



# Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 4 – THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

LESSON 77 – BEING HUMAN: BODY, SOUL, SPIRIT

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE – JOHN MACARTHUR, PGS. 399-451

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY – WAYNE GRUDEM, PGS. 439-528

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# Body, Soul, Spirit

- ▶ Various terms are used to refer to human persons in Scripture. Five of the more common terms include body, soul, spirit, heart, and conscience.
- ▶ Man's constitution includes a physical component – Genesis 2:7 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 being.
- ▶ Man comes from the ground, from the earth.
- ▶ Just as creation is material, man possesses a material element called his body.
- ▶ Often the term is translated “flesh” and can refer to the physical body or the fallen, carnal nature associated with the body since the fall.

# Body, Soul, Spirit

- ▶ The human body was created “very good” (Gen. 1:31).
- ▶ God gave man a physical body in order that he might exercise dominion over the physical world (Gen. 1:26, 28).
- ▶ Our bodies, as Christians, serve as a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).
- ▶ Our physical bodies are so essential to our being human that God will give us resurrected bodies fit for our eternal dwelling (John 5:25-29; Rom. 8:23).
- ▶ Dualistic and gnostic philosophy has taught through the ages that the physical world, including our bodies, are inferior and even inherently evil and worthless.

# Body, Soul, Spirit

- ▶ Socrates believed that the human body was a prison for the soul and he longed for death so that he could be freed forever from the confines of his carnal frame.
- ▶ Gnosticism was anti-material, going so far as denying that Jesus even had a physical body (He had not come in the flesh).
- ▶ Eastern religions teach that the body and material realities are illusions and they long for an eternal, bodiless existence.
- ▶ The Bible teaches that at his creation, Adam's body was sinless and deathless, but sin did bring dramatic changes as his body experienced difficulties, decay, and eventually death.

# Body, Soul, Spirit

- ▶ Our fallen body now is a “lowly body” (Phil. 3:21) and a “body of death” (Rom. 7:24).
- ▶ Bodily cravings and desire lead to sin.
- ▶ The body needs discipline (1 Cor. 9:27; 1 Tim. 4:8) and it longs for redemption (Rom. 8:23).
- ▶ At Christ’s return, believers will be raised and given their glorified bodies (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Phil. 3:20-21).
- ▶ Also, at the Final judgment, the lost will have been resurrected to judgment and given bodies that will suffer under the torments of the wrath of God forever, always dying, but never finally being dead (John 5:28-29).

# Body, Soul, Spirit

- ▶ The term “Soul” occurs 750 times in the Old Testament (nephesh), and in the New Testament around 110 times (psyche).
- ▶ The term soul often refers to the entire person, or his status as a living being.
- ▶ The term can also refer specifically to the immaterial part of a person, in contrast to the physical body.
- ▶ The soul, at death, leaves the body and for the believer, is immediately in the presence of God. For the lost, there is judgment until the resurrection in hell.
- ▶ The soul often encompasses the realms of intellect (mind), will, and emotions.
- ▶ Ultimately, all souls will be reunited with resurrected bodies.

# Body, Soul, Spirit

- ▶ Our spirit, another term for the immaterial part of our being, comes from a word that means wind, breath, or life force (Amos 4:13; Job 9:18; Psa. 135:17; Psa. 51:11; 106:33; Isa. 42:1; Gen. 6:17; Eccl. 3:19, 21).
- ▶ The term can also be used to refer to the entire, or whole person.
- ▶ The spirit is the inner man, the inner life that animates the body.
- ▶ The spirit departs at death (Matt. 27:50; Acts 7:59; James 2:26; Rev. 11:11).
- ▶ The term also refers to the Holy Spirit and to ministering angels and alludes to a relationship with God.
- ▶ The terms soul and spirit are often interchangeable in Scripture (Psa. 31:5; Eccl. 12:7; Heb. 12:23; Luke 1:46-47).

