

“A SPIRIT DOES NOT HAVE FLESH AND BONES”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

When discussing such topics as worshiping in spirit (John 4:23-24; Philippians 3:3; 1st Corinthians 14:15), it should not be presumed that everyone knows what that means. It is not complicated, but it is worth explaining.

The simplest approach is to consider Jesus' direct statement to the disciples when, in His resurrected state, they mistook Him for a ghost. *“They were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have’”* (Luke 24:37-39). The spirit is that living part of man which is distinct from his corporeal form.

When the Lord raised Jairus's dead daughter, *“her spirit returned”* (Luke 8:55). She had a spirit that had departed her body and went back when Jesus revived her. Christ Himself, immediately before *“He breathed His last”*, said, *“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit”* (Luke 23:46) at which point He *“yielded up His spirit”* (Matthew 27:50). At death, the spirit departs the body. Thus, *“the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual”* (1st Corinthians 15:46), which is not to say the spiritual does not co-exist with the natural, but that when the natural has ceased, all that remains is spiritual. As Solomon put it, *“the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it”* (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Because the spirit is the existence of a person beyond the physical body, it is the spirit that experiences emotion. Jesus *“groaned in the spirit”* (John 11:33) and *“He sighed deeply in the spirit”* (Mark 8:12). Paul's *“spirit was provoked within him”* (Acts 17:16), underscoring the fact that the spirit is the inward part of man. That's where God put it, as it is written in the prophets, *“Jehovah... forms the spirit of man within him”* (Zechariah 12:1). In this sense, there is no discernible difference between man's heart and his spirit; Scripture attributes to the one what it does the other (Psalm 143:4). Both are properly understood to be the seat of human emotion and intellect; however, the heart is also an organ within the anatomy which pumps blood (2nd Samuel 18:14; 2nd Kings 9:24), and that never describes the spirit.

When one's thoughts and feelings are fixed on others, though physically removed from one another, it can correctly be said that he

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is *“absent in body but present in spirit”* (1st Corinthians 5:3; cf. Colossians 2:5).

Insomuch as the spirit is clearly distinct from the body, the two can sometimes, in fact oftentimes, clash. Jesus warned against temptation, saying, *“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”* (Mark 14:28). Since this is true of one's own flesh and one's own spirit, it is all the more a concern between one's flesh and the Spirit of God, *“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. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His”* (Romans 8:5-9).

The apostle expounded on this theme, writing, *“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Galatians 5:16-25).

There can be no living in the Spirit without first being born of the Spirit. Jesus preached, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6), so *“unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (5). Watery rebirth in the Spirit is clearly a reference to baptism in water (Acts 8:36; 10:47), *“for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body”* (1st Corinthians 12:13). Being both watery and spiritual, baptism is a physical action done for a spiritual purpose. Baptism now saves us, *“not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God”* (1st Peter 3:21).

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***"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"***

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

***"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"***

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

***"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"***

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN"

PROVERBS 25:11

"Follow the Word, not the herd."

— Anonymous

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

KDNF 840AM

Sunday @ 9:00 a.m.

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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VICTIMS OR VICTORS?

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The present culture revels in victimhood. Everybody has been, allegedly, oppressed, harassed, and traumatized. And everybody needs therapy, mental health days, and accommodation of every sort. All they think about is the evils they have, supposedly, suffered. However, in Paul's illustrious description of **love**, he said that *"it keeps no record of wrongs"* (1st Corinthians 13:5 NIV) or that it *"does not take into account a wrong"* (NAS). In other words, it does no good to wallow in miseries. *"Do all things without complaining"* (Philippians 2:14). Victim culture has everybody getting "triggered" all the time, but love *"is not provoked"* (1st Corinthians 13:5).

Victimhood is all about losing. While suffering loss in some way is a universal experience, that loss need not define whom a person is. It need not become one's identity. You don't have to be a loser.

Despite loss in the present, Christians are intent on being winners, as Paul wrote, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"* (Romans 8:35-37)!

The culture of Christ is not focused on victimhood, but victory! *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith"* (1st John 5:4).

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