him alone. Although in a body of flesh, they would be spiritual people because their life was directed by their spirit in union with the Holy Spirit.

In this way each person who would make up the nation would be unique with their own character that would be given by God at birth and then formed and molded during each one's life based on each one's life experience. God also created people to have choice but it was a choice between obeying Him and being acceptable to Him or being disobedient and being rejected by Him.

God knew that the loving fatherly relationship He desired with people could only arise where they had a choice and could exercise their own will. A forced relationship would be one that was not formed out of love and trust and could never be true or satisfying to a person or God. Therefore, man and woman were given free will and choice. At creation the choice that was before them was to either obey or disobey the will of God to the extent that it had been revealed to them.

Genesis 2vs 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, " Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. "

Choosing obedience would mean continuing to live a holy life in God's spiritual kingdom and under His rule and protection. It would mean knowing Him, communing with Him, understanding His will and being obedient to it. It would mean living with God in a relationship that was loving and trusting with God's blessing and protection from evil. The Holy Spirit would continue to be in each person's spirit and He would teach each person God's will and help them to obey it. This would enable the person to live their life for God and live it in a way that pleased Him. It would mean having eternal life with God and living in a world free from the touch of evil.

Choosing disobedience would mean separation from a life in God's spiritual kingdom and removal of His rule and protection. It would mean still retaining the likeness of God in having a soul and spirit but the soul would be influenced and shaped not from a continual spiritual contact with a holy God but based on their experiences in the physical world around them without God. They would cease to know God in an intimate way and would be unable to commune with Him due to spiritual separation. Their life would be based on contact with other people who had also lost their spiritual link to God. The Holy Spirit would not continue to live inside them to direct their lives. It would mean that their spirit would die to God and their eternal life in God's kingdom would also be lost, with their physical body aging and eventually dying. Without a spiritual connection, God's blessing and God's guidance, they could not know His will nor have the ability to be obedient to it. It would mean losing the relationship of love, trust, blessing and protection from evil. It would mean living in a world in which they would have knowledge of both good and evil being influenced not only by God but also a powerful evil spiritual outcast, the angel Lucifer (Satan).

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden was a test of man and woman's trust in God and their desire to live a life in God's kingdom trusting, depending on and loving God alone. It was a test to ensure that people would choose

to have God as their ruler and obey His will rather than their own. If either man or woman should choose to disobey God and eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, the protection from evil would be lost and they would gain the knowledge of good and evil, be able to distinguish between the two, choose between the two and be influenced by the two.

These first people, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were therefore separated from Him. Now sinners, they were still like God with a spirit and soul but the trust that God had placed in people was betrayed and God in His holiness was confronted with people who had sinned through their disobedience to His will.

As a result of the freedom of choice that God gave them and their subsequent decision, they would now live a life that was very different to the one God had desired for them. They lost the life that God had planned for them, a life centered on Himself and a life that was holy and perfect in composition. A life that would have been based on love for God and love for all people with no selfishness. A life where all of creation would be under God's hand and all work in perfect harmony. A life shielded from the influence of Satan with no evil, hatred, killing, sickness, selfishness, sadness, emptiness or death. More specifically, their life was affected in the following ways.

1. They lost the spiritual relationship with God and were separated from Him.
2. The Holy Spirit no longer lived within them thus deadening their spirit to God. They lost His spiritual revelation, teaching, guidance and help. The loss of this spiritual presence of God in their life meant that they were now more inclined to be drawn away from God towards the material world they were made to live in.
3. They lost their access to the tree of life which meant that they no longer had eternal life with God.
4. Their physical body would grow old, wither and eventually die. There was now a limit on the number of years that people would live after which their physical body would perish and return to the dust from which it was made. *Genesis 3vs19..... For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.*
5. They gained the knowledge of good and evil becoming even more like God, able to determine their own destiny, good or evil, with their minds and spirit now being open to receiving evil thoughts. God's protection from evil was removed which now meant that their life would be open to the temptation and influence from Satan and evil spirits.
6. They were cast out of God's spiritual kingdom and were now under the spiritual control of Satan.
7. Due to sin that had now entered their life, they were ashamed and hid from God.
8. Life on earth would no longer be easy for man and woman and there would be difficulties, pain and sorrow.

The sentence passed upon these first two people, when God said that they would surely die if they ate of the forbidden fruit, was passed onto all following generations and consequently all people have been and are under God's condemnation and are totally separated from God. God therefore sees all people who are born into this world as sinners. When our body eventually dies, our spiritual life lives on for eternity.

Where and under what conditions we live on makes the message of Christianity so incredibly important for all of us.

