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IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPIRIT AND SOUL IN THE BIBLE?

The question regarding what is the difference between soul and spirit arises quite often. Sometimes simply because it can be confusing from a human standpoint: both seem to be the same. And then there is the question of Demon possession and/or oppression. God views the Soul and Spirit very differently.

In the New Testament, the word for spirit is "pneuma" while the word for soul is "psyche". Immediately we can see where the English words for pneumonia and psychiatry come from. The bible tells us (and modern science also confirms) that we are made up of three distinct parts: Soul, Spirit and body.

1 Thes. 5:23

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole **spirit, soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now, we can see why God "Breathed" into Adam to give him life. Adam was "born" with a spirit that was alive. When Adam sinned, his spirit died and all humans from then on are born spiritually dead (after their own kind).

Genesis 2:7

*the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and **breathed into his nostrils***

the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

The animals, reptiles and birds that were already created breathed air, but man would be different – he would have the very breath of God as his Genesis. This also explains why after Adam and Eve had sinned they did not immediately die a physical death. Their spirit died, but the other two parts of the creation continued to live...until eventually they too died. This is why you can eat a Big Mac and not regret it. Animals have no Spirit but they do have a type of soul and body. I will however, point out that even Solomon had some reservations about the difference between the two, when he says in:

Eccles. 3:19-21

Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. [20] All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. [21] Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?"

Of course this was Pre-Messiah, and the Messianic plan was "veiled" in the Old Testament and "fully revealed" in the New Testament. Therefore, I believe we can say that now we do know what Solomon was unsure of. Jesus made it clear where our spirits go when we die. As he said to the thief on the cross "Today, you will be with me in Paradise."

SPIRIT

According to the bible, we are DEAD in trespass and sin before we accept Jesus Christ.

Ephes. 2:1

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

Since we have beating hearts, this reference can only refer to how God views us BEFORE he rescues us. When we are dead spiritually we have no communication with God (unless he initiates it) and we do not comprehend the things that are spiritual. The spirit is that part of man that can grasp and perceive spiritual things.

1 Cor. 2:14

*The man **without the Spirit** does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

However, God loves us so much that he rescues us from our dead condition and redeems us (purchases us from the bonds of Satan) (note: this price has already been paid, when we ask Jesus into our lives this is our coming into agreement with a contract that has already been negotiated. This contract/covenant is called the New Covenant see Jer 31:31, Hebrews 8, Luke 21:20)

Ephes. 2:1-6

*As for you, you were **dead in your transgressions and sins,** [2] in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. [3] All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. [4] But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, [5] **made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions**--it is by grace* you have been saved,*

*grace means – unmerited favor

Now that we are Alive in Christ, we have a natural desire to learn more of God. We understand things that we didn't understand before. We are no longer under the ETERNAL curse of death but under the ETERNAL blessing of Life.

1 John 5:11, 12

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The divine Spirit indwells our now new human spirit when we become saved. Jesus talks of this specifically when asked by Nicodemus how he can be saved (see John 3:1-21). Now we have communication with the Father through our Spirits.

SOUL

Soul on the other hand is our intellect, reasoning, will and personality. The things that make us who we are (separate from the distinguishing characteristics of our bodies). Some of us have nice humanly acceptable souls and some of us have despicable ones – no matter, as long as we are "dead in our sins" they both end up the same place – hell. Those who have renewed Spirits regardless of how despicable they may appear go to heaven (remember the thief on the cross – despicable soul but in the end a renewed spirit- destination; heaven)!

One of the most MISQUOTED verses in the bible comes from NOT UNDERSTANDING this difference. The passage is used over and over by people who can't seem to accept that God would give them a free gift. They constantly try to earn it and in the process get other to try and earn it to. The verse is:

Philip. 2:12-13

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,
[13] for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

Rather than look up the Greek word translated here as "salvation", people try and use this as the reason to "work" or "earn" our salvation. However, the word translated here as "salvation" is "soteria" and Thayes Lexicon gives us the primary meaning of this word: "*deliverance from the molestation of enemies*". Since God is not our enemy, this obviously refers to the demons who will attack our intellect, reasoning, will and personality traits. In fact the verse says "*for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose*", or he is our helper in this process (and it is a process). Demons and Satan's forces can no longer attack our soul since it now belongs to the King of Kings –Jesus.

The other interesting reference in this verse – and I believe it is deliberate is that it deliberately refers to all three aspects of a human. These are:

God who works (God is Spirit working in tandem with our spirit)

*in you to will (reference to the our soul - intellect, reasoning, **will** and personality traits)*

and to act (reference to our bodies – where we act out our will)

according to his good purpose.

When we give our hearts to Jesus he invades us with his Spirit, and then begins the lifelong process of conforming us to the image of his son.

Philip. 1:6

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

2 Cor. 3:18

*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are **being transformed** into his*

likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

In closing, let this be our joy:

2 Cor. 4:16

...The Outward Man is decaying, but the Inward Man is being built up day by day.

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