



Where Do the Human Soul and Spirit Go When We Die? (Part II)

Hebrews 4:12: (NASB) *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*



In Part I, we deeply explored the human soul. We saw that both the Old and New Testaments clearly teach that humans ARE souls and do not HAVE souls. We further confirmed that the Bible is explicit about the destiny of the human soul being death, as that was the irrevocable penalty for sin given to Adam at the beginning. As surprising as all this might sound, it is all verified in Scripture. We will now consider the human spirit. What is it? Is it a tangible being or is it an intangible essence? Is it a life force all of its own? Is it the same as the soul? Is the human spirit immortal or can it die? These are complex questions. As with the soul, the answers can be found in the Bible, but only if we are careful to consider both the Old and New Testament records together.

recap
recap

Once again, here are the basic elements of the soul and spirit, life and death questions.

THE HUMAN SOUL

Genesis 2:7: (KJV) *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 soul.*

We saw in Part I how the Bible clearly labels man as a soul.

BODY +
THE BREATH OF LIFE =
A LIVE CREATURE CALLED A "SOUL" |  Man BECAME a living soul.
He was not GIVEN a soul.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Zechariah 12:1: (NASB) *The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the **spirit** <7307> of man within him.*

Spirit: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #7307 *ruach*; wind; by resemblance breath, i.e., a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions)

The Bible seems to define the human spirit as formed within each person.

THE HUMAN SOUL AND THE SPIRIT DIVIDED

Hebrews 4:12: (NASB) *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*


The Bible does show us significant differences between soul and spirit.





GOD HAS A SPIRIT


Genesis 1:1-2: (NASB) ¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and *the spirit <7307>* of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Ruach is used at least 348 times in the Old Testament. It has a variety of meanings in different contexts:


 **GOD'S SPIRIT/ruach** When talking about God's *ruach*, it is the unseen and powerful moving influences that He has as the Creator of all. He can apply it anywhere He chooses. It is God's invisible power and influence.

 **EARTH'S SPIRIT/ruach** When talking about the natural earth, *ruach* depicts wind and power - the unseen yet moving forces of nature.

 **ANIMALS' SPIRIT/ruach** When talking about animals, *ruach* is the drive of their instincts that move, guide and protect them.

 **HUMANITY'S SPIRIT/ruach** When talking about humanity's *ruach*, it is our unseen drive, focus and influence.

Here are just a few Old Testament examples of God's spirit in action:

 **God's spirit was the moving force in creation:**

Genesis 1:2-3: (NASB) ²The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the *spirit <7307>* of God was moving over the surface of the waters. ³Then God said, Let there be light; and there was light.

Imagine the power of God *moving over the surface of the waters*. God speaks and His power brought what He spoke into reality.

God's spirit gave humans exceptional skill and understanding:

Exodus 35:30-31: (NASB) ³⁰Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³¹And He has filled him with the *spirit <7307>* of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;

Bezalel received miraculous skills in the service of building the Tabernacle in the wilderness.



Every time I think of him, I think, I want his hands! I want to be able to create like he did. I used to build fine furniture and there is such intricacy in carving a piece of wood. To know what he knew because God's spirit moved him is awe-inspiring.

God's spirit guided the prophets to properly represent His will:

Isaiah 59:21: (NASB) As for Me, this is My covenant with them, says the LORD: My *spirit <7307>* which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring, says the LORD, from now and forever.



The holy spirit guided and directed God's prophets by inspiring them to write or speak words they generally did not understand. The meanings of these writings were often revealed in the New Testament, meant for us to study and understand now.

God's spirit is His unseen power and influence over all things in both the natural and spiritual realm.

Just as the wind has power which itself is unseen but its results are obvious, so God's influence is also unseen, yet its results are undeniable.

In Old Testament times and before Jesus' baptism, there was a more mechanical operation of God's spirit, such as during the time of creation and in giving miraculous abilities for specific and limited purposes. The prophets did not have God's spirit dwelling within them like the Christians of the New Testament. They were given certain abilities to do the work God needed them to do usually for limited periods of time.



We see several ways in the Old Testament that God's spirit worked with humans. Now we are going to look at *ruach* as it is used to refer to natural phenomena.



There are MANY Old Testament uses of *ruach* in nature as some form of wind:

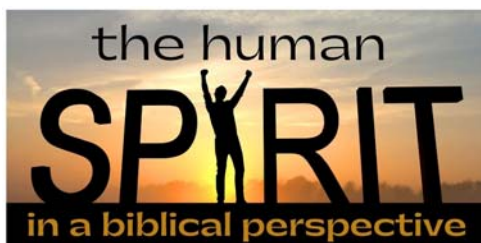
Genesis 3:8: (KJV) *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool <7307> of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

The *cool of the day* might include a cool breeze. In the *cool of the day*, Adam and Eve would commune with God. This is *ruach* in a serene, happy way.

