

God Is Spirit, Part 1

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[0 : 00] First of all, I would ask you to turn to John's Gospel, Chapter 4, and an interesting discussion that our Lord had with the Samaritan woman at the well.

And we're just going to focus on one particular verse out of that. But I want to share the incident with you. And if I can discipline myself to quit soon enough, we'll have some Q&A.; But I don't always do that. So I'll tell you what let's do. I've invited you to do this in the past, so I'll remind you of it. While I'm speaking and covering a certain point, if there's something that's unclear that you want to add, please just raise your hand.

And sometimes I kind of get in a trance when I'm teaching, and I don't always see everything that's out there. So you might not only have to raise your hand, you might have to go like this to get my attention.

But I'll stop, and we'll deal with your question or whatever you have to comment. And we'll just move on from there. So that can make this more profitable than it would be otherwise.

[1 : 18] So while we're trying to scratch where people itch. So I'm going to just jump in here with chapter 4. And we'll begin with verse 7.

We'll just skip this about you needing to pass through Samaria. And in verse 7 we read, There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give me a drink.

Now just be reminded that Jesus is here alone. None of the twelve disciples are with him.

They've all gone into the city, probably to get carry out and bring it back and have a little picnic together. And the Samaritan woman therefore said to him, And she's of course in shock, And we're not going to go into the history of the Samaritans, that'd take too long.

But she said, How is it that you being a Jew ask me for a drink, Since I am a Samaritan woman? On two counts. It's extremely, extremely odd that Jesus would approach her and ask for a drink on two counts.

[2 : 27] One is, she is a Samaritan, Which means she's from the other side of the tracks. And the Jews and the Samaritans have no dealings. History goes back a long ways.

And secondly, she's a woman. And it was considered verboten for a man to encounter a woman in a situation like this, Without others being present.

It just wasn't done in that culture. So there are two reasons here why it is, She is shocked. She's shocked that he's even talking to her. And the text says, The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is, Who says to you, Give me a drink. You would have asked of him, And he would have given you living water.

And when he tells her that she has no idea, What I think that he is thinking is even beyond his physical appearance and being as a human.

[3 : 32] This is God in the flesh. And it's difficult for us to get our minds wrapped around that. But that's exactly what Jesus is saying here.

He isn't simply saying that he is Jesus, the Messiah. He's saying, You have no idea who I am.

And who he really is, of course, as we will see later, Is God incarnated. And you would have asked him, And he would have given you living water.

And she said to her, Sir, you have nothing to draw. She has no idea who this is. You have nothing to draw with. And the well is deep. Where then do you get that living water that you're talking about? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you? Well, quite an understatement. Yes, he is. But who gave us the well and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle.

[4 : 39] Jesus answered and said to her, Well, everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again. But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.

But the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life. You know, as most of us read this, it's just words.

But my, oh my. What is underlying this? The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water. She's thinking in terms of some kind of magical water.

So if you drink this water, you'll never get thirsty again. Be a wonderful thing for a woman who has to make, for a woman who has to make daily trips to the well and carry it all the way back, etc. She's thinking of the practicality of it and the mysticism of it. And she says, If you give me this water, I'll not be thirsty again. Come all the way here to drink.

[5 : 43] And he said to her, Go. Call your husband and come here. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said I have no husband.

For you've had five husbands. The one whom you now have is not your husband. This you have said truly. I'd love to have seen the expression on that woman's face.

When Jesus said, Well, you're right about that. That you have no husband. You've had five husbands. Can you just picture the look on that woman's face when Jesus told her that?

What? Who is it? How do you know what? Her mind, she's just overwhelmed with what he says. And she's trying to recover from the shock of this.

And the best she can come up with is, Sir? I perceive that you are a prophet. Well, honey, that is quite an understatement.

[6 : 57] A prophet? Oh, more than a prophet. I perceive that you are a prophet. My, oh my. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.

Jerusalem. And you people, meaning, of course, you Jews. You people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. And Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father.

You worship that which you do not know. We worship that which we know. For salvation is from the Jews.

Now, I'm tempted to just park right here, but I'm going to resist the temptation and just insert a comment. And that is, this too is an enormous understatement.

Because through God's design plan that operates primarily with the son of Noah, one of the survivors of the flood, one of the three sons, survivors of the flood, and his name was Shem.

[8 : 20] It is going to be through the line of Shem, Noah and Shem. And Shem is related to the word Semitic.

