



## SOME MEDITATIONS ON THE HUMAN SPIRIT

The following are extracts from Scripture referring to the human spirit.

It is our experience that in this little word 'spirit', both in the Hebrew and Greek, as well as in the concepts behind the word, lies the key to a number of conundrums currently facing the church.

We are a carnal church, focusing on a 'name it and claim it' theology, which much of the time in many of our lives has simply not worked. One of the reasons is we fail to move into the real world, the spiritual world, where God dwells and where the solutions to many of our problems lay hidden.

The human spirit, the eternal part of our nature, engages supernatural spiritual world - the bridge in all of us to this parallel spiritual universe. But we are not able to capitalise on the reality of our spiritual nature until we are willing to learn more about our current state and what stands in the way in us of our personal wholeness and discipleship.

The following is offered as a series of meditations. The Biblical truths it introduces are insights into a world which for many of us has either been completely hidden or remains a source of fear or confusion. Yet our human spirit offers us a key to our wholeness, to letting go of the damage of our pasts which has clung so intensely, preventing us from moving on into our future unencumbered by our past. Read the material slowly and begin to discover your spirit and its secrets.

### Source of Spiritual Life

#### **Pr 18.14: "A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?"**

Two mentions of 'spirit' in one proverb! Here we see an interesting observation about human nature. The author recognises that the human spirit can be a source of healing or sickness.

All human beings live in two worlds, the spiritual and the physical. The channel into the spiritual world is our human spirit. This is the eternal part of our nature and the signature of the Holy Spirit in us. Our spirit therefore is the part of our being that is able to readily draw on the resources of God in the Holy Spirit from the spiritual world. The author is therefore totally accurate in his statement that our spirits potentially sustain us in sickness.

The problem we all face, also raised by the writer, is the appalling damage inflicted on us by a crushed spirit. Very little is able to help such a person, spiritual or otherwise. In recent years, even with the innovations of modern medical science and the most sophisticated drugs that psychopharmacology can provide us with, we know of no way, except God, that can heal and restore a crushed spirit. The one small comfort we all have is that our human spirit is at least in the right world to be able to receive such help. Such healing is God's prerogative (Jn 7.39).

**Isa 38.16: “Lord, by such things men live: and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live.”**

*King Hezekiah is under siege in Jerusalem by Sennacherib, King of Assyria. But to make matters worse he is also dying of an illness. He turns to God for help and God hears his prayer and gives him a further fifteen years life as well as delivering him from Assyria. This verse forms part of his prayer of thanks and expresses the deeper understanding this whole series of events has given him of God's ways.*

The shock of these events has birthed in Hezekiah a whole new view of life. He now sees in a deeper way, more than ever before, the *a-priori* of His activities in the spiritual world. Events have to be changed in Yahweh's world first. This has humbled the man and put in fresh focus for him the physical world and its fickle transient nature and allure. For the first time he understands what makes spiritual men like Isaiah tick. Such men have a 'life source' from God out of the spiritual world that he has never seen or touched into before.

Finding this spiritual life has restored his physical body. It had also allowed him to accept in humility that all the pain and trauma had originated from God for his good. Hezekiah had found his spirit and with it a new understanding of suffering and the appalling barrier that pride is to knowing God.

It is only in, and through, our spirit that we can feed on God and walk in humility. Now he understands. But the key for him, and all of us, is to find our spirit, recognise its centrality in us and allow it to have pre-eminence in our lives along with His Spirit. We should be driven by our spirit in His, not by the carnal or material. It is in being driven by our spirit and His, that we create eternal value.

**Jn 3.6: “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”**

*Jesus is talking with Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Ruling Council. He questions Christ about the source of His authority and miracles. Christ introduces the concept of being 'born again', enlarging on the idea of the two worlds, the spiritual and the material, and that Christ was Himself from the spiritual.*

In Scripture often the more important the truth, the simpler the words. Very few readers of Scripture live by the principle of this verse, even though simple and not easily misunderstood. The material universe as we know it creates after its kind, being physical. But our world is paralleled by another world, that of the spiritual, that is somehow here with us, all around us, but still entirely separate. We as spiritual beings, made after our Creator, live by our human spirit, in these two worlds. Our bodies live in this physical world, while our spirits in us live in the spiritual world. All human beings live in this way in both worlds.

