

Total Man



What Is Man? (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue to study together our theme for this week which takes the form of a question: "What Is Man?" The Bible is, I believe, the only book which gives a satisfying answer to this question. Let me say I studied many, many other books.

In my introductory talk yesterday I explained that the Bible serves as a mirror to show us our inner nature. In the natural we need a mirror to see our whole outer personality, we cannot see it without the help of a mirror. Likewise, in the spiritual we need a mirror to enable us to see our whole inner personality. The mirror that God has provided is His Word, the Bible, the Scripture. I said that God's Word is really like an X-ray mirror, it looks right into us and shows us what is inside us. In Hebrews 4:12, the writer says:

> "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (NIV)

So that the X-ray of God's Word pierces into our inner being and reveals the two constituent elements of man's inner being, spirit and soul, so closely and intimately related that only the surgeon's knife of the Word of God can separate between them. And without the revelation of God's Word, most people are not aware of that duality within the spirit and the soul.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Paul gives us the complete picture of human personality:

> "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete..." (NASB)

The two words "entire" and "complete" reveal that this is a picture of total human personality made up of three related elements: spirit, soul and body. This takes us back to the record of God's creation of man as originally given in Genesis 1:26:

> "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and

> the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'" (NIV)

I pointed out that God there speaks in the plural. So we are initiated into the mystery that God is one and yet more than one. And as the record of Scripture unfolds, this mystery is revealed that God consists of three persons yet one God. The three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, summed up in that word triune, a triune God; three and yet one. And it's stated there that God made man in His likeness. One of the ways in which man resembles God is that man, like God, is a triune being. God is Father, Son and Spirit; man is spirit, soul and body.

Now, today we are going to look in greater detail at the process of man's creation, because this will help us to understand better the elements that make up man's total being. We'll turn to the first verse that describes creation other than merely stating it and that's Genesis 2:7 which says this:

> "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." (NIV)

Literally a living soul. That's such a dramatic picture for me. I see the Almighty Creator molding a faultless form of clay and yet it's just a form of clay. And then in His grace and condescension, He stoops down, places His divine lips against the lips of clay, His divine nostrils against the nostrils of clay, breathes in His Spirit, the breath of life and that inbreathed spirit transforms that clay into a perfect, living human personality.

The Hebrew word that's used there for breathed in Hebrew is *viapach* and its sound indicates a sharp outgoing breath *viapach*. God, as it were, put all of His divine energy into that breath that He breathed into the clay. It was not just a languid sigh, but a sharp outgoing infusion of breath. And that breath of God, that Spirit of God, made that clay into a living human personality.

So we see there in that record the three elements. First, God's breath or Spirit from above. Second, the clay of which the body was molded from below. And third, the union of Spirit from above and clay from beneath produced what the Bible calls soul, a personality.

Now I want to speak briefly about the two Hebrew words that are used there, the word for spirit and the word for soul. In the Hebrew language, basically, the sound of the word often contains a key as to its nature or meaning. We've seen that already in the word used for breathed, *viapach*, suggested a strong, forceful, outgoing breath. The Hebrew word for Spirit, *ruach*, ends in that Hebrew letter *chet* which most English speaking people find it so hard to pronounce. Ch is a kind of continuous outgoing, guttural breath. And it suggests the nature of the divine Spirit, continuous outgoing, self-existent, dependent on nothing and no one. This is beautifully conveyed by Paul in Romans 11:35-36:

> "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things..." (NIV)

Everything comes from God, everything is maintained by God, everything returns to God. That's the divine, eternal, self-giving, self-existing Spirit that's represented by the word *ruach*.

Now let's look at the word for soul, which is *nefesh*. And here I hope I can convey this over the radio. The word *nefesh* suggests, when we analyze it, two processes. First taking in breath and then breathing it out.

Have you ever heard somebody snoring? That's exactly what it is. Taking in and then breathing out. Now that's the nature of soul. Soul is not self-existent. Soul is dependent. Soul must receive from spirit breath in before it can breath out.

This is beautifully brought out in a phrase that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15:45, where he contrasts Adam and Jesus. He says:

> "So also it is written, The first man, Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." (NASB)

That's the difference between spirit and soul. Spirit has life in itself. It gives life. But soul must first receive life from spirit before it can live. So there we have the divine breath of God, the eternal, self-existent breath of God, breathed into that body of clay and the result a living soul a *nefesh*, something that is essentially dependent on spirit, dependent on God to receive life and to maintain life. So those are the three elements that make up man in his total personality. The spirit from above, the body from beneath and the soul which is produced by union of spirit and body, a living human personality.

In closing my talk today I want to look briefly at the Greek words used in the New Testament for the three elements that make up man's total personality. Spirit in Greek is pneuma

which also means wind or breath. And we get some English words derived from it like pneumatic, something that works by breath or wind. The word for soul in Greek is *psuche*, which gives us many, many English words such as psychology, etc. The word for body is soma and we get a combination of the two words: soul, *psuche*; and body, *soma*; in the English word psychosomatic. That's some kind of a problem that is not attributed merely to man's body or merely to man's inner personality, but it combines both psychosomatic.

Now, interestingly enough, in the English language and in other similar languages, unregenerate man has many words that begin with psycho. In other words, he's very much taken up with his soul, he's very much aware of his soul. For many years I studied Greek philosophy in the original language and Greek philosophy, in a certain sense, revolves around the soul. But the interesting thing is that there are none, or almost no words in English that begin with pneuma. And in Greek philosophy, really nothing was ever devoted to that element of man. What does that mean? It means this. That apart from the mirror of God's revelation, man is aware he has a soul. He's really unaware of his own spirit. There's an element in him deeper than his understanding which he cannot plumb, which he cannot fathom, which he can only know about through divine revelation. So again we see that we are absolutely shut up to the mirror of God's Word if we want to know the truth about ourselves.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about radical changes in man's total personality caused by his rebellion against God.

Radio Program

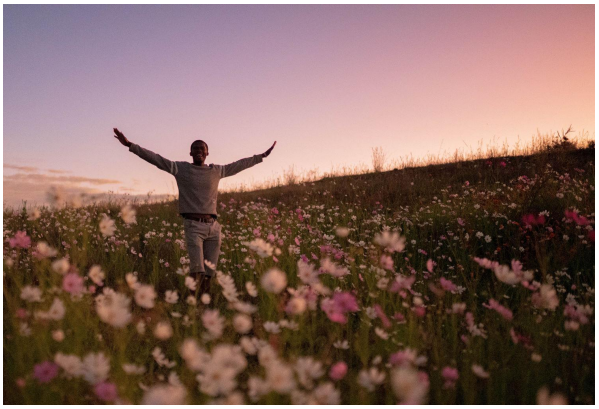
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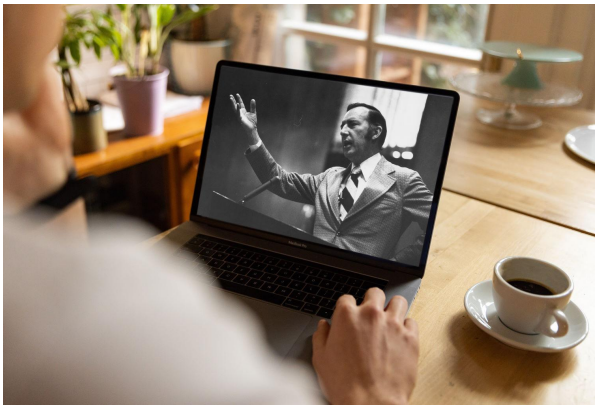
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