**Body, soul and spirit**

Is it a man just body and soul or is he **body, soul and spirit**? This I believe is one of the most fundamental questions that somebody needs to have correctly answered. I consider the subject of body, soul and spirit as one of the most important subjects dealt within this magazine. Therefore I would like to ask you to please pay close attention as we go through the Word to find the answer not only to the matter of body soul and spirit but also to some other equally important questions related to it.

1. **Body, soul, spirit: what died in the day Adam and Eve sinned?**

To start approaching the topic of body soul and spirit we need to go to the first book of the Bible, the Genesis. There, after God made man, He imposed a restriction on him, making also clear the penalty, for the case that this restriction was violated:

**Genesis 2:16-17**

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die". 
The restriction that God imposed on Adam was that he should not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty for the case that this restriction was violated was that: "in the day [pay attention: that very day] that you eat of it you shall surely die". Two very significant things have to be noted in that penalty. The first is that if Adam ate from the tree death would happen immediately, in that very day. The second is that this would happen surely. The phrase "you shall SURELY die" has exactly the purpose to put emphasis on the fact that death would happen 100%, surely, in that day.

Now from Genesis 3:1-6 we all know how Satan deceived Adam and Eve to violate the only restriction God had imposed on them, and eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After eating from that tree and according to what God had told them in Genesis 2:17, they should have died at that moment. The problem here is that Genesis 5:5-6 says about Adam:

"After he [Adam] begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died."

Therefore, according to the Bible, Adam continued to have life in his body for many years after he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. On the other hand, God had said that if he would eat from that tree he would surely, 100%, die, in that same day. So what really happen in
the day that Adam and Eve ate from that tree. Did they die as God said, or they didn't die? Who will solve us this "problem"? Man's ideas, theories, religion and tradition? No! Only one can give us answers, and this is no other than the Word of God. And if you want this Word to give you answers, you have to leave it to speak for itself (self interpretation).

In our case, since God cannot lie (Numbers 23:19) in the day that Adam and Eve ate from that tree they really died. Actually, it was the Devil that said, when he deceived Eve, "you shall not surely die". Thus, if they didn't die that day, as God said, then Satan was right and God was wrong, which is simply impossible. However, that's exactly what many teach today when they say "actually when God said that they would surely die He meant that just the sperm of death would be planted". The Word of God does not need such kind of defense. Actually it does not need any defense at all for it is truth and truth can stand by itself. Returning to our topic: SINCE GOD SAID THAT THEY WOULD SURELY DIE THAT VERY DAY, THEY INDEED DIED THAT DAY. However, since they continued to have life in their bodies even after they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it is self-evident that they must have had another form of life, in addition to the life of their bodies, that was lost in the day that they ate and for this reason it was death (absence of a form of life). So, we have to search the Scriptures to see how man was created and what were the parts of his being. Knowledge of what composed the life of the first man will also enable us to see what was lost in that day.
2. Body, soul and spirit: the body and soul parts

Starting our research on how the first man was created, let's go to Genesis 2:7. There it says:

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.......

Which part of man did God form of the dust of the ground? His body. That's why the elements of the human body can be found in the ground. So one part of the first human being was the body. But let's continue:

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 soul [soul = nephesh in Hebrew]"

We saw that God formed man's body of the dust of the ground. However, this body didn't have life. It was just formed, without life. Then, the Word of God tells us that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul". Therefore, what is soul? Soul is what gives life to the body. The fact that people do not understand the simple truths of the Word of God described at that point has caused no end of confusion. Here the Word of God tells us that soul is what gives life to the body. Without soul the body is dead. Where is the soul, the life of the body, the life of the flesh? The Word of God again is very precise:
Leviticus 17:11, 13-14

"For the life [nephesh in Hebrew] of the flesh is in the blood.....Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood, and cover it with dust; For it [i.e. the blood] is the life [nephesh] of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life [nephesh] of it: therefore I said to the children of Israel "You shall not eat the blood of any flesh: for the life [nephesh] of all flesh is its blood"

We saw in Genesis 2:7 that soul (nephesh in Hebrew) is what gives life to the body. Here in Leviticus we see that "the life of the flesh is in the blood". In the above passage the word “life” is a translation of the Hebrew word "nephesh" that is translated as “soul” in Genesis 2:7 as well as in 471 out of the 753 of the places where it occurs. Therefore, what is “nephesh” or soul? According to Genesis 2:7 soul is what gives life to the body. Where is the “nephesh”, the life of the body, the soul? According to Leviticus 17:11-14 it is in the blood: "For the life (nephesh, soul) of the flesh is in the blood". How this soul life passes from generation to generation? Through the blood. That's why Acts 17:26 says:

"And He has made from ONE BLOOD every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth".

The "one blood" of this passage is the blood of Adam which passes from
generation to generation and actually is the blood that all of us have.

Actually, soul is not something that only man has. Animals have also soul which again is in the blood. Although this is immediately understood from the above passage of Leviticus, where we are told that the life of all flesh is in the blood let's go to Genesis 1:20-21, 29-30 to see it there as well:

**Genesis 1:20-21**

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature [nephesh, soul] that has life [nephesh, soul] and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature [nephesh, soul] that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good"

**Genesis 1:29-30**

"And God said "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yield seed; to you it shall be for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein *there is* a living soul [nephesh in Hebrew] I *have given* every green herb for meat:" and it was so."