In Christ, being 'born again', we have our human spirits quickened by the Holy Spirit and therefore this spiritual world opens to us as never before. Both these two worlds are mutually exclusive (v12). As Christians our biggest dilemma is that we are constantly confronted by this other world which we cannot see, do not know and are unable to fully understand. Christ notes this (v13) and then introduces us to the clue of how to be part of this world, with the simplest but most profound of truth (Jn. 3.16). The bridge between these worlds is Christ Himself, by the Holy Spirit (Jn 14.16 ff. ). So in our spirits we decide to open ourselves to God or the Enemy, in this parallel spiritual world (v18 - 21).

In spite of the creation of our spirit by God's Holy Spirit, our bodies like our spirit, can be the home of His Holy Spirit, or demonic influence.

**2Co 7.1: “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for Christ.”**

*Paul has just commented on being unevenly yoked with unbelievers and finishes his thought by emphasising that we are sons and daughters of the living God, and should therefore live pure lives in holiness, because we love Him.*

Paul's frequent use of 'body and spirit' takes an interesting turn with this statement. We are always in danger of contaminating our spirit as well as our body. For most Christians this will be a radically new idea, in spite of the clear statement here in Scripture and the overall emphasis regarding human spirit in Scripture. The pernicious nature of sin corrupts every area of our human make-up.

Most of us are able to grasp the idea that we can sin in our bodies, that we need to 'keep our lives pure'. But to say that we are also required to keep our spirits as pure as our bodies is a radical thought. Firstly, we are confronted by the idea we can have contaminated spirits but also that we have to choose to live in purity 'in our spirit'. In addition, Paul places the emphasis clearly on us in choosing to purify our spirits. This is not some eccentric apostolic thought or remote task by the Holy Spirit, but rather our response to our love for Christ.

But Paul goes even further, in saying that we should all strive to 'perfect holiness'. This will be a strange and alien idea to some, who assume holiness is what God lays on us. The whole thrust of Paul's teaching here, centred as it is on the human spirit, is that we are able, in substantial measure, to influence our growth in Christ by focusing on those things that promote spiritual growth and holiness, centred on Christ through our human spirit, by His Spirit.

## Damaged Spirit / Under Attack

**Ps 34.18: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”**

*Here David recalls the way the Lord had helped him when he was captured by Abimelech and by feigning insanity was set free. He sees God's redemption in redeeming every area of his life.*

This use of the term 'spirit' by David is not uncommon in the Psalms. David sees the spirit as the centre of human make-up and the deepest part of his being. He describes his spirit as being crushed, and uses this term as a way of emphasising the depths to which he had sunk.

In speaking of his spirit David puts the whole matter of his plight in God's hands in the spiritual world. God is Spirit and as such has intimate personal access to our spirit. On numerous occasions in Scripture, at first glance, it is difficult to decide whether the writer is speaking of the Holy Spirit or our human spirit. By such anomalies it is as though the Lord is hinting at a more subliminal message - that He actually does not want to distinguish between our spirit and His Spirit. The two should be one. We should not seek to separate them.

This verse also introduces us to the idea that the spirit can not only be manipulated, but even hurt and damaged. This idea is not difficult for us with regard to our 'hearts', but to say this of our spirit? How can a part of our being, that we cannot see, be damaged by life's experiences? And when it gets damaged how can it be repaired? It is here that the true significance of the nature of the human spirit is explained. Unlike our brain and even our 'heart', as our human spirit gets damaged by life's events, it is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit to restore the damage (v22). Nothing else except God can restore a crushed spirit.

**Ps 77.3: “I remembered you, O God, and I groaned: I mused, and my spirit grew faint.”**

*The author is experiencing deep melancholy and is oscillating between two extreme moods of despair (v3) and healing (v14-15). Asaph admits that in his spirit he carries a dark, draining hopelessness which we all at one time or another experience in our relationship with God.*

The Psalm begins with the ‘I’ (v1) and ends with the ‘you’ (v20). He shifts from personal despair (v3) to corporate salvation by God of His people (v19-20).

It is the nature of most mental and emotional disorder that it feeds on itself. Once you have allowed yourself to look at the hopelessness of your condition (v2), you begin to let go of all hope, despair possessing you (v3). As this depression deepens, it becomes more private, isolating you from others. You begin to believe you are the only one on earth suffering this way (v4). To express the utter hopelessness of his condition the writer thinks of his spirit (e.g. spiritual nature) and even here, intended to be the source of life, contributes to the death he feels (v3). The purposeful use of the word ‘spirit’ emphasises both the depth (e.g. into the unseen spiritual world) to which he has plummeted and the utter barrenness of every area of his life.

