

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Body, Soul and Spirit

### Body, Soul and Spirit - posted by Heydave (), on: 2014/3/6 6:54

On another thread the subject of the tripartite nature of man was brought up. That is that man comprises of a body, soul and spirit. It appears that this is a position disputed by some as error and that those who believe and teach such are liable to go into other extremes of error.

I would like to consider if the doctrine of man being tripartite is in fact error or not.

The scriptures state clearly in at least two places regarding this truth....

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess 5:23).

Here there is a clear distinction between spirit, soul and body.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb 4:12)

Here we see that although the soul and spirit are very closely connected and can be hard to separate, they are in fact separate (in the same way as joints and marrow are separate) and the Word of God is that which can show us what is in fact soul and that which is spirit.

Now I would agree that any teaching that over emphasises the separation of any of the three elements can lead to erroneous doctrine and practice because we should view our lives as a whole. One part always affects the other and one part cannot be treated separately. However the truth seems clear to me that our make up is clearly three parts, body, soul and spirit.

In addition to the clear scripture references there are also types in scripture that also speak into this reality. For example the temple had three parts, the outer court, the holy place and the holy of holies. Also there are three heavens spoken about in scripture, the physical atmosphere of heaven around the earth (sky), the spiritual heaven where spiritual principalities operate and the heaven of God's throne. God Himself is tripartite, Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Therefore my question is, on what basis do people question this teaching and why should it be any basis for error any more than any truth that is pushed beyond its limits can become error?

### Re: Body, Soul and Spirit, on: 2014/3/6 10:56

Quote:  
-----Therefore my question is, on what basis do people question this teaching and why should it be any basis for error any more than any truth that is pushed beyond its limits can become error? Heydave  
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I think the simple and real answer to your question Dave is that if we ever get to having to make a distinction in our thinking between spirit and soul we will have to change our attitudes altogether.

If there is no distinction between spiritual life (spirit) and natural life (soul) then nothing we do can really be that bad after all. Hence the mantra JUDGEMENTAL, JUDGEMENTAL, JUDGEMENTAL on those who press this distinction in this hour! With no distinction our children's disobedience simply becomes natural behaviour and therefore just psychology, a thing to be excused. Our own rebelliousness simply becomes political and societal awareness. Our husbands or wives unfaithfulness simply becomes emotional and physical need. Understanding becomes learning from experience and truth becomes an expression of that which we understand.

Hence why some brethren press politics, Sociological thinking, Psychology, Philosophy and a myriad of such man made

things onto us and call it proof that they are under one head, even Christ. All it is proof of is that we are yet in the flesh. Then if we are unwilling to see that the natural man and the spiritual man is the difference between two kingdoms and two kings, we will never comprehend why it is necessary to speak of Christ as Lord and God, and Caesar as king.

With a proper understanding there is no offence in calling Caesar, king. The very name means king. On the other hand we rejoice in the fact that we know a more perfect truth that Christ is both Lord and God by which truth we do not worship Caesar as God, but honour him as king. We worship Christ as both Lord and God and honour Him by obeying Caesar so far as we are able to obey him.

Make no mistake David brother, the magnitude of the reality at back of this ability to comprehend the difference between that which is spiritual (spirit) and that which is natural (soul) is the difference between the kingdom of heaven and the fire of hell.

**Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2014/3/6 11:32**

Thank you amrkelly for emphasizing the difference between soul and spirit and how glossing over those differences to the point of denying they exist is in conflict with Biblical truth. I agree with both you and Heydave that the Bible teaches the truth of soul and spirit. Anyone who says this teaching is in error are themselves in error.

But Heydave was asking for such people who think soul and spirit being separate entities is heretical to come forward and explain their position. I also would like to hear how they could argue such a bizarre thing. I've never run across anyone who holds such a position myself. Perhaps they assume that the teaching of soul and spirit implies that we are two separate persons in one body. I've never heard anyone say that and if they did it would be wrong. We are tri-PART, body, soul and spirit.

I also welcome anyone who denies the truth of soul and spirit to explain their position.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/6 12:06**

I think we have 3 parts and I think the Bible teaches that.

Being created in God's image means we were created as spiritual beings. Our spirit is tainted by sin until we are born again. The "new creation" we become refers to our spirit.

Our "soul" is simply our mind and emotions. These are not re-created when we are saved but we are able to transform them through the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:) assuming that our spirit is reborn.

Our body is simply our flesh, obviously.

**Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2014/3/6 15:15**

Well there seems to be a consensus in affirming that the Bible teaches man has a body soul and spirit. Maybe I was wrong, but I was sure it was suggested that there were those who considered this to be wrong and would even lead to error. I just wanted to understand why they took that view.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/6 15:27**

Now, I might be stating this incorrectly, but I believe that those who believe in "soul sleep" object to dichotomy or trichotomy because they believe that the entire body will be raised at the final resurrection and that their "soul" will not be severed at death in some disembodied state.

I know of some perfectly wonderful Christians who believe this and while I disagree (but not super strongly) it is not grounds to divide over IMO.

Re: , on: 2014/3/6 20:24

Quote:  
-----Well there seems to be a consensus in affirming that the bible teaches man has a body soul and spirit. Maybe I was wrong, but I was sure it was suggested that there were those who considered this to be wrong and would even lead to error. I just wanted to understand why they took that view. Heydave  
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Here is a nice and simple answer David to anyone who doubts the validity of the terms Spirit, Soul and Body as meaningful terms used in the ancient world by men who were both capable of understanding what they were saying, said it in context of the development of the terms themselves and said it in context of the original linguistic origins found in Hebrew as spoken and written in ancient Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures given by God to Israel.

### Spirit, Soul, and Flesh (Body)

The Usage of  $\psi\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ ,  $\pi\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$ , and  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$  in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 25 A.D.; and of their Equivalents  $\text{נֶפֶשׁ}$ ,  $\text{רוּחַ}$  and  $\text{בָּשָׂר}$  in the Hebrew Old Testament

Burton, E. D. W. (1918). Spirit, soul, and flesh. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. Professor and Head of the Department of New Testament and Early Christian Literature in the University of Chicago.

This scholarly volume is a compilation of articles written between 1913-16. They cover all classical literature of the ancient Graeco Roman World as well as new testament times in an effort to show how these three words were used in ancient biblical times. The relevance of these studies lays in the most extensive study ever undertaken into what these three Greek and Hebrew equivalences meant to the men who used them.

The breadth of these studies can be seen as follows.

#### I. $\psi\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ , $\pi\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$ , AND $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$ IN GREEK WRITERS FROM HOMER TO ARISTOTLE

I.  $\psi\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$

II.  $\pi\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$

III.  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$

#### II. $\text{נֶפֶשׁ}$ , $\text{רוּחַ}$ AND $\text{בָּשָׂר}$ IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

I.  $\text{נֶפֶשׁ}$

II.  $\text{רוּחַ}$

III.  $\text{בָּשָׂר}$

#### III. $\psi\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ , $\pi\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$ , AND $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$ IN GREEK WRITERS FROM EPICURUS TO ARIUS DIDYMUS

I.  $\psi\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$

II.  $\pi\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$

III.  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$

IV. Epicurus and the Epicureans

V. The Early Pre-Christian Stoics

VI. The Later Pre-Christian Stoics

#### IV. $\psi\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ , $\pi\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$ , AND $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$ IN GREEK WRITERS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD

I.  $\psi\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$

II.  $\pi\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$

III.  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$

IV. Neo-Pythagorean Usage

V. Stoics and Writers Influenced by Stoicism

## VI. The All-Permeative $\hat{\Gamma}^{1/2}\hat{\mu}_\zeta\hat{\Gamma}^{1/4}\hat{\pm}$

## V. Î Î½Î¼á; Î¼Î¼±, Î¼...Î¼® , AND Î¼Î¼•Î¼¾ IN JEWISH-GREEK LITERATURE

$$I. \hat{I} \hat{I}^{1/2} \hat{\mu}_a \hat{I}^{1/4} \hat{\pm}$$

**II. I...I±I®**

## III. £¬•¼

#### IV. Translated Works

## V. Works Written Originally in Greek

VI. Î Î½Î¼á¿!¼Î±, Î“...İþÎ®, AND Î£Î¬-İ•¼ IN ETHNIC RELIGIOUS WRITINGS APPROXIMATELY CONTEMPORARY WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT

## I. The Usage of the Magical Texts

## II. The Hermetic Literature

## VII. Î Î½Î¼¿; Î¼¼Î±, Î¼...Î¼Î®, AND Î¼Î¼-Î¼¾ IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

$$I. \hat{I} \hat{I}^{1/2} \hat{\mu} \hat{I}^{1/4} \hat{\pm}$$

II.  $\hat{\Gamma} \dots \hat{\Gamma} \neq \hat{\Gamma}^{\otimes}$

III.  $\hat{\mathcal{L}}\neg\hat{\mathbf{i}}^{\bullet}\hat{\mathbf{i}}^{3/4}$ 

#### IV. The Pauline Usage

## V. The Usage of the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts

## VI. The Usage of the Johannine Writings

## VII. The Usage of the Remaining Books

The claim that spirit, soul and body, are somehow the product of fiction is simply wrong. The thing I have noted myself in my own studies is that the terms begin to be used outside of Israel approximately in parallel with the Assyrian Captivity of Israel in the 8th Century BC. As the Hebrew influence came to bear on Assyrian culture itself we have the beginnings of what today is called the Cabalistic occult practise of divination and sorcery. It is this particularly occidental understanding of the occult which is grounded in a knowledge of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