Spirit, Soul and Body

Paul makes it very clear that people are made up of three parts, spirit, soul and body.

1Thessalonians 5vs23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Each is defined in the following way.

The spirit is God breathed into people and is that part of a person through which we can interact with the spiritual realm and the spirit realm interact and influence our soul.

The soul is made up of a person's mind, emotions, and will. The mind enables a person to reason and think and the emotions are a person's feelings. The will determines a person's actions, thoughts and emotions and therefore what a person will say, do, think and feel.

The body is the physical outer person which is the house or tent that a person lives in during our life on earth. From the day that we are born our body ages until it fails and there is physical death.

We differ from all animals in that, being created in God's image, we have a spirit that was breathed into us by God and animals do not. When animals die their body perishes, and having no spirit, the soul also perishes. We were created above the animals to have a special and unique higher form of life, a spiritual life, that would communicate with God.

Zechariah 12v1 Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him.

All people have a spirit and in the Old Testament book of Numbers, God is described as the "God of the spirits of all flesh".

Numbers 16vs22 Then they fell on their faces, and said, " O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation? "

The body has a finite life but the soul and the spirit, are immortal. When we physically die our body returns to the dust from which it was formed and our spirit returns to the spiritual realm from where it was originally sourced. The physical returns to the physical and the spiritual returns to the spiritual. Our soul leaves with our spirit.

The spirit leaving at a person's physical death is mentioned in the Bible as is the fact that the soul leaves as well. As the first Christian martyr Stephen was being stoned to

death, he called out to God to ask Him to receive his spirit as he knew his body was about to die.

Acts 7vs59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. "

Also, when Jesus prays for a little girl who had died, she comes back to life and we read:

Luke 8vs54 But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, " Little girl, arise. " 55 Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. When Jesus was about to die He asked the Father to receive His spirit.

Luke 23vs46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, " Father, ` into Your hands I commit My spirit. ' " Having said this, He breathed His last.

Other verses in the Bible that support this are:

Ecclesiastes 12vs7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

James 2vs26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Psalms 146vs3 Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. 4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish.

Due to our separation from God, the spirit within each of us, although active within us, is not able to function in the way that God intended it to and is dead to God. The spirit is active in that it functions as a channel for evil spirits to tempt and influence us and for the working of our conscience and intuition. Also, God communicates with each of us through our spirit to convict us of sin, draw us towards Himself and be reconciled to Him.

Even though the spirit's link with God is cut off and the intended level of God's help and guidance is not available, He has not left us in complete spiritual darkness. The Bible tells us that there is a spiritual light from God that comes into every person who comes into this world. This of course is the conscience which has been placed in every person. A small portion of God's light that helps the person to understand moral good.

John 1vs9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

The soul, as did the spirit, came into people when the spirit was God breathed at creation into our lifeless fleshly body. Each person's soul (mind, emotions and will) uniquely defines the life of each person and it is the source of our unique human nature and individuality. It has been formed by God in a particular way and as we live our life on earth, our soul is further developed, shaped and molded.

Each of us is created as a special person by God in our mother's womb and God has a unique plan for the life of each of us, if we choose to reconcile ourselves to Him and live the life He wants us to live. We are individually important to God for He fashioned us according to His will for us (Psalm 139 vs 13-16). Even though sinners, He still loves us for we are His creation.

Job 31 vs 15 Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One fashion us in the womb?

Our soul defines who we really are irrespective of our words, actions or bodily mannerisms. Apart from having many emotions, thoughts and actions that are not seen by others, as we live in this world we learn how to act in ways that don't always match what we think and feel. Therefore, the soul of an individual is never really known by other people, and in many cases, quite unknown and unpredictable to the individuals themselves.

The body is important for it enables our spiritual soul and spirit to live and act in this physical world, and once people are reconciled to God, accomplish His will on this earth. It also enables us to develop as spiritual people through the type of life we lead, our experiences and what we do with our life. Our experiences and physical interactions with people and the rest of creation help us develop and shape our mind, emotions and will. How we live our life on this earth in our physical body determines how we shall live it spiritually for eternity.

When we focus on the body we cannot avoid the fact that there is an end to life. When we cannot accept the spiritual realm then all we can think about is how we can best live our life on this earth before the time comes to die. This is the attitude of those who cannot appreciate the eternal nature of spiritual life. Yet, spiritual life continues for both the believer and nonbeliever after physical death.

