

THE NATURE OF MAN

THE COMPOSITION OF MAN

- Man is both material and immaterial at the same time

Genesis 2:7 ~ *Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

- While there were 2 steps to the act of creating Adam, the result was a single, unified living person with body and soul living and acting together
- The particles of the earth provided the material while God's breath effected life
- Thus, material and immaterial combined to produce a single entity

2 Corinthians 4:16 ~ *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*

- Thus, man is a combination of both...bipartite in nature:
 - Material – the body of man
 - Immaterial – the seat of man's consciousness, emotions, intellect, will, etc.

Material

- Man's material being is his physical body

Genesis 2:7 ~ *Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

- The body of man was formed from the dust of the ground
- Biblical terminology for the physical body:

Psalms 73:26 ~ *My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Romans 12:1 ~ *I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

1 Corinthians 15:44 ~ *it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

2 Corinthians 5:1 ~ *For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

2 Corinthians 4:16 ~ *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*

- At death the body again unites with the dust from which it had its origin

Genesis 3:19 ~ *By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.*

Psalms 104:29 ~ *You hide Your face, they are dismayed; You take away their spirit, they expire And return to their dust.*

Immaterial

- The immaterial part of man is his inner person...their “soul” which lives on after their body dies
- There are many terms used in Scripture to refer to man’s immaterial being...these terms refer not to separate entities but various aspects or facets of the whole of man’s immaterial being
- Although these terms are distinguishable in Scripture, they serve similar or overlapping functions

1. Soul (Heb. *nepesh*; Gk. *psyche*) – place of man’s will, emotions, feelings, passions, and appetite

Proverbs 25:25 ~ *Like cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a distant land.*

Ezekiel 18:4 ~ *The soul who sins will die.*

Matthew 10:28 ~ *Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Revelation 6:9 ~ *When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God...*

- It can also refer to the whole person

Acts 2:41 ~ *So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

Acts 27:37 ~ *All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons.*

2. Spirit (Heb. *ruach*; Gk. *pneuma*) – the seat of life...that which makes man a living being with its various functions and feelings...unlike “soul” however, it does not refer to the whole man (i.e. both material and immaterial)...in Pauline thought it assumes prominence in relation to the spiritual life

Psalms 51:10 ~ *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

Matthew 26:41 ~ *Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Acts 7:59 ~ *They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”*

2 Corinthians 7:1 ~ *Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

3. Heart (Heb. *leb*; Gk. *kardia*) – the whole inner being of man...the place of emotion, intellect, and will...the wellspring of life...the center and seat of life

Proverbs 4:23 ~ *Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.*

Jeremiah 17:9 ~ *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...*

Acts 16:14 ~ *A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.*

- God opens the heart (Acts 16:14)...enlightens the heart (2 Cor 4:6)...directs the heart (2 Thess 3:5)...searches the heart (Jer 17:10)
- The heart can be foolish (Rom 1:21)...unrepentant (Rom 2:5)...hardened (Mark 6:52)...veiled (2 Cor 3:15)...sincere (Heb 10:22)...purified (James 4:8)

4. **Conscience** (Gk. *suneidesis*) - subjective moral guide that is alerted to what is wrong...a witness within man that tells him he ought to do what he believes to be right and not to do what he believes to be wrong

Romans 2:15 ~ *in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,*

- The emphasis in Scripture is that the conscience should be kept clear:

1 Tim 1:5 ~ *But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith*

1 Tim 3:9 ~ *but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.*

- The problem with the conscience, however, is that it is not always a reliable guide...it is not infallible
- It functions like a skylight not a light bulb...it lets light into the soul, but does not produce its own light

1 Timothy 4:2 ~ *by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,*

Titus 1:15 ~ *To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled*

Hebrews 10:22 ~ *let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water*

- The Christian's conscience (when properly informed by the Word) operates to prod him/her to do what is right in various relationships:

