



THE GIFTS & MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

NOTES BY

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The Spirit Realm

Is it a matter of any consequence to divide the spirit and soul? It is an issue of supreme importance for it affects tremendously the spiritual life of a believer. How can a believer understand spiritual life if he does not know what is the extent of the realm of the spirit? Without such understanding how can he grow spiritually? To fail to distinguish between spirit and soul is fatal to spiritual maturity. Christians often account what is soulful as spiritual, and thus they remain in a soulish state and seek not what is really spiritual. How can we escape loss if we confuse what God has divided? (Watchman Nee - [The Spiritual Man](#), vol. 1, p. 22).

THREE CLASSES OF PEOPLE

In 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 and in 3:1, Paul distinguishes between three classes of people. First there is the “natural man” in verse 14. Here the word “natural” in the original Greek is “soulish.” So in verse 14 we have the “soulish man.” In verse 15 we have the “spiritual man,” and in 3:1 we have “fleshy men” or “infants in Christ.” The three verses according to the Greek read this way: *“But a soulish man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritual man discerns all things...and I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshy men, as to infants in Christ.”* Here Paul clearly distinguishes between “the soulish man,” “the spiritual man,” and “fleshy men.” In verse 14, Paul says clearly that “a soulish man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” A person who lives in the psychological part of his being (the Greek word *psyche* [soul] is the origin of the English word *psyche*) does not accept and does not understand the things of God. The reason is clear: the soul is not the part of man which receives and understands spiritual things. In 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 Paul says, “that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, *interpreting (or communicating) spiritual things to spiritual men*” (Margin, NASV). It is quite clear from this passage that spiritual things can be communicated only to men who know the spirit, and that those who live in the soul can never accept or understand the things of the spirit.

There is also a third class of men referred to by Paul in chapter three, verse 1. These are called “fleshy men,” “infants in Christ.” This class of men is regenerated, having the life of God and the Spirit of God. But instead of paying attention to the spirit, they walk according to the flesh. They have the Holy Spirit dwelling in their spirit, yet they do not know the spirit. They neither submit to the Spirit nor are they ruled by the Spirit. Concerning the Bible they may pretend to be very learned, yet in depth of understanding they perceive very little. The Corinthian believers were in this class. Paul calls them “infants in Christ,” yet they considered themselves quite mature in spiritual things. According to chapter eight, verse 1, they were puffed up in knowledge, and in chapter thirteen though they could “speak with the tongues of men and of angels,” had “prophecy,” knew “all mysteries,” and “all knowledge,” had “all faith,” and could “remove mountains,” yet in verse 11 Paul referred to them as “infants” and told them that they should put away “infantile things.” The Corinthian Christians, mighty in gifts, puffed up in knowledge, no doubt glorying in their intellectual attainments and parading their linguistic abilities, Paul nevertheless calls “infants in Christ.” They are an excellent example of Christians who make no distinction between soul and spirit. Thinking they represented the highest in Christian attainment, they in fact could not receive the things of God nor could they understand them. Neither gifts nor knowledge qualified them as spiritual men.

One other verse shows the distinct cleavage between soul and spirit. It is Jude 19. “These are the ones who cause divisions, natural [soulish], not having spirit” (Gk.). Jude was referring to the degraded situation that will exist at the end of this age in Christianity, where there will be pretenders to spiritual things. These men will be the source of divisions, because they are soulish men devoid of spirit. Here again it is clear that the realm of the soul and the realm of the spirit are two entirely different spheres. The realm of the spirit is the realm of God’s activity, and the realm of the soul is the realm of merely human and sometimes even demonic activity. The importance of being able to distinguish between these two realms cannot be overestimated.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

According to the revelation of the Bible and the experience of believers, the human spirit can be said to have three main functions. These three functions are *conscience* (Rom. 9:1; 8:16), *intuition* (Mark 2:8), and *communion* (John 4:24). The conscience is the part of the spirit which distinguishes right from wrong and is not influenced by knowledge stored in the mind; it is rather a spontaneous direct judgment. The intuition is the “knowing” part of the spirit. All true knowledge originates not in the mind, but in the spirit. The revelations of God and the movements of the Holy Spirit are known to the believer through his intuition. A believer must, therefore, take care to heed these two aspects of his spirit: the speaking of his conscience and the teaching of his intuition.

Communion is the third function of the spirit, and is related to the worship of God. The soul is not competent to worship God. According to John 4:24, “God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

THE SOLID EARTH

All matter, substance, everything is made up entirely of atoms which are the building blocks of matter. Whether something is solid, liquid or gas depends merely on how closely the atoms are packed.

