

# What is Man?

LESSON  
ONE

## In the Beginning Discussion Forum



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# What is Man?

## Lesson One: In the Beginning

### Discussion Forum

With

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Rev. Timothy Mountfort  
Dr. Grant R. Osborne  
Dr. Richard Phillips  
Rev. Vermon Pierre

Dr. Ramesh Richard  
Dr. Philip Ryken  
Dr. David VanDrunen  
Prof. Jeffrey A. Volkmer  
Rev. Dr. John W. Yates

### Question 1:

#### Were Adam and Eve historical people?

##### Dr. Richard Phillips

When we answer the question, “Were Adam and Eve historical people?” the first thing we have to know is where we’re going to get our information from. And what we have is, we have, science produces a version of history, and the Bible, by revelation, produces a version of history. And so we’re living in a time when science is telling us — by scientific method, which has its place — that there is no Adam and Eve historically; evolution really does not permit the Adam and Eve of the Bible in any way. But for the Christian we have the written testimony of the perfect God, who not only was there but who created it. And so, for us, we have to take the testimony of the Bible, when it speaks definitively, as a true answer by which we will compare other answers. Now, by that standard, the Bible teaches that Adam and Eve were historical people. The Lord Jesus, when he was answering a question about divorce, he spoke back with reference to the Genesis account of Adam and Eve, treating them as historical people. The apostle Paul, in Romans 5, treats Adam as a historical person. His actions resulted in a certain outcome as a historical person. Now one thing we have to watch, we’re living in a time now where many scholars are trying to be biblical while avoiding the wrath of the society, and one thing you’ll hear is “Adam and Eve were historical people, but maybe that’s possible under evolution.” Well, you can have a historical Adam and Eve under evolution, but you can’t have the biblical Adam and Eve under evolution. So people will say — and evangelical writers are saying — Well, maybe Adam and Eve were... Adam was one of the many historical people. God just chose him and made him the one he was going to deal with representatively. Or maybe he was the head of a tribal confederation. Well, Genesis 2:7 says very plainly that God created him by an act of special creation. And the way that he did that is essential: the care and the love, the face-to-face covenant relationship built into the creation of, the design of that particular creature, God breathing his own life into him. If we give up the *biblical* historical Adam and Eve,

we lose everything because you lose Genesis 3; you lose the Fall, apart from which the redeeming work of Christ means nothing. We lose the authority of the Bible. We lose the dignity of man as made in the image of God. We lose the basis for true unity in the human race. It's hard to be living in a time when believing in God's revealed Word, where it so clearly speaks, is receiving the kind of scorn it receives in culture. But Christians have been through this many times before. We humbly and meekly take our stand upon the Word of God. Jesus, Paul, the New Testament, certainly the Old Testament account itself, if Genesis 2 and 3 is not an account of actual history, well then by those same standards, what about John 6? What about the resurrection of Jesus Christ? You know, that's just as ludicrous by the standards of science as is the creation of Adam and Eve. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." And the Bible teaches the biblical historical Adam and Eve, not just some other historical Adam and Eve. And it's absolutely essential to the Christian faith and witness. If we lose Adam and Eve, we're merely giving up the grand narrative of the Bible. But that's quite a lot.

### **Rev. Vermon Pierre**

Were Adam and Eve historical people? Well, if we're going to take seriously what Jesus says about the beginning of creation, and if we take seriously what Paul says about the beginning of creation, yes, absolutely they are historical people. Paul speaks of Adam in Romans 5, and the assumption is that there was a real person named Adam through whom sin came and affected the whole world, affected the whole planet, affected humanity. Jesus, in Matthew 19, speaking about divorce, speaks of man and woman being created and the two becoming one flesh. He's quoting from Genesis, and he's quoting in a way that assumes that, yes, there was a real man and woman created, and the first marriage was formed there. And so, we have to believe that Adam and Eve are historical people based on what the Bible says about Adam and Eve.

### **Dr. Philip Ryken**

People sometimes wonder whether Adam and Eve were real people. After all, the names Adam and Eve simply mean "the man" and "the woman," so that seems very general. It could really apply to anyone. But I think it's clear from many, many things in Scripture that Adam and Eve were real people in a real past, real historical human beings who actually lived in this world. I think we could show that from Genesis, from the fact that they speak to one another, that they bear children, that they do real things in the world. And also from the fact that when you look at the biblical genealogies that say this person gave birth to that person and that person gave birth to the next person, and whether we're looking at those genealogies in the Old Testament or the New Testament, Adam and Eve are included in those genealogies right alongside lots of people that there's absolutely no doubt that they are real historical people. I also think it's significant the way that, in the New Testament, Jesus and also Paul refer to Adam and Eve, and they speak of them as individuals whose actions and whose presence have a real impact on what's happening in the world today, particularly the apostle Paul when he talks about sin in the world and when he talks about the plan of salvation, Adam is as real to him as Jesus is. And so, I think we get

a lot of confirmation, even apart from the opening chapters of Scripture, that Adam and Eve were real people.