All you have to do is drop the H in Shem and you get Sem. And it's the word from which Semitic and Semites come.

It's also the word from which anti-Semitic comes, which means against the Jew. So Shem is going to be the progenitor of the Jewish people.

Of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It will be Shem through which the line of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is going to come.

And thousands of years later, it will be through that same line genealogically in the direct order, Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Messiah, will come.

[9 : 22] And David, of course, who will precede him by a thousand years, is of this same line, this same royal line. And it is through this line that the Messiah is going to come and that the salvation that we enjoy will be provided and so on.

So this is just a nutshell type thing that we're looking at here. But it's all tied together. As I've often told you, everything in the Bible is connected to everything in the Bible.

Don't lose sight of that because it's very, very important. When he says, salvation is from the Jews, he, of course, is referencing himself and she doesn't understand that, but that's the truth of the matter.

And he says, an hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth. For such people the Father seeks to be his worshipers.

God is spirit. That's another way of saying God is immaterial. God is not physical.

[10 : 43] God does not have a body or a physical presence. God is spirit. Spirit is not confined by physicality like flesh is.

We are flesh and we are all confined in our flesh as to where we can be and what we can be. We are confined to one precise location that we are occupying at this moment.

I am right here now and because I am right here right now, I can't be somewhere else at the same time. This is a limitation of physicality and God doesn't have that limitation because God is spirit. Spirit is immaterial and yet our spirit is confined to our body. The time is coming when our immaterial spirit will be freed from our body.

It will make an exit and it will go and be with the Lord. When Jesus said God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.

[11 : 56] And God being spirit, well let's go back if we may to Revelation chapter 4 and we'll try to make some connections before we get too far into this.

Revelation chapter 4 and this has to do with the 24 elders.

This is a scene in heaven. Excuse me, boy I've got a morning fog that I can't get rid of here. This is a scene in heaven and John the revelator is given this picture and I just want you to visualize if you can, really it's not that hard for us to do now as it was for generations ago, if you just visualize like a gigantic TV screen and you're looking at the screen and this is what you see.

This is kind of like what John is seeing. He's given an image, a picture. It is not real in substance but it is real in its actuality and what is behind it and the only way that John the revelator can comprehend this is to just be given this picture, this preview of this issue and it is just absolutely amazing and it's the 24 elders.

Their identity remains unknown. We do not know who these elders are except to say they are not angels because they are recipients of redemption and angels are not that.

[13 : 45] Angels have no redemption provided for them. So these obviously are human beings and they are recipients of redemption.

They are 24 of them. They fall down before him who sits on the throne and will worship him who lives forever and ever and they will cast their crowns before the throne and here is what they are saying.

And you got to remember John is seeing this spread out before him and he has already been told to write at the beginning of the revelation he's been told to write the things which he sees and hears.

So he's taking note of all of this and what they are saying is worthy art thou our Lord and our God to receive glory and honor and power why?

Because thou didst create bring into being all things and because of thy will they existed and were created.

[15 : 00] I think the King James says for because of your good pleasure they were created and it simply means that God was pleased to do it.

We of course want to ask the question why was he pleased to do that? We have no idea. All we know is that it pleased God to do this and we must go back into an area where I cannot explain but I will just briefly try to give you some semblance of it.

Contemplate if you can and if you can you have a better mind than I contemplate the existence and the being of this immaterial God.

Can we call him an immaterial mind an immaterial intelligence that is not in any way confined and in this being of immateriality there was absolutely nothing else that existed.

Nothing. No universe no heavens no earth no planets no stars no anything nothing yet there was this one that we call the uncaused first cause.

[16 : 41] He is before all things by him all things consist. So we're already in over our heads because you just cannot imagine there being absolutely nothing.

No planets no earth no universe no stars no anything yet there was God and this being immaterial being the spirit being that does not occupy space and time but is greater than and transcends space and time and by the way I want to make a slight distinction here in a word that is often used and they even wrote a song about it somebody wrote a song it's a beautiful song it's got a great message to it the song is how big is God and it's a it's a misnomer to think in terms of God and his bigness because God is not big God is great that's one thing with which we can agree with the Muslims when they say God is great they're right about that but it's not the God they're talking about it's a different God but