Here is *ruach* in relation to nature in a not-so-happy way:

1 Kings 19:11: (NASB) *So He said, Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD. And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind <7307> was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind <7307>. And after the wind <7307> an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.*

Ruach can be used for the cool breeze of the day or for a *great and strong wind* that breaks up mountains. In nature, *ruach* depicts wind and power, the unseen and yet moving forces of nature.



The highest form of spirit we see in the Bible is God's spirit. It is His mighty power, influence and focus that can guide and change things. His spirit is aptly described by the same word for wind. This unseen force can reshape landscapes as well as gently cool you in the heat of the day.



God's spirit is this great power that creates and changes things. The same word *ruach* is used for natural wind. Using the same word to describe God's spirit and the natural wind is eye-opening. It ends up being all about unseen power.

God's spirit is all-powerful.

How does the human spirit compare with its power, focus and influence?

Man was created in God's own image. This would imply that our spirit would (in some small and very inferior way) have similarities to God's spirit. To set this comparison in place, we want to first explore some of the few scriptures that talk about the *ruach*, the spirit, in the animal creation.

Before we get too far, let's introduce a second, less-used Hebrew word for *breath* - *neshamah*.

Breath: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5397 *neshamah*; a puff, i.e., wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, intellect or (concretely) an animal

The King James Version translates this as: blast, (that) breath (-eth), inspiration, soul, spirit



Let's start with *ruach* in animals and humans:

Genesis 6:17: (KJV) *And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the **breath** <7307> of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.*

The word translated *breath* here is *ruach*.

But let's go back to this verse about man we looked at earlier:

Genesis 2:7: (KJV) *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **breath** <5397> of life; and man became a living soul.*

The word translated *breath* here is *neshamah*, not *ruach*.

Further, when referring to both animals and man:

Genesis 7:22: (KJV) *All in whose nostrils was the **breath** <5397> of life of all that was in the dry land died.*

The word translated *breath* here is also *neshamah* and not *ruach*.



Why the difference?

Is *neshamah/breath* interchangeable with *ruach/breath*?

These seem to mean the same thing, but they do not. *Neshamah* is a puff of wind. *Ruach* is used for something bigger, something afterwards. The breath of life, *neshamah*, has the thought of the vitality that brings one to life. *Ruach* refers to something that is the result of that life. They are different in their application even though they might sound like they mean the same thing.

Both humans and animals receive *neshamah* - the initial breath of life, the act of breathing, and they both are then described as having *ruach* - the animated power to be either animal or man.

They both receive the breath of life to begin living, but they are described as having *ruach* as a result of first receiving *neshamah*. *Ruach* goes beyond the vitalizing power of breathing.



This Psalm refers to creatures like the birds, cattle, goats and lions:


Psalms 104:29-30: (NASB) ²⁹You hide Your face, they are dismayed; You take away their *spirit <7307>*, they expire and return to their dust. ³⁰You send forth Your *spirit <7307>*, they are created; and You renew the face of the ground.

You take away their spirit, they expire - if their spirit/*ruach* is removed, they expire; they die. If their drive and instinct are gone, they die.

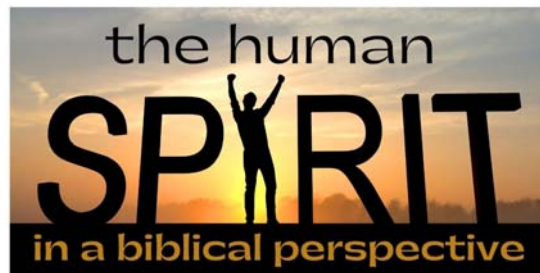
You send forth Your spirit, they are created - they are created by God's spirit/*ruach*.

Ecclesiastes 3:20-21: (NIV2011) ²⁰All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. ²¹Who knows if the human *spirit <7307>* rises upward and if the *spirit <7307>* of the animal goes down into the earth?

Perhaps this is a reference back to creation. The earth brought forth the animal creation and their spirit/*ruach* - the drive and instinct of animals, what makes each animal distinct - returns to where it came from, the earth. Man was directly created by God, and therefore man's spirit/*ruach* - his drive and influence, the things that make each man distinct - is retained by God.

BODY +
 THE BREATH (neshamah) OF LIFE =
 A LIVE CREATURE CALLED A "SOUL" | 

THE BREATH(ruach) IS THE RESULT OF A SOUL = THE SPIRIT OF THE CREATURE



"Spirit" in animals is all about their drive and instinct. God built this into them as an outgrowth of their natural being. Their "spirit" gives us a basic foundation for understanding our own human spirit.

We have our foundation, so let's look at how *ruach* is used regarding humanity. Here are just a few of the many Old Testament examples:



The human spirit can be sorrowful:

1 Samuel 1:15: (KJV) And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful *spirit <7307>*: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my *soul <5315>* before the LORD.

Soul/being: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5315 *nephesh*; properly, a breathing creature

Our energy can be sorrowful because of things that have happened to us.