But then (v6) the writer begins to shift in his ‘heart’ and his spirit. As a worship leader and hymn writer he looks to God’s historic faithfulness with His people and what he had himself written regarding His covenant love (v8). Behind this simple couplet lies a profound truth: if we are to break despair in our lives we must do it with our whole being, not allowing ourselves to indulge in a mere mind-and-heart exercise, but involve our human spirit. The first step to breaking such despair is opening our spirit to the Lord (v6b). For it is out of our spirit, under His spirit, that true and lasting healing must begin.

## Emotions

**Ps 73.21: “When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered.”**

*This Psalm is attributed to Asaph, founder of one of the Temple choirs (1Ch. 25.1). It speaks of a deep personal journey where he is struggling with the merits of being faithful, but then chooses, on entering the Temple (v17) not to live out a life of covetousness (v2-3) but one of peace. Being satisfied with what God has given him (v27-28).*

An interesting reference to an ‘embittered spirit’. The context follows the classic parallel Psalmic couplet of ‘heart’ and ‘spirit’. The consequence of his embittered spirit is that he acts irrationally (v22) and this separates him from God (v14).

As we see from this verse, the heart and the spirit can either act together, mirroring the experiences of the other, or they can act against each other. This is a profound truth, as it explains how we are able to be one person on the ‘outside’ and another person on the ‘inside’, all at the same time. For instance, we can hate people in our spirit, but be their ‘close friend’ outwardly. Thereby laying sickness on them from our spirit, while openly embracing them. This is evil, fed by the enemy and calculated to fragment us within, dividing our spirit from our body.

**Ps 142.3: “When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way....”**

*This Psalm, linked with Psalm 57, shows the toll of being hated and hunted like a wild animal. David recalls the incident when his cave, a place of safety and refuge, becomes a place of despair for him (v7). He is under extreme spiritual and physical attack.*

When David wants to speak about the deepest level of his being, he speaks in terms of his spirit (see Ps 76.12, 73.21). Here he is admitting that this unseen, hidden and deeper part of his nature is only known to God (v3).

David recognises that his spirit is part of his human make-up, the root of his feelings of vulnerability (v4). He also admits it is only God who can sort out his plight (v3a, 6). It is a fundamental principle of the Christian's life, that we can only begin to receive help when we admit we are in need of it (v6), open our human spirits to His healing (v7) and let it begin in our emotions (v7b).

We all have to learn not only to worship when we feel like it, but worship in order to feel like it. This promises to bring others to stand with us, in both worlds (v7b).

**Ecc 7.9: “Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.”**

*Qoheleth is the only Biblical book of the Canon of the old literary tradition fittingly called ‘pessimism literature’. Confine your thinking to this world, says the writer, and you learn far more from a funeral than a party, a bad day than from a good day. Life is utterly futile, meaningless and nothing but trouble...*

This proverb, part of the Wisdom section of the book, clearly illustrates the place of emotion in the human spirit. Tying spirit and emotion together in this way is significant, illustrating what for us today is a crucial principle in dealing with human disorder.

The Hebrew word used here for ‘anger’ is *ka’as*, which is a strong word implying indignation and exasperation. It implies we do not get over the anger very quickly. And since it is in our spirit that this feeling is centred, we know its long term consequence will profoundly influence every area of our life. All emotion can be righteous or unrighteous. It is not correct that we have ‘good’ and ‘bad’ emotions.

Anger, as an emotion, is much of the time merely a beneficial defensive mechanism which turns an attack on us into an assault on others. Attack is the best form of defence. But like all emotions, it is possible for us to manage it so the feelings remain righteous.

Here the author is looking at anger in its unhelpful and damaging sense. He is not dogmatically stating that all anger is wrong, just that spontaneous uncontrolled anger is folly and should not be permitted in our lives by any of us. Allowing it unbridled reign in this way merely relegates us to the level of being fools. The wise use of ‘spirit’ to describe a person, as in other places in Scripture, demonstrates we are talking about the whole person.

**Pr 15.4: “The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.”**

The first of around ten references in Proverbs to the human spirit.

