

In The Beginning God . . .

*An In-Depth Study of the
First Three Chapters of Genesis*

All Truth Begins Here



Man's Nature: Spirit, Soul & Body

INTRO: In our previous study we considered the Biblical revelation that human beings are unique in all of creation. Made in God's image and standing in both the spiritual and material realms, Adam and Eve together reflect the image and glory of God and become co-regents in governing the earth. We also saw how chapter two is an expansion of the creation of humanity in the sixth day. In this study we will explore further the unique nature of mankind in an effort to understand what God wants us to know about ourselves.

I. Human Beings Were Made to Relate Freely & Easily to Both Heaven and Earth: Spiritual and Material

- A. God Pronounces that Everything is "Very Good" at the End of the Sixth Day.
 - 1. He has made the physical universe & the plants, animals, and substance of the earth
 - 2. He has made mankind in His image and given him a physical body
 - 3. God is directly responsible for the creation of matter and states clearly that it is good

- B. Human Beings Share God's Spiritual Nature, Though Made from Dust
 - 1. It is not the existence of the "soul" that makes man unique, the same Hebrew word is used of creatures in Genesis 1:21 (*nehphesh*): the term seems best to apply to *conscious life* in the broadest sense.
 - 2. The distinction in the creation of human beings is two-fold:
 - a. we are made in the image of God (unlike any other creature)
 - b. while many other creatures breathe, we were animated by the breath (life) of God
 - c. it is this *breath of God*, the *Spirit of God*, that gives us our spirit / spiritual nature

- C. Our Life, Our Spirit, Comes from God and Connects the Realms of Spirit and Matter
 - 1. It is useful as a review to remember that we were originally given dominion over the realm of the earth
 - 2. While this dominion appears to be total, it must be remembered that the man was made under God and His authority
 - 3. While the realm of nature was ours to rule, it was a co-regency in fellowship with God in a consistent and constant relationship

II. As A Result of Our Unique Creation, Human Beings Are A Trichotomy (Have Three Parts)

- A. A body made of dust, infused with the Breath of God, and man becomes a living soul: We have a Body, a Soul, and a Spirit.
 - 1. Hebrews 4:12 "the Word of God pierces the division of soul and spirit"
 - 2. I Thessalonians 5:23 "may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete"

- B. It is most useful to think of these three parts as each serving a special role in the unified person of the human being
 - 1. Our bodies are material and have special senses, locomotion, and a brain which enables communication and interaction with the material universe
 - 2. Our spirits are spiritual (non-material) and have special senses, can abide in the presence of God, and enable communication and interaction with the spiritual realm
 - 3. Our souls, which is the seat of our conscious existence, integrate the perception of the material and spiritual realms and allow us to think, choose, and experience emotions relating to both realms and to mediate between the two.

- C. Special senses in each faculty include: BODY—sensation, smell, taste, sight, sound, SPIRIT—awareness and perception, insight and vision, ears to hear (the Word of God), spiritual appetite, SOUL—reason/intuition, volition (bound or free), emotion (servant or master)

NOTES

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:12¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Genesis 1:26-28²⁶

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish o

Genesis 2:7⁷ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

Discuss among yourselves in your groups what things have been new to you, or given you special insight or encouragement in our study of the creation of humanity.