# Heart and Conscience

- ▶ Usually when the Scriptures speak of our heart it is a reference not to the blood pumping organ, but to the control center of a person – the seat for thoughts, attitudes, motives, and actions.
- ▶ This term can also refer to the whole person (Psa. 22:26) or to the core of the inner life (Exodus 7:3, 13; Psa. 9:1; Jer. 17:9).
- ▶ From the heart flow the “springs of life” (Prov. 4:23), good and evil thought and intentions (Gen. 6:5; 1 Kings 3:12; Job 8:10).
- ▶ Emotion, passion, actions, and words also find their origin in the heart (Deut. 19:6; 1 Sam. 1:8; Isa. 32:6; Matt. 15:18).



# Heart and Conscience

- ▶ All people are created with a conscience, the faculty of moral evaluation concerning right and wrong, good and evil.
- ▶ Self-awareness and rational capacity are connected with the conscience to alert a person concerning the morality of his actions.
- ▶ Failure to heed conscience leads to guilt and shame.
- ▶ Romans 2:14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)

# Heart and Conscience

- ▶ Lies and errors can override the warning of the conscience and eventually lead to our conscience being misinformed or miscalculated.
- ▶ Sin sears the conscience (Titus 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:2).
- ▶ To violate conscience is a serious sin (Rom. 14:14-23).

# Three Views of the Human Constitution

- ▶ With all of these terms used to describe our being human, how many actual components are there that make up a human being?
- ▶ Monism – One
- ▶ The human person is seen as one element. One individual being that is a unified self, not a combination of multiple parts.
- ▶ Secular materialism asserts that matter is the only substance in the universe and no God or spiritual entities exist in reality. There is no soul or immaterial part to anyone.
- ▶ All mental and spiritual activities are chemical products of the brain and at physical death there is nothing that survives.
- ▶ Some theologians see the terms for body, soul, and spirit as so interchangeable that they refer to one unified being and not contrasting realities. They are all synonyms for the whole person.

# Three Views of the Human Constitution

- ▶ Dichotomism – Two
- ▶ Dichotomism holds to the idea that man is a two-part being consisting of a body and an immaterial element called either a soul or spirit interchangeably.
- ▶ Humanity consists of more than matter as there is also a spiritual element that animates or gives life to the material body.
- ▶ Jesus did teach a distinction between body and soul in Matthew 10:28, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
- ▶ The Bible teaches that the immaterial part of us survives physical death.

# Three Views of the Human Constitution

- ▶ Trichotomism – Three
- ▶ Trichotomism also affirms that man consists of multiple parts, material and immaterial, the three parts being body, soul, and spirit.
- ▶ The body is the physical, material part of a person.
- ▶ The soul is the psychological element of a man – the mind, will, and emotions that allow him to relate to the world and other people.
- ▶ The spirit is that element that responds to spiritual matters and to God.
- ▶ The presence of the spirit distinguishes men from the animals.
- ▶ 1 Thess. 5:23 - Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ▶ This was a majority view among the early church fathers but was in decline until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

# Three Views of the Human Constitution

- ▶ Evaluating these three views monism must be rejected since it denies the existence of God and all spiritual realities.
- ▶ Even in Christian thought, we cannot deny that there is a distinction between body and soul (material and immaterial) and that the immaterial part survives physical death.
- ▶ Both dichotomism and trichotomism rightly affirm that man consists of more than matter. The dividing issue centers on whether there exists a substantive distinction between soul and spirit.
- ▶ The biblical evidence suggests that the terms for souls and spirit are used so interchangeably that both terms refers to one part of us that is immaterial. It is difficult to argue that they are distinct parts making us one part material and two parts immaterial. (See Job 7:11; Isa. 26:9; Luke 1:46-47, etc.).
- ▶ Both terms for soul and spirit are used to describe the saints in heaven (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9).

# Three Views of the Human Constitution

- ▶ But what about the two texts that use the phrase, “Body, soul, and spirit” (1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12)?
- ▶ It is clear in the Scriptures that the immaterial part of us can be given different terms, but not every designation means a different, distinguishable part. At times the phraseology is used simply for emphasis.
- ▶ Jesus tells us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.....but not our spirit. However, He tells us to worship God in spirit and truth.
- ▶ Remember also that at times each of these terms can be used to refer to the whole person, so these are overlapping concepts and not distinguishable parts.

# Three Views of the Human Constitution

- ▶ In reality, we have been created as a complex unity with a material element (physical body) and an immaterial element (soul/spirit) that survives after the physical element dies and will be reunited with it at the resurrection.
- ▶ James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
- ▶ Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.