The human spirit can be a worthy example to imitate:

2 Kings 2:9: (KJV) *And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy **spirit <7307>** be upon me.*

Elijah finished his work, and now Elisha would pick up where Elijah left off. As they prepared to part from one another, Elisha asked Elijah (who had been a powerful influence for God in Israel - remember he is the one who stood against the 450 prophets of Baal, all by himself) for a double portion of Elijah's drive to follow God, to be within him as well. When the human spirit is God-driven, it is something to be imitated and worth wanting and developing.

The human spirit can be deflated:

1 Kings 10:4-5: (NASB) *⁴When the queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, ⁵the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more **spirit <7307>** in her.*

There was no more spirit in her - this corresponds to an expression in our day: It took her breath away. Solomon's wisdom and prosperity was more than she expected. This scripture is so descriptive! Even the stairway Solomon used to go up to the house of the LORD was breathtaking. The Queen of Sheba went to Solomon to match wits with him, but once she saw his grandeur, she was deflated and felt she could not match up to him.



The human spirit can be inspired to godly acts:

Ezra 1:1-3: (NASB) *¹Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia... the LORD stirred up the **spirit <7307>** of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom...saying: ²...The LORD, the God of heaven... has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem... ³Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem...and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel...*

Cyrus was not a Jew, but God stirred up his human spirit so that he would stand for the Jewish people in a way unheard of before this. He was inviting them to build a house for God in Jerusalem, promising to help. His spirit was inspired to perform godly acts. His desire, focus, motivation and kingly influence were inspired to do godly acts. It is a motivating example of the human spirit in action.

The human spirit can grow faint and ponder:

Psalms 77:2-3,5-6: (NASB) *²In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord... My **soul <5315>** refused to be comforted. ³When I remember God, then I am disturbed; when I sigh, then my **spirit <7307>** grows faint. Selah. ⁵I have considered the days of old... ⁶I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, and my **spirit <7307>** ponders:*

When I sigh, my spirit grows faint - my focus, my energy grows faint due to my struggles.

I will meditate with my heart - even though we may feel faint, the same human spirit can be revived by focusing on things from above.

Our spirit is the outgrowth of who we are, the outgrowth of our human life.



The human spirit can be impatient:

Proverbs 14:29: (KJV) *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of **spirit** <7307> exalteth folly.*

Has our human spirit ever been impatient? Yes, of course! This describes our humanity, our drive, our focus, our discipline, our motivation.

The human spirit can search for the Lord:

Isaiah 26:9: (NASB) *At night my **soul** <5315> longs for You, indeed, my **spirit** <7307> within me seeks You diligently; For when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.*



We have a soul/*nephesh* (we learned about that in Part I) and a spirit/*ruach*.

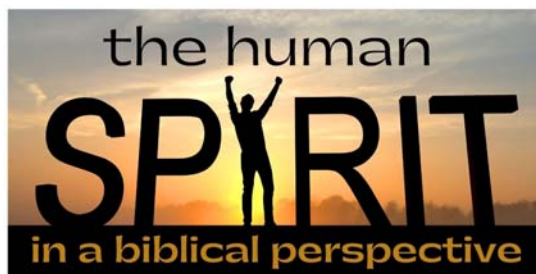
What is the difference between the two?

As an example, it is like being hungry. When we are hungry our stomachs crave food. Our spirit, or drive, finds the food. Maybe we buy it from the store or pick it from the garden. Our spirit, our motivation, our instincts are going to drive us to get that food.



At night my soul, my very life, longs for You, my Father. Then, my spirit... seeks You diligently. My life is feeling empty and longs for God, and then I will apply myself to seek You diligently in the darkness of that night. It is a beautiful picture of what we feel, and then what we DO about what we feel. That is the soul and the spirit, all together.

We speak of people having a gentle spirit, a kind spirit, an angry spirit or mood, or a bitter spirit. The spirit describing mankind in general is either with reference to the breath of life, the animating spark which God first gave to Adam and his posterity - the *neshamah* - an invisible power or quality, or second, the spirit of the mind - the will - an invisible power that controls the life - the *ruach*. We can see this word has no reference to immortality, but simply refers to vitality, life power, drive or motivation.



The human spirit is an outgrowth of the human soul. It is the energy, motivation, focus and influence of the soul's existence. It is intangible in the sense that you cannot touch it, yet it is tangible in the sense of it being able to touch you by way of inspiration, passion and memory.

We have all been touched by inspiration, memory or the passion to do something. That gives us the sense of the human spirit in action as defined in the Old Testament.

Looking at the human spirit through the lens of the Old Testament gives us a powerful view of how we are wonderfully made.

**We now have a powerful Old Testament view of the human spirit.
How does this view translate in the New Testament?**

As we discussed in Part I, we cannot truly understand any basic doctrine of the Bible unless we consider the Bible in its entirety to describe it. Doing this requires crossing a language barrier between the Old and New Testaments. This becomes easy when we find Old Testament Hebrew verses translated into the Greek language of the New Testament.

In Part I, our bridge for the word *soul* was from the Old Testament *nephesh* to the Greek word *psuchē*. We found it by Jesus quoting the Hebrew word into Greek.