### **Question 2:**

## **What are some theological implications of denying the historicity of Adam and Eve?**

### **Dr. David VanDrunen**

The historic Christian doctrine that God created Adam and Eve in his image and that this Adam was a real historical person who fell into sin, it's come under great attack recently, of course, for an important reason, from modern science and the claim of the evolutionary origins of the human race. But there certainly have been many within the church who have called into question the idea of Adam's historicity and whether we really *need* to have this doctrine in order to maintain orthodox Christian faith. I believe that there are a number of unfortunate implications of rejecting the historical character of Adam. One of them is simply the implications for our view of Scripture. Scripture does affirm and treat Adam as a historical man in a number of places, not only in the opening chapters of Genesis but refers back to him many other times throughout the Scriptures. But there are also some very significant implications for our doctrine of sin. Historically, in Protestant theology we have confessed that we are sinners "in Adam," that God did not make us sinners, that we are not just sinners by nature originally, but that God made us upright and that we became sinners because of a free act of the first man. And that this idea, that we are actually sinners because of our own fall, is really a crucial idea in many respects. If we give that up, what are we saying about God? Are we saying that God actually created us sinners by nature? Can we uphold our traditional doctrine of original sin, the idea that we are condemned in Adam, not just for our own personal sins? But perhaps the most troubling implication of rejecting the idea of a historical Adam is what it does to our doctrine of salvation. I think we see this especially by considering Romans 5. In Romans 5, Paul undertakes this extensive analogy between Adam and Christ, who is the last Adam, and he says that, just as Adam, the one man, fell, and through his one act brought sin and death and condemnation into the world, so also through Christ, the one man, through his obedience, through his act of righteousness, has brought life and resurrection and justification to this world. And if you follow Paul's logic, he's saying that just as the one man brought sin, so the one man brought life and salvation. If we don't think we need a real Adam in order have our doctrine of sin, then it really calls into question whether we really need a real Savior, a real historical Savior, in order to be redeemed from our sin.

### **Dr. John Hammett**

I think there's some very grave theological implications for rejecting the historicity of Adam and Eve. First of all, it has implications for our view of Scripture. Scripture clearly teaches Adam and Eve as historic individuals. We have not just Genesis 1 and 2, we have the genealogies where Adam is mentioned there. We have Paul

mentioning Adam and Eve together in 1 Timothy 2, even the order in which they sinned. So, if we reject their historicity we have problems with our view of Scripture — it's erroneous there — and then soteriologically, in terms of salvation. Paul seems to connect the first Adam and the last Adam in Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15, as having important consequences for all of humanity. If Adam is not a historic individual, I'm not sure how those parallels work out there. And then third, in terms of our doctrine of the Fall, if we have no historic Adam and Eve, we have no place for sin to begin. Are we to think that God made us with a bent to sin with a corrupt nature? Unless there's some original creation of historic individuals that were unfallen, who then fell, we would have to suppose that God created us sinful with a corrupt nature, and that would not make sense at all. So, I think rejecting the historicity of Adam and Eve leads to very, very grave consequences for other areas of our theology.

### **Dr. Ken Keathley**

When it comes to the subject of the historicity of Adam and Eve, I cannot think of a more contentious item within evangelical theology today among both theologians and biblical scholars. You have the very obvious problem that it appears that Jesus and the apostles believed in the historicity of Adam and Eve. So, right up front, what one believes about the historicity of Adam and Eve will affect, or will have implications for what one believes about the nature of inspiration and the Bible, because if Adam was not a historical person, but Jesus and Paul thought he was and then said so — and we have it recorded in Scripture — what do we do with that? And so, there are very profound theological implications for the nature of Scripture that has to be dealt with on that issue... Concerning the historicity of Adam and Eve and how it affects our salvation, one has to think about the grand narrative of salvation; you have creation, fall, redemption and consummation. If the Fall is not a historical event, not an actual event, well then what does that do to our salvation that we believe is an actual thing happening to us? So, there are soteriological implications to what we believe about the historicity of Adam and Eve... And then, whenever we talk about the historicity of Adam and Eve and how it relates to our understanding of anthropology, if Adam and Eve are not at the head waters of the human race, then what does that do to our understanding of the unity of the human race and the way that God dealt with humanity in a corporate sense in Adam and then deals with us in a corporate sense in Christ. So, it profoundly affects, has profound theological implications for one's view of anthropology. And then the historicity of Adam and Eve affects how we understand the nature of sin and the nature of just the human condition. If there isn't a historical Adam, then there isn't a historical Fall. And above all else, the doctrine of the Fall is an optimistic doctrine, because if God created the world as it is the way we see it, red in tooth and claw, and with human beings inclined to moral evil, okay, if this is the way it really is, then what does that say about our sense that, well, this is not the way it ought to be? Well, maybe it is, you know? And so, if you don't hold to the historicity of the Fall, you're left with some pretty tough conclusions, or tough options. One, you could say, "Okay, we're going to have to be stoics, suck it up and this is just the way it is and learn to deal with it." Well, if you're going to do that you might as well be a materialist and an atheist, and I think that does indicate why many head that way. Or we can be quasi-Gnostics in which we understand salvation to be

deliverance from this world, and the only thing one can really hope for is for one's soul to be delivered from this physical creation. Both of those don't fit with the biblical narrative.