Romans 13:5 ~ *Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.*

1 Peter 2:19 ~ *For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly*

1 Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12 ~ *However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled...10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?...12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.*

5. **Mind** (Gk. *nous, phreneo*) – the place of thought, judgment, reasoning, and understanding...includes the faculties of perceiving, understanding, feeling, judging, and determining

- The mind of an unbeliever is depraved, reprobate, defiled, and blinded:

Romans 1:28 ~ *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper*

2 Corinthians 4:4 ~ *in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ*

Ephesians 4:17-18 ~ *So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding...*

Titus 1:15 ~ *To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.*

- The mind of the believer is to be fully engaged in worshipping the Lord and livingly godly:

Matthew 22:37 ~ *And He said to him, “ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’*

Romans 12:2 ~ *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Ephesians 5:17 ~ So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

1 Peter 1:13 ~ *Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*

6. Inner Man – the real, true self

2 Corinthians 4:16 ~ *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*

Ephesians 3:16 ~ *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,*

VARIOUS VIEWS OF MAN’S COM		
Viewpoints	Analys	
	Material	Non-m
Dichotomy	Body	Sou ----- Spit
Trichotomy	Body	Sou
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How Many Parts are There to Man?

1. Two Parts (Dichotomy) - Man is a two-part being, consisting of body and soul/spirit where soul and spirit are of the same substance

a. God created man as only two parts

Genesis 2:7 ~ *Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

Job 27:3 ~ *For as long as life is in me, And the breath of God is in my nostrils*

b. The words “soul” and “spirit” may be used interchangeably

- Both the soul and the spirit can be troubled

Genesis 41:8 ~ Now in the morning his *spirit was troubled*, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

Psalm 42:6 ~ O my God, my *soul is in despair* within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

- Both terms are used in the same context

Luke 1:46-47 ~ And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

John 12:27; 13:21 ~ Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour... When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

- Both terms describe the soul/spirit departing at death

Luke 12:20 ~ But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?"

John 19:30 ~ Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

- Both the soul and the spirit can sin

1 Peter 1:22 ~ Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

2 Corinthians 7:1 ~ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

c. The body and soul/spirit together are mentioned as constituting the entire person

Matthew 10:28 ~ Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

1 Corinthians 5:3 ~ For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.

James 2:26 ~ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Conclusion: Scripture does not seem to support any distinction between soul and spirit. They are synonyms for the immaterial aspect of man's nature.

2. Three Parts (Trichotomy) - Man is a three-part being consisting of body, soul, and spirit

- The body is seen as world-conscious, the soul as self-conscious, and the spirit as God-conscious
- The soul and spirit are said to be different both in function and in substance
- The soul is seen as a lower power consisting of man's imagination, memory, and understanding
- The spirit is a higher power, consisting of reason, conscience, and will and is that part which comes alive when a person becomes a Christian

a. Does 1 Thessalonians 5:23 describe man as 3 parts?

1 Thessalonians 5:23 ~ 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.

- Paul's aim is not to provide an analysis of the makeup of man's immaterial being
- Rather his aim is to communicate his desire that the Thessalonians be as holy as they can be

b. Does Hebrews 4:12 describe man as 3 parts?

Hebrews 4:12 ~ *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

- Again, the writer's aim is not to provide an analysis of the makeup of man's immaterial aspect
- Rather his emphasis is on the depth to which the Word of God is able to penetrate; i.e. innermost depth of man's personality
- He is using a number of terms (soul, spirit, joints, marrow, thoughts and intentions of the heart) that speak of the deep inward parts of our being that are not hidden from the penetrating power of the Word of God

c. Is a separate spirit what makes us different from animals?

- Those who hold to man being three parts say that both animals and humans have souls, but that it is the presence of a spirit that makes us different from animals

- "We do not have to say that we have a part distinct from our souls and bodies that make us different from animals, for our souls and bodies (including our minds) relate to God in ways animals never can. Rather, what makes us different from animals is the spiritual abilities that God has given to both our bodies and souls (or spirits)" ~ Grudem, 480.

