



The Doctrine of Man - Part 8

Title: Man and the Soul



What is the soul?

The nature of man's soul is, like that of the doctrine of the Trinity, a mystery that simply cannot be grasped by the mortal mind.

Only a fool would dogmatically answer this question.

In my opinion, the Bible indicates not so much that I have a soul, but rather I am a soul.

I have a body and I have a spirit, but the soul is me.

If this be true (and again, who can be dogmatic here?), then the following proposed illustration would not seem to be inappropriate.

Prior to Adam's fall, the first man could be likened to a driver guiding his beautiful new automobile down a smooth and scenic super highway.

As he drives along, his car is filled with lovely Christian music and inspiring scriptural messages coming from his Father's broadcasting house nearby and is being picked up by his stereo unit.

In this illustration, the driver (Adam) would be the soul of man, the car would be his body, and the radio his spirit.

For a while everything goes well.

Then the driver deliberately twists the car off the highway and smashes it into a tree.



Almost instantly six tragic events take place:

A. The three events initiated by the driver.

1. The automobile.

The automobile is badly damaged with a cracked block. While it will still run for a while, it is evident that soon the entire mechanical system will break down completely.

2. The radio.

The radio is hopelessly wrecked. No sound whatsoever can now come through its system.

3. The driver.

The driver, although still alive, is under the condemnation of the righteous Judge for his foolish and wicked act. His punishment is twofold:

a. To continue driving.

The first punishment is to continue on down life's highway in a dying car with no soothing and comforting messages from the radio.

b. To be eventually forced from the car.

The second punishment is to be forced from the car after it stops completely and to be then confined to a lake of fire forever.

B. The three actions generated by the Holy Spirit.

This, then, is the situation all unsaved men find themselves in today. But in keeping with this illustration, when the sinner turns to Christ for salvation, **the Holy Spirit of God immediately effects three things:**

1. His transformation of the car (body).

Although he does not fix up the old wrecked car, he does nevertheless promise eventually to transform the entire automobile.

1 Cor 15:51-54 NLT:

51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!

52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.

53 For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

54 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:



2. His repair of the radio (spirit).

The Holy Spirit immediately repairs the smashed radio, and soon the car is once again filled with the blessed sounds of God.

1 Cor 2:12-14 NLT:

12 And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.

13 When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths.

14 But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.



3. His assurance to the driver (soul).

The driver is assured that whereas he once was subjected to God's wrath, he now can enjoy his peace.

Rom 5:1 NLT:

Faith Brings Joy

1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Rom 8:1 NLT:

Life in the Spirit

1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.



He need no longer fear hell, as heaven is now his future home.

John 14:1-3 NLT:

Jesus, the Way to the Father

1 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.



17. Where and how does man receive his soul?

There are three distinct theories.

A. Preexistence.

This says that in a previous existence men were angelic spirits, and as a punishment and discipline for sin they were sent down here to indwell human bodies.

Henry Thiessen points to famous proponents of this view:

Some have felt the disciples of Christ were influenced by this view when they said of the man born blind, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?”

John 9:2 NLT:

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

2 “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?”

This is not certain, but we know that Plato, Philo, and Origen held this view.

Plato taught it to explain man’s possession of ideas which he had not derived from sense; **Philo**, to account for the soul’s imprisonment in the body; and **Origen**, to justify the disparity of conditions in which men enter the world. (**Lectures in Systematic Theology, Eerdman’s, 1979, p. 164**)

Needless to say, there is absolutely no scriptural evidence whatsoever to support the preexistence theory.

B. Creationism.

According to this theory, each human soul is an immediate and special creation by God and enters the developing body at an early stage, probably at conception.

Ecc1 12:7 NLT:

7 For then the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Zech 12:1 NLT:

Future Deliverance for Jerusalem

1 This message concerning the fate of Israel came from the LORD: “This message is from the LORD, who stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the human spirit.

Heb 12:9 NLT:

9 Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?