### **Question 3:**

#### **What does Psalm 8 teach us about humanity's place in creation?**

##### **Dr. Ramesh Richard**

Psalm 8 is one of four creation Psalms... Between verses 3 and 7 there's an entire doctrine of man — sometimes we call it anthropology, or a long way to say a very simple thing — where God says that we are a little lower than God himself, little lower than the heavenly realm; we're at a little higher than the earthly realm. So, we're not in this great line continuum where, somehow, because of time or accident or chance, we evolved. We are actually a little lower than the heavenly realm. So, by rank we are very, very dignified. Then also by rule, he gave us, he delegates to us rule. That means we're not intrinsically in authority, but as delegated authority that we use in order to harness nature but not to harass it. And then there's a representation, which is really, in my opinion, the full-blown doctrine of the image of God... So, this Psalm is just unbelievable. It is against evolutionism. It is also against technicism, where we think by technology we can handle all human situations. It is also against what I am going to call a "godless humanism" where, without reference to God, we can find meaning to the human situation. Someone said you have to carry both the dignity and the humility of man constantly. So, when we are prone to be proud, we will be humble because we're number two, or when we're prone to be so self-defaced, we know that we have dignity. So, mankind is not divinity, but we certainly have dignity because of God's role and rank and representation that he's endowed toward us as creatures, this unique creature called man.

##### **Dr. Ken Keathley**

Psalm 8 is one of those fascinating passages of Scripture that speak of the role that God gave humans in the economy of his plan for the ages. It says that he made us a little lower than God or a little lower than the angels, depending on which translation you use, and it speaks of the role that we have either as ambassador or as steward over all that God has created, because it says that he has given us this place and he's also given us a task that we are to have dominion over his creation. And so, it speaks of the uniqueness of humanity among all of creation.

##### **Dr. David VanDrunen**

Psalm 8 is a wonderful psalm. It's one of the most familiar ones to most Christians. And one of the remarkable things it says is, it talks about us as human beings, and it remarks about this great dignity that God has given to us. It begins by talking about how great the Lord is, how majestic *his* name is in all the earth and all the wonderful things he's done. And then it reflects on the fact that God has exalted us, and it expresses almost a disbelief that God could exalt us as human beings in light of how



all-surpassingly majestic he is. I think when we read Psalm 8 it drives us back to Genesis 1. In Genesis 1 we read about God creating us as human beings as the pinnacle of his creating work, and God made us as those who bear his image and his likeness. And it goes on to say that, as those created in his image and likeness, that we are called to exercise dominion in this world, to rule and subdue the other creatures. So, it's really interesting that in Psalm 8, when it talks about how God has made us a little lower than the angels, that he has called us to exercise dominion over the works of his hands. And so, this tells us something about our task as human beings. God made us to do something. He didn't make us just to be. He made us to be active creatures and to carry out his will, to carry out his purpose, and ultimately, to carry out his rule underneath his ultimate authority. But I think if we're considering Psalm 8, we can't just go back to Genesis 1. We need to go ahead to Hebrews 2. In Hebrews 2 there's an extended quotation of Psalm 8 and it's preceded by this, what seems to be a cryptic statement by the author of Hebrews: "It is not to angels that God has subjected the world to come..." and then he goes into this quotation from Psalm 8. And really, what he's getting at there is that God didn't just call us as human beings to rule this present earth, this present age, but he ultimately called us to rule a new creation. This is part of God's plan for us as human beings. And, as the author of Hebrews explains there, that if we look at ourselves now we don't see it, but we see Jesus, he says. And Jesus has already gone before us, is already exalted, and he's bringing many sons to glory. And so, ultimately we see God's intentions fulfilled in Psalm 8 in the new creation in which we are going to rule with Jesus forever.

### **Question 4:**

#### **Do human beings consist of both material and immaterial parts?**

##### **Dr. Bruce Little**

There's a major question today that, even in evangelical circles, about whether or not humans are made up of both material and immaterial parts. Now, I answer the question, yes. I think that, first of all, I read the Scriptures, and I see words that indicate to me that there is something that is separate from the body, that there is... For example, we can look at 2 Corinthians 5:8 and Paul says, "To be absent from the body is to be face to face with the Lord." Well, I know that when I die my body goes into the grave. But Paul says something: "me," goes to be with the Lord. So, I have to take that into consideration and say, that's just not incidental that Paul makes that kind of a claim. Or, we have the claim of Jesus ... where he's on the cross and he says, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And then the next says, he gave up breathing. Well, we know that the body went into the grave, but he is saying he commended his spirit to the Father. So, verses like that, Hebrews 4:12, about the word of God being alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to dividing the center of the soul and the spirit, the joints, the marrow, well, that language is there. I don't know how it all works together, but I think there's the clarity there that would tell me, yes, there is a material part and an immaterial part of man.

**Dr. James K. Dew, Jr.**

Traditionally, throughout the history of the West and even in the East, people have thought of human beings as having both bodies and souls — the material, physical, or the nonmaterial, immaterial parts of us... I think when we take the whole of the New Testament, and even the Old Testament into consideration, we have to draw out the conclusion that there's more to us than just this physical body. This physical body does seem obvious, right? I can touch it, I can poke it, I can feel things in it, but there's clearly got to be something more to me when I read the Bible, the Old Testament or the New Testament. The Bible talks about, in Ecclesiastes 12 for example, that at death the spirit goes back to God from where it came, and the body goes back to the earth from where it came. Paul talks about being absent from the body and being present with the Lord. There seems to be a distinction there between body and soul. Jesus talks, for example, about not fearing just the one who can destroy the body but not the soul, but needing to fear the one who can destroy *both* the body and the soul.

