

“God’s Word, Alive!”

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A Biblical Teaching Ministry Dedicated to “Holding Forth the Word of Life”
by Velma Sanders

“*The Spirit of Man*”

I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

(Job 32:7, 8, King James Version)

After considering God’s glorious work of creation, the psalmist David asked the question, “What is man?” It is only as man, the created, looks away from himself, to God, the Creator, that the answer can be obtained. Mere human earthly wisdom and speculation can never fill in the blank to the mysterious and compelling question, “What is man?” (Psalm 8:1-4; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 40:28)

From the opening chapters of Holy Scripture, it is revealed that man is triune in nature; composed of three parts. “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.” The New Testament writer, Paul, outlined these three separate and distinct parts of man as “spirit,” “soul” and “body.” “And the very God of peace, sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Genesis 2:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Each of these three components, although merged together within the fleshly body of man, has characteristics and functions that are peculiar to them. The “Body” contains the five senses of “*Feel*,” “*Sight*,” “*Smell*,” “*Taste*,” and “*Touch*.” The “Soul” contains the “*Emotions*,” the “*Mind*,” and the “*Will*.” The “Spirit,” which is the emphasis of our study, is the home of “*Communion*,” “*Conscience*,” “*Intuition*,” and “*Worship*.” Upon a careful examination of the Scriptures it is not difficult to see that “the spirit” within us is complex and manifold in its nature. There is a common spirit, shared among all, and there is an individual human spirit. There is the spirit “dead in sin” and there is the renewed spirit. There are demonic spirits, and there is the Spirit of God.

By “spirit,” we mean that part of man that is undetectable by the human eye, that which is invisible to the physical realm. Jesus said, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.” Again, the sacred writer, Luke, records, “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit, and having said this, He gave up the ghost (spirit).” Without doubt, “the spirit” is real, howbeit, invisible. (Luke 23:46; 24:39)

The Breath of Life

The “Breath of Life” is life that God has imparted to every human being. It is that which activates man and gives to him breath and animation. This “Breath of Life,” from God to man, was first imparted to Adam, the progenitor of the human race, in the Garden of Eden.

“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.” Having been formed by God, man lay lifeless, as a corpse, upon the ground. James, in his epistle, stated it this way, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” It was not until God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the “breath of life” that man lived. It was only at that moment that the eye received its twinkle, the heart started its pumping, and all other systems within the body were activated due to the breath of God; which is natural life, imparted into man. (Genesis 2:7; James 2:26)

God, the Giver of Life, grants to man this breath, and it continues in each individual until death. Job’s friend, Elihu, who was born untold generations after Adam spoke of this breath of life, when he said, “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” Job states, “All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.” That same breath, imparted to Adam, was found in Elihu, in Job, and continues to this day in you and I, as well as in all of mankind. Paul preached to the intellectual men of Athens, “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things . . . For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” (Job 27:3; 33:4; Acts 17:22-29)

This breath of life from God, to all, is in no way affected by or contingent upon the spiritual state of its inhabitant. Whether one is saint or sinner, weak or strong, regardless of stature or status, all share in the breath of life.

It is only at the time of death that the breath of life from God departs from the individual human body and returns to God. Solomon wrote, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.” It is this “breath” that God put into Adam, the head of the human race, that He has never done a total recall. Written in Job, we find, “If He set His heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath, All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.” (1 Corinthians 15:45; Job 13:14, 15; Ecclesiastes 12:7)

The “Breath of Life” is to be distinguished from the “Life of God” that is given to a person at the time of regeneration; when one repents of sin and turns to God by faith in Jesus Christ. The Breath of Life is also to be distinguished from the natural, personal human spirit. In conclusion, the Breath of Life is the Breath of God that indwells a person and gives him natural life. Having received, “without money and without price,” this gift from God, His command to each benefactor is, “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord, Praise ye the Lord.” (Psalm 150:6)

The Spirit of Man

While it is true that each human being shares in God's initial "Breath of Life," it is also true that each person has a spirit that is separate from all others. This part of the spirit is called, "The Spirit of Man," as found in 1 Corinthians 2:11, "For what man knoweth the things of the man, except the spirit of man which is in him. Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

This individual and personal part of every human being is given by God, and is uniquely their own. Just as our bodies are unshared, separate and distinct, so is "the spirit of man." In the same way that one speaks of "my eyes," "my hands," or "my thoughts," so it is appropriate for one to be aware of and to make the distinction of "my spirit."

Speaking of the Old Testament Prophet, Elijah, it is written, "And when the sons of the prophets, who were looking on at Jericho, saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him." The spirit of Jacob is referred to in Genesis 45:27, "And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them; and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived."

This spirit of man is separate from and has different functions than the soul of man. Hence, the writer of Hebrews wrote, "For the Word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The spirit of man is similar to the soul of man only in its make-up of being non-physical and that they cannot be measured by human means. (Hebrews 4:12)

Each person has this spirit of man. Howbeit, from birth, the spirit of man in every individual is naturally dead and separated from God, through Adam's sin. The Bible has many different ways of expressing this death of the spirit of man, e.g., "dead in trespasses and sins," "shaped in iniquity," "sons of disobedience," as well as, "without God and without Christ." (Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:1, 12, 5:6)

At the time of Adam's transgression, in the Garden of Eden, his natural spirit lost its sensitivity towards God, and, therefore, became dead to Him. However, the spirit of Adam did not depart from Adam, it was merely separated from God. To those who are yet "dead in sins," they still have in their possession a spirit, although it is darkened by sin and incapable of holding communion with God.

Within those who have been regenerated, through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, the spirit of man within them has been quickened by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38-40, 3:19; Romans 8:9-17; Ephesians 2:1-6)

In summary, the spirit of man, which all possess is separate from the common breath of life. It is also separate and distinct from the Holy Spirit. The natural spirit of man can be alive or dead towards God, but regardless all possess a spirit that is uniquely their own.

The Renewed Spirit

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him. Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:1-7)

This historic and famous conversation that took place between Jesus Christ and Nicodemus tells of how a person that is separated from God, through sin, can be reconciled to Him. Our Lord referred to this supernatural experience as being, “born again.”

When one is “born again,” the Holy Spirit of God quickens (makes alive) the previously “dead in sin and separated from God” spirit of the person, and then He, the Spirit of God, takes up residence within that quickened spirit. Paul writes of this wonderful event saying, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 8:15, 16; Titus 3:5)

It is at the new birth where the Holy Spirit comes into man’s spirit and quickens it as though kindling a flame. From that moment onward, the person who was formerly incapable of communion and worship with God is now enabled by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, within his spirit, to be in fellowship with God. (Proverbs 20:27a; John 4:23, 24)

It is of utmost importance to realize that this experience is an act of God, by grace through faith. Faith placed in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross for sin. It is only upon this foundation, that the work of “new creation” is brought forth. (Proverbs 20:27a; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-13)

“And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul;
the last Adam (Jesus Christ) was made a quickening (life-giving) spirit.”
(1 Corinthians 15:45)

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