

## **The Body, Soul, and Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23)**

In this lesson we are going to deal with something that is very important not only in the word of God but also important in the life of every person. The subject here is the body, the soul, and the spirit of man. So let us look to the scriptures and see what the word of God has to say about these 3 parts of man.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

According to this verse we see that man has 3 basic parts the body, the soul, and the spirit. This verse also shows us that these 3 are not the same. Below we will give a brief description of each one of these parts.

### **Body :**

The body is the easiest part to define the body is the flesh. It is the part that we look at every day in the mirror. This is what we see when we look at one another, I cannot see your soul or your spirit but I can see you flesh.

### **Soul :**

The soul also has a bodily form except it is on the inside of your physical body. The soul cannot be seen with the natural eye but it is still there. The soul is really who you are. For instance at death we know that the body goes back to dust and the part of you that goes to heaven or hell depending on whether you are saved or lost is the soul. (We will discuss more on this later in the lesson) The rich man who went to hell in **Luke 16:19-31** had eyes and a tongue and a body of some kind. He also had a memory and knew things. Therefore we say that the soul is who you really are. It is kind of like if you take off all your clothes you are still you and the flesh is clothing for the soul and once the flesh is removed at death you are still you. Another good reference for showing that the soul is a bodily form is found in **Revelations 6:9-11**. Notice here that the souls under the altar are given white robes to wear. So we see from this that the soul is capable of wearing a robe therefore it must have a bodily form.

### **Spirit :**

The spirit of man is a little harder to define in absolute terms. We know that before salvation the spirit is dead (**Ephesians 2:1**). This is why one has to be born again as Jesus said in **John 3:3,5**. The spirit in the bible is likened unto the wind or air (**John 3:3-8**) and the spirit is also connected with the mind (**1 Corinthians 2:11**). But we cannot say that the spirit is the mind specifically because the rich man in hell still had his memory and as we will see later the spirit goes back to God who gave it at death.

The teaching that man is a 3 part being makes sense also because God is a 3 part being. God is a trinity (**1 John 5:7**) and when he created Adam he created him in his image. Note how the 3 parts of man are listed in **Genesis 2:7**.

- 1) The dust of the ground (The body)
- 2) The breath of Life (The spirit)
- 3) A living soul (The soul)

Some teach that the soul and the spirit are the same thing. But this will not work when one looks at the scripture. First look at our main text **1 Thessalonians 5:23** they are listed separately. Next look at **Hebrews 4:12** this verse says that the soul and the spirit can be divided between therefore they are not the same thing. So it is scripturally clear that they are not the same.

The next question becomes what happens to these parts of man when he dies? We will discuss each of these three parts individually for both a saved person and a lost person.

### **Body :**

This one is easy, according to **Genesis 3:19** the flesh goes back to dust. This is true for both a saved person and a lost person. It doesn't matter what you do to the body eventually it goes back to dust.

### **Spirit :**

According to **Ecclesiastes 12:7** the spirit returns to God who gave it. Now this is true for both a saved person and a lost person. Remember that a lost persons spirit is dead therefore what does it matter whether it goes back to God even though the person is lost. Another good scripture for this is **Matthew 10:28**. Notice how the verse talks about destroying the body and soul in hell but does not mention the spirit. That is because the spirit goes back to God who gave it.

### **Soul :**

For a saved person today who dies their soul goes to heaven (**2 Corinthians 5:6-8**). For a lost person who dies without the Lord Jesus Christ the soul goes to Hell (**Luke 16:22-23**). Remember the soul is who you really are and it has a bodily form. In essence the soul of man is immortal it will live forever in heaven or hell depending on what you do with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now a good example for this is found in **Luke 23:39-54** concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ had the same 3 parts as all men a body, a soul, and a spirit. The only difference was that he had God's blood and had never sinned. But when he died his body went in the tomb (**Verse 53**). His spirit went back to God (**Verse 46**). Now soul went into the heart of the earth. He told the repentant thief in **Verse 43** that today he would be with him in paradise. At that time paradise was in the heart of the earth and that is why Jesus said in **Matthew 12:40** that as Jonas was 3 days in the belly of the whale, so shall the son of man be 3 days in the heart of the earth. Therefore Jesus is an example to prove to us what we have already said concerning what happens to the 3 parts of man when he dies.

With all that we have said concerning the body, soul, and spirit it is plain to see that the soul is the most valuable part of man. It is what will spend eternity in heaven or an eternity in the lake of fire. Where your soul spends eternity will depend on whether you receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior and this is why Jesus said what he did in **Mark 8:36**.

*“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his won soul?”*

**The Body, Soul, and Spirit : Handout  
(1 Thessalonians 5:23)**

- 1) What are the 3 parts of man according to 1 Thessalonians 5:23?
  
- 2) Give a brief description of each part.
  
- 3) Give a verse for showing that the Soul and Spirit are not the same.
  
- 4) What do we see from Genesis in regards to man having 3 parts?
  
- 5) List what happens to all 3 parts of man when he dies. Give references.
  
- 6) How is the Lord Jesus Christ an example of what happens when a man dies?
  
- 7) What is the most important part of Man? Explain why.