In seeking to understand how the use of these terms Spirit, Soul and Body have come about, and why the ancient world began to use them, is in my view only possible in context of the exile of Israel into Assyria in the 8th century BC. Only in this way is this trichotomous understanding actually assimilated into the ancient world outside of Israel proper. In the end the terms found their full meaning in the revelation of the Lord Jesus beginning at the Jordan River, the commission of the apostles and their eventual writing of the New Testament Scriptures. Remember that the Hebrews always had these terms at their disposal and they always formed part of the Old Testament revelation of Both God Himself, Creation and the means of Salvation.

It is essential to understand or else realise that the language of the New Testament is not English. It is Common Greek of the Hellenistic influence. When the Greeks began to assimilate the meaning and implications of the idea of spirit, as distinct from the personality, and the personality as distinct from the physical body, these terms began to fall into intellectual usage in the ancient western world. There had already been a separate directly satanic influence on ancient Egypt through magical texts and meanings associated with the worship of false gods and the manipulation of the very elements of life itself. From the River Nile, to food, to wealth, to health, to happiness and a multitude of other day to day realities the Egyptians were practising formal magical arts. Assyria similarly practised what amounted to the same magical art as could be found in Egypt. In these cultures it is possible to find a corresponding use of terms as those of the Hebrews and eventually the Greeks, yet with no direct revelation of God to make substance and validity of their meanings. For this reason there has always been an occult equivalence of these terms which have over time become so closely paralleled with the true meaning of these words, that today claiming a trichotomous understanding of man, is beginning to be expressed itself as an occult insight. In short if you hold such an understanding you will eventually be called a sorcerer.

The implications of the whole of the Western World rests in these three terms and the way in which the Greeks developed their use of Hebrew meanings which were incorporated philosophically and magically into Assyrian religious practises. When Israel and then Judah went into captivity there was a correspondence in time and space between the Hebrew God of Israel and His revelation of Himself through the Law and the Prophets, and the occult world of satanic inspiration and the meaning of what spiritual life meant to the whole of the pagan world. It is not without good reason that Daniel is given a name by the Babylonian king which translated means chief sorcerer. No one doubted the reality of spirit, no one doubted the meaning of magic, both fear and effect (the soul) and no one doubted the meaning of the body and the realities.

s of physical life. So that we can say with certainty that both the meaning of these words and their usage was to be found in several ancient languages by occultist, magicians, philosophers as well as historians. The only true meaning however could be found in Israel in the first instance and then the Church in the second. It has been apostasy which has hidden their meanings, both in Israel and the Church.

It is a very easy thing to imagine that because a distinction and a true meaning is lost within the folds of history, that either its true meaning is lost or the need to rediscover the word and their relevance is a vanity. Nor does it mean that any distinction in words has to be made into a metric system of doctrine. Countless saints have walked faithfully throughout church history. It is only necessary to truly desire to please God and to obey the most basic commandment to love not the world, to discover the meaning and distinction between spirit and soul and to walk in it. At the root of this command to love not the world is a necessary willingness to deny the very body itself. Not an aesthetic practise, but a recognition of its lusts and desires which detract in comfort, from that which is a joy, in its discipline.

This business of the trichotomous nature of men and how that very distinction lies at the heart of understanding the full meaning of salvation simply cannot be underestimated in this hour we live in.

The ancient Greeks philosophised and speculated intelligently about what the spirit was, as well as whether the soul was the same in meaning. They also exercised considerable efforts in anatomical medicine and founded the first western schools of medicine. The physics of ancient Greece were as much concerned for the meaning of material substance (the body) as they were about the personality which pervades and shows itself through that substance.