God is not big because when you talk about bigness and size you're talking about dimensions and that which occupies something so God does not qualify for being big he's greater than that he is God is great and his greatness knows no bounds no physical material limitations are anything that he has to deal with we just can't contemplate this because we're so locked in to physicality in the

present world and the materiality that we're so used to this is our little world we live in it and we function in it but God in his greatness transcends all of this God is not bigger than his universe he is greater than his universe and if you contemplate the millions of miles the light years that separate the things that are out there in the heavens and try to imagine the greatness of

God that supersedes all of that in this spirit concept in which he dwells that is unconfined that is greater than all of his creation do you find yourself mentally just kind of exiting and dropping out well I think we all do because already we're in over our head so this is what we're talking about when we when we describe the omnipresence of God the everywhere presence the omniscience of God the all knowingness of God and the omnipotence of God his potency that is his power that is omni omni means all and encompassing everything he isn't just potent he is omnipotent he isn't just knowledge he is omniscient he's all knowing and so on

Roger what yeah good point yes Rick you know when we talk about God being spirit how does that coincide when it says that we were created in God's image well when we talk about God being spirit how does that coincide with our being created in God's image we are created in God's image and as Genesis 2 says we are created in his image and in his likeness and I I make a distinction between those two I know a number of commentators do not but image image conveys the idea of physicality when you see an image of something it is physical it is material and if it is a statue or a picture or whatever it has physicality connected with it but when you use the word likeness it doesn't necessarily involve something that is physical but it just means a similarity to or the same kind as and I think this is partly what is involved in our own existence existence because not only is [22 : 00] Adam and us by the way created in the likeness and image of God but that conveys something of the nature and character of the eternal being there is a sense in which God has made something about us that is like himself and I think that likeness is our spirit we are made physically and non-physically we are comprised of flesh and bone and blood and tissue and we'll get our physicality and we also are consisting of immateriality which is our human spirit Joe what I was going to say that just make the point that animals we created don't have a spirit only we do man do and so what Mark is saying the spirit has to be the difference you know there animals don't have a spirit we do so somehow the spirit plays into that go ahead

Mark well I appreciate you mentioning that I'm not real sure about that because the spirit and again this is something we all possess but we're very weak in understanding spirit spirit is our life principle when we are told that God breathed into the nostrils of man and and I don't know how else to picture this I take this quite literally and I know a number of people don't but and I think I've touched on this in time past we're getting far afield here but if that's going to scratch where you itch that's okay when God created Adam in his own image and in his likeness

I believe the text requires physicality on the part of God and this physicality was represented in what we refer to as the pre incarnate appearance of Jesus his name wasn't even Jesus pre incarnate revelation or experience of the son of God in the form that he took that allowed him to use himself as a pattern for making man how did God decide how did God incarnate before Bethlehem how did he decide to make Adam the way he was with one head two eyes and one nose and two arms and two legs and so on well he could have just simply conjured that up in his mind and made him that way but my suggestion and I can't take this to the bank and I'm not asking you to but my suggestion is this is a pre incarnate appearance of the son of

God and I base that on a number of other places where he appears in Genesis and I'm thinking primarily and I'm using this as an example because it's one that we could more easily identify with when in Genesis about chapter 17 somewhere in that area 18 when God appeared to Abraham in the cool of the day as Abraham had pitched his tent there in the plains of Mamre and he stepped outside his tent and he looked up and he saw what the Bible describes as he saw three men approaching him and he immediately regarded them as strangers he didn't know who these people were and he was welcomed extending hospitality to them and the text goes on there in Genesis to make it very clear that one of those three that is classified as a man is none other than deity incarnated in the appearance of a human being and the other two who accompanied him are angelic beings who also had assumed physical bodies so the three of them appear as just three strangers human beings approaching

Abraham we know from the text as you read on in Genesis that two of those are the destroying angels who are then after they leave Abraham they are going to Sodom and Gomorrah and they are going to destroy those cities and the one being there is God incarnate this is thousands of years

before Jesus is going to be born as a baby in Bethlehem but he had a pre-existence keep that in mind in John 8:58 when Jesus is talking to the Pharisees he says before Abraham was I am did you get that he didn't say I was but I am he's the eternal I am there's no time when he did not exist with the father and that Trinitarian formula is something else we may or may not be able to get into but at any rate he is going back to creation when he created