Without a spirit that is alive to God, the soul becomes the dominant influence in every person's life and we are almost entirely developed, shaped and molded by our experiences in our outer body rather than our inner spirit. This means that our mind, emotions and will are governed by the influences of the world we live in. What we see, hear, smell, taste and touch determines our thoughts, emotions and the formation and exercise of our will. Living in this way focuses on the physical world and our physical body that returns to the earth when we die. Our immortal, vastly more important spiritual life is ignored and we individually leave this earth unprepared by not being spiritually fed and developed during our life on earth. Each person has the choice of how to live each day of our life and our choices will determine the strength and level of our spiritual life and the destiny of our spirit and soul after physical death.

The term "flesh" is used by Paul to describe the state of people without God. It is defined in Nelson's New Christian Dictionary as the *Human nature alienated from God and devoted to sensual self-gratification and pursuit of worldly pleasures and possessions*⁴.

With no spiritual relationship between the Holy Spirit and our own spirit, we are not

able to know God or His will. The natural control of life that would have come from people being led by God's Spirit has been replaced by spiritual isolation from God. In this state, we are influenced by the sinful life we are born into and the experiences of our life in a physical world that is also separated from God. We are fleshly people rather than spiritual people because we, through our soul, follow our fleshly body rather than our spirit. When we listen and act on what our body wants rather than our intuition from the spirit, then we yield to the flesh instead of the spirit. Living in this way means that our soul becomes quickly indistinguishable from our spirit and we effectively are only able to, through our soul, experience our mind, emotions and will, and through our body, experience our senses.

The soul needs the body to live and communicate in the physical realm and it needs the spirit to live and communicate in the spiritual realm. The soul cannot function or exist independently. Therefore any external spiritual influences, whether they come from God's Holy Spirit or evil spirits, can only gain access to a person's mind by first going through the spirit of the person.

There are six functions of the spirit.

Communication with the Mind

The spirit of a person is linked to the soul of the person and this enables information to be transferred from the soul to the spirit and from the spirit to the soul. Therefore, when we pray our mind sends the prayer to the spirit and the spirit communicates the prayer to the spiritual realm. Similarly, when spiritual information is received, it comes through the spirit and the spirit communicates this to our mind. The information received into our mind in this way is called our intuition.

Intuition is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as the *power of knowing without reasoning or being taught*⁵. Intuition is sourced from our spirit. It provides the means through which the spirit is able to communicate to the mind what has been communicated to it by the spiritual realm. Because intuition comes from our spirit, our mind has no part in its formation, it only interprets it so that we can understand it.

We read in the gospels that Jesus had the ability to know what people were thinking. An instance of this is seen in Mark's gospel where Jesus became aware in His spirit (His own spirit not the Holy Spirit) of what the scribes were thinking silently to themselves. The Holy Spirit revealed this to His spirit and He understood it with His mind.

Mark2vs6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 " Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone? " 8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, " Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"

When we reconcile ourselves to God, our ability to listen to His guidance through our intuition increases as we spend time reading the Bible, praying and living our life for God. We will continue to also receive through our intuition evil thoughts and we must always check that the intuitive thoughts, that we believe come from God, are consistent with what is known from the Bible.

Communication with God

People were created in God's likeness and therefore have the ability to clearly communicate with Him. We were meant to live our life being led by our spirit, linked to God, rather than our body. We were designed to be spirit-led people. The spirit was intended by God to be the key part of a person because by it people would communicate with Him. With the separation of people from God, the spirit was deadened to God because the communication link was broken. Therefore, the vital role that the spirit was to play was lost. In spiritual darkness, people lived life according to the information received through the body from the physical world around them. Through reconciliation with God, the Holy Spirit comes to live in each of us and through His presence within us we are individually able to communicate with God.

Conscience

When God withdrew His spiritual communication link with people He did leave a portion of His light in people, the conscience. The conscience is in every person that is born into this world and it provides an awareness that God exists as well as an awareness of right and wrong, good and evil. This is communicated up to the mind through intuition.

The conscience provides the explanation why every person knows right and wrong deep down inside them and also explains why so many primitive cultures have been discovered worshiping a god. They, like so many others, are searching for God they know deep within themselves exists. However, the "voice" of the conscience can be suppressed by it being repeatedly ignored by our mind.

God's Call to Salvation

God is able to call people to be reconciled to Himself by influencing a person's spirit. In this way the otherwise darkened spirit of the person is spiritually influenced by God to draw the person to believe and be reconciled to Him.

Communication with Evil Spirits

Although we will consider the evil in this world in more detail later in this book, the New Testament clearly tells us that Satan and his evil spirits exist in this world and Satan has spiritual control over it. The information received from these spirits is received by our spirit and then transferred to our mind. This is how people are tempted by evil spirits and are spiritually influenced by the world around us.