Here is an Old Testament to New Testament bridge for *ruach*:

Psalms 31:4-5: (NASB) *4You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for You are my strength. 5Into Your hand I commit my spirit <7307>; You have ransomed (redeemed) me, O LORD, God of truth.*

The Psalmist is prophetically speaking about Jesus on the cross. *Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth* - meaning the power, influence and drive in his humanity that he is handing over to the Father.

In the New Testament, Jesus quotes these verses on the cross:

Luke 23:46: (NASB) *And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit <4151>. Having said this, he breathed his last.*

The Greek word for spirit, *pneuma*, is Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4151. According to Jesus' words, *pneuma* is the equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew word *ruach*.

Spirit: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4151 *pneuma*; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the holy spirit



We are familiar with this root word in English. For example, typical bicycle and car tires are "pneumatic" - they have a solid rubber surface but are filled with air.



Some Bibles mistranslate our English word *spirit* as *ghost*. The King James Version, for example, was translated at a time when superstition was rampant; therefore, the word *ghost* would command a great deal more respect and reverence than it does today. Back in those days, ghosts were very real in the minds of most people, yet very mysterious. They were always associated with the thought of personality, and the translators, believing in a personal holy spirit, conceived the idea of calling it a holy *ghost*. But so far, we have seen nothing indicating that an entity's spirit is a separate being.



We have looked a lot at the Old Testament, and now we have crossed the bridge into the New Testament. We know we are using the right word because Jesus quotes the Old Testament scripture in the New Testament. We have the appropriate word upon which to build our discussion. We will see how it is used in the same way as in the Old Testament.

Truth does not change between the Old and New Testaments. Some things DO change, like the need to follow the spirit of the Law instead of the letter of the Law. However, once the basics of life are set as a solid foundation in the Old Testament, the New Testament builds on that foundation, expanding but not changing it.

As with the Old Testament, we will touch on God's spirit first and then see how the New Testament defines the spirit of man.

God's spirit was with Jesus from the moment his ministry began:

John 1:32: (KJV) *And John bare record, saying, I saw the **spirit** <4151> descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.*

Here is a beautiful picture of Jesus coming out of the water at baptism, and God's spirit in the form of a dove descends upon him. This was an outward manifestation that God's power and influence would rest upon Jesus throughout his ministry.



This was a powerful marker that indicated how Jesus would be able to do the miraculous things he did.

God's spirit strengthens us to subdue our flesh and leads us to sonship:

Romans 8:13-16: (NASB) *¹³for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the **spirit** <4151> you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are being led by the **spirit** <4151> of God, these are sons of God.*

We have this life-and-death scenario. God's spirit strengthens us to bring us to sonship. Without God's spirit, we do not have the opportunity for the life we are called to in Jesus. God's spirit is integral in the life of a true Christian. We have that spirit dwelling within us to bring us up out of death.

We can work with it or can sabotage it, but God's spirit is there to drive us and help us. We have to cooperate with it in order for it to strengthen us and help us to subdue our flesh in order to lead us to sonship.



The next part of this verse compares other spirits - other powers, motivations and focuses:

¹⁵For you have not received a *spirit <4151>* of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a *spirit <4151>* of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father!

This introduces the *spirit of slavery*, meaning the power or influence of slavery on a human. It is not a personality in itself. We are not slaves to sin any longer, as we have been adopted as sons of God. The word *pneuma* describes other influences that can come into our lives.

God's spirit is a testimony that we are prospective sons:

¹⁶The *spirit <4151>* himself (itself) testifies with our *spirit <4151>* that we are children of God,

God's *spirit... testifies with our spirit*. The two can work together.



Our spirit - our power, strength, focus and motivation - has to work with God's spirit in order for it to be a powerful influence in our lives.

Slavery versus adoption are two contrary influences that are able to sway us with their power. But our spirit can and must work with God's spirit. This enables us to have the privileges of adoption rather than be subjugated to slavery through sin.



...the spirit himself/itself testifies - some Bible translations assign the personal pronouns of "himself," "he" and "him" to describe *pneuma*, even though the neuter pronouns of "it" and "itself" are grammatically correct because *pneuma* is not a masculine or feminine word in Greek.

When referring to the *comforter* or *helper* (Greek: *paraklētos*) aspect of the spirit, such as in John 14:16, there is a consistency in using the masculine pronoun "he" rather than the neuter "it." This is because the words *comforter* and *helper* are masculine in Greek, and using the masculine pronoun follows the rules of Greek grammar. It is not proof that the holy spirit is a person or personality.



Let's look at our human spirit. The human spirit can be directed to serve God:

Romans 1:9: (NASB) For God, whom I serve in my *spirit <4151>* in the preaching of the gospel of His son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you.



I have a story about how our spirit can affect others. I was at a high school football game my senior year and our team was getting killed. The senior guys were all sitting in the bleachers, quiet, and I said, "I'm bored. Let's do something about this. Let's get crazy - follow my lead." We started chanting the name of the best football running back we had, over and over again.