However, there are several problems with creationism:

- 1.** It cannot account for the fact that children resemble their parents in intellectual and spiritual as well as in physical respects.
- 2.** It cannot explain the universality of sin—If God creates each soul in heaven separately and sends it down into the developing body, then why are all men sinners?

It is wrong, furthermore, to say the soul is thereupon corrupted by the body, for nowhere do the Scriptures teach that the source of sin in man stems from his body of flesh and blood and bones.

Quite the contrary, for sin is said to come from man's stubborn and rebellious will, and his will is an aspect of his soul.

In other words, does God create a sinful soul in the first place?

If he does, he then becomes the author of sin.

But if, instead, he creates a pure and innocent soul, then why and how and when does man become a sinner?

Would not one of the more than 40 billion individuals who have lived, or are living on this earth, have decided to keep his pure soul unspotted and sinless?

C. Traducianism.

Both body and soul are passed on through natural generations.

Job 14:4 NLT:

4 Who can bring purity out of an impure person?

No one!

Pss 51:5 NLT:

5 For I was born a sinner—

yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

Pss 58:3 NLT:

3 These wicked people are born sinners;

even from birth they have lied and gone their own way.

John 3:6 NLT:

6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.

Eph 2:3 NLT:

3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.



This is called the traducian theory and is the view of most theologians (with notable exceptions, such as Charles Hodge).

However, as in the case of the theory of creationism, a serious charge is likewise leveled at the traducian view.

The problem is this: If the child receives his soul from his parents, then how did Jesus escape the sin-tainted nature of Mary and remain the pure and perfect Savior that he was?

But it would seem this argument overlooks one basic but absolutely vital fact—the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ did not come into existence at Bethlehem through either the creation or traducian method.

The indisputable scriptural fact is that as God he always existed.

Thus, while he could pray, “A body hast thou prepared me” (Heb 10:5), he also would pray later, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

Heb 10:5 KJV:

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me

John 17:5 NLT:

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Here are three additional overviews on this subject:

1. By Millard Erickson on the basis of Hebrews 7:9-10:

Heb 7:9-10 KJV:

9 In addition, we might even say that these Levites—the ones who collect the tithe—**paid a tithe to Melchizedek when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him.**

10 For although Levi wasn’t born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham’s body when **Melchizedek collected the tithe from him.**

Taken at face value, [**Hebrews 7:9-10**] would argue for the humanity not only of an unborn fetus, but even of persons who have not yet been conceived, since Levi was a great-grandson of Abraham.

It is more significant, however, to take this passage as evidence for traducianism, the view that the entirety of a person's human nature, both material and immaterial (body and soul), is received by transmission directly from the parents; that is to say, the soul is not at some later time (e.g., birth) infused into the body, which was physically generated at conception.

If Hebrews 7 does indeed support traducianism (and it appears to do so), this passage would in turn argue for the humanity of the fetus, since it would not then be possible to think of the fetus apart from a soul or a spiritual nature.

(Christian Theology, p. 554)

2. Habermas and Moreland contrast the creationist and traducian views:

In the ancient church there were two major views about the origin of the soul: creationism and traducianism.

According to creationism, our bodies are passed on to us through normal reproduction by our parents, but God creates each individual soul out of nothing, most likely at fertilization.

According to traducianism, both the body and soul are passed on to us by our parents.

Now the soul is the thing that makes us the unique individuals we are.

I could have had a different body, but I could not have had a different soul.

My soul makes me, me.

For the creationist, I could have had different parents from the ones I had.

Why? Because God could have created my soul out of nothing and placed it into a different body formed by different parents.

In this case, I would have been united to a different body and born to different parents.

For the traducian, I could not have had different parents from the ones I had.

Why? Because essential to my identity is the fact that I have this very soul, and essential to a particular soul's being the very soul it is, is that it come from just these two people.

The soul is passed on from the parents—different parents, different soul. **(Immortality: The Other Side of Death, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, pp. 179-180)**

3. Beacon Dictionary of Theology also outlines these two views:

Theological creationism maintains that God directly creates each human soul, while the body is propagated by the parents.