**Dr. David W. Jones**

We have to say that, certainly, there are material and immaterial components to us, although I think it's important to describe us as human beings as composite unities; that is, we're not different pieces put together as if we're compartmentalized. You know, we're all one being. That becomes so very important as we talk about so many theological and moral topics by way of how we treat the body, how we treat the bodies of others. If we view ourselves as human beings, as just kind of being the spirit as the *real* me and the body as some sort of prosthesis that's used by the real me, well then, you know, we're prone to neglect the body... But if we view our true selves as being a composite unity of immaterial and material components, then we see that our entire being is what Christ redeemed. While we may have a new spirit now, one day we'll have a new body at the end of the age. And so, really, the entire me is important; the entire me has been redeemed; the entire me has to be taken care of. And what we do with the bodies as well as the spiritual parts of us is equally as important.

**Question 5:**

**What does the account of Adam's creation teach us about our own composition?**

**Rev. Dr. John W. Yates**

In Genesis 2 we're told that God forms Adam out of the dust of the ground. And then in Genesis 2:7 we're told that he breathes his breath into the face of Adam. This is a wonderful image of God coming on this inert creature and breathing his own life into him... There's a very real sense that when God forms the first human, Adam, he's taking dirt and dust from his material creation, but the life given to Adam is out of God's own mouth... So, the breath, the spirit, the life are God's own; the substance of man is out of creation.

**Rev. Xiaojun Fang, translation**

What has the Bible taught us about man's composition? According to the Scriptures, in the book of Genesis man was composed of two portions. First, God formed man out of the earth, so we have a material body. Second he breathed life into man, and this refers to his soul. The material body is visible; the soul is invisible, and yet a man's thoughts, emotions, and will spring forth from there. This is what God has given to man at creation. While we are alive, we can see nature, we can see each other's material bodies, but we can also feel what cannot be seen. For example, a man's emotions are not visible, but can be felt. For another, air is not visible, but you need it. From this we know that there are things that [exist] though we cannot see them — heaven, hell, eternity, and the God with whom we shall commune eternally.

**Dr. Mike Fabarez**

We learn in the Bible that people consist of both a material and immaterial part. Back to Genesis 2:7, it speaks of the fact that Adam was made out of the ground, out of the dust of the earth, and God breathed into him the breath of life, which is exactly the pattern we see throughout Scripture: a material and immaterial part. James speaks in James 2 of the body when it's without the spirit it's dead. On the cross, in Matthew 27, Jesus dies and he gives up his spirit. So, the combination of the material and the immaterial, the body and the spirit, is what constitutes who we are. People have gone to try and divide that in more ways. But that's the basic constitution of human beings: a immaterial part and a material part. One we could see as just the component parts of our bodies, but the Bible goes on to say there is an element of that, much like a computer might have software and hardware, that hardware also has some firmware, and that gives us some problems — the idea of some built-in impulses in our bodies. And that is something that we struggle with as Christians, knowing that there are passions and desires of the body, and that even though our spirit may be made new in Christ, we still have this principle of humanity that pushes against our godly desires in our humanness. So, there's flesh and there's spirit, there's this new man within us and yet this old sense of our fallen humanity in our material part. Material, immaterial, those are the two basic components of who we are as people.

**Question 6:****Are our physical bodies an important and permanent part of us?****Prof. Jeffrey A. Volkmer**

Our bodies are important, permanent parts of us. Probably one of the best places to go for this is not just stop at our bodies but all physical aspects of the universe. We find out in Colossians 1, Paul's grand, just expansive Christology in Colossians 1, that all things are being reconciled back to God through Christ; everything is created for him and by him. That includes the physical aspects of our universe as well as the nonmaterial aspects of our universe. And we have to be careful to get that right because that's the classic Gnostic error, to separate or to put too rigid of a distinction

between the nonmaterial and the material. No, they're much more connected to that. So even if we go back into Genesis 1, to be made in the image and likeness of God is more than just our nonmaterial qualities. That isn't to say that God is corporeal, God is flesh, but we are made in such a way in our physical bodies that we are the proper representation of God, how he intended it. So, when he made us he said that it was good. That includes our physical parts as well as our nonphysical parts. And we find out in the book of Revelation that the eternal state, the way that we're going to reside with God forever, is a physical realm. It's a new heaven and a new earth. It's not some ethereal, wispy thing. It's the city of God comes out of heaven and resides in Jerusalem in a physical reality. It's cleansed and clear of all sin, all death, all everything, but it nevertheless has a physical element to it. So, if the eternal state will include the physical, then we should be careful not to denigrate the physical, even though it's broken and scared by sin, in the present age.

**Dr. Dinorah B. Méndez, translation**

I believe that the physical part of the human being is very important and is part of the holistic being. So, sometimes we think in theological or spiritual terms that the human body, or the physical part, will not be part of salvation or eternal life, but if we believe that the human being is made of all these areas, of all these dimensions, and is holistic, then it has to be that the physical body is a part of salvation as well as eternal life in the future. Therefore, in my opinion, it is very important to consider the physical body to be part of our being, and it is also what gives us our identity. It is what distinguishes me as an individual from another individual, and it separates me, although it allows me to interact with others. I think it is a fundamental part of being a human being.

