

Sermon Supplement, Lord's Day, September 30, 2007

Kihei Baptist Chapel, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS AND WHAT IS MEANT BY THE BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT OF MAN.

Glenn Armstrong D.D.

INTRODUCTION: Our current series of Sunday morning messages is a study of the practical work of God in the creation accounts as give to us in the first here chapters of the Book of Genesis. Nothing is more vital to understand than God's plan and purposes in creation, man's accountability to his Creator and how to experience the power of God in our personal lives. To avoid endless rehashing of doubts, disbelief and denial of the unregenerate world and to appreciate the truth contained in creation it is valuable to understand how the Book of Genesis was given to us.

THE HISTORICITY, AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

MOSES THE AUTHOR AND ORAL TRADITIONS THE SOURCE.

The most popular view of the origin of the book of Genesis is that it followed years of oral traditions passed down from creation through the patriarchs to Moses (1526-1406 BC), who wrote it down. Thus creditability of the oral traditions is sourced in Mesopotamian life and culture. Admittedly, those who hold this view, and most of the evangelical theological world does, often add the guidance of the Holy Spirit in giving Moses correct information to put down in writing which accounts for the verbal inspiration of the texts. However, it leaves the door open to critics within the church to attack the validity of the written accounts of creation as to time and truth, by saying they are the results of fables, myths, folklore, pagan stories and copied content.

While oral traditions may be included in historical sources, they are not an explanation for revelation or inspiration. They are not the reason the creation account is valid and believable. Parallel historical accounts are to be expected since what happened in history may very well have been known to everyone across cultures. However, God's Word is not the result of the authority of oral traditions even when they are documented by the finds of archeologists in ancient clay tablets. Human experience alone, no matter how fascinating and interesting, contributes nothing to divine doctrine and inspired truth. Genesis is not the demonstration and reflection of the parallel content of clay tablets!

GOD THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR.

A study of the Book of Genesis should begin with an overview of the organization and structure of the book. It is clearly a book of several parts. Each part is contributed by different authors. These authors and their sections are identified as the book progresses. Here are the ten divisions of the book: 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:19; 36:1. The section 36:1 is repeated in 36:9 and 37:2. The verses listed indicate the section of the book and who authored it. In each section the key word "account" divides the book. The

Hebrew word, *toledoth*, is translated “account” in the NIV and “generation” in the KJV. Its simple meaning is “record”.

Of particular interest in this paper are the sections of Genesis from 1:1-5:1. This is the section that contains the record of creation. It is the record given by God, 1:1. It is God’s account of creation! He gives us His stated truth about creation; namely, that He created material by the word of His power; arranged the material into usable form; gave life to some of what He formed; gave life, mind and mobility to other parts; and gave life, mobility, mind and eternal conservation of consciousness to man, whom He created separately from other mobile life when He created him in His image.

This section of the book is the record of creation as God gave it to Adam. Adam would clearly have understood the time factor of creation since a light-dark cycle already existed before Adam’s creation. He would have had no problem understanding that evening and morning were caused by the sun and moon which had existed since the fourth day. God used what Adam already understood to be days. He understood the days of creation to be solar days; and when God created, He did it in a sudden, immediate action without the need for long indefinite periods of time.

The record of this section of Genesis was available to Noah’s father, if not Noah himself. Adam and Noah’s father’s lives overlap in both time and location. Noah would have had the written record of the “account” given by God to Adam, and he would have taken it on the ark for the continued existence of the “record” of creation.

The first four chapters of Genesis are clearly said to be the creditable historical account (record) authored by God and passed on by Adam. It is not the result of oral fables and folklores!

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT OF MAN?

God’s account of His creation defines that He gave life in different forms. He gave some life to matter that He formed into immobile plant life. Different life and intelligence was give to mobile intelligent animal life and even a different kind of life was given to man. A life that included mind, mobility, human conservation of conscience, the ability to remember and record history, plan, envision possibilities, invent, organized, etc. A very major difference in man was his ability to know, fellowship, communicate, worship, honor and obey his creation. The ability to obey of necessity included the ability to choose to disobey. Adam clearly knew he was accountable to God the Creator. By the right of creating and sustaining matter, God was moral governor over His entire universe. God has never forfeited this position and man has never enabled himself to separate from accountability to God.