"Tent" for the Soul after Physical Death

Every person who dies has a spirit that will go into the spiritual realm. When alive, our soul is linked to our physical body and our spirit but when we die the physical body separates and the soul goes with the spirit into the spiritual realm. Paul speaks of our body being the outward person and our soul and spirit being our inward person. During our life on earth each of us has an earthly tent, our body, but we also have a heavenly spiritual tent, a home in which we shall dwell for eternity, which is our spirit.

2Corinthians5vs1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Even though our life in this world has so much to do with our outward person and it is the part of our life that is given great importance in this physical world, God is primarily interested in our complete inner person. Our spirit enables us to live in eternity in the same way that our body enables us to live for a limited time on this earth.

The Heart

Apart from the spirit, soul and body, the Bible also frequently mentions the spiritual heart.

The heart is the center of the soul, and determines how we will live our daily life. The heart determines the direction of a person's life and what is important in that person's life. It determines how the person will act and react to the world, issues, people and God. The heart determines emotions that are felt, how the mind will be applied and where the will should be directed.

Having lost our focus on God and our submission to His will, we are each born with a sinful heart that is self-centered and our daily experience and exposure to the physical world is from this self-centered perspective. The communication from the physical world dominates our heart and it is largely unaffected by our spirit. Due to our sinfulness, our heart has little light from God, is hardened towards God and we are unable to comprehend the spiritual things of God. The heart that should be soft, open and yielded to God is instead only open to the world and its influence. Having been born as a sinner and with most spiritual influence being received from evil influences, the Bible describes our heart as being "desperately wicked".

Jeremiah17vs9 " The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? 10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

God knows the heart of every person and He does this through the spiritual realm. We are told that God uses the spirit of a person to find out what is in our heart and to provide His spiritual light into our life.

Proverbs20vs27 The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inner depths of his heart.

Nothing is hidden from God and though we may be able to impress or convince people through our words and actions, God's view of us is formed by what we hold in our heart. A good indication of what we hold dear in our heart is how we choose to spend our leisure time, our passions, desires and what we choose to talk and think about. God considers a person's heart as being more important than our outward appearance, words, actions, status in society or possessions.

1Samual16vs7 ... For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. "

In all cases God knows us even better than we know ourselves for He sees the motive behind all that we do, say or think. Our motives come from our heart.

Luke 16 vs 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

Need for God

As a result of the separation of people from God, people have tried to gain a sense of fulfillment by continually seeking God or alternatively something or someone in life to try to fill the spiritual emptiness deep inside us. Whatever or whoever we put first in our life becomes our god because it takes the place of the one true God. If the focal point in our life is not God, we will never be able to fill the empty spiritual space deep inside us and though we may experience short-term satisfaction, it will never be lasting or truly fulfilling. Typically this lack of fulfillment drives us on to endlessly pursue further achievements or experiences but true lasting contentment, peace or happiness is always elusive.

Having been designed to gain satisfaction from the spiritual relationship with God, people continually try to find satisfaction from the world around them not realizing that the void is spiritual. Only the spiritual things satisfies the spiritual hunger and no false god, relationship, career or material possession could ever satisfy the spiritual hunger within each person that can only be truly satisfied by the restoration of a spiritual relationship with the one true God.

C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* says this:

*God made us: invented us as a man invents a petrol engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.*⁶

God is the only source of true fulfillment and hope for our life and until we realize that we were created to be in God's image, to live for God, love Him and obey Him, we will never live a fulfilled life. The human spirit was made to gain its spiritual life and direction from God and people were made to live a spirit-led life.

The spiritual separation from God has caused us to grow apart from Him and to regain all He has for us we must become part of His holy nation. God's desire did not change when our spiritual life was lost through an inability for the first people created to obey God. God told Satan that there would be a Seed (who would be Jesus Christ) who would overcome him and step him into the ground.

Genesis 3 vs 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. "

God intended that His plan, to create a holy nation from people who were spiritually separated from Him, would unfold through covenants with people. These covenants would provide a way for sinful people to come to know more about God and His will. The Seed that God promised after Adam and Eve were disobedient would be sent but only at the time appointed by God, in accordance with His perfect and complete plan, wisdom and knowledge.

- 4. Kurian, G.T. 2001. Nelson's New Christian Dictionary: The authoritative resource on the Christian world. Thomas Nelson Pubs. Nashville, Tenn.**
- 5. Oxford Dictionary ed. Soanes and Stevenson. 2004, Concise Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press, Oxford.**
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