It would appear to be a principle in Scripture that all that happens to the human ‘heart’ can happen to the human spirit. But the two parts are not directly interchangeable in Scripture, as the ‘spirit’ of man is used far more rarely and with much more precision than the word ‘heart’.

When the writers of Scripture wish to express emotion or activity at the deepest level of their being, they will frequently use the word ‘spirit’. When they wish to refer to the more superficial and fickle level of human nature they will use a word like ‘bowels’, ‘heart’ or often ‘soul’.

Here the writer wishes to emphasise the reality of the severe impact that spoken and unspoken words can have on a person. To do so he uses the term ‘spirit’. What is at first confusing to many is the idea that the spirit can be damaged by words at all. But on closer consideration the reason is obvious. Words

are spoken by people and all people have human spirits. So when we speak or think words and thoughts we also project our spirit as well as the words. So if the words are 'deceitful' or intended to do harm we will not only hear and/or feel the words in our minds, but also experience the impact of the words spoken in our human spirit.

Like all communication involving human nature, it speaks at two levels. We may be crushed by what a person says audibly, but we can also be crushed by what they say inaudibly from their spirit. We all 'talk' subliminally to one another all the time, but although we may not hear what is being spoken we will certainly 'feel' it. The deceit of our spirit even without our tongue can do much damage.

**Pr 15.13: "A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit."**

A crushed spirit speaks of a level of damage at the very core of our human make-up. The implication being that this is long term damage.

The use of 'heart' and 'spirit' as a couplet is very common in Scripture. The 'heart' rests within man, created by God, a solid part of our make-up, therefore not symbolising a fleeting unstable gift like the 'breath' of man's spirit. The heart, from our perspective, denotes a man's aims, resolves and courage, while the spirit denotes the direction of a man's overall vitality - man's essence and self-expression involved in his overall behaviour.

As with other Proverbs, we must ask how it is that our emotion can have such a deep negative impact on our spirit. The answer is not as complicated as at first appears. For our emotion is rooted in our spirit and is part of our eternal personality, just like that of our Creator Himself. So to us our emotion is like the breath, felt then lost forever. In this sense our emotions are all truly spiritual.

As we go through life we develop some appalling and damaging personal habits. One of these is that if emotions are judged by us to be negative and we do not want to feel them, we suppress them (in our spirit). Here they fester and turn toxic, poisoning our spirit and in due course our whole physical body. For as we grow older this suppressed emotion comes back and bites us, often leaving us very sick in our body as well as in our spirit. This process, theologically, can be described as pneumatopsychosomatic, a blending of spirit/emotion described in mediaeval times as soul sickness.

Here the author is admitting that sorrowful or unrighteous emotion crushes the spirit. At one time or another all of us will experience such truth in our lives.

**Rom 8.15: "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba, Father'".**

*The Pauline theme continues, of living life by the Holy Spirit in our human spirit. Paul emphasises the remarkable shift that through our spirit and His we are able to make, by being adopted and bound to God as Father.*

The writer admits we are all driven by fear. And only Christ can break this.

In our old life, before we met Christ, our spirit had no life, but lived under the 'spirit' of the current age, one of fear and demonic assault leading to death. We have all lived in this fear and we all know it makes an appalling master. Our human spirit is subject to all of the vagaries of our environment, whatever forces prevail. When we come to a knowledge of Christ this fear should give way to faith - faith in our adoption into the family of God and the privilege of calling God Father. Sadly, for many of us this is not true or even possible.



For many of us the word 'father' is the very source of fear. For some of us the enemy is father. For others, the thought of father fills us with hate, revenge or desolation. We have nothing good to say or feel about 'father'. So it is essential we first deal with 'father' baggage first, so when we do call God Father we do so in purity and with no hidden drives.

Therefore, instead of our old lifestyle, we have become children of the Living God, allowing us to have God as Father. This new condition is the basis of a life in our spirit by the Holy Spirit. Until we move into this new life with Father we cannot clearly see or realise how we have been bound (2Tim 1.7).

## Pride / Brokenness

### **Pr 16.18: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."**

In a sequential study of references to the human spirit in Scripture, this is the first direct reference to the human spirit being the seat of human arrogance or pride.