**Dr. James K. Dew, Jr.**

One of the clear takeaways from the Old Testament and the New Testament is that we seem to have both a physical body and an immaterial soul, a nonphysical soul. Another seeming clear takeaway from the New Testament and the Old Testament is that at death the person seems to survive death via the soul. The body goes back into the ground and is corrupted and the soul goes off to be with God. I think a lot of Christians, erroneously though, assume that because of that, that this physical body is just not that important, because it's something that can die, it can decay, and that my life can somehow continue via the soul or spirit in the presence of Jesus at death. But I think that this is a misreading of the New Testament and the Old Testament. I think when we start off in Genesis 1 and 2, God made us male and female in his image, and he created us in physical bodies. Our life is in a physical body. And we come to the New Testament and it's not just a small thing in the New Testament. Jesus talks about it in John 11. Paul talks about it in 1 Corinthians 15 and then again in 1 Thessalonians 4. He talks about the resurrection of *the body*, that our future hope as Christians resides in this body coming back to life and us living in those bodies forevermore in the presence of Jesus. And so I say to my students sometimes, you know, God who is omniscient and all wise created us and put us in bodies, and surely a God with those attributes didn't just do that incidentally or whimsically, but he did it intentionally. He intends us to be embodied, and this is reinforced by the fact that in the final states

of existence, these bodies come back and we will have them forevermore. So I take from that that the body is a really big deal. And I could say that not just for these theological reasons, but also for just basic scientific and philosophical reasons as well. This taking the body seriously and saying that the body is part of who I am allows me to make sense out of personality changes when physical things change. So, for example, if you were to smack me across the head with a frying pan and there was damage done to my brain, my personality would change. Well, how does that make any sense? It makes sense because this body is part of what I am, it's part of who I am, and this also makes, I think, wonderful sense out of the resurrection where we get our bodies back. If, in short, I just am my soul and nothing else — this body's not important — then why do we need to get this body back in the resurrection? That just doesn't add up to me, and I think that because of that we have to have a very high view of the body as well when we think about the human person.

### **Dr. Ken Keathley**

How important is our physical body throughout eternity? And the answer to that is completely important, despite the fact a lot of our hymns and much of our preaching puts emphasis upon the immortality of the soul. What we find in the Bible, though, is not the emphasis or the stress on the immortality of the soul but the resurrection of the body. Of course, this raises the question, what happens to the immaterial part of our being during the intermediate state, from the time that we die until the time that we're resurrected. And the Bible just doesn't say a whole lot. And I think there's a very good reason for that, and that is, it's merely an intermediate state. It is not the way we're going to be for all eternity. The stress of Scripture over and over again, some in the Old Testament but a lot in the New Testament, is the stress upon that there is a resurrection in which you and I as believers in Christ, we will be resurrected like him, and we will enjoy our resurrected bodies for all eternity. The relationship of this body to the resurrection body is one difficult to understand. Paul talks to us about it in 1 Corinthians 15, and he says, he uses the analogy, it's like a seed being planted that gives way to something much more glorious. In a similar way, the body we have now will be like the one we'll have then.

## **Question 7:**

### **How are terms like spirit, soul, mind and heart interrelated?**

### **Dr. Grant R. Osborne**

The words spirit, soul, mind and heart are really related theologically to an issue that's called "dichotomist" versus "trichotomist" views of how God made us as human beings. What that means, are we three parts, body, soul and spirit, or are we two parts, basically material and immaterial? And this has actually been a huge debate for several hundred years, and I think the first thing I need to say about that is the Bible doesn't overly care about the issue. It's an issue that comes from theologians more... We have body; we have soul and spirit. Within that, the term for "heart" actually refers more to the mind than it does to the feelings in Scripture.

Studies of the word “heart” have shown that the heart is how we look at life. The heart is not just how we *feel* about life. The heart is how we consider life, how we think about life, and how we think about our walk with God. And so, therefore, our heart is what determines our walk with God, and our soul and our spirit are the way we relate to God. And of course, when we die, that is when we especially see this dichotomous or two-part. When our body is buried and becomes part of the dirt and our soul is with God, and when we’re in the, what’s called the “intermediate state,” that means our spirit will be with God waiting for Christ to return and give us our final eternal body.

### **Dr. David VanDrunen**

Scripture uses a variety of terms to refer to us as human beings, and some of the common ones are soul, spirit, heart and mind. And they’re certainly very related, but there are also some important distinctions that should be made. If I could comment first on the terms “soul” and “spirit,” these are terms that are used almost synonymously in Scripture. Really, they describe the nonmaterial aspect of our being; we are bodies and God has made us with bodies. But God has also made us with a nonmaterial aspect to us, which Scripture refers to as both the soul and the spirit. So, sometimes when Scripture is referring to us, it will refer to us as body and soul. Sometimes it will refer to us as body and spirit. Now, when we talk about terms like “heart” and “mind,” these are a little more complicated, and they don’t really refer to one specific aspect of our person. If you take “mind,” for example, it really seems to get at our identity as thinking beings, and in part that says something about our soul. Our souls are involved in our thinking, and yet we know very clearly that our bodies are involved in our thinking as well. We have brains. And so, our mind captures something about both our bodily and our spiritual natures. Probably the richest term of them all is “heart,” and heart is a term in Scripture that really gets at what makes us tick. It’s what do we really love? What do we really value? And Scripture speaks about things that flow from the heart, that that really defines who we are. And so, when Scripture talks about the heart it’s usually not talking about that physical organ that beats inside of us, but really about what we love. And we’re called to love God with *all* of our heart, and that’s a way of representing the kind of fullness and completeness and the depth of the love that we should have for God.

### **Dr. Ken Keathley**

Well, one of the difficulties in understanding what the Bible has to say about soul, spirit, mind, heart is that Scripture uses those terms interchangeably. Often you’ll find where at one place it’ll refer to spirit, another place to soul, and it appears to be referring to the same thing. So, the best thing I think we could say about those terms is that they’re referring to that part that is in contrast to the material person, which is *more* than the material part of your being. And third, talking about the *whole* of a person, both material and immaterial. So, I think that’s the best way to understand those terms. When Jesus talks about loving God with all of your soul, spirit, heart, mind, I think he’s using those terms almost as synonymous terms and piling up terms to emphasize that the whole person should be engaged in loving God.

