

The Glory of the End-times Church



by George A Nel

For Personal or Group Study
(inclusive of in-depth Study Guides)

Chapter 2: Understanding Spirit, Soul and Body

Having discovered that our **body** is the temple of the Holy Spirit (*the Court Yard in Biblical Temple comparison*), I would like to elaborate a little more on our “three-part being”. As we’ve discussed, we consist of body, soul and spirit. This Chapter will help us to better align these three components to the Old Testament Temple of God.¹

In the previous Chapter I mentioned that, by assuming my emotions **defined me** as an individual, I wrongly measured my relationship with God by how I felt. But once I gained some understanding of the different parts of my own human make-up, I realised that the feelings in my soul had no bearing on my walk with God! Even if I “felt down”, God still loved me the same! And then I learnt that I could **change my feelings** by renewing my mind with the Word of God – *by what God said about me, how He viewed me, and what He purposed for me!* This also led me to a more intimate experience of Him in my spirit.

Dear reader, if you feel worthless, it is almost impossible to truly fellowship with God! Unless we believe what He says about us, we unintentionally make Him out to be a liar – *I know this sounds very crude...* But, the road to intimacy with God starts by realising that you have been completely forgiven and are well accepted by a loving Father,² because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Only when we agree with God on that, can we boldly approach Him and enjoy His wonderful Presence and really have sweet communion with Him!

John 16:27 “for **the Father Himself loves you**, because you have loved Me (*Jesus*), and have believed that I came forth from God.”

Ephesians 3:17-19 “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being **rooted and grounded in love**... may be able

¹ Keep in mind that the Tabernacle that Moses constructed was a physical representation of what he saw on the mountain in God’s Presence. Studying Scripture, we are presented with the understanding that the Tabernacle modelled a Heavenly vision of God’s Heavenly environment (Exo 25:40 “see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain”). Rev 21:10 embodies the Temple-pattern: “(he) showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...” :22 “But I saw no temple in it, for the **Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple**”). Keeping in mind that since man was created in the Image of God, man similarly became a temple for the Lord God Himself!

² Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ... :6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which **He made us accepted in the Beloved**.

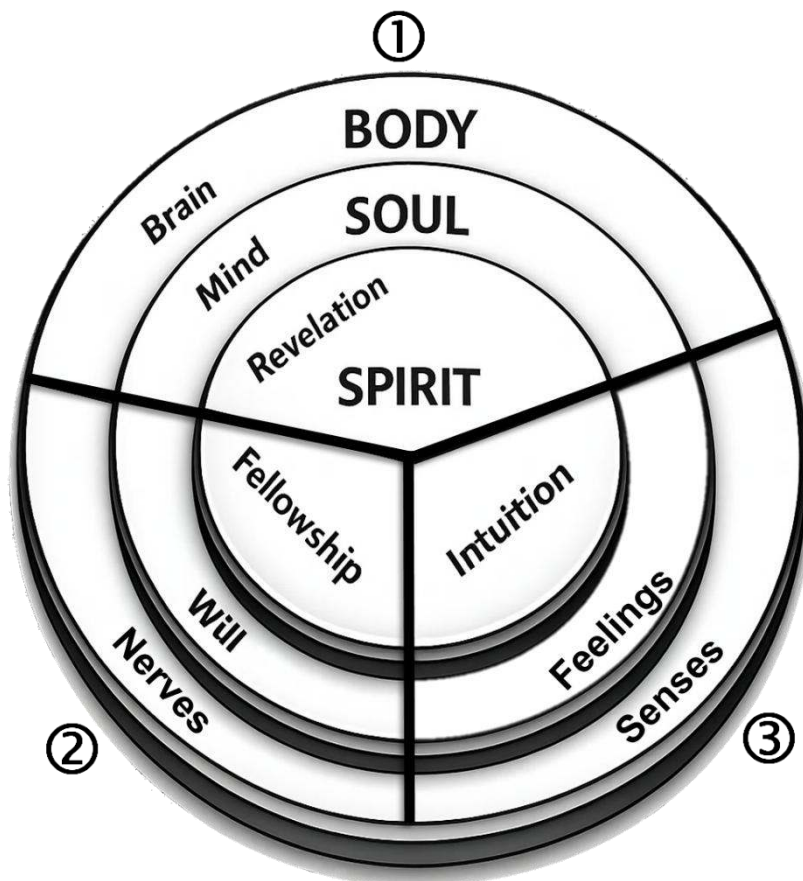
to... know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore **come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

So, let us now discuss the functions, senses and interactions of our "three-part being".

FUNCTIONS OF BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

Below is slightly updated copy of the diagram that we've looked at in Chapter 1:



The three "slices" in the foregoing graphic illustrate in a very simplified way the main functions of our body, soul and spirit.