The team was looking back at us like, what's going on? The coach was not playing this player, but then finally the coach handed him the ball and in the first play, he got 30 yards down the field. In the second play, he scored a



touchdown. The people in the stands went wild! Then the defense - we started chanting about them. After about five plays, that running back scored again. We did not have enough time to win the game, but it sure changed! The music teacher was sitting near us and told us we had changed this game!



This is a powerful representation of human spirit. The attitude we can impart to others through belief and expression is amazing.

God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel - the Apostle Paul is saying: *I am applying who and what I am and what I have to serve God.* He served God with his energy, focus and motivation. **This is how faithfulness happens. It does not just come to us; we have to apply ourselves through our human spirit.**

God's spirit searches all things, while the spirit of man searches the things of man:

1 Corinthians 2:10-12: (YLT) ¹⁰but to us did God reveal them through His *spirit <4151>*, for the *spirit <4151>* all things doth search, even the depths of God, ¹¹for who of men hath known the things of the man, except *the spirit <4151>* of the man that is in him? so also the things of God no one hath known, except *the spirit <4151>* of God. ¹²And we the *spirit <4151>* of the world did not receive, but the *spirit <4151>* that is of God, that we may know the things conferred by God on us,

→ Comparison →

THE SPIRIT OF GOD VS THE SPIRIT OF MAN VS SPIRIT OF THE WORLD

The spirit of the world is an intangible thing, but we have the power and influence of God. God's spirit can examine all things, but we humans can only examine the little world we live in. We have great capacity, but we are still comparatively tiny. The spirit of the world can bring us down; the spirit of God can bring us up. We have to align our motivation with God's spirit.

Thinking of Jonathan's football game, what might the "spiritual game changer" be with God? Think about the resurrection of all who have ever lived. That will be the shout to "get up and go," since the world will have experienced the personal miracle of resurrection. That will stimulate the human spirit at the appropriate time.



The function of the holy spirit changed over time. Remember, in the Old Testament it was more mechanical, used as the moving force of creation and in giving certain individuals specific, miraculous talents. It guided the prophets to write or speak words they generally did not understand. In the New Testament and today, it motivates, helps, comforts, inspires and guides dedicated Christians.

The human spirit can be fearful:

2 Timothy 1:7: (NASB) *For God has not given us a *spirit <4151>* of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*



God's spirit is so lofty, but our spirit is so up and down. Even if we have timidity and fear in our human spirit, God can work with us. He takes that brokenness and tells us we can grow; we can be better and apply ourselves more fully.

The human spirit can be better used of God if it is humble:

Matthew 5:3: (NASB) *Blessed are the poor in **spirit <4151>**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Blessed are the poor in ego... we can have motivation, or we can be full of inflated ego. The poor in ego are more likely to grab hold of God's kingdom.

The human spirit can have godly desire:

Matthew 26:40-41: (NASB) *⁴⁰And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, So, you men could not keep watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the **spirit <4151>** is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

What a great example of the human spirit. Peter wanted to be there with his Lord every single step of the way, but he fell asleep. His spirit was willing - his desire was there - but his flesh was too weak. Jesus knew that and loved him. Later, he forgave him for all of these things that went wrong.

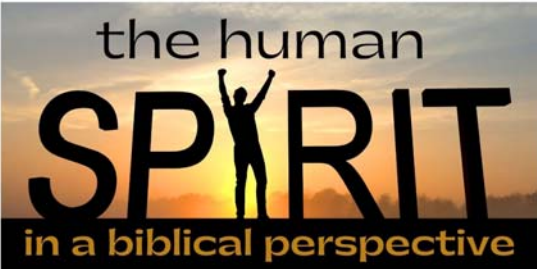
It is interesting how the holy spirit and our spirit are both *pneuma* because we are made in God's image.

We must be careful to choose which spirits (influences, powers, motivations) we listen to:

1 John 4:1-3: (NASB) *¹Beloved, do not believe every **spirit <4151>**, but test the **spirits <4151>** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the **spirit <4151>** of God: every **spirit <4151>** that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; ³ and every **spirit <4151>** that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the **spirit <4151>** of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.*

Manifestations of the spirit of Satan are described as the *spirit of fear*, the *spirit of bondage*, the *spirit of the world*, the *spirit of error*, the *spirit of divination*, the *spirit of antichrist* and the *spirit of slumber*.

Again, these are things, not people, animals or entities. For example, the *spirit of slumber* is the giving in to being too tired to stand up for what is right. The *spirit of fear* is, *I can't, I can't*. Spirit has a wide breadth of meanings, but the human spirit is that power and influence we individually have.



The New Testament builds exactly on the Old Testament foundation. New Testament focus is heavily upon God's spirit influencing and guiding the early church. Our human spirit is clearly represented as an outgrowth of the human soul. It is the energy, motivation, focus and influence of the soul's existence.

