

# **What is Jesus Doing?**

## **DIVIDING SOUL AND SPIRIT**

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

- Hebrews 4:12

What is the difference between soul and spirit?

Before we can understand this scripture, which speaks about the nature of the Bible, the Word of God itself, we need to understand what soul and spirit really are...

Here is a simple answer that will help us understand this scripture, and also, how we can utilize our relationship with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit to overcome our natural negative reactions to daily life by waiting on the supernatural insight that comes through the Holy Spirit when we “wait upon the Lord” and respond to what is happening instead of simply reacting to it.

Just as God (One God) is made up of Three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, man (one man or woman) is made up of three parts. Body, soul and spirit.

### **What is the Body?**

Our bodies are the vehicle which allow us to interact with the world. They carry us around, and through the five senses, Sight, Hearing, Touch, Taste and Smell, the body allows us to experience the world around us. Through it we experience pleasure, or pain.

### **What is the soul?**

Simply, the soul of a person consists of the mind (or intellect), the emotions and the will.

# **What is Jesus Doing?**

The Soul is who we think of when we think of ourselves. It is the “inner man”. The Soul is complete and with the body, is all we need to operate in the natural world. The Mind, Emotions and Will (which is the ability to make choices/decisions), are the way our physical bodies are able to operate and make sense of the world around us. Our senses perceive the world around us and communicate to the soul and the soul operates our bodies so that we can function.

## **What is the spirit of a man?**

The spirit of a person consists of conscience, intuition and communion.

- The conscience is the part of a person that perceives right and wrong (their moral sense).
- Intuition is the part of a person that understands those things that are not spoken or experienced directly by the senses.
- Communion is the part of the spirit of a person that is able to communicate directly with God through the Holy Spirit. It is also the function of the spirit of a person to worship God.

In the Bible, the name Adam is Hebrew for “from the ground” and is used in the rest of the Bible as the Hebrew name Ha’Adam for humanity. Genesis 2:7 tells us that Adam was created from the dust of the earth and became a living soul.

Because of this, our senses, which are our body’s way of communicating to our souls, are attuned to the earth and all “natural” things.

That is why our feelings shift and change according to what is happening around us. Science talks about natural selection and that the human being has survived because of the “fight or flight” response, as it is called.

# What is Jesus Doing?

The science of Psychology describes it like this:

*The fight or flight response is an automatic physiological reaction to an event that is perceived as stressful or frightening. The perception of threat activates the sympathetic nervous system and triggers an acute stress response that prepares the body to fight or flee. These responses are evolutionary adaptations to increase chances of survival in threatening situations. Overly frequent, intense, or inappropriate activation of the fight or flight response is implicated in a range of clinical conditions including most anxiety disorders. A helpful part of treatment for anxiety is an improved understanding of the purpose and function of the fight or flight response.*

## **Have you experienced this reaction in times of threat or stress?**

Everything that is of the earth is unsteady and changeable, which is why a person who allows their soul to control their life is never at rest. Through the soul – through our senses and feelings – we are in contact with people. Someone who lives according to the soul is always in unrest with regard to what other people think and say about him.

Through my spirit I am meant to be in contact with God. However, before I said yes to Jesus, I lived according to my own understanding. My senses and my body were used to serve my own earthly desires. My spirit was then polluted by those desires and filled with that which is of this world, with the result that I had little or no contact with God. My spirit was suppressed by my soul. I was a soulish person.

Let me explain further...

Before we receive the Holy Spirit by accepting Jesus Messiah as our Lord and Savior, our spirit is under the control of the soul. Fight or flight is the only reaction we know to trouble or stress. We also tend to idolize or worship the things of this world like money or power. This is not what our spirit was intended to do.

## What is Jesus Doing?

Salvation in Christ is meant to change this relationship so that I become spiritual and heavenly instead of soulish and earthly. The result is a life of faith instead of a life according to my human understanding. When I received Jesus as Lord, and I became “born again”, my spirit was AWAKENED by His Holy Spirit. Instead of my soul, with its own desires, dominating my body and my spirit, now, my awakened spirit, in proper alignment with God’s Holy Spirit, has control, through my WILL aligned with God’s WILL, over my MIND and my EMOTIONS so that my body now is under obedience to God’s purpose for my life. I am now as God created Adam to be. I am now able to have dominion over the earth as a partner with God.

*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

- Ephesians 2:10

The intention is that our spirit is to be made alive so that God can speak to us; we should live for Him and for the heavenly things. Then we find rest for our souls. The heavenly things are eternal and unchangeable. When we live before God’s face, we are free from people and the unrest that comes from living before their face.