The atom is not a solid, indivisible substance, but consists mainly of space. The center or nucleus of the atom is the main mass. The center consists of protons and neutrons. Circulating around the nucleus are smaller particles called electrons. An atom is only a few hundred millionths of a centimeter across. A proton is so light that it would take 160 million million million million of them to weigh one gram. An electron is 1800 times lighter than this, (Illustrated Fact Book of Science, Arco Publishing, Inc. New York.)

THE GRAND DESIGN

Whether we look at the universe through the telescope or view specks of matter through a microscope, the grand pattern of a Great Designer emerges. The planets circling the sun, the moons rotating around the planets are a macrocosm of what would be seen through an atomic microscope. Rotating around the nucleus of the atom are the electrons, just as the sun has planets circling it. There is a force that holds the planets in a programmed orbit, and a force that keeps the electrons circling the nucleus. When we examine our universe and become aware of the order and precision by which it is maintained, we catch a glimpse of the pattern of the heavenly realm. We can better understand a bit of the relationship between energy and the spirit realm.

There is so much space between the center or nucleus of an atom and the electrons circulating around it, that the atoms are not solid matter at all. If the atom’s nucleus were the size of a softball, and the electron circling it were a ping-pong ball, the space between the nucleus and the circling electron would be 100 yards, the equivalent length of a football field! It has been said that if one could eliminate all the space between the electron and the nucleus of each of the atoms in the entire Empire State building, the residue of atoms could be put in a teacup. However, the teacup would be so heavy (having all the weight of the concrete, metal, wood, glass, etc. of the complete structure) it would be pulled right through the ground toward the earth’s center.

MATTER AND ENERGY

It was not until Albert Einstein’s Theory of Relativity was accepted that the relationship between matter and energy was understood. Before World War II the theory was taught that matter had always existed, and could not be destroyed. In the late 20th century, Professor Albert Einstein began telling the world that when mankind was able to split the atom, this would unleash more power than the world has ever seen before. The world smiled complacently at Einstein’s theory and his words. Who was this upstart scientist who was challenging the wisdom of those who had gone before? Matter was eternal. It has existed forever, so they

said. Then came the atomic age and scientists suddenly found that matter can be changed to energy. Einstein's formula was very short and simple, but carried an entirely new message to man. His Theory of Relativity is represented by "E=mc²" which means mass and energy are equivalent. When the total mass of the products of nuclear fission is calculated, it is found to be less than the original mass of the atom before fission. Energy is part of the equation. All creation came from God's energy.

BOUNDARY OF SPACE

Matter is actually energy slowed down. Matter can be speeded up and changed to energy. Energy can be changed to matter, which is how God created the heavens and earth, through His boundless energy. He alone is responsible for the miracle of creation. It is necessary that we understand the relationship of matter, space and energy, for they are a pattern of something higher. The spirit realm is near and dear to us, but often goes unrecognized. Similarities in the physical world help reveal the deeper truths of that higher realm.

GOD IS SPIRIT

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24 KJV)

In the first place, God Himself is Spirit. Jesus teaches us this. We cannot accept that God is Spirit without accepting that there is a spiritual realm. The Bible is so full of references to the spiritual realm that we simply cannot rationalize it away.

God created the spiritual realm and the angelic hosts

As the Creator of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1), everything in existence whether seen or unseen (or yet to be discovered) is made by God (Colossians 1:16; Nehemiah 9:6). All things were made by God's Word of command (Psalm 33:6) and this includes every angelic being (Psalm 148:2, 5). Angels are also referred to as the "sons of God" (Job 1:6). Please note that this is plural and distinguished from the singular "Son of God". Other Biblical designations for angels include "morning stars" (Job 38:7) and a more general term, "hosts" is often assigned (e.g. Genesis 2:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Luke 2:13). In Biblical imagery, "stars" is also used to symbolize angels (Revelation 12:4).

Angels are spiritual beings and they are innumerable

Angels are spiritual beings and they are sent out by God to help us and minister to us (Psalm 91:11-12; Hebrews 1:14); we don't command them. Their numbers are regarded as innumerable (Hebrews 12:22; Daniel 7:10). With some 300 references to angels in the Bible, the accounts of angels are too numerous to list.