It is inspiring to see how well the scriptures regarding the human spirit fit together. Now let's apply what we have learned.



With a clear biblical view of what the human spirit is, what happens to it when we die?

Because our human spirit is clearly represented as an outgrowth of the human soul, we need to look at the answer to the life-or-death question regarding it in a philosophical way. Nowhere have we read in Scripture that our human spirit is its own life force. If it is not its own life force, then how can it die? It was not alive, so it is not its own entity, something the Scriptures are clear about.

Those who believe we have been given some immortal spark of divinity that never dies point to this:

Ecclesiastes 12:7: (NASB) *then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the **spirit** <7307> will return to God who gave it.*

The argument is: it was Adam’s BODY that was judged to go back to its original elements. The body became dust, but the spirit, the life force, went back to God - we are not specifically told it is extinguished, so therefore it lives on forever. This is one reason some people believe the spirit and soul are interchangeable and immortal.

If we go back through the scriptures we just went through, we see the human spirit and human soul are NOT interchangeable; the spirit is an outgrowth of the soul. The soul is *what* we are - *man became a living soul* - our spirit is our energy, motivation, focus and influence from the soul’s existence.



The human spirit is an outgrowth of the human soul. It is the energy, motivation, focus and influence of the soul’s existence. It is intangible in the sense that you cannot touch it, yet it is tangible in the sense of it being able to touch you by way of inspiration, passion and memory.

Many scriptures use both words in the same verse.

The idea that just the body goes back to dust and not the soul is not what God said. In Genesis 3:19 (KJV), God clearly told Adam, *...for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

While we respect those who believe in these things, there is no scriptural teaching or evidence of the spirit and soul being interchangeable and immortal.

We DO know that God uniquely created humanity:

Genesis 1:26: (NASB) *Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*

Genesis clearly states that man was created at the hand of God. On the other hand, we know from Genesis 2:19 that the animals were formed *out of the ground* and not in the *image of God*. We explained the *image of God* in Part I. Humanity was created to have dominion over the earth, to be thinking, moral creatures like God. We are able to make decisions, have emotions and have dominion.



In the image of God is not a “look-alike” contest, it is a “be-alike” contest. God has a powerful spirit that has dominion over the universe in a moral, intelligent way. We were given a similar spirit to have dominion over the earth in much the same way.

We also know that unlike the animal creation, humanity was a direct creation of God:

Genesis 2:7: (NASB) *Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

This is different than the animal kingdom which was brought forth from the earth.

The creation of Eve was also a uniquely direct creation of God:

Genesis 2:22: (NASB) *The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.*

Going back to Ecclesiastes 12:7, the spirit cannot return to God as an entity since it is not a thing; it is a force: *then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.*

What does all this mean? God directly created human life in His image.

When we die, the human spirit is the marker of that life. Our lives are lived through applying that spirit - that motivation, focus and influence. Our spirit is the fingerprint of our unique life.



It is the life resume of each individual, and this is what goes back to God. There is not a magical part of us that did not die.

We think of our fingerprints as being unique to us, but did you know that our ears are so unique that biometrics studies have shown up to 99.6 percent accuracy when ears were scanned using computer software? That is the same accuracy as fingerprints. And even identical twins do not have identical eyes. Our tongues and teeth are unique to us as well.



Psalms 139:14: (NASB) *I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...*

Where does our spirit go when we die? We might imagine a person’s character and personality as files on a computer. We copy our files to “the cloud,” a powerful memory system that keeps files safe. But there is an even MORE powerful cloud that exists, with UNLIMITED storage - God’s perfect mind - allowing Him to recreate and resurrect the identical character and personality of everyone who has ever lived and died in His future kingdom. God’s memory is not a cloud; it is a bright light. The memory, the contribution we have made in our lives, goes back to God so that He can recreate every person in the resurrection exactly as they were when they went into the grave.





Remember that bridge between the Old Testament Hebrew, *ruach*, and the New Testament Greek, *pneuma*? Jesus quoted Psalms 31:5 when he told God in Luke 23:46, *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*, and breathed his last breath.

In other words, here is the sum total of my life. Jesus needed to be brought back from death. He was giving God his fingerprint, the “cloud file” of his entire life, every fiber of his being.

As Stephen was being stoned, he did the same thing.

Acts 7:59-60: (NASB) ⁵⁹*They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!* ⁶⁰*Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them! Having said this, he fell asleep.*

Stephen saw a vision of Jesus as he was dying, and said: *Take what I have offered in following in your footsteps; this is what my life is...* This is such a beautiful picture of the goodness of God’s plan and the grace that maintains the individual identity of every single person who has ever lived.

New Testament

Strong's Concordance
 #5590 (Greek) *psuchē*

**Translated as soul,
 life, mind, heart**

What about the dividing of soul and spirit - what does that mean?

Hebrews 4:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰*For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.* ¹¹*Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.* ¹²*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of **soul <5590>** and **spirit <4151>**, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

Psuchē means “the animal sentient principle,” the person’s life as a whole, a breathing entity.

For us to enter into the rest of God requires our physical lives to be submissive to God’s spirit/pneuma within us. When we apply God’s word to our lives, it can show us our very core, our carnality versus our spirituality. It can show us our human life, our soul, and how wretched it is in contrast to the holy spirit working within us.

This division is between our human life and our spirit-begotten life:

2 Corinthians 5:17: (NASB) *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

We have to adhere to God’s spirit with our own spirit and our lives.



Finally, what about preserving soul, spirit and body all at once?

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: (NASB) ²³Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your *spirit* <4151> and *soul* <5590> and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

What does the apostle mean here? Paul *seems* to be wanting the *spirit and soul and body* all preserved complete up to the time of the return of Jesus. However, Paul KNEW and taught that the human body decays. Such a desire would NOT be scriptural, and in fact, he taught contrary to this thought in 1 Corinthians 15:44 where he said we will be raised with a spiritual body, not a human body. What is he talking about here? We need to look at the context.

Who is the *you* in this text?

1 Thessalonians 1:1-4: (NASB) ¹Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ²We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; ³constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, ⁴knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

You is the entire church group at Thessalonica, NOT an individual. *Spirit, soul and body* are all singular, not plural, focusing on the church as a whole group and not on individuals.

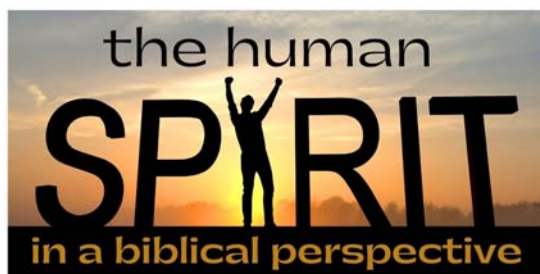
Therefore, *spirit and soul* HAVE been preserved, as the true church is still here and functioning as human beings. *Body* here means the whole body of Christ, not an individual human body.

Let's read from 1 Thessalonians 5:23 again: ...may your *spirit* <4151> and *soul* <5590> and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the apostle is praying that the true followers of Jesus serve God and witness to the truth of the gospel in unity and peace. He is not speaking to each individual Christian at Thessalonica, as he did not expect them to live until the time of the return of Jesus. Their physical individual bodies would not be preserved but would return to dust.

In Acts 4:32 we read, *And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul*. In Ephesians 4:4, the Apostle Paul points out that *there is one body and one spirit*, meaning unity.

1 Thessalonians 1:23

The terms body, soul and spirit are figuratively used of the true church - those whose names are collectively written in heaven. The true spirit has been preserved in the "little flock" as the true church is called in Luke 12:32. Its body is discernible today, and its soul, its activity, its intelligence, its sentient being, is in evidence everywhere, lifting up the standard for the people - the cross, the ransom. We know it cannot be the individual spirits and souls of people, as their bodies have not been preserved but have returned to dust.



The human spirit, which is an outgrowth of the human soul, does not live on after death, as it was never alive on its own in the first place. Because it is the energy, focus, motivation, and influence of our lives, it becomes a record for God to hold until each individual's resurrection.

SOUL AND SPIRIT ARE SCRIPTURALLY THE SAME - TRUE OR FALSE?

False. They are absolutely different as we have shown.

YOU HAVE A SOUL AND ARE A SPIRIT - TRUE OR FALSE?

False. We ARE a soul and our spirit is an outgrowth of that soul.

WHERE DO THE SOUL AND SPIRIT GO WHEN WE DIE?

The spirit is part of the human life, the soul, that dies. (Ezekiel 18:20) Spirit/soul/body all die, but the memory of that spirit goes back to God to be kept until the resurrection.

This is a complex subject with many applicable scriptures. The good news is that if we look at them all topically, we can get a clear-cut picture of what the human soul and human spirit are. We can see that the spirit is an outgrowth of the living soul. God created all of this so that humanity would be in His image, after His likeness.

We know that Jesus cancelled the penalty of death by his paying the ransom price. This allows all to be resurrected with a new body. By God remembering the spirit of every human being who has ever lived, at resurrection that entity is preserved and placed back into that brand new body.

The soul and spirit work together to fulfill the plan of God!

*So, where do the human soul and spirit go when we die?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on May 16, 2022
Ep. 1229: I'm a Christian and I'm Angry! What Now?

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.

Bonus Material and Study Questions

The Old Testament word for *breath* can be easily confused with the word for *spirit*.

Here are just three examples of both words being used in the same context:

Job 32:7-9: (NASB) ⁷I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom. ⁸But it is a *spirit* <7307> in man, and the *breath* <5397> of the Almighty gives them understanding. ⁹The abundant in years may not be wise, nor may elders understand justice.

Job 33:2-6: (NASB) ²Behold now, I open my mouth, my tongue in my mouth speaks. ³My words are from the uprightness of my heart, and my lips speak knowledge sincerely. ⁴The *spirit* <7307> of God has made me, and the *breath* <5397> of the Almighty gives me life. ⁵Refute me if you can; Array yourselves before me, take your stand. ⁶Behold, I belong to God like you; I too have been formed out of the clay.