Pride by its very nature is the opposite to a teachable spirit. We all know at least one person who never listens to advice. Pride blinds a person to the truth. When you carry pride in your spirit, you screen out selectively only what you want to see. You refuse to see anything that may challenge or defy your position. You listen to only what you want to hear. Whether it is Custer at the Little Big Horn or Hitler in his last days, pride blinds us to what we need to know. This is a simple truth, but the chief cause of mass destruction of human life, as well as the author of the greater part of all human misery. For no one is more blind than he who refuses to see.

That the Author chooses to place pride in the human spirit is entirely correct. The human heart may be fickle and easily change its wishes, but it is in the human spirit in the spiritual world that human pride is first fed to us, inspired by the enemy. For the purveyor of pride is ours and Christ's enemy, Satan himself. A haughty or arrogant spirit will always eventually lead to a person's fall. For Satan is himself passionately committed to the destruction of human life and he does it chiefly by leading us in personal deceit. Pride forewarns destruction.

### **Mt 5.3ff: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God."**

*This verse opens Christ's teaching entitled the Sermon on the Mount. He is addressing his disciples and this is the first of eight qualities that should be the hallmark of all His disciples.*

Being poor in spirit, like all the Beatitudes, is a condition we personally choose and strive after. It is not some supernatural clay seal we are pressed with by God, but rather a quality we choose to embrace enthusiastically because we want to be part of the Kingdom of God now. Proudful arrogance has no place in Christ's Kingdom. Humility, meekness and the admission we can do nothing of eternal worth without Him, is the precondition of being both part of the Servant's Kingdom and being in His service. There is honour (Pr 29.23) but it is the Lord or His people that bring us honour, we should never give this to ourselves (e.g. Lk 14.10-11).

There are two points of note here. That the Lord introduces the Beatitudes and His teaching ministry with this first statement, using the human spirit, is significant. Christ is choosing to introduce these divine principles by centring firstly on the human spirit in the spiritual world. For out of our human spirit comes all that we eternally are and will be. If we do not grasp this fact first of all, then none of the other teaching has any relevance to us. We must start with the centrality of the human spirit, otherwise nothing else will make sense or hold together.

Also, that Christ uses the term 'in spirit' and not the word 'heart' or 'soul' is significant. Christ knew all too well that the human spirit is where truth is discerned (Mk 2.8). And if man is to change it must start and end in his spirit, by his humility and brokenness. Without knowledge of our human spirit: and meekness, we will not know God (v5, 2Cor 10.1).

## Root of Personality

**1Co 2.11: "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."**

*Paul has introduced the idea of divine wisdom and here begins to unpack the stark contrast of this wisdom with its divine origins, and human wisdom with its carnal fruit.*

The common belief is that our minds generate all our ideas and 'personality'. And since most of us have never seriously thought about our spirit, it never occurs to us that we have this resource. But here, as in several other verses in Scripture, we see another angle. Our mind is merely a channel for our spirit. For it is out of our spirit that our life forming 'DNA' emanates of who we are and who we are becoming. Only our human spirit can accurately read the motives and agendas behind our minds.

Paul is not here making a statement renouncing the conventions of human biology, but rather introducing to us the fact that there is another dimension to our human make up, that of our spiritually-inspired nature emanating from our spirit. And our spiritual nature should be led and fed by His divine wisdom (e.g. Christ), not the Enemy or self (2.4-5).

We see here clearly that it is only by delving into our spirit that we are able to fully know our own nature and thoughts. Our mind, acting merely as a channel, cannot reveal our deepest thoughts. They are hidden in 'man's spirit within him'. So a man who does not know the Lord or His Spirit will never be fully true to himself, or realise his full potential or become the person God intended. His spirit will deliver only a shadow of who he was created to be. Paul makes the distinction between the 'soulish man' (Gk : anthropos psychikos) and the 'spiritual man' (Gk : anthropos pneumatikos), the latter being enlightened by God's Spirit (v14).

For as the Holy Spirit begins to feed man's spirit he begins to live in a new and real way, able to see alternatives for his life and begin to touch into his full personality and potential. In this verse we see the two parallels. Potentially we know who we really are by reading our spirit and God is known to us by a similar revelation by us of His Spirit revealing Him. This verse, along with others, opens a whole new area for us of the potential of being in Christ.

**1Co 14.14: "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful."**

*Paul is continuing his explanation of why he does not put tongues at the top of his hit list of spiritual gifts. Here he is pointing out the obvious flaw in the gift of tongues, that it denies the need for use of his mind.*

As dual-natured beings we are able to live at two levels here on earth, while still in our bodies. We actually have a choice, we can live in our bodies or we can live in our spirits. The ideal for Paul is to have our minds become the mind of Christ so that we are able to live fully in our spirit, so that in our bodies we live with our minds in submission to His Spirit and ours (v15).