[28:23] Adam he breathed into his nostrils and this is in my estimation and I don't know how else to put this in his human form in his pre-incarnate form there he is as a human being and he is making Adam making the first man to look like himself he's using himself as a physical pattern that he has assumed and he has a physical mouth and we are told that he breathes into Adam's nostrils breath of life and Adam became a living being now before that he was fashioned out of the dust of the ground he was given this physical body and here is this human being body fashioned out of the earth and if I pointed out to you in the past it's no coincidence that your body is made up of the same chemical compositions that exist in the soil which is a pretty amazing thing and really that's what you ought to expect if the text is true and it says that Adam was taken from the dust of the earth and here is this body that he fashioned and we just can't imagine this but I'm asking you to embrace the physicality of this and I know many do not because they think that creation with a hands-on kind of thing like that is somehow beneath the ability or the dignity of the almighty

I don't see it that way at all it is true it is true God could have created Adam by just saying poof let it be and there he is out of nothing and he's able to walk and talk and breathe and everything he could have done that but I think there is a simplistic physicality involved here and if you recall my teaching over the years I am a great literalist I am confident that the vast majority of the Bible makes very good sense when it is approached from a literal standpoint and I know there is a school of thought that I think has since been debunked that is called allegorism that somehow thinks the physicality and to make God a physical being and the person that we're talking about creating is somehow beneath him

I don't see it that way at all I just think that this is God using language and terminology that we can understand because guys all of the Bible all of the Bible is given us for the purpose of communication for our understanding and appreciation and God has reduced himself to speaking in terms and using concepts that we can grasp and understand consider it if you will because I'm sure that it is it is a condescension on the part of God to come down to our level and be one of us someone said that when God decided to create human beings and become one of them and come to earth in the person of a human God was slumming that's quite a way to put it God had reduced himself to entering the slums of humanity compared to what he was in his glory and in his inexpressible presence God condescended and this is the text of Philippians 2 that he was in the form of God that means that Jesus as the son of God was of the same essence character nature and makeup as his father yet he did not regard that exalted position as something to be held onto and grasp at all costs but he willingly relinquished it he laid aside his royal personage as deity and condescended to become a human being like us it was a great step down from what he was to what he became and he dwelt among us in the likeness of human flesh and seen as a man and so on and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross that's the great kenosis passage in

Philippians chapter 2 so in this physicality that existed prior to Bethlehem he creates this first being and he had breathed into his nostrils this life principle what was it what was that life principle we're not able to define it I can't define it I tend to think in terms of air and wind and oxygen you know when the Bible uses the word spirit pneuma we spell it in the English p n e u m a it's an odd spelling starts with a p but the p is silent and it's pronounced pneuma you don't pronounce the p and it's the word from which we get the word pneumonia it's the word from which we get the word pneumatic as a pneumatic drill it is air driven and air or wind is where or it is an expression of our immaterial being it's something that's vital to us this wind air air wind and spirit are all translated with the same word pneuma think about that there is a connection between air wind and spirit what Joe and Nicodemus several weeks ago if you follow

[35:08] Nicodemus Jesus explained that the spirit that you need to be born with is like the wind it affects you but you can't see it Jesus said that and that explained just what you're saying there so in connection with what was said about the question this wind air or spirit that that God breathed into the nostrils of Adam and I can't think of this I know this is very crude to put it this way but I don't know how else to put it because it's really the way it looks to me that Adam was jump started Adam

was jump started there was this lifeless flesh created body arms legs everything all the internal organs and all of them are made out of the dust of the earth and and and yet we know that they are that they are flesh and tissue and blood and bone and all of this

I don't I don't understand the mechanics of that I don't begin to but when God had put this together then he breathed into Adam the breath of life and Adam became a living being so now he possesses characteristics that are somewhat God like in that he has a physical body like the one who put his body together and he has a non physical spirit which is that life giving air or wind that was breathed into the nostrils of Adam just think of that guys you know we're all familiar with with lifeline type cases where somebody has been maybe a a victim of drowning or something and and and and they're almost given up for dead and someone is there who knows CPR and they can administer life mouth to mouth resuscitation and and literally breathe their air into this person and and actually have the result of saving their life it's a like a miraculous thing that occurred yes do you have a comment question yes we're talking about starting life breathing life the spirit and all when people pass you often hear they give up the spirit and give up the breath you're right that's the other end of it absolutely thank you for mentioning that any connection with that be reminded that's exactly what our lord did when he was on the cross one of his seven last sayings was father into thy hands I commit my spirit and the text says that Jesus bowed his head and died the immaterial part of his being that is not seen that is not felt that is not weighed that is not measured we tend to dismiss this well then it can't be real oh yes it is fellas the spirit part of our being is more real than you'll ever know well I won't say ever know because you're going to know it one time the time is going to come when you will know it but the spirit part of our being is that which animates us it is that which actually is your life and when the spirit is gone your life is over all that is left behind is a lump of dead flesh the life is gone we say the life has gone out of him that's exactly what happens and when you visit the funeral home and you see that body stretched out there in the casket and people say things like well he looks so natural you know well the undertaker and the makeup artist can only do so much you know with trying to give us the flesh tones and make us look alive and all the rest of it but it's a study in futility because really what that body is is empty it's empty the person the real person that lives there in that spirit is gone and what is left behind is just the place where you used to live and this is one of the reasons why Paul refers to these bodies in 2nd