Slice number 1 has to do with the function of **REASON**:

- the brain in the **body**;
- the mind in the **soul**;

- revelation in the **spirit** (*supernatural perception*).

The function represented by slice number 2 focusses on **INTERACTION**:

- the nervous system of the **body** interacts with the brain;
- the decision making "will"³ in the **soul** produces bodily activities;
- fellowship in the **spirit** enables communication with the invisible realm.

Slice 3 depicts the function of **DECISION**, which is motivated by:

- senses in the **body** (*sight, smell, hearing, taste & touch*);
- feelings⁴ in the **soul** (*e.g. happiness, depression, fear*);
- intuition⁵ in the **spirit** (acting on what we generally call a "gut-feeling").

SENSES OF BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

Every one of the three components of our human being also has its own "senses".⁶ We are all familiar with the five **bodily senses** (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch/feeling). These five senses enable us to perceive the **physical** (*natural*) **world** around us.

Our **soul** perceives things mostly in the **psychological realm**. Similar to the natural senses of the body, the soul can also *consciously*.

1. "**see**": having insight;
2. "**hear**": listening (*hearing with attention and comprehension*);
3. "**taste**": referring to our unique preferences;
4. "**smell**": silent awareness;
5. "**feel**": emotional responses.

Finally, we also have **spiritual senses**, by which we can perceive the **spiritual world**. Similar to the bodily- and the soulish-senses, the spirit has its own senses, but on a deeper level – perhaps more *sub-consciously*. Because our spiritual senses operate in the spiritual realm, I'll use Scriptures from the Bible to illustrate:

³ i.e. volition.

⁴ i.e. emotions.

⁵ Relating to discernment.

⁶ Body, soul and spirit – each component needs senses to be able to communicate and interact with the realm in which it exists. The applicable "realms" under discussion being the PHYSICAL-realm, the PSYCHOLOGICAL realm and the SPIRITUAL realm.

1. "**sight**": vision – Matthew 17:9 "Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.' "
2. "**hearing**": revelation – Luke 10:22 "no one knows... who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."
3. "**taste**": communion – Psalm 34:8 "taste and see that the LORD is good"; 2 Corinthians 6:14 "what communion has light with darkness?"
4. "**smell**": discernment (*sub-conscious sense*) – 1 Corinthians 2:14 "...the things of the Spirit of God... are spiritually discerned."
5. "**feel**": perception – Acts 10:34 "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.' "

THE HEART AND FLESH

What do the terms "heart" and "flesh" in the Bible actually mean?

Let's first look at the "heart". The Bible more often uses "heart" metaphorically to represent the seat of emotions, understanding, and spiritual life, even though there are instances where it also refers to the literal organ that moves blood through the body. So, what is the metaphorically meaning of the "heart" of man?

Some people regard references to the heart as being the same as the spirit of man, but the Bible refers to the *spirit* and the *heart* separately. I believe that the term "heart" in Scripture usually refers to a combination of **spirit and soul**. If the Lord desires our "heart", He actually wants our spirit-man to be reborn, but also our soul-part to be sanctified through faith and the continuous surrender of our will (*recall that the "will" of man is mainly located in the soul*). Without us being willing to give our lives to Jesus, we cannot even be spiritually reborn. In the same way the Holy Spirit can also not sanctify our soul unless we are willing to believe God and willing to surrender to Him to purify our earthly (fallen) nature.

Proverbs 23:26 My son, give me your **heart**, and let your eyes observe my ways.

When Proverbs 4:23 states "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life", we can clearly see that the spirit and soul are at the "heart" of the course of our entire lives (*refer to the verses in the*

*footnote for definition).*⁷ Following is a representation of the HEART of man (*union of soul and spirit*):



When the **soul** of man is more inclined towards the spirit (*i.e. spiritual things*), we call that person is a “**spiritual believer**”. 1 Corinthians 3:1 says “I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ”. Paul was saying to the Corinthians that they were spiritually immature because they were worldly minded.

When the **soul** of man is more inclined towards the body (*i.e. earthly desires and things*), we refer to such a person is a “**fleshly/carnal believer**” (*refer to the following graphic representation of the FLESH*).

⁷ Act 13:22 “...He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own **heart**, who will do all My will’ “ (*soul of David*). Act 5:3: But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your **heart** to lie to the Holy Spirit’ (a spiritual/hidden decision to lie).



Romans 8:5 sums it up beautifully: “For those who live according to the **flesh** set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the **Spirit**, the things of the Spirit.”

So, when we “give our hearts to God”, it means that by an act of our will we open our spirit-man to God. The Holy Spirit that then occupies our spirit, causes a **Divine shift of control** from our selfish orientated *soul* to our God centred reborn *spirit*.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

Let us consider how the three components of our beings interact. As an example, we’ll look at how the Gospel message of Salvation is heard and received.

Romans 10:10 For with the **heart** (*soul & spirit*) one believes unto righteousness, and with the **mouth** (*body*) confession is made unto salvation...

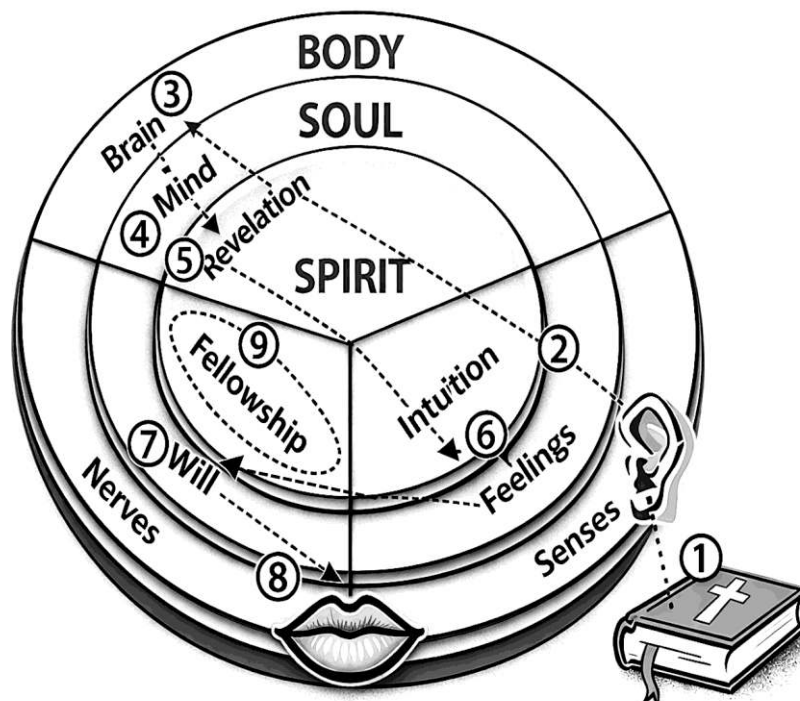
:13-14 For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not **believed** (*spirit*)? And how shall they believe in Him of whom

they have not **heard?** (*soul*) And how shall they **hear** without a preacher? (*body*)

Let's look at a simplified step-progression of the Salvation process, and then compare the steps with the numbered diagram following:

Salvation process:

1. Our **ears** receive the Message (bodily activity);
2. We actively **listen** to what is said (soul activity);
3. The Message is then processed by our **brain** (bodily activity);
4. Our mind **reasons** about and considers the content (soul activity);
5. Consequently, we receive **revelation** of the Truth in our spirit (spirit activity);
6. The Truth most probably stirs our **emotions** (soul activity);⁸
7. By a decision of our **will**, we choose to accept Christ (soul activity);⁹
8. Our **nervous system** physically moves us to a prayer of repentance (bodily activity of speaking with the mouth);¹⁰
9. Our faith brings us in **fellowship** with Christ (spirit activity).



⁸ 2 Cor 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation.

⁹ Mat 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the Prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

¹⁰ Rom 10:10b ...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Recalling the very first Scripture we read in Chapter 1, it should be obvious that God is interested in the salvation of the WHOLE person (*see the footnote*).¹¹

We close this synoptic overview of the spirit-, soul- and body- components of man, with a verse from the second Chapter in the Bible that expands the narrative of the creation of man (*italicized text added by the author*):

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed man of the **dust of the ground** (*body*), and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life** (*spirit*); and man became a **living being** (*soul*).

WORSHIP

According to John 4:24, God desires us to worship Him in SPIRIT and Truth. We could never experience real intimacy with God unless we activate our spirit-man during our worship. Consider for a moment something we call "worship" in a church setting. Simply singing nice songs (even meaningful and emotional songs), is not spiritual worship. There is nothing wrong with singing with our minds,¹² but if it does not move to a spiritual level, it can never fully be what God desires from us.

Having a better comprehension of our three-part-being will help us understand the normal progression of real worship. Singing the lyrics of a song together as an assembly, unites our focus on God – His goodness, His love, faithfulness, etc. As we start singing in unison, the Scripture that says God enters our midst when we gather together in His Name, starts to manifest.¹³ In other words, God's Presence is attracted to our united focus on Him.

As we then perhaps close our eyes, or lift up our hands, we begin to sing with deeper meaning. It is a joint experience between us and God! When our singing hearts unite with God's Heart, it becomes spiritual worship. The Holy Spirit IN us (*Who knows the Mind of the Father*) starts leading us in spontaneous expressions of love and gratitude to the Lord. At some point individuals may even stop singing along with the congregation as they personally enter into intimate moments with God.