3. Many Parts (Multi-Faceted)

- Although soul and spirit are common terms used to describe the nonmaterial nature of man, there are a number of additional terms that describe man's non-physical nature.
- Hence, man's nonmaterial nature can be understood as multi-faceted.

Mark 12:30 ~ *and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'*

- Again, Jesus' aim is not to provide an analysis of the makeup of man's immaterial aspect
- Rather his emphasis is on the depth to which believers should love the Lord

THE SOURCE OF MAN'S IMMATERIAL NATURE

Reincarnation

- The immaterial aspect of man reincarnates from one form of creature life to another
- Souls of people exist in heaven long before their bodies are conceived in wombs of mother; then God brings soul to earth to be joined with the body
- Some hold that men previously existed as angelic spirits who were later imprisoned in physical bodies as an act of judgment and punishment for sin
- Souls go through various incarnations throughout history, appearing in different physical forms at different times
- Problems with this view:

1. Scripture clearly states what happens to the souls of both believers and unbelievers upon death

Hebrews 9:27 ~ *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.*

2 Corinthians 5:8 ~ *we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*

2. Specific passages imply that there is a definite point in time for the beginning of each man's existence, prior to which they did not exist

Job 38:4 ~ *Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding*

John 8:58 ~ *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am"*

3. It destroys the unity of the whole human race as coming from Adam

Romans 5:12 ~ *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned*

1 Corinthians 15:22 ~ *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive*

4. No one has any accurate and provable recollection of a previous existence

Traducianism

- The soul as well as the body of the child are inherited from the baby's parents at the time of conception
- Though the parents do not create the soul, through the normal process of reproduction both body and soul are generated

1. This best accounts for original sin and total depravity

Romans 5:12 ~ *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—*

- If the parents pass on the soul as well as the body, it explains where the sin nature comes from and the tendency, from birth, of every human being to sin
- The sin nature cannot be explained if God creates each soul directly.

2. When God created Eve, He did not breathe into her the breath of life; Rather her soul was somehow passed on in what He did through Adam

Genesis 2:7 ~ *Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

3. Explains the appearance of corresponding mental or moral traits (immaterial) in children.

- Explains the heredity factor - the intellect, personality, and emotional similarities of children and their parents

4. There is Scriptural support for it

Genesis 2:1-3 ~ *Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made"*

Genesis 5:3 ~ *When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth*

Psalms 51:5 ~ *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me*

Acts 17:26 ~ *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*

Hebrews 7:10 ~ *for he (Levi) was still in the loins of his father(Abraham) when Melchizedek met him”*

NOTE: Christ would need to be an exception to this since he did not receive a sin nature

Creationism

- Each man's soul is a separate and special creative act of God each time a new life is conceived
- God creates a new soul for each person and sends it to that person's body sometime between conception and birth
- Human bodies come into being through normal reproduction but God directly creates the soul/spirit

1. There is Scripture that does seem to indicate this

Genesis 2:7 ~ *Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being”*

Numbers 16:22 ~ *But they fell on their faces, and said, “O God, You God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, will You be angry with the entire congregation?”*

Ecclesiastes 12:7 ~ *then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it*

Isaiah 42:5 ~ *Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk in it*

Zechariah 12:1 ~ *The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him*

Hebrews 12:9 ~ *Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?*

2. The soul is immaterial and therefore could not be transmitted from parents

3. Christ does not have to be an exception, because He was created a sinless being

- Preserves the purity of Christ by ensuring that His soul was created by God
- With this view, it would be impossible for Christ to inherit His mother's sinful nature since His physical body was from Mary, but His sinless soul was from God.

BUT:

Does this make God the author of evil?

Did not God cease from his creative work (Gen 2:2)?

How then is Adam's sin passed on?

Conclusion:

Scripture does not seem to treat the origin of the soul as a separate issue; therefore, it is difficult to determine which is absolutely correct but traducianism has the best biblical support