**Dr. James K. Dew, Jr.**

The Bible uses terms like spirit, and soul, and heart throughout the Old Testament and throughout the New Testament, and the temptation, I think, is for a lot of people to read these as referring to different parts of us, different, maybe, composites that make up the whole person. And I think that that's probably not the right way to look at that, that you could read a distinction between things like a body and a soul or a body, heart, mind, those types of things. Those terms like "heart" and "soul" and even "spirit" seem to me to be used interchangeably to refer to the nonphysical parts of the human being. But that doesn't mean that they have no nuances that are different from each other. So, "spirit" and "soul" might be referred to the inner part of the person that's immaterial, and words like "heart" also are referring to the immaterial, but this word seems to have a different connotation where essentially it's referring to the moral seat of a person, or maybe the seat of desire of a person. So, while all three of those types of terms may very well refer to the same part of the person, they refer to that part of the person to convey different kinds of nuances, to recognize that this immaterial part of the person really does have certain distinctions about it that need to be pointed out.

**Question 8:****What is the covenant of works?****Dr. David VanDrunen**

The covenant of works is a doctrine that was developed in the early centuries of the Reformed theological tradition, and there are several aspects of it that I think can summarize what it was getting at. For one thing, it affirms that at the beginning, when God created man that he entered into a covenant with him. And so this covenant of works refers to God's original relationship with Adam. So, what it's affirming is that, just as later in history, God entered into covenant with his people in various ways at various times, so even before the Fall, God actually entered into this special relationship, a covenant relationship, with Adam. So, that's one aspect of this doctrine. A second aspect of this doctrine is captured in that term "works." And what this teaches is that, in this covenant, God required Adam to be obedient and that he was going to deal with Adam according to his obedience or disobedience. And perhaps it's helpful to see this in comparison with how God deals with us as people now. God doesn't offer us salvation, he doesn't offer us eternal life according to our good works. He offers it to us by faith in Jesus Christ. Well, God didn't go to Adam at the beginning and offer him a mediator, didn't offer him a savior, didn't offer him someone who would do the work for him. What he said to Adam was, "You obey me, and if you don't obey me, you will die," with the implication that if he would obey, he would live. And so that's why it's referred to as the covenant of works, because it was based upon the degree of Adam's obedience, or whether or not he would be obedient to God's call. But there's one other aspect of the doctrine that I think is worth mentioning, and that is the idea that God did not originally intend the human race simply to live in the Garden of Eden forever and ever and ever. Now, this is a

historic Christian idea. You can go back to Augustine, or John of Damascus, or Thomas Aquinas and you find this conviction that God actually desired to have human beings in his, we might say, an “eschatological fellowship,” that he wanted human beings to be with him and rule with him, not only in the first creation but in a new creation. And so, the Reformed doctrine of the covenant of works has ordinarily taught that if Adam had been obedient and had been faithful to the commission that God gave him, that God at some point, in some way, would have blessed him with life in the new creation. He wouldn’t have had to die in order to get there, but through that obedience God would have blessed him and blessed all of us in Adam with the blessings of everlasting life.

### **Dr. Bruce L. Fields**

The covenant of works, or what I sometimes refer to as the “Edenic covenant,” is one of these debatable areas in the realm of biblical and systematic theology. I know a theologian who I hold in high regard, Anthony Hoekema, though a Reformed theologian would speak against the existence of the covenant of works. More recently, Michael Bird in his *Evangelical Theology* would also challenge the concept. Let’s just say I, with all due respect, I do return to the particular section of Genesis verses 15-17 where the Lord is, kind of, giving a word to Adam to not eat of the Tree of Life, and there I think that still we have some basic covenantal framework. For example, I do think that you have essentially two parties there, God and Adam, which a fundamental element of covenant. You do have a stipulation — now mind you, it’s very simple in form, but we would expect that, I think, in Genesis, you see — but the basic stipulation is don’t eat of the fruit, that there is also in the framework here a kind of promise of reward, though it’s stated in an opposite direction: “God says in the day that you eat of the fruit you shall die.” By implication, what is in play is that if you obey you will live. And I can’t help but believe that in the particular framework of this encounter that we can also understand life to be right relation with God, and death, at least initially, to be a broken relationship with God. So, I think you have, at least in a very, very fundamental way, certain characteristics of a covenant: parties, stipulation and the involvement of consequences or rewards if indeed obedience is followed through.