From the end of the third century AD to approximately the 10th Century the terms Spirit, Soul and Body as distinct realities of experience and substance was lost and buried in the Roman Catholic Church. The meaning became subjugated to Latin texts which did not express these terms fully, as well as Apostate men who had no interest broadly in true spiritual life. In such a mind it is not necessary to draw a distinction between spiritual life (spirit) and natural intelligence (soul). Their concern was with power and the establishing of a primacy of power. The Crusades and the sacking of Constantinople and the removal of what were by then Islamic libraries to the West, began the process of assimilation of the Greek philosophical meanings and ideas of the ancient world into secular societies through the founding of Universities ex ecclesia on these Islamic treasures of learning. In short the ancient Greek Hellenistic world of philosophy Mathematics, and Reason was rediscovered by the men of learning in the West.

The effect of this eventually led to the 12th-Century Renaissance, and the re-examination of ancient Greek literature from the philosophers to the occultist alike. This early re-examination essentially supported the continued embrace of a dichotomous view of mankind, but in that process what we now understand to be occidental occultism emerged with its intuitive occult understanding of the trichotomy of man. As a former occultist I was introduced to this trichotomous reality even before I had any true knowledge of God. Today the New Age occultist also embraces this same understanding. However the meaning is distorted and takes on the form found in ancient magical texts written in Greek over two thousand years ago. So side by side with the dichotomous scientific material paradigm of a European dominant philosophical, political and economic model of power which eventually emerges as the Enlightenment and a continuation of the dichotomous view of mankind, we have the trichotomous and ancient occult understanding of occidental magic or sorcery. This manifested itself intellectually in what eventually became known as alchemy. But its occult meaning is found in ancient Egypt in the Hellenistic period written in common Greek where the Hebrew meaning of spirit, soul and body was corrupted by those who were seeking their own metrical and spiritual benefit. In other words these three terms spirit, soul and body had already been corrupted in meaning from their original Hebrew meanings which came by revelation of God, to their Greek equivalencies as prescribed by Satan's activities in the world of occult thinkers.

The significant point here is to simply realise that although the philosophers and occultist of the Hellenistic period of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt as well as the Greek philosophers had essentially developed the use of these three Greek words  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  (Soul),  $\pi\acute{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  (Spirit), &  $\sigma\acute{o}\mu\alpha$  (Body) the true meaning was already corrupted. It was a meaning which was lending itself to a dichotomous understanding. However with the advent of Christ the early church had no difficulty in using these words to describe what is in fact true reality. Man is Spirit, Soul and Body. The early Greek church fathers, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria,...Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil of Caesarea, for more than two centuries had no trouble with its meant whatsoever.

Today that struggle over the implication of a dichotomous understanding of man and a trichotomous understanding of man forces a concern by rationalists who take the name of Christ, as well as spiritual minded believers who take the name of Christ. The rationalist is offended at the implication of a spiritual dynamic which exceeds their own ability to lay hold of its meaning with the mind, and so embraces modern philosophy and meanings, whilst using very often the same language.

ge as the spiritual believer. Where the distinction ends, is a choice to reject trichotomous understanding set in a true meaning, and embrace a dichotomous understanding which fails to make a true distinction between the natural man and the new creature in Christ. To that end we would say that the true meaning is not metrical as one writing a poem, but spiritual as one walking by faith. It is not a matter of words but spiritual reality. However for those who press rationalism instead of spiritual truth the words become necessary and even essential.

Those who do truly love the truth and are minded to be spiritual men with or without knowing it, joyfully embrace the spiritual man and reject a determination to be self seeking. To embrace a truly spiritual mind of reason is to embrace the new life and lay hold of it at any cost.

Getting back to the centrality of these three seemingly unimportant word, it is actually proper to set them in their true framework of discovery by the western world through Israel via Babylon and via Babylon to the ancient greeks and then Islam and finally from the medieval world of 12th century ex ecclesia to the occult world of the Occident right up to the present day. The only true and proper meaning of these words can be found in Israel in the beginning of the revelation of God to Israel through the Law and the prophets and then in finality through the true church by the Apostles and the Prophet in the writing of Scripture. Everything else is a misuse of truth or a corruption of the true meaning.

I make no apologies for writing these things.

#### Re: Body, Soul and Spirit, on: 2014/3/8 8:53

In seeking to understand why the trichotomous view is held with such concern by some believers, I would like to explain my thinking a little further. To do this I must have a point of reference. My point of reference will be the following comment I made earlier.

Quote:  
-----There has always been an occult equivalence of these terms which have over time become so closely paralleled with the true meaning of these words, that today claiming a trichotomous understanding of man, is beginning to be expressed itself as an occult insight. In short if you hold such an understanding you will eventually be called a sorcerer.  
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I believe that to understand why the trichotomous view is held with suspicion by some believers and even spoken against, it is necessary to make a dichotomous distinction first.

