

LESSON 38

Man: A Tripartite Being

Introduction

In the conclusion of lesson 4, on the Trinity we said that man was a tripartite being; man consists of three component parts: body, soul and spirit.

There are two passages that clearly teach that man has three parts.

I Thess. 5:23, "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." This verse clearly states that man has three separate, distinct parts; the distinctions may be slight but they exist, nevertheless.

Heb. 4:12, "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 discernor of the thoughts..."

Some people teach that the soul and spirit are two words but meaning the same thing; this verse definitely tells us that they are divisible.

It is true that in many passages of Scripture it seems that the terms soul and spirit are used interchangeably, but there are other passages where this is impossible.

Let us seek to study the Scriptures for the answer.

Briefly, then, this is the distinction:

1. Spirit gives man "God-consciousness"--the ability to communicate with God.
2. Soul gives man "self-consciousness"--the ability to be a person, personality.
3. Body gives man "world-consciousness"--the ability through the senses to understand.

I. The Origin of Man

Gen. 1:1 tells us that God existed in the beginning; He always existed; He is eternal.

Gen. 1 :26,27, records the fact chronologically that man was created on the sixth day.

Gen. 2:7 gives the details of how it was done, "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.? The three parts of man are referred to in this verse:

1. The body of man--our flesh, bones, blood were made of the dust of the ground. .
2. The spirit was breathed into man's nostrils by the Lord God.
3. "And man became a living soul"; this is the union of the other two. It is the part of man above the body but beneath the spirit and acts as a medium between the two. (Baxson)

II. The Body of Man

This is the part of man with which we are most familiar--the physical part of man.

Psa. 139 :14, "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

The Bible tells us that the body of man was formed from the dust of the earth.

Dust is analyzed as containing 96 elements and man also contains 96 elements, and they are identically the same ones; a wonderful proof of creation.

To mention some of the 96: calcium, carbon, chlorine, fluorine, hydrogen, iodine, iron, magnesium, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, potassium, silicon and sodium

Gen. 3:19, God in pronouncing the curse upon man after the fall, says, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

The body of man has five senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell.

All ecstasy, pain, sensation or ability is expressed in and through the physical body.

After the fall the body became a dying, death-doomed body. (Chafer) Heb. 9 :27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die . . ." Ever since the fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, man is born with an appointment with death.

III. The Spirit of Man

The spirit gives man God-consciousness, the ability to communicate with God.

God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, giving him the spirit (wind, breath).

Someone has said that man is "dust inbreathed by Deity". (per Miss R. Paxson)

"The spirit receives impressions of outward and material things through the soul and the body, but it belongs to a higher level and is capable of a direct knowledge of God by relation to its own higher senses and faculties. The spirit is the capital city of the human personality." (A. T. Pierson)

God is a Spirit, John 4 :24, and the spirit of man is the part that resembles God most. This is manifested in our assurance of salvation. Rom. 8:16, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Eccles. 12:7 teaches that at death the body goes to the dust and the spirit back to God; "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. " Eccles. 3:21, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

The spirit of man at death goes upward to God; spirit of the beast goes downward.

Luke 12 :20, "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. "

"The soul of the beggar went to Abraham's bosom, Luke 16:22; the soul of the rich man was taken to hell, Luke 16:23.

So at death man goes to three different places proving that man is tripartite.

IV. The Soul of Man

The soul is self-consciousness; it stands for the individual, personal life.

The Bible speaks of a hungry soul, a weary soul, Jer. 31:25; a thirsty soul, Psa. 42:2; a grieved soul, Job 30:25; a loving soul, Song 1:7.

The soul seems to be the part of man midway between the body and the spirit, yet it is not a mixture of the two, though at times it seems to take on characteristics of one or the other. The soul joins two worlds, the physical and the spiritual.

The work of the soul is to coordinate the activities of the two diverse parts.

The soul is to keep the body, as the lowest in subjection to the spirit the highest.

God designed that the human spirit indwelt and ruled by the Holy Spirit, should keep man in constant touch with Himself, and maintain in everything its proper pre-eminence, ruling soul and body." (A. T. Pierson)

It is the soul of man that Jesus died to redeem on the cross. Heb. 10 :39, ". . . but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Jas 1:21, ". . . receive. . . which is able to save your souls."

Psa. 49 :8, "For the redemption of their souls is precious."

Luke 16 :23 tells us that the soul can be lost in the place of punishment.

Rev. 18 :12,13 lists commodities in which merchants deal: gold, silver, precious stones, ivory, wood, ointment, wine, oil, animals and the souls of men.

Men gamble their souls for a moment of pleasure.

Conclusion

God created man a tripartite being to love the Lord and to enjoy life and nature.

Man was created with the ability to think, love and make decisions, Isa. 1 :18.

Man was made for God; the spirit of man was made to commune with God.

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"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day," Gen. 3:8, is a beautiful picture of this fellowship.

You must prepare for the day of resurrection when your component parts will be reunited and you will stand before the Judge of all the earth.

Jesus died on the cross to save our souls from the terrors of hell.

Review Questions

371. What do we mean by the expression, "Man is a tripartite being"?
372. Give 2 passages of Scripture to prove that man has 3 component parts.
373. Briefly, what is the distinction between these 3 parts ?
374. Tell the story of the creation of man.
375. In what way are we fearfully and wonderfully made? (Psa. 139 :14)
376. What is the relationship of Gen. 3:19, to an analysis of dust?
377. Distinguish between soul and spirit.
378. How does God communicate with an individual?
379. List 6 adjectives used in the Bible to describe the soul.
380. Give 3 verses to show which part of man Jesus came to save.