Angels are powerful but are not omnipotent, omniscient or omnipresent

As created beings, angels are of a slightly higher order than humans (Hebrews 2:7) and are of greater strength and might (Psalm 103:20; 2 Peter 2:11). Angels have emotions (Job 38:7) and they take an interest in God's plan of salvation (1 Peter 1:12). They have knowledge of all things on earth (2 Samuel 14:20) and thus in all likelihood know more than humans although they are not omniscient as they do not know the timing of the end of the age (Matthew 24:36). It is suggested in Jacob's dream (Genesis 28:12) and inferred from Daniel's encounter with Gabriel that angels move freely between heaven and earth. They can be delayed from arriving at a destination, which means they can only be at one place at a time (Daniel 10:13). From this we surmise that an angel is not omnipresent although this does not preclude the constant presence of one angel or another among us. It is generally accepted that angels are immortal (Luke 20:36); at least not in the sense of mortality as we know it but the Bible does also tell us that there will be a time of end for all fallen angels when they are cast into the Lake of Fire to suffer for eternity (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:14-15). Being immortal and having been created before the foundations of the earth, we can infer that angels are ancient and have observed mankind since Adam and Eve. Although we are not given every detail, scriptural references depict enough about the heavenly order of spiritual beings to let us know loosely that angels have varying degrees of power and authority.

The Realm of God

It is beyond the physical, in the unseen, invisible realm where God abides. The spirit realm is a step beyond the physical. Man cannot go beyond the edge of our physical realm, because he is held back by human limitations. Although the spirit realm is a step beyond our physical boundary, we can in a measure gain perceptions of the spirit realm, but *For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 1 Cor 13:12*

Much like the unseen powers of the physical realm, this unseen world known as the spirit realm is invisible to human eyes. It reaches beyond our physical realm, and we are not always fully aware of it. God dwells in the spirit realm outside of time, matter and space. He views the physical universe from His vantage of seeing the end from the beginning. He lives in eternity where time does not exist. God has never crossed into the physical realm to be seen of men. He is King of Kings and Sovereign of Sovereigns: *Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man has seen, nor can see; to Whom be honor and power. So be it. (1 Timothy 6:16)*

He abides in the spirit realm, but has made provision for us eventually to rise up to Him through His Son, Jesus.

THE UNSEEN WORLD

Our Heavenly Father is invisible, a Spirit being, eternal, immortal, and lives in that spirit realm. A bright, unapproachable blinding light, consisting of spirit energy. God exists in the spirit realm where time does not exist, for time and space do not exist where there is no matter. God has never left the spirit realm, but allowed Jesus to come to earth to reveal the Heavenly Father. Jesus is the only one we know of Who has seen the Father, and has now joined Him in the heavenly realm: *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory forever and ever. So be it. (1 Timothy 1:17 AV)* Those who overcome in this age will have full access to God's invisible Spirit realm. The Spirit Realm could be right here among us. The spirit realm is hidden and ignored by most people, and not understood by the great majority. The spirit realm is energy, force, power, vitality, supernatural--above the physical. Remember, too, Satan's power of persuasion is also active in the spirit realm.

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24 KJV)

Just as man is limited in physical aspects, in comparison to God, he is even more limited in the spirit realm. God's concepts or thoughts surpass those of man: *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways, says God. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 MKJV)*

The spirit (***ruach*** in the Old Testament Hebrew, ***pneuma*** in the Greek of the New) is often best understood as wind or breath. The broader meaning of spirit is unseen or invisible force or power. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it comes and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3:8).*

It is by His spirit he governs and rules and has power over His creation. God's Spirit is the most powerful of all unseen forces at work in our environment. His Spirit overcomes all other forces in the world and allows Him to use other forces or energy to accomplish His will.

Following Jesus' baptism, it was said, *"lo the heavens were opened unto Him," Mat. 3:16.* The Holy Spirit descended upon Him, giving Jesus free access to the spiritual realm. God's Holy Spirit was given in its fullness to the Savior. Jesus' thoughts and ways then reached beyond the physical realm and were higher than mankind's. We are given examples showing Jesus moved in the spirit realm which permeates the physical. He often perceived

even the thoughts of His disciples: *And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: (Matthew 12:25 AV)*
And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? (Mark 2:8 AV) [Also, Ps. 139:2; John 21:17; 1Cor.2:11]

Numerous examples exist in the Gospels of an interaction between the Spirit Realm and the Physical Realm:

Angelic Visitations before and after the Birth of Jesus, including visitations in Dreams

Some of the Miraculous Events in the Life of Jesus

Five thousand people are fed	Matthew 14:15-21
Calming the storm	Mark 4:35-41
Jesus walks on the water	John 6:17-21
Cursing of the fig tree	Matthew 21:18-22
Jesus turns water into wine	John 2:1-11
Miraculous catch of fish	Luke 5:1-11
Demons sent into the pigs	Mark 5:1-20
Evil spirit sent out of a man	Mark 1:23-27
Boy with evil spirit is healed	Mark 9:14-29
Jairus's daughter raised	Matthew 9:18-26
Heals a paralytic	Mark 2:1-12
Shriveled hand is restored	Luke 6:6-11
Bartimaeus receives sight	Mark 10:46-52
Two blind men get sight	Matthew 9:27-31
Crippled woman is healed	Luke 13:10-17
Ten lepers are healed	Luke 17:11-19
Jesus heals a man born blind	John 9:1-7
Lazarus is raised from dead	John 11:1-45
Widow's son is raised	Luke 7:11-16

The Transfiguration

Read Mark 9:2-9.