Paul oscillates between the themes of the human spirit and the human mind throughout his writings, and at first his thinking may seem a muddled mess. But he has a remarkably clear and developed picture of



what goes where and how it all works together! The flesh, symbolised in the mind, is at war with the spirit, under the Holy Spirit (Rom 7.21 ff.).

The battle for all of us is to learn how we allow our spirit to master and guide our bodies represented by our minds. So that our spirit and His Spirit is able to 'dethrone' the arrogant prideful and selfish flesh (e.g. mind) so forcing it to become the mind of Christ. Our spirit and His takes mastery over our physical bodies, symbolised in our minds.

This verse comments on Paul's understandable annoyance at the practice of tongues, which does not give any requirement to use the mind or bring it under the human spirit or His Spirit.

**1Co 12.10a: " ...to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another the ability to speak in different tongues...."**

*Paul is listing some of the spiritual gifts and mentions the ability to discern between different spirits....*

There are four types of spirit noted in Scripture. These are the Holy Spirit, human spirits and the two types of spiritual creatures, angelic and demonic spirits. (In addition, Scripture sometimes speaks of the 'spirit' of the age; 1Sam 11.2, Zec 12.10.)

It is essential that the Church of Jesus Christ, as it moves into the spiritual world, is able to see what spirits they are confronting, human or supernatural. We all have to learn to discern spirits in the spiritual world, for this alone is spiritual maturity (Heb 5.14). For instance, when praying for healing for people Christ sometimes casts our spirits (Luk 9.42) to heal people, while at other times He did not (Jn 9.9). Christ was able to discern whether it was the demonic spirit or some other cause for the sickness (Mk 5.8 ). We should therefore not assume all sickness is demonic, but learn to see what the root of the problem is in our human spirit by His Holy Spirit.

In the same way when we pray for people, we must be extremely careful not to attribute raw emotion to demonic manifestation. Or being 'slain in the Spirit' when it is in fact an autonomic demonic spirit. Ministry into the human spirit in the spiritual world can only be done by the enlightenment of our spirit through spiritual knowledge by the Holy Spirit.

Christ also warned us to be careful not to commit 'blasphemy', by attributing to Satan what in fact was the work of the Holy Spirit (Luk 3.23ff.). To avoid this brand of blasphemy we need discernment.

In a similar way we should be careful to avoid being drawn to dogmatism. We are all learners when it comes to the spiritual world, so we should be careful not to be dogmatic. These days are for our learning. God is well-equipped to expose our arrogance when He wishes, and nowhere is this more likely than in the area of our believing we know when it comes to the issue of discerning of spirits. How much we need this spiritual gift.

## Centrality of the Human Spirit

**Ge 45.27: "...the spirit of their father Jacob revived".**

*Jacob hears of Joseph's prosperity in Egypt and his generosity to his family.*

Here typically we see a reference to the centrality of the human spirit in human make-up where Jacob's spirit revives at the news of his son and this leads to the bold decision of Jacob to travel to Egypt before he dies, to see his son.

When the spirit is being influenced, for better or worse, our whole being, especially our physical bodies, will be profoundly touched. This verse is one of many in Scripture which illustrates this point.

**Jn 4.23: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks."**

*Jesus is talking with a Samaritan woman at a well. He offers her water that lasts for ever and, quite naturally, she wants it. She recognises in Christ a Jewish prophet who uncharacteristically is willing to speak with Samaritans. Christ lifts the conversation to a supernatural prophetic level by disclosing to her His Messiahship and that her nation will be part of the spiritual church He has come to birth.*

This and the following verse continue the basic emphasis of John's life of Christ as the spiritual gospel. Jesus, the salvation will of God, has broken into our world, thereby introducing the possibility of us becoming part of His original world, the spiritual world.

Although the Old Testament has some sixty or more references to the human spirit, a full explanation of the significance of its place in human make-up must wait for teaching like this from Christ. Here we are introduced to the reason why we have a spirit, to 'worship the Father in (our) spirit and (His) truth (e.g. through Jesus Christ: Jn 14.6).

The close coupling of spirit with truth in the writings of John is no accident. God is wanting all of us to enter His world as worshippers of Him, through His Son, by the Holy Spirit. What is not said by Christ at this time is that the Father is seeking such worshippers for His Son (Lk 24.52).

We are only able to communicate with and worship God through our human spirit by His Spirit, and this must be done on the foundation of truth of who Christ is.

**Jn 4.24: "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."**

Nowhere else in Scripture is it more clearly stated that the spiritual world is real and is a parallel world we must learn to be comfortable with. In this verse we see encapsulated truth regarding the dilemma we face here in our world regarding the spiritual world. We have to learn to live now in the spiritual world.

If God, our Creator, is ruler of this eternal spiritual world and the physical world is merely a temporary mirror of Creator, then we should seek to give full honour to the spiritual world as the real world. Our world in its present form is temporary, His world eternal. So the spiritual world is the real world, ours a passing glory, one day to be renewed and incorporated into the 'real world' (Rev 21.1). We must learn to be at ease worshipping God in the spiritual world now.

Our human spirit by the Holy Spirit is the best present link between the two worlds.

## Source of Knowledge / Truth

**Ps 32.2: "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."**

David is grateful to God for His forgiveness of his sin and the potential of his living a life in his spirit free from deceit.

David saying that in his spirit is no deceit may at first seem strange. It would be more common to expect David to use the word 'heart' (e.g. v11) or 'soul' to describe the seat of deceit. But this is not the case in this instance. Here we see clearly a dogmatic statement that we will be judged by our spirit's state.

Scripture is making a profound comment on human make-up. For although our heart and mind are often deceived and are the Devil's playground (Rom 8.5), our spirit is the true root of our eternal hope and will pass on when our body dies. It is therefore in our spirit that we will be judged and not merely by physical deeds in the flesh in this world. It is by the supernatural fruit borne of the Holy Spirit through our spirit, and not merely by our physical efforts, that God will judge us. All that we are judged by will emanate from our human spirit.

David goes on to recite a time when he resisted repenting until it was almost bursting in him (v4-6). But again it came from his spirit. This verse, along with a select group of others in Scripture, introduces us to this parallel spiritual world that we all live in by our spirit. It is in this world by our spirit that true management and accountability of our lives takes place, for it is from our spirit that true repentance emanates.

**Pr 20.27: "The lamp of the Lord searches the spirit of a man: it searches out his inmost being."**

One of the Emblems in Scripture of the Holy Spirit is light. Here the writer is portraying the lamp of God seeking out and exposing the whole person, from the inside out. Consistent with Scripture, and here more clear than in many other passages, the writer identifies the human spirit at the heart of human make-up. The spirit of man is the core of his human nature.

There is no hint here that any part of man's nature cannot be seen by God. In fact, there is a matter-of-fact-ness or routine about this practice by God's Spirit. The implication is that from God's perspective there is nothing hidden in us that He cannot see (Mk 2.8).

As God is Spirit He is able to see not only into our spirit but also easily in this world all that we are and are doing. This makes it very easy for Him to know everything, making folly of our living in deceit and not speaking or acting in truth. He knows fully, anyway, in both worlds.

**Da 7.15: "I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me."**

*Daniel has a dream in which he sees four beasts (1-14) and then seeks the Lord High God for the interpretation (v15 -28). He was disturbed by the vision/dream that he has had and records this concern (v15).*

This verse is the only reference in the book of Daniel to human spirit. But it is very significant in its use and is a mirror of Daniel's understanding of the spiritual world.

In the Old Testament you can in part see the level of understanding of the spiritual world the prophets had by their use of the word spirit. Allowing for inspiration by the Holy Spirit it is consistent with men like

Moses, Job, David and Qoheleth that they saw the need and significance of their spirit. For them it was a functional supernatural channel between God, the Holy Spirit, the spiritual world and their own lives. Nowhere is this more clear than here in this verse in Daniel.

Daniel apparently knew he would receive such spiritual truth through his spirit and this would then 'pass through' his mind. At times, when the Holy Spirit speaks to us, we are disturbed, unable to sleep, settle or maybe struggle to concentrate. At times it takes considerable daring in us to accept the original or unique thoughts of what He says that goes against all our conventions. It takes maturity to receive the meat of spiritual truth, for much of the time it will offend our minds and require faith to hold onto. Christ warns us about the danger of attributing it to Satan even if we do not like what we see or hear (Mk 3.29-30).