Therefore, not only man but also the animals have "nephesh" i.e. "soul". This is not strange at all, if we understand that soul is what gives life to the body. When you die there is no more life, no more soul. The same happens
with the animals. Soul is for them the same that is for man i.e. what gives life to the body. Although, there is no problem about what is defined as soul in the Bible, the problem is created when we go to the Bible with the preconceived idea that soul is immortal. If soul was immortal, then really the souls of the various animals would also be immortal, since they have "nephesh" as man has "nephesh". Soul is not something immortal. It just gives life to the body. When you stop having life in your body, you have no more soul.

By now, we have seen that the Bible teaches that God formed the body of man of the dust of the ground, and that He gave to that body life i.e. soul. The same is also true for the animals. They also have body and soul. Every man in the world, believer or unbeliever, has body and soul. It can therefore be concluded that since Adam died 930 years old, when he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he obviously lost neither his body nor his soul. Thus, since something had to die for Adam that day, he must originally have had at least one more part, which was lost, died, when he ate. So, let's continue searching the Scriptures to see what they say about that.

3. Body, soul and spirit: the spirit part

To continue our enquiry let's go to Genesis 1:26-27. There it says:

**Genesis 1:26-27**
"Then God said "let us make man in our image, according to our likeness....
So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them"

According to this passage, God created man "in His own image". Here is a very critical point, a key point, if we want to understand not only what happened in the day that Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but also other passages of the Bible that are affected by what is said here. Reading the above passage, the question that has to be asked is what is the image of God? What does He look like? John 4:24 tells us:

"God is Spirit"

God is not flesh but Spirit. That is His image. Therefore, when the Word of God tells us that God created man according to His image, it means that in addition to body and soul man also had that which is the image of God i.e. spirit. In order to understand better the usage of the phrase "in his image" in the above critical passage, let's see another place where this phrase occurs.

**Genesis 5:1-3**

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when
they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son \textit{in his own likeness, after his image}; and called his name Seth"

This passage says that Adam begat a son "in his own likeness, after his image". What does it mean? It means that as Adam was, so his son was i.e. as Adam had hands so Seth had hands. As Adam had feet so Seth had feet etc. As Adam was body and soul so Seth was body and soul. Similarly, when the Word says that God created man "in his image", "in the likeness of God", what it means is that as God is, so Adam was. God is not flesh. He does not have feet, hands, head. He is spirit. So as God is spirit so Adam had spirit. One could ask, why did God make Adam apart from body and soul, spirit as well? The simple reason is that without spirit Adam could not communicate with God Who is spirit. God being spirit, cannot communicate with the body and soul. They are different things. You see, you cannot receive the messages of a radio station unless you have a radio receiver. You may have a washing machine. But the fact that you have a washing machine does not make it possible for you to receive the messages of the radio station. You need a radio receiver. Similarly, God is spirit and to communicate with Him you must have spirit. Body and soul are enough for things of the five senses. But when it comes to the things of God, what you need is spirit. This truth is also explained in I Corinthians 2:14:

"But the natural [psuchikos in the Greek] man does not receive the things
of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him: nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

In this passage, the word translated "natural" is the Greek adjective "psuchikos", which comes from the noun "psuchi" which means soul. So, psuchikos means "a soul man" i.e. a man with body and soul only\(^1\). According to that passage a man who is only body and soul "does not receive the things of the Spirit of God". As it was said above to receive "the things of the spirit of God", to communicate with God you need the appropriate receiver i.e. spirit. That's why the passage says: "nor can he (the man of body and soul) know them because they are spiritually discerned". The man of body and soul is impossible to know the things of God for the simple reason that such things have to do with the spirit, "they are spiritually discerned", and since he lacks spirit he cannot know them.

Summarizing all the above, Adam had body, formed from the dust of the ground, soul that gives life to the body and spirit to communicate with God. He was body, soul and spirit. Having established that, there is no question about what happened in the day that Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had told them that in the day that they would eat from it, they would surely die. Bearing in mind that death means the absence of a form of life, we can now see what died that day. Adam was body, soul and spirit and his body died many years after the day that he ate. Now since without soul a body has no life, Adam had body

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\(^1\) The same word, phuchicos (soul man, a man of body and soul) is also used in I Corinthians 15:44, 46, James 3:15 and Jude 19.
and soul even after he ate from that tree. On the other hand, since God is always right in what He says, something had to die that day. Since Adam was body, soul and spirit before he ate and since, as we saw, he continued to have body and soul after he ate what was lost for him that day, was the spirit that God gave him. He continued to have body and soul but he didn't have spirit. The spirit departed from him and this was death for him since spirit, a form of life that he had before he ate, was no more there.

You see, how clearly the Bible settles the things when you leave it to interpret itself. It was actually this loss of the spirit that was restored in the day of Pentecost where holy spirit was made available, so that today after believing in Jesus Christ you are again body, soul and spirit. That's why then Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says:

“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.”

We now, after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection and receiving the gift of the holy spirit, we are no longer just body and soul but body, soul and spirit.

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Other relevant articles: “Pentecost and New birth realities”