EXAMPLES OF INTERACTIONS WITH THE SPIRIT REALM IN THE O.T.

Examples abound of the interaction between earth and the realm of the Spirit in the O.T.

The burning bush not consumed	Ex. 3:3
Aaron's rod changed into a serpent	Ex. 7:10-12
The ten plagues of Egypt--(1) waters become blood, (2) frogs, (3) lice, (4) flies, (5) murrain, (6) boils, (7) thunder and hail, (8) locusts, (9) darkness, (10) death of the first-born	Ex. 7:20-12:30
The Red Sea divided; Israel passes through	Ex. 14:21-31
The waters of Marah sweetened	Ex. 15:23-25
Manna sent daily, except on Sabbath	Ex. 16:14-35
Water from the rock at Rephidim	Ex. 17:5-7
The Jordan divided, so that Israel passed over dryshod	Josh. 3:14-17
The walls of Jericho fall down	Josh. 6:6-20
The sun and moon stayed. Hailstorm	Josh. 10:12-14

Widow of Zarephath's meal and oil increased	1 Kings 17:14-16
Widow's son raised from the dead	1 Kings 17:17-24
Jordan divided by Elijah and Elisha near Jericho	2 Kings 2:7, 8, 14
Elijah carried up into heaven	2 Kings 2:11
The Shunammite's son given, and raised from the dead at Shunem	2 Kings 4:32-37
An hundred men fed with twenty loaves at Gilgal	2 Kings 4:42-44
Elisha's bones revive the dead	2 Kings 13:21
Shadow of sun goes back ten degrees on the sun-dial of Ahaz, Jerusalem	2 Kings 20:9-11
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego delivered from the fiery furnace, Babylon	Dan. 3:10-27

Numbers carries the account of the prophet Balaam who was so intent upon gaining a reward that the donkey upon which he was riding perceived the spiritual presence of the Angel of God blocking the path. However, Balaam was oblivious of the Angel, so intent was he, seeking his reward from the pagan king Balak. Finally, God opened Balaam's eyes to the spirit realm, (Numbers 22:31). Seeing the Angel with a drawn sword, Balaam fell on his face. The donkey was aware of the Angel three times, but greedy Balaam's thoughts and attention were concentrated upon an expected reward. Concentration on worldly pursuits blinded his spiritual ability to perceive the angelic being.

In 2 Kings 6:8-12 we have an interesting example of Elijah's activity in the Spirit Realm which is a constant annoyance to the King of Aram!

Elisha, God's prophet, was able to discern what Israel's enemy, the king of Syria, discussed in his bedchamber, 2Kings 6:12-17. The king planned to take Elisha captive. When the young servant, upon seeing all the enemies' horses and chariots encompassing the city became frightened. Elisha reassured him, "*Feat not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them*" (verse 16). In answer to Elisha's prayer, God opened the eyes of the young man so he could see the spirit realm, "and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (verse 17).

It is clear the spirit realm is among us right now, but we are unable to see it, touch it, taste it, or hear it. It is beyond our physical reach and comprehension. ***As Billy Graham has said, "We could have a spirit railroad station right here in our very midst, with angels and celestial beings coming and going, and we would never know it."***

...That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being. (Acts 17:27-28 AV)

A SEA OF GLASS

Examining what some of the Scriptures says about the spirit realm should impress us with thoughts of the spirit world and the part we can have in it. In Revelation 4 a door was opened in heaven and John was encouraged to come up and learn of future events, and there he sees the sea of glass and on the Sea a Throne on which God sat in majesty. *Rev 4:1-6* This vision describes a physical impression or description of the spirit realm where God is seated on the throne. The sea represents the greatness of the Kingdom which God is working out with His mighty Spirit power.

Among the many instances in Scripture of individuals encountering a view into the realm of the Spirit while being situated in normal reality, Ezekiel's' experience ranks towards the top of the list!

Ezekiel 1:22-26 Ezekiel 1:26-28 See also Exodus 24:1