Isaiah 42:5: (KJV) Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth *breath* <5397> unto the people upon it, and *spirit* <7307> to them that walk therein:

Breath: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5397 *neshamah*; a puff, i.e. wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, intellect or (concretely) an animal

An interesting look at *spirit* and *spiritual* in the New Testament:

Galatians 6:1: (KJV) Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are *spiritual* <4152>, restore such an one in the *spirit* <4151> of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Spiritual: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4152 *pneumatikos*; non-carnal, i.e. (humanly) ethereal (as opposed to gross), or (daemoniacally) a spirit (concretely), or (divinely) supernatural, regenerate, religious

Spirit: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4151 *pneuma*; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the holy spirit

1 Corinthians 2:14: (KJV) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the *spirit* <4151> of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned.



The Ezekiel prophecy of the Valley of Dry Bones provides an interesting insight into *spirit* in the Old Testament. The word *spirit* depicts God's power and influence, but is used in a similar way to God breathing (different word - <5301> - meaning to puff or inflate) life into Adam in Genesis 2:7.

Ezekiel 37:1: (KJV) The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the *spirit* <7307> of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

Ezekiel 37:5-6: (KJV) ⁵Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause *breath* <7307> to enter into you, and ye shall live: ⁶And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put *breath* <7307> in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.



Perhaps this is showing us a contrast between the creation of man and the reestablishment of Israel. At creation, the body needed to be energized with God's life-giving breath, while Israel needed to be reborn by way of God's power and influence to not only energize but guide.

The phrase *holy ghost* or *holy spirit* is ALWAYS derived from the following two words:

Holy: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #40 *hagios*; (an awful thing) sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated)

Spirit: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4151 *pneuma*; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit: ghost, life, spirit(-ual, -ually), mind

The root word for *spirit* and *ghost*:

Spirit: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4154 *pnew*; a primary word; to breathe hard, i.e. breeze: blow

Some of its seven uses:

Matthew 7:25: (KJV) *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew <4154>, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*


Luke 12:55: (KJV) *And when ye see the south wind blow <4154>, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.*

John 3:8: (KJV) *The wind bloweth <4154> where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit.*

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Ep.1228: Where Do the Human Soul and Spirit Go When We Die? (Part II)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1228-soul-spirit/>

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. What is the biblical description of the human soul? Are the soul and the spirit the same? What is the word in the Old Testament often translated "spirit"? What else has a spirit? (See Genesis 2:7, Zechariah 12:1, Hebrews 4:12)
2. What was the result of God's spirit "moving over the surface of the water" of the unfinished earth? How did God's spirit work with certain individuals in the Old Testament including the prophets? What is God's spirit? (See Genesis 1:2-3, Exodus 35:30-31, Isaiah 59:21)
3. How is the Hebrew word *ruach* translated into English in Genesis 3:8 and 1 Kings 19:11? In what way is God's spirit and these other translations similar and yet different? What meaning ties these together?
4. What is the word translated "breath" in Genesis 2:7 and 7:22 (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5397)? In what way did the breath of life operate similarly in both humans and animals in these two verses? In what way was their creation different? Describe thoroughly how *ruach* and *neshamah* are similar and how they are different. (See Genesis 1:26, 6:17)
5. What happens when the spirit is removed from a man or an animal? (Psalms 104:29-30) If this is true of both men and animals, what might Ecclesiastes 3:20-21 be referencing? How can the human spirit/*ruach* can manifest? What is the difference between our soul/*nephesh* and our spirit/*ruach*? (See 1 Samuel 1:15, 2 Kings 2:9, 1 Kings 10:4-5, Ezra 1:1-3, Psalms 77:2-6, Proverbs 14:29, Isaiah 26:9)
6. Why is it so important to understand and link Old Testament words with those in the New Testament? What are some of the ways God's spirit works with man (including Jesus) in the New Testament? In what way is that different from the operation of God's spirit in the Old Testament? How do our lives as "sons of God" differ from our lives previously? (See Psalms 31:4-5, Luke 23:46, John 1:32, Romans 8:13-16)
7. What is the difference between the spirit of God, spirit of man and spirit of the world? How can we maximize the power of God's spirit in our lives? (See Romans 1:9, 8:13-17, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, 2 Timothy 1:7, Matthew 5:3, 26:40-41, 1 John 4:1-3)
8. What did God tell Adam the results of sin would be? Did He promise he would continue living forever? Who DID promise this? Explain Ecclesiastes 12:7 in light of these other verses. Does man have inherent eternal life, immortality?
9. How does the true church of Christ as a collective group explain the use of "soul," "spirit" and "body" in 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4? (See Genesis 1:26, 2:7, 3:4,19)
10. As a son of God, how are you maximizing His spirit in your life? How can you use His word to see "our carnality versus our spirituality" and make changes? (See Hebrews 4:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:17)