Wiley states that “Creationism as a theory seems to be closely connected with the attempts to emphasize the importance of the individual as over against an emphasis upon racial continuity and solidarity” (CT, 2:27).

According to creationism, the soul is created pure and free from sin.

The soul, however, becomes sinful by its essential relationship to the complex of sin which burdens every member of the human race.

Those who support creationism base their biblical support on:

Eccl 12:7 NLT:

7 For then the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Isa 42:5 NLT:

5 God, the LORD, created the heavens and stretched them out.

He created the earth and everything in it.

He gives breath to everyone,

life to everyone who walks the earth.

And it is he who says,

Zech 12:1 NLT:

Future Deliverance for Jerusalem

1 This message concerning the fate of Israel came from the LORD: "This message is from the LORD, who stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the human spirit.

Heb 12:9 NLT:

9 Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

Num 16:22 NLT:

22 But Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground. "O God," they pleaded, "you are the God who gives breath to all creatures. Must you be angry with all the people when only one man sins?"



The claim is also made that creationism makes the sinlessness of Christ more natural and logical.

In the history of the church the theory of theological creationism has been adopted or favored by the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, by the Roman Catholic church, and by the Reformed church.

Individuals who supported this position are Jerome, Pelagius, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, Ambrose, Hilarius, and Hieronymus. ...

Traducianism.

This is the belief that the soul is procreated by parental conception along with and in the body.

Natural generation thus included both the spiritual, immaterial faculties of human personality as well as those purely physical organs which can be observed and verified scientifically.

This is most in harmony with the Hebrew concept of man as a body-mind unity, and also most congenial to the biblical concept of inherited sinfulness. (**Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1983, pp. 140, 526**)

18. What are the basic characteristics of the soul?

As one consults various theological works on the makeup of man, he soon discovers the discussion usually centers around four basic words.

These are: intellect, sensibility, conscience, and will.

Here again let it be emphasized that no absolute and all-inclusive definition can be forthcoming but these statements are suggested guidelines.

A. Intellect.

Intellect is that aspect of the soul that tells man whether a given issue is right or wrong.

B. Sensibility.

Sensibility is that aspect that tells man what he would like to do about the issue.

C. Conscience.

Conscience is that aspect that tells man what he should do about the issue.

The Bible lists several kinds of conscience:

1. An evil conscience.

Heb 10:22 NLT:

22 let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

2. A defiled conscience.

Titus 1:15 NLT:

15 Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted.

3. A weak conscience.

1 Cor 8:7 NLT:

7 However, not all believers know this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated.

1 Cor 8:12 NLT:

12 And when you sin against other believers by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ.

4. A good conscience.

Acts 23:1NLT:

1 Gazing intently at the high council, Paul began: “Brothers, I have always lived before God with a clear conscience!”

1 Tim 1:5 NLT:

5 The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith.

1 Tim 1:19 NLT:

19 Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked.

Heb 13:18 NLT:

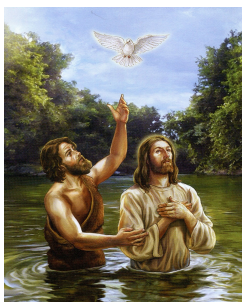
18 Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live honorably in everything we do.

1 Pet 3:16 NLT:

16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

1 Pet 3:21 NLT:

21 And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



5. A pure conscience.

1 Tim 3:9 NLT:

9 They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience.

6. A seared conscience.

1 Tim 4:2 NLT:

2 These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead.

D. Will.



Will is the aspect that tells man what he shall do about the issue.

To illustrate:

A man goes to his bank and cashes a \$100 check.

Upon counting his money in the car he discovers the bank teller has mistakenly given him an additional ten dollars.