### **Question 9:**

**How was God’s benevolence toward humanity expressed in Adam’s day?**

### **Prof. Jeffrey A. Volkmer**

So, when we read the creation account, we see that mankind is the last thing God makes before he rests. The creation week is not a static, flat telling. It climbs in its intensity, its level of description ... and that ultimately gets expressed and manifested, its zenith is at the creation of mankind. So, the last thing that God does before he rests, before he stops — it’s not a rest because he’s tired; that’s a rest as in it’s complete; he stops. So the last thing he does is create people. So they have a



privileged place in the narrative and over all of creation. God's benevolence to Adam is also showed because Adam, humanity, gets to rule over everything else that God had made to the point where he created mankind, and indeed all of creation is made *for* Adam. So, Adam has this symbiotic relationship in a way where he is supposed to rule creation in God's image and his likeness, but then at the same time, creation takes care of him because everything that God has put — all the plants of the ground, all the trees, all the fruit — is for the sustenance of Adam. So, the fact that he's made last, has this privileged place in the creation account and in creation itself, and the fact that Adam is the only one who is able — well, along with Eve — Adam is the only one able to rule and subdue the earth, subdue all of creation, shows how much God had this intimate and close relationship that he had with Adam and Eve. And it's worth noting the stark contrast that that account has with all other ancient Near Eastern creation accounts, because in those cases, man and the creation of man is usually an afterthought. It is some gods losing a bet, some gods refusing to work, and so they make man to pick up the slack where the gods have gone on strike. And so, you just don't see this ethical, moral, intimate relationship that you see in other ancient Near Eastern accounts that you see in the Genesis account.

### **Dr. Rick Boyd**

One passage in Scripture that I don't think gets enough attention are the first two chapters, and then at times we try to make too much of the first two chapters. But the first two chapters really do reveal the nature of God and our place as humans in his creation, so much so that Psalm 8 reflects back on that and says, "What is man" — or what is mankind, what is humanity — "that you think of him?" Or the son of man — each of us — that you visit us? You made us a little lower than God. But going back to the first couple of chapters of Scripture we see that God created everything, and in the first chapter, the creation account that's in the first chapter, humanity is the crowning touch. He builds each day some part of creation; the first three days he gives it form, and the next three days he fills it, and the crowning touch — what makes his creation not just "good" but "very good" — is humanity. In the second chapter we see God creates everything, including a garden and places us right in the center of it, so he is *so good* to us and provides everything that we need. And then we get to Genesis 3. That's where the problems come in when we do our own thing. But God's creation, his original creation, and his heart, even now, is for our good. He is such a loving and good God.

### **Dr. Dana M. Harris**

When we look at the creation account, people often talk about the parallels between the biblical account and other ancient Near Eastern accounts. One thing to keep in mind is, there are profound differences, even if there are some superficial similarities. In a lot of these other creation accounts, there's often some kind of cosmic conflict between the gods and the goddesses. The result of that is that the body parts, often, of the gods and goddesses become then the stuff of creation. Moreover, on those accounts, humanity is often an afterthought. Human beings are created just to take care of the gods and goddesses. When we look at the biblical account, we see that God very purposely and redemptively works through the days of creation, where he

brings about order out of chaos and fullness out of emptiness. Each day, God ends by pronouncing that the work that he has done that day is “good.” When we get to the sixth day, God pronounces that the work that’s done on that day — the creation of Adam and Eve — is “very good.” So, even if we compare the creation account in the Bible with other creation accounts, we see an inherent goodness in God’s attitude towards humanity and the very exalted purposes that he has for humanity. So, if we look at Genesis 1 and 2 then, we see that, not only does God place humanity at the apex of his creation, but he then goes on to entrust humanity with the dominion of his very creation. So, humanity is presented in Genesis 1 and 2 in royal and priestly terms.

**Rev. Thaddeus J. James, Jr.**

When we look at Genesis 1 and 2 and then God’s benevolence — God’s loving kindness to his creation — Genesis 1 and 2 we see God creating man. After each day of creation God said that it was “good.” After creating man then he said that it was “very good.” So, we see man as the culmination, the epitome of God’s creation. Everything that was in the Garden was designed perfectly for man, that every tree, every plant, everything was for the purpose of man, to please man. But then God looked at man, and he said that, well, there’s nothing here that’s going to be suitable for man. So, then God says, okay, I’m going to fashion — now think about what that looks like — he took the rib from the side of Adam and he *fashioned* a woman that was perfectly compatible for Adam. So, again, showing God’s loving-kindness. And then he takes another step, and then he says that man and woman is to be one, so one physically, one spiritually, one emotionally, to walk together side by side in this creation. Can we imagine what it looks like when God, when he says that Adam walked with God in the Garden in the cool of the day. What was that like to have that state of perfection, that state of holiness, that state of purity and innocence that was all designed perfectly in this beautiful garden for man? So, that would be the epitome. In Psalms it talks about the blessed man, the man that has God’s divine favor, that person that has, again, God’s loving-kindness, his grace, his mercy is upon that man. How much more of a blessed man was shown in creation by the creation of Adam and then the fashioning of Eve? So, that would be the ultimate as far as God’s benevolence toward man.

**Rev. Dr. John W. Yates**

Genesis 1 and 2 is an amazing testimony to God’s goodness or to his benevolence toward us as his creatures. I think we take for granted that there is a creation, but one of the most stunning things is that if there’s a God who’s sufficient to himself, there’s no need for creation. If God, as Father, Son and Spirit can relate to himself eternally in his own being, then creation is not necessary. And yet, out of the abundance of his love, God *chooses* to create. And not only does he create, he does so in an ordered, logical, progressive way in which he draws beauty out of what he’s made. And then at the very capstone of creation, he places man and woman — humanity — to tend, to steward, to keep his creation. And so, the God who’s all-loving, who’s all-knowing, who’s all-powerful, creates out of an abundance of those things, and then instead of stewarding it himself, he creates us, in his image, as the stewards of this perfect

creation that he's made. It's an *amazing* testimony to the fact that at the core of his being God is love and expresses that love in giving us to creation.