Understanding why the trichotomous position is thought to be wrong, cannot possibly be a matter of simply insisting that the Scriptures do not reveal something of what that distinction between spirit, soul and body means. At the same time it is equally true that the scripture does often interchange all of these words in a variety of ways.

For example the physical body itself is often referred to in terms of God's creative authority. God made the man. This is true of his body, as it is true of his soul and/or spirit. Yet the scripture clearly points to something of another way of thinking about the body and the soul beyond just speaking about physical creation. There is also a view of the body which is expressed in terms which go beyond a simple physical description. This difference is something which even questions the legitimacy of simply remaining a natural man after conversion.

For example when the scripture tells us that, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul" we are not reading about a corruption of something, rather we are reading about the order of things as well as the original condition of things. In Genesis 2:7 we read that, "The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This description of man as a living soul is a description of a sinless man. It is not the description of a fallen man. It is the description of the physical man and the soul as well. It is the revelation of God as to the origin of the human body itself in its sinless perfection as well as the soul itself.

In speaking about the body and the soul therefore the scriptures speaks about the natural body, as well as the soul which is also natural. In 1 Peter 2:11 this relationship between the natural body and the natural soul is clearly expressed. Yet

it is expressed in negative terms. Peter is saying very clearly that the body itself has a consequence and effect on the soul. Even if we discount the whole question of a sin nature, where that nature lies or where does the power of sin express itself we cannot change Peter's words. Setting aside all of these things we cannot remove from the simple and straight forward meaning of what Peter has said. "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11) Paul says a very similar things as well. Again if we set aside any question of sin, sinfulness, or a sinful nature, we see that Paul also draws a very real distinction between that which is natural and that which is spiritual.

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:1, NASB95)

Even if we absolutely insisted that what Paul is saying here with regard to the maturity of the Corinthian believers means no more than saying, "you are immature" there would be no getting away from the fact that he is speaking about that which is natural to natural born men and women. Of course Peter is not making that assertion. Neither is Paul. However we can pretend for a moment that they are and take the meaning of what they have said to be free from all controversy regarding doctrines of sin, sinfulness and sinning.

I posted a section of a publication by Erasmus on another thread to prepare for this post. So here is the point I was making.

Quote:  
-----Thou prayest, and judgest him that prayeth not. Thou fastest, and condemnest him that fasteth not. Whosoever doeth not that thou doest, thou thinkest thyself better than he: beware lest thy fast pertain to thy flesh. Thy brother hath need of thy help, thou in the mean space mumbles t in thy prayers unto God, and wilt not be known of thy brother's necessity. God shall abhor these prayers: for how shall God hear thee while thou prayest, when thou which art a man canst not find in thy heart to hear another man. Perceive also another thing. Thou lovest thy wife for this cause only, that she is thy wife. Thou doest no great thing, for this thing is common as well to infidels as to thee: or else thou lovest her for none other thing but because she is to thee pleasant and delectable. Thy love now draweth to thee fleshward. Erasmus 1501  
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Here is a paraphrase:

You pray and judge him that does not pray. You fast and condemn him that does not fast. When someone doesn't do what you do, you think yourself to be better than they are. Be careful because your fast may prove to be no more than something of your own purposes. Your brother has need of your help. You always complaint to God when you are praying, and don't want to see your brothers need. God rejects such prayers. How can God hear you when you pray if you who are the same in nature as your brother do not see your brothers need? Understand this as well! The only reason you love your wife is because she is your wife. That is no great achievement, even unbelievers do the same thing. Perhaps you love your wife because she is beautiful and desirable to you. Such love is natural and no more.

Although Erasmus is writing his article to present the trichotomous view of Origen, in this short passage he ends up speaking about just two things. These are the body and the soul. The meaning of this passage draws us to a dichotomous view and yet his deeper intention is to show that if all we do is that which is natural we are not spiritual at all. Herein lies a scriptural reality. When dealing with conduct and behaviour the scriptures always draws a simple dichotomous understanding. Yet the scriptures clearly show that a man is much more than that which he is by nature of the body and the soul.

Having made that point I will post into the more difficult explanation of where the problem is perceived to lay with expressing and teaching a trichotomous view and why increasing numbers of believer are actively speaking against it.

I personally recognise and believe in a trichotomous view of a man. I have no problem however in speaking about the dichotomous view because as we can see in simplicity, if all we did was speak about the body and the soul we would not be able to remove from the admonishment of scripture to be more than mere men. This is Peter's meaning and this is Paul's meaning as well.