As he ponders the situation, four “voices” offer advice:

A. The voice of intellect: It would be wrong to keep the ten dollars.

B. The voice of sensibility: Yes, but I really could use that extra money.

C. The voice of conscience: Forget it, greedy one. Return it or I'll make you miserable.

D. The voice of will: Here is my decision on whether to keep the money or return it.



19. Is man a two-part or three-part being?

In other words, does he consist of body and soul, or does he possess body, soul, and spirit?

A. The theory that man is a dichotomous being.

This view offers two arguments to support dichotomy:

1. Material and nonmaterial.

Man is a dichotomous being not just because of the plan of God, but because of the very nature of the universe, which only recognizes material and nonmaterial.

In other words, man's body belongs to the material and his soul to the nonmaterial.

What else is left?

Therefore, as man's spirit is decidedly nonmaterial, it must be placed into the camp of the nonmaterial and thus becomes identical with that of the soul.

2. The terms soul and spirit are used interchangeably in the Bible.

Often in the Bible the terms soul and spirit are used interchangeably.

The Virgin Mary seems to do this very thing during her hymn of praise to God. "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour":

Luke 1:46-47 NLT:

The Magnificat: Mary's Song of Praise

46 Mary responded,

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

47 How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

Advocates of this view would also include **1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 7:1; James 5:20; 1 Peter 2:11**, claiming the interchangeable usage of soul and spirit in these cases.

1 Corinthians 5:5 NLT:

5 Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.

2 Corinthians 7:1 NLT:

1 Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.

James 5:20 NLT:

20 you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

1 Peter 2:11 NLT:

11 Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.



B. The theory that man is a trichotomous being.

Basic evidences for trichotomy would include:

1. That both terms are used interchangeably does not mean there is no distinction whatsoever.

For example, the phrases “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” are on occasion used interchangeably, yet most Bible students would recognize a general and decided difference between them.

2. The New Testament carefully distinguishes between body and soul.

In at least two essential passages the New Testament carefully distinguishes between body and soul.

1 Thes 5:23 NLT:

Paul’s Final Greetings

23 Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

Heb 4:12 NLT:

12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

3. The Hebrew word nephesh is translated “soul,” “beast,” and “creature.”

The Hebrew word nephesh is translated by the word “soul” 428 times in the Old Testament.

But on two occasions it is rendered “beast,” and in nine other passages we find the word “creature” being used:

Gen 2:7 NLT:

7 Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

Gen 2:19 NLT:

19 So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one.

Lev 24:18 NLT:

18 “Anyone who kills another person’s animal must pay for it in full—a live animal for the animal that was killed.

The point of the above is simply this:

The Bible on occasion pictures animals as possessing souls.

Therefore, as man is different than animals, he must have something higher, and that higher thing is the spirit.

Nowhere in the Scriptures do we read of an animal possessing a spirit.



4. The three levels of consciousness in all men.

Trichotomy is the best theory to explain the three levels of consciousness in all men, that of:

- 1. Self-consciousness (through the soul),**
- 2. World-consciousness (through the body)**
- 3. God-consciousness (through the spirit)**

These, then, are the arguments for dichotomy and trichotomy.

What are we to believe?

Hebrew scholar Dr. Merrill F. Unger answers:



Merrill Unger

The two terms are often used interchangeably ... however, soul and spirit as synonymous terms are not always employed interchangeably.

The soul is said to be lost, for example, but not the spirit.

When no technical distinctions are set forth, the Bible is dichotomous, but otherwise it is trichotomous.

Theologians have pored over these distinctions ceaselessly.
(Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 1043)

How do we obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins?



How do we get right with God, regardless of our individual sins?

Just say this Prayer and all of your sins will be forgotten, and you will have Eternal life, with Christ Jesus, in Heaven:

Lord Jesus, I repent of all my sins, and I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior.

Friends, if you prayed that prayer, I believe that you are born again, and you have everlasting life, get in a good bible teaching church, and may you keep growing, in the Lord, and may HE use you to help save many souls for His Kingdom !

In, Jesus Mighty Name!

Rev. Jesus Del Rio, Ed