Corinthians 5 I think it is he refers to them as like a tent our body is like a tent and a tent is considered to be temporal you might want to go camping for a week or weekend and live in a tent but I can promise you you don't want to live in a tent 24-7 365 days out of the year you don't want to do that because it is too temporary you want something that is more permanent so we build houses and you know even our houses are temporary even the million dollar mansions they are temporary because these bodies are temporary so our makeup is somewhat similar to that of God himself in that we have a physical body and we have a non-physical spirit so in that sense we are made in the image and in the likeness of God and I think that the text is saying that in the image that's where our physicality comes from that's the image and when you see a statue or something that's a physical image but likeness is something else likeness can be physical but it more has to do with the non-physical we would say we would say of somebody who is a maybe a teenager and you just met you know their father but you haven't met them you meet them and you say something like you are the spitting image of your father you look just like your dad well there's a similarity there so Adam was created to look something like the creator in his image and in his likeness and oh my goodness the food is here and what

Joe you haven't mentioned the soul at all in your discussion here but in the Bible when I had it when I had my presentation I found scriptures that said the soul is the most important thing you know you would give up everything in the world to save your soul the soul is key now how does that tie into the spirit then which is separate than the soul you know well I hear you Joe and I would simply say this then we'll have to terminate this because I can never compete with the food okay I think and I know Joe and I would have some minor disagreement here but I would like to agree with him but if I did then we would both be wrong so the point the point I'm making and I'll have to terminate with this is that the text the text says that when

[43 : 13] God breathed into Adam the breath of life that Adam became a living soul soul some translations render a living being but it's a living soul so my contention is and I'm not completely sold on this but I buy it now because I don't have other life so what I'm saying is that our constitution

is such that as I've said before guys we don't it isn't that we have a soul we don't have a soul really what we have is we have a body that is comprised of immateriality and materiality so that when the spirit and the body are combined we are a soul this means we don't have a soul we are a soul we are a soul and the soul is made up of the immaterial and the material the soul is part physical and part spiritual and when physical death occurs the spirit part of our being leaves the physical part of our being and goes to be with the

Lord so that's one of the things guys that's one of the reasons that we naturally fear death because death is a disruption of your being death is a separator it separates the real you from the place where you live temporally and we we we fight against that we do everything we can to keep body and spirit together that's called life and when we have to surrender those for illness or accident or whatever it is it's always looked upon as a tragedy a tragic consequence because our being has been torn apart and we are no longer a whole being and that's the thing that we fear that's why death is referred to as a great enemy and the time is coming of course when that's going to be taken care of and you know the beautiful thing of it is that

Jesus Christ through his death and burial and resurrection has already taken care of that therefore the fear of death ought not to be true of a believer in our baser sort of course we do fear it because we're still in the flesh but we ought to take great comfort in the fact that provision has been made for us even when this body is disrupted and torn apart so that our spirit is taken out of our body even in that God has made marvelous provision for us we'll have to conclude with this Roger what is it do we say our spirit energizes our body so when we die and the spirit leaves there's no energy left in it that's exactly what I'm saying yeah that's your spirit spirit is the energizer the spirit let me put it this way guys but I've realized

I'm in over my head but I'll give you what little I understand the spirit your human spirit is the boss your spirit is the boss of the body not the brain the spirit and it is the spirit that gives command to the brain and the brain goes into action to carry out the order that is given from the spirit now how can I prove that I can't I can't prove that I don't know that anybody can but anyway that's that's my take on it and it's something for you to think about and I'd like to continue this next week but we've got other plans so anyway thank you for your kind attention and if you understand anything that I've said please explain it to me enjoy your breakfast