### **God’s Word: A two-edged sword**

That said, even when we are “born again” and our spirit is awakened, we still struggle with the body of sin that is still a part of our flesh. This is where God’s Word, the Bible, comes in. Its purpose is to do a deeper work in us. It is sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces and divides between soul and spirit and discerns the thoughts and counsels of the heart. In this sense, the heart is the inner man which now includes both soul and spirit.

## What is Jesus Doing?

The scripture we started with, Hebrews 4:12, tells us that God's Word discerns the thoughts of the heart and pierces and divides between soul and spirit – between that which is earthly (human) and that which is spiritual and heavenly, which I receive into my spirit through the spirit of God. For this to occur, first I must believe the Word and be obedient to it. I do this by spending time reading the Word, studying the Word, meditating upon the Word and praying in accordance with the Word.

For example, the biblical concept to “Overcome evil with good” goes against our human feelings and our human reasoning; but if we believe the Word and are obedient to it we come to understand the truth of that statement. When we choose to believe God and ask for His strength to ACT as if we believe that good overcomes evil, only then can we EXPERIENCE that God's wisdom is greater than our senses and see the deliverance of the Lord when trouble comes.

God's Word also says to forgive the person who sins against you seven times seventy each day, in other words, as many times as it takes... If you are soulish, you will hold onto your grudge and your pride and fleshly sense of personal honor will cause you to make plans as to what you should do to the offender and you may also seek the opinions of family and friends who will validate that, rather than simply forgive.

The Apostle James, the brother of Jesus tells us...

*For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

- John 3:16-18

## What is Jesus Doing?

It is far better to let God's Word in to pierce and divide between what you are absorbing through your senses – especially through your emotional feelings of hurt and pride – and the wisdom that is from God, which you absorb through your spirit by His Word. Live by faith and not according to your human reasoning; only then will you enter into that rest, the true Sabbath, that only comes with a right relationship with God.

If you are struggling with all of this, just know that the disciples did too. The Gospel of Matthew tells us how Peter struggled with confusion between soul and spirit...

Matthew 16:13-23

**13** *When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"*

**14** *So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."*

**15** *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"*

**16** *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

**17** *Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. **18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. **19** And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*

**20** *Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.*

## What is Jesus Doing?

**21** *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

**22** *Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"*

**23** *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

Peter, ironically, was the one who had just been commended by Jesus for proclaiming Him as Messiah, and yet, when Jesus revealed to the twelve that He was going to be killed as the completion of His mission, Peter tried to talk Him out of it. Peter, although he knew that Jesus was from God, thought that he was going to be the conqueror of Rome, not the victim of it. That was a worldly view.

Peter cared for Jesus, but he only had a sense for the things of men, which is to spare yourself and those you care about from pain. Satan has access to this unregenerated soul, and the result is a terrible unrest.

Jesus told Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan!" because Jesus had a sense for the purpose of God, which was to lay His life down. Now He wants to make our spirit alive as well so we can carry our own cross, which is the purpose for which we were born and in fact, born again.

In his defense, Peter did not have the Holy Spirit as we do, even though he had the unique privilege of knowing Jesus personally and Calling Him friend. On the Day of Pentecost, after Jesus went up His Throne, when the Holy Spirit was released upon him, Peter became fully the Rock upon which Christ built His Church. We who are spiritual are that Rock today, who have received God's Spirit and do His Will by allowing His Word to divide our soul and spirit.

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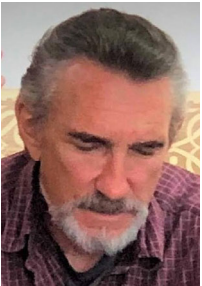
## Becoming spiritually minded

The result of having an awakened spirit, meditating on God's Word, taking up your cross daily, and following Jesus, is a life of faith in which we hold fast to the Word against our own human reasoning and present our body in the service of God. Then our soul, which is earthly and restless, is poured out, and we become spiritually minded and enter into rest in God.

*See that you do not refuse Him who speaks ... from heaven. ... Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

- Hebrews 12:25,29

All unrest, complaining, struggling with other people, and anxiety stems from giving in to the soulish desire to fight for earthly life. The spiritual man lives by faith in God's Word. All things serve him for good. (Romans 8:28) He has a mind for laying down his life, and he rests in God. What a glorious life and peace this is – a kingdom that cannot be moved.



*With blessings from the Abundant Life,*

*- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi*