



Spiritual Realities - Vol 2: The Breath of God in Us

Description

A study on the origin and nature of man's spirit, soul, and body. Knowing God's activities within our being. Understanding physical health and the spiritual energies which God releases in us to think and be successful.

Introduction

The contents of these volumes progressively build upon one another. We will be continually expanding our concept of the spiritual world and our relationship to it. Because of new truths, perspectives and terms constantly being introduced, it is vital that you work through these writings as they are presented. It is too easy to misunderstand subjects as serious and critical as these. Therefore, we ask that you become familiar with the foundations that were laid in Volume I, before delving into this volume.

In Volume I we established a basic understanding of the spiritual world. We discussed the laws which govern that realm, and how they are different from the laws governing the natural realm. We explained the existence of two kingdoms in the spiritual realm: God's and Satan's. And then we explained how people may gain access to the spiritual world, enabling them to release power, blessings or curses into this natural world. Finally, we gave a basis for discerning what is of God and what is not: 1) fruit manifesting over the long term; 2) agreement with the written Word of God; and 3) the exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord.

In this volume we turn our attention to the nature of man and his relationship with the spiritual world. Only as we have an accurate understanding of man's spirit, soul and body, can we give clear explanations for the spiritual and supernatural phenomena seen in the world around us.

In the beginning, God's Spirit was brooding over the surface of the earth, preparing it for His creative acts to follow. After He spoke into existence the various elements of our world, He went to work on His greatest creation: man.

In the book of Genesis we read how God created the first man, Adam:

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
(Gen 2:7 KJV).

Identify three different elements involved in Adam's being: the body formed from dust, the breath released from God, and the soul which was created.

The body is of course the physical element with which we are most familiar. The soul is the created element - it came into existence at a point in time. And the word breath is often interpreted with the word spirit. It is that breath of God which we see going into man and forming his spirit.

Preview Chapter

CHAPTER 1

The Origin of Man's Spirit and Soul

In the New Testament we can read about the same three elements in man's being. For example, the Apostle Paul wrote, Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5:23).

Notice how this verse mentions all three parts of man's being.

Some Christian teachers today believe that the soul and the spirit within a person are the same thing. They envision the soul as being fashioned out of the spiritual breath of God, much like the dust of the earth was used to form the physical body. If that is true, then the terms spirit and soul refer to the same substance within man, and should be thought of as one and the same. Christian teachers who think this way only recognize two parts to man's being: the physical body and a spirit/soul. This two-part view of man is called dichotomous, a word simply meaning two parts.

In contrast, the word trichotomous is used to talk about the view which portrays man as a three-part being. The trichotomous teacher emphasizes that the spirit and the soul remain as separate entities within a person.

No one really knows for sure in what way the spirit was used to bring the soul of man into existence. Creative acts are beyond our full comprehension. What we have to help us understand the nature of man are numerous Bible passages which talk about the various activities and functions of man's being.

There are some verses in the Bible which refer to persons having three distinct parts (i.e. I Thess. 5:23). Other verses talk as if man has only two parts, a natural part and a spiritual part (i.e. I Cor. 7:34; Matt 26:41). Therefore we must see man as being both dichotomous and trichotomous. In one sense, he is a two-part being, because the spirit and the soul are so intertwined that in many ways they are one. We may be able to separate them for discussion purposes, but in reality the spiritual substance of God's breath was, in some fashion, used to actually bring the soul of man into existence.

At the same time, when speaking in other contexts, we can talk about the spirit of man as being separate from the soul. For example, we separate the two when talking about their origin - the spirit coming from God's breath, and the soul being created. Because the spirit came from God, we will see later how this "God stuff" within us has certain characteristics not associated with the created soul.

We must also separate them when talking from God's perspective, because several verses mention how God could withdraw His breath from men if He chose to do so. For example Job 34:14-15 tells us:

"If He [God] should determine to do so,
If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,
All flesh would perish together,
And man would turn to dust."

Because God could withdraw the spirit from man, we must recognize the spirit as separate from the soul when looking from His viewpoint.

We do not want to make this seem complicated. We are simply pointing out that both dichotomous and trichotomous views fail if we limit ourselves to just one or the other.

The Bible has Scriptures speaking from both perspectives. That is the reason why some Christian teachers today teach one way, and others take the other perspective.

In the following pages, when we talk about the spirit as an entity separate apart from the soul, we are speaking of that spiritual energy which both originated from the breath of God and is resident within man. When we speak of the soul/spirit we are talking about the two elements which function together as one. And then as we talk about the soul only, we are doing this for the purpose of understanding; but please keep in mind, that the soul does not exist independently of the spirit which sustains it.

In the next chapter we will begin looking at the nature and functions of the soul and spirit within man. But first we need to establish the origin of man's spirit.

It is not just Adam in whom God's breath resides. Every human being has this spiritual breath from God. In the passage from the book of Job which we last quoted (34:14-15), we read that all flesh would perish if God were to withdraw His Spirit from man. If God

simply inhaled His breath from mankind, we would all turn to dust. From Scriptures like these we learn of the life-sustaining function of the spirit within man (see also Eccl 12:7 and Job 33:4), and we also conclude that God's breath is in every human being. We can understand that God breathed life into the first man, but how does it actually get into all other human beings?

Think of the breath which God released into Adam. We understand that in that initial breath, God fathered not just Adam, but all of mankind. The Lord is referred to in the Bible as the "God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num 16:22;27:16) and the "Father of spirits" (Heb 12:9). God is the Originator, the Source, the starting point for all of life. The spiritual substance which God released into Adam became the substance of life which energized all of Mankind.

Consider the power in that first breath. Compare it to God's other creative acts such as when He spoke into existence the plant life in this world. In God's spoken words, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation," there was enough power to give life to all plants for the duration of this world. In a corresponding way, there was enough power in the divine breath that was released into Adam, to give life to all the generations that would follow him.

The residue of God's breath abides in every living human being. By using the word residue we do not want to imply that the amount within the later generations is diminished. Rather, the spiritual substance of life is creative, and hence reproduced in every single human being.

It is important for us to recognize that God began the entire human race through Adam. The Apostle Paul explained in the New Testament,

"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth... He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation... Being then the offspring of God..." (Acts 17:24-29; underlining mine).

Notice that every human being is considered the offspring of God, having been made from the one man Adam.

It is critical that we establish in our minds the truth that the spiritual substance of life originated with the breath of God, and that it is passed on through generational lines. Even today, the spirit which sustains life in a newborn baby, originated with that first breath released into Adam.

It is at this point that some people have a misconception. They wrongly imagine God releasing spiritual life into the womb of a mother each time there is conception, or at some point during the gestation period. That is a common misunderstanding, and we need to establish the fact here that the spirit-substance of life itself is passed through the generational lines.

The passing on of spiritual substance from one generation to another is made clear when we study the account concerning Abraham and Levi in Hebrews 7:9-10. We are told that when Abraham brought his offering to God, Levi was "in the loins" of Abraham. Levi did not come down to the earth from heaven and then enter the womb of his mother. No. Notice the location of Levi. The Bible tells us that he was in the loins of his great-great-grandfather. The amazing thing is that Levi was not born until four generations later.

We are not saying that Levi fully existed before his conception, but the spiritual substance did indeed exist within his forefather. Levi's soul, the created element, would not have come into existence until the spiritual substance came in contact with the physical substance in the womb of his mother.

We can make a comparison at this point. As the spirit is seen as the energy which sustains life, think of an electric current flowing through wires to a light bulb. The wires are compared to the generational lines, and the light bulb is at the point where a person comes into existence.

The question, "When does human life begin?" has some profound implications when we consider many of the issues facing today's society. Having a Biblical understanding determines much of what we believe about abortion, genetic engineering, etc.

Concerning this, notice what King David said as he praised God,

For Thou didst form my inward parts;
Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb...
Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Thy book they were all written,
The days that were ordained for me,

When as yet there was not one of them (Ps 139:13-16).

Notice that God has ordained a set time for each person's existence. God established these times before this world was made. The spiritual substance of life pre-existed with God from the beginning, and we were each in the thoughts of God. However, the soul of man comes into existence simultaneously as the body is formed within the womb of the mother. That time is set by God.

We can summarize this first chapter by saying that all human beings depend upon the breath of God to sustain their life. That breath originated from the first breath released into Adam. Through Adam, God fathered all of mankind.

The only exception to this was the birth of Jesus. He was born of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit came upon the virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-35). He descended directly from heaven as the Word became flesh (John 1:14; 6:46-51; 8:23, 42). Jesus was the "only begotten Son" of God (John 3:16). In contrast, all the rest of mankind have been naturally born of Adam.

Back Cover

Writing for the 21st Century

Harold R. Eberle has become known internationally as a teacher to the Body of Christ. Having traveled extensively and authoring several books, he has influenced leaders' lives all over the world. His passion is for the maturation of the Church.

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