

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

1. Man's spirit was formed by God to bring us into oneness with Him

Zech. 12:1 ...Thus declares Jehovah, who...forms the spirit of man within him,

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man...

Gen 2:7 God...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

John 20:22 ...He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

John 3:6 That which is born of the Spirit is spirit...

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

There is indeed a spirit in man (Job 32:8). God formed the heavens, the earth and the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12:1). These three items of God's creation are equally important. The crowning act of His creation was to form the spirit of man by breathing the breath (*neshamah* – same word translated *spirit* in Prov. 20:27) of life directly into his nostrils (Gen 2:7). This intimate act was repeated in the bringing forth of the new creation by Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit into the disciples (John 20:22). The human spirit as a receptacle can receive God as the Spirit and be filled with Him (Eph. 5:18). Our regenerated human spirit joins us to the Lord making us one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). The two breathings in Genesis 2 and John 20 show that the focal point of God's participation with man is the human spirit. Man's spirit is his inward organ for him to contact God, receive God, contain God and assimilate God into his entire being as life and everything to him.

2. Man's spirit is for the building of God's dwelling place

Acts 17:24 The God who made the world ... does not dwell in temples made with hands;

2 Cor. 6:16 ...For we are the temple of the living God

Eph. 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

God does not look to heavens or earth, or to a temple built with hands, but to our human spirit for His dwelling and rest. Heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool, but God looks to those with a humble and contrite spirit for His dwelling (Isa. 66:1-2). Our spirit is where the building of the church, the dwelling place of God, takes place today.

3. Man's spirit corresponds with the Holy of Holies and the Good Land

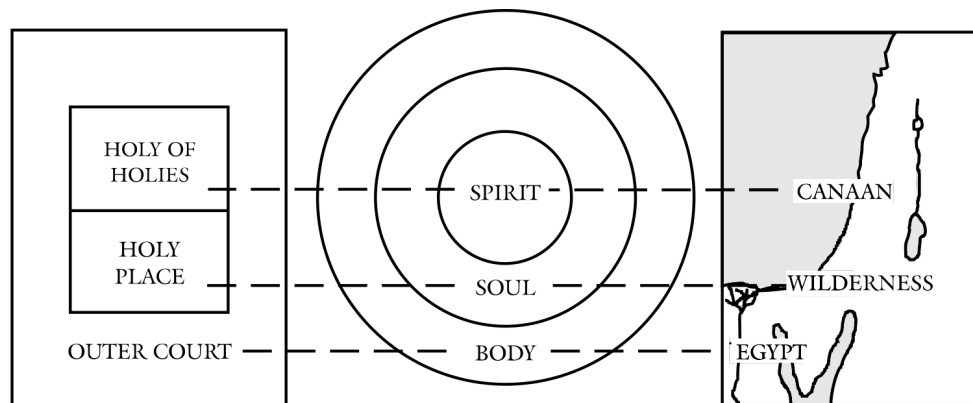
1 Thess. 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Heb. 10:22 Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies...

Heb. 4:11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest...

Man is composed of body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Just as the body is distinct from the soul, the soul is distinct from the spirit. With our body (Gk. *bios*) we contact the physical world, with our soul (Gk. *psuche*) the psychological world and with our spirit (Gk. *pneuma*) we contact God who is Spirit. As Christians we are called to be filled unto all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19).

This begins with impartation of eternal life into our spirit through regeneration, continues with spreading of life into our soul through sanctification and consummates in glorification through the redemption of our bodies. The three parts of man correspond with two important types in the Old Testament – the Temple with its three parts and the three stages of Israel’s journey.



“In the tabernacle fashioned by Moses there were three separate compartments. [...] In this tabernacle we have a figure of the Christian man. His spirit is the holy of holies, where God dwells...” (Martin Luther in his comment on Luke 1:46-47)

“Let us therefore come forward to the Holy of Holies” implies a coming into the reality of God by coming forward to our regenerated human spirit. The presence of a man in the outer court or even in the Holy Place was not sufficient to bring him into contact with God. There was a need to pass through the veil which was rent (Matt. 27:51) by the death of Christ in order to be brought into the presence of God. We do not need to remain in the Holy Place, i.e., the old covenant, the soul; we must enter into the Holy of Holies, i.e., the new covenant, the spirit.

The children of Israel journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the land of Canaan. Likewise, our Christian journey from the realm of the flesh (Egypt) to the realm of the spirit (good land of Canaan) involves a passage through the wilderness of the soul.

In Heb. 4:11 there is a charge to *“be diligent to enter into that rest”*. In our journey toward God, we cannot expect to enter into the rest that has been prepared for us by simply *“wandering”* through our Christian life, relying only on the elements of our soul. Instead, our soul-life must be denied in our experience (Matt 16:24-25). We must not continue to wander in our soul (our *psuche* consisting of our mind, emotion and will), but press on to enter into our spirit, where Christ is our rest. Our entrance into the good land depends upon the constant word of God operating within us to produce a *“dividing of soul and spirit”* (Heb. 4:12).

Ultimately, the journey of God toward man consummates in the temple as His dwelling, and the journey of man toward God consummates with our living and walking in Him as our good land (Col. 2:6; Acts 17:28; Gal. 5:16). These consummations are realized in our human spirit. Knowing the difference between the soul and the spirit is important for our daily living. We need to deny our soul-life (with its unrenewed mind, fickle emotions, and stubborn will) and receive him as life in our spirit. Our human spirit enables God to mingle Himself as the Spirit with us. This brings man into a restful union with God and produces God’s habitation with man.