A clear Biblical observation regarding man is that while he was created of earthly materials he is also composed of spiritual elements. (Genesis 2:7; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12)

THE BODY OF MAN:

It is not too difficult to understand that the body of man is physical, biological and made up of the same elements contained in the earth. We can see the body so we understand what we are talking about when we speak of this part of an individual. However, the complexity of the body is still under observation and documentation. We may never fully understand either the simplicity or the complexity of the function of the human body. We do know that the human body is designed to live and function within the limitations of an earthly environment.

For our purposes, this paper does not require us to identify the body other than what we observe. The theology of Biblical Christianity regarding the body is that it continues into eternity and will be resurrected with the same identity, but different elements capable of existing for ever. (I Corinthians 15:42-50)

Unlike other forms of life, man was created by God with a life that has eternal capacities. Death for man in the Bible never means to cease to exist. Human death has three scriptural definitions: 1) physical death – the separation of body and soul 2) spiritual death – the separation of the soul from God and 3) eternal death – dying physically while spiritually separated by God and remaining so for ever.

THE SPIRIT OF MAN:

The short explanation of what the spirit of man is is the life within a person. Spirit mean “breath”, “wind” and is the word/principle assigned to mean life. This is true of animals and humans as well as God. Once created, both animals and man needed to have life to enable them to function. Creation immediately gave them their bodies, equipped for life on earth, but they needed life itself. Whatever life is, it is given by God and is not a combination with earthly elements. At the immediate creation of man, like immediately at his death, the body is no different, it is just lacking life.

The Hebrew word for “spirit” is *ruah* and is used 389 times in the Old Testament. It is used in relation to God, man and animals and nature. It has a general meaning of “wind”, “spirit” or “breath”. A New Testament word, *pneuma*, has the same meaning.

Spirit usually refers to the life, wind, breath, creativity, feeling, will, and of an intelligent being. It is different from the life of animals in degree. Man’s spirit makes him capable of interacting with continuing conversation with the Divine Spirit of God, (Romans 8:9-17) God demands to be worshiped in spirit rather than in the fleshly part of the nature of man, that assumes God is appeased with rites and rituals. (John 4:24)

Human spirit is defined by what the invisible, immaterial part of man can do; such as, perceive, reflect, feel, desire, have purpose, develop character and moral judgments, express meekness, understand liberty, believe, display and live a new redeemed life, be spiritually gifted, understand, know and worship God. It is the animating force within human beings. The spirit of man may be the seat of his intelligence, but while it contains

the mind of man it is far more than knowledge, innate wisdom and brain functions. It is more than the “breath of man” as defined by materialists. If that was an acceptable definition, then the spirit of man would die with the body.

THE SOUL OF MAN:

The soul of man speaks of the immaterial aspects of the human being. As such it may contain the spirit of man as well as many interacting characteristics that define them. While this makes defining the spirit and soul difficult, it is to be expected. In reality the body, soul and spirit seldom work independently. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit while separately identified none the less work in independent harmony.

Soul is often defined as man’s seat of emotions and appetites. This differs from animals emotional appetites by being connected to both the body and the spirit. It appears that animal emotions are only biologically driven and without a spirit nature connecting them to the person and presence of God. In addition man was given an eternal “living soul” that will never die.

The soul is a non-material entity within a person that produces the faculties of thought, action, emotions, memory, spiritual nature, God awareness, happiness and misery, the embodiment of a spiritual God directed life through which he can perceive, reflect, feel, desire, determine purpose, remember, evaluate and record history and events, experience a conversion to a regenerated life.

Any attempt to define spirit and soul becomes immediately difficult. The scripture ascribes many of the same activities to both of them. In every definition of terms it is vital to list the “likes” and “difference”. If there is a single difference between two items then they are not the same and a distinction is to be made. This is true in spite of many items, being the same. The scripture does indicate that man’s spirit and soul are not the same, (Hebrews 4:12) and can be distinguished independently.

The soul of man is capable of being conscious of evil, sin, God’s righteousness and the certainty of judgment because of the difference I between man and God. (John 16:7-11)
The Holy Spirit of God can convict and convert the soul of man.

CONCLUSION: God created man in His image as a tri-unity person. The body, soul and spirit of man are each separate overlapping elements even as the Trinity, yet they equal one person. The scriptures divide the body, spirit and soul to bring about conviction and conversion, by “piercing” the division of soul, spirit and joint and marrow (body).
Hebrews 4:12.

”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.”
(I Thessalonians 5:23)

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