### **Question 10:** **How did Adam's sin impact the rest of creation?**

#### **Rev. Timothy Mountfort**

Adam's sin impacted the rest of creation, both humanity as well as the created order, in profound ways. First of all, we know from 1 Corinthians 15:22 that Paul says in Adam we all sin. So Adam, as a representative head, as what we call the "federal head" of humanity, was not only sinning in such a way that it impacted his own relationship with God, but it impacted all of humanity that would exist after his relationship with God. As a result of that, because man, because Adam had a position of being that federal head, everything that was under his authority, everything that was placed under his care was also therefore affected. So the created order was affected, the earth was affected... Everything on the earth that was part of Adam's responsibility to take care of was therefore impacted.

#### **Dr. David VanDrunen**

One of the things that we see in Scripture, and this is captured in most of the broader Christian tradition is that Adam's sin was not just a passing problem, but Adam's sin had a profound effect on himself, on his posterity, and on the whole created order as well. We can see it most immediately on the effects upon him and his posterity, the effects on human nature, that human beings have become spiritually dead, as Ephesians says, dead in our transgressions and sins, and we were destined to die. From dust God took us and to dust now we would have to return. But it's not just upon us in a small way as human beings that we see the effects of Adam's sin, but Scripture makes clear that because of Adam's sin, God also placed this curse upon the broader created order, and we see something of this already in Genesis 3, of course. God, when he came and pronounced judgment upon the serpent and upon the woman and upon Adam, one of the things he said to Adam was that from now on he was only going to get his food through his toil. He was going to have to work the ground, and the ground was going to be resistant to his toil in a way that it apparently wasn't before. We probably get our best theological perspective on this from Romans 8. In Romans 8 Paul talks about the whole creation being subjected to futility through the sin of Adam. And, of course, we want to avoid speculation... But we do know whatever exactly the implications were, that this world, this broader created order is not the way it was meant to be, that we see the presence of evil in this world and that, as Paul says, there is a futility to this world. And ultimately, what can we say about the world in which we live? That it's become a mammoth cemetery. It's where the dead bodies of fallen human beings are now buried. And one of the things that is very encouraging, of course, is that Romans 8 speaks about hope beyond this, that creation is, in a sense, calling out for this liberation from decay and points us ultimately to the

resurrection of our bodies, to our adoption as sons, as Paul puts it, to assure us that this curse upon creation is not the final word.

**Dr. John Hammett**

Well, in Genesis 3 we have the description of Adam's sin, the impact upon creation, especially on the curse placed upon the ground, so that God says that now the ground won't produce for you crops naturally, it'll produce thorns and thistles. And so, every farmer knows that a garden left to itself produces weeds and not crops. Well, I think that's a mark of the fall of creation. So, creation's in turmoil. Romans 8 as well says that creation, now, as being under futility, under slavery, this bondage to corruption that one day will be released, but right now we see that bondage and I think it works itself out in all types of ways. Why are there floods and droughts and famines and things like that? Why does creation not seem to cooperate with us? Why are there hurricanes and tornados and things like that? Well, there may be all types of natural causes that weathermen can trace, but they're talking about *how*, not *why*. Why are these things out there? Well, one, I think it has to do with the fact that creation is broken. It's fallen. I think that happened with Adam's sin... The fact that we see creation broken and fallen, not working right, all those things I think are the fruits of Adam's sin. It touches us in terms of our work in the world becomes toil. We have "work" before the Fall. After the Fall, we have "toil" because creation no longer cooperates with us. We're at tension with creation; therefore, our desire to care for creation becomes increasingly complex and difficult because of the fallenness of creation.

**Dr. James K Dew, Jr.**

Christianity has a lot to say about Adam's sin and the impact that that had on us as human beings, and the world around us as well. And typically, when we talk about Adam's sin and the impact that that has, the two things I think that I hear us say a lot is that, well, this explains our soteriological problem. Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation, so in other words, Adam's fall and Adam's sin explains to us why it is that we need salvation, why it is that we need grace. And I think that's absolutely right. It does. All have sinned, all fell in Adam, and so we now have to deal with this sinful nature that turns against God. We also talk about Adam's fall and Adam's sin with regard to our moral dispositions, and so, for example, we all have not just this need for salvation, but we all have this disposition to do bad things now. We even do things that we don't want to do. And as Paul says in Romans 7, the good things we want to do we don't do, the bad things we don't want to do, that's what we end up doing. And I think that Adam's fall helps us make sense of those two things — our need for salvation and also our tendencies, our bent-ness towards sin. But if we stop there and that's all we say about Adam's sin, then I think that we have a thin and flimsy view of the Fall. I think, frankly, we don't have a fully robust, fully orbbed biblical view of the Fall. I think we have to add to it more, that his sin did more than just affect us soteriologically and morally, but it also affected us physically, it affected the world in a physical way. So when sin, through Adam's sin, when it comes into this world, this taints, distorts, bends *everything*. I mean, I think that what the Bible is saying to us in Genesis 3 is that because of this sin, now even the ground

itself will spring up thorns and thistles and difficultly Adam will have as he works the ground. And I think that this helps us make sense out of a lot of things too. It explains not just why we need salvation and why we do bad things, but it also explains things like cancer, it explains things like tornados, it explains things like corruption and crime. In short, Adam's sin affects everything in creation; everything that God made was good, and now everything via Adam's sin is corrupted and tainted or perverted in some way. And so, I think we've got to have a much more robust view of the Fall and what happens there because it impacts everything in the created order.

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