¹¹ 1 Thes 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.

¹² 1 Cor 14:15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

¹³ Mat 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

To try and put it into perspective, we initially start singing by using our intellect and our physical voices, but then we progress to the activation of feelings and finally spiritual adoration.

I don't mean to make real worship a stepped process, but there is more often than not, a progression from intellect and emotions to spirit-activation. It is very helpful to employ all three parts of our being so as to ease into a place of true worship. This can be done by clapping, lifting/waving our hands, dancing/swaying on the rhythm of the song... I know that I am opening myself to criticism by saying this, but we have to keep in mind that **even our salvation experience involved all three parts of our beings!**

Lastly, let me clearly state that true worship does not necessarily require being part of a group, because it can (and should also) be practised privately at home!

It is during spiritual worship that God will often respond by speaking to us, or giving us revelation and/or visions, which is truly awesome!

It is important to realise that worship is not limited to singing (whether in church or at home). Everything we do should be done as if unto the Lord.¹⁴ Even simply living a holy life, is worship to God! Doing our daily tasks, should be done as acts of worship.

FINAL THOUGHTS

For the sake of completeness (and perhaps for further exploration, as and *if lead by the Holy Spirit*), I'd like to end with some rather complicated triune-man aspects (*maybe somewhat controversial, but today recognised by modern science*):

- The soul can become **fragmented** by deep traumatic experiences, which in severe cases may even lead to MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder) – better known today as DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder). I have personally dealt with a few such cases and I must admit, it can be quite bewildering. This kind of soul fragmentation could manifest in an individual acting diversely contrary to normal personality traits, under certain circumstances. This happens through "trauma triggers", meaning past traumatic experiences

¹⁴ Col 3:23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.

trigger a different fragmented soul part/personality.

Another sign could be a severe "loss of time" (not knowing why an individual finds himself/herself suddenly in a particular place). It is important to understand that when such behaviours occur, we are not dealing with demons as such, but with created soul trauma handling coping mechanisms in the mind. Dealing with such brokenness must only be left to anointed Christian professionals who have a thorough understanding thereof. **PLEASE NOTE:** we may all have similar short experiences simply because we have lost track of time or when we were in deep thought while going somewhere. *That does NOT mean that we have DID!*

- Real demonic oppression mostly happens in either the soul or the body (e.g. some diseases¹⁵). All true believers, understanding their authority in Christ, have the ability to heal the sick and cast out demons.¹⁶
- The possibility exists for even our new born spirits to be hurt, broken, or somehow affected. Remember 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that says "may the God of peace Himself sanctify you **completely**; and may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless". It should stand to reason that even our spirit-man may be harmed, because the Bible informs us that even the Holy Spirit can be grieved or quenched,¹⁷ and aren't believers reborn of the Holy Spirit? By that I mean, our spirit-man is based on Who the Holy Spirit is¹⁸ (*please see the footnote for Biblical reference*).

Key Takeaway Points from this Chapter:

- Understanding the interaction between the spirit, the soul and the body of man, enables us to distinguish between holiness and carnality – a purification process in the soul. This is what distinguishes as a *spiritual* believer or a *carnal* believer.

¹⁵ Luk 13:11 & 13 And behold, there was a woman who had a **spirit of infirmity** eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up... And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

¹⁶ Mar 16:17-18 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

¹⁷ Eph 4:30 And do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God... 1 Thes 5:19 Do not **quench** the Spirit.

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

- Focussing just on the desires of the body and the soul, restricts our spiritual awareness and spiritual growth.
- Exercising our spiritual senses increases our spiritual sensitivity and awakens us to the Voice of God and to subsequently know His will for us.
- The body is intended to be a vehicle for the expression of the Kingdom of God in our physical world.¹⁹
- It is vital that we train our whole 3-part being in our fellowship with God. Serving the Lord is not just a spiritual matter...
- Practising (and frequently entering into) true worship, will sensitize us to God's Voice.
- Worship most often starts as a decision in our minds (soul), focussing our attention on God and all His goodness, perhaps engaging our physical bodies, and most probably becoming emotionally (soul) moved, before we experience true spiritual worship. In other words, it is usually when our total 3-part being is wrapped up in God, that we can easily have a spiritual experience of **union with the Lord**.
- Worship is a major key to bringing the Presence of God to earth!

*To gain deeper insights, as well as practically apply the principles shared in this Chapter to your own personal life, we can **Go Deeper** with a Study Guide, which is only available in the book itself*

¹⁹ Mat 6:10 (*what we call the Lord's prayer*): "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."