

Christianity Clarified Volume 08

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[0 : 00] What is Christianity really all about?

The issue remains very confusing to a large segment of our society. At times, it even extends to many who consider themselves Christian. Here, in an ongoing effort to try and dispel some of the confusion, is Marv Wiseman with another session of Christianity Clarified.

No matter how you describe it, the origin of the first human being sounds to our modern minds very extraordinary, perhaps improbable to many, and to some even impossible.

There is, however, nothing impossible or improbable about it if one is willing to embrace divine revelation and the account given in Genesis 1. But if not, little recourse is left except the Darwinian hypothesis of biological evolution.

But evolution, to an increasing number of scientists, few of whom claim to be Christians, simply can't stand the tests of scientific scrutiny.

[1 : 08] The evolution model creates more problems than it claims to solve. Stephen Hawking, often acclaimed world-leading physicist, assured us that no god or creator was called for in order to begin the universe.

His reasoning was that the very existence of gravity made it possible for the universe to create itself quite out of nothing. The good doctor never mentioned how, why, or when gravity suddenly appeared to constitute the catalyst for the universe to commence.

One is continually amazed to see the lengths men are willing to go in order to reduce the Creator to a non-player status, or even relegate Him to no existence at all.

No commentary upon all this nonsense could possibly top that offered by the psalmist in his 14th. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

In our day, many of the fools are not content to say it in their heart. They publicize it with their tongue and pen as well. But we can't concern ourselves any longer with the trivia offered by the fools of whatever stripe.

[2 : 22] We have much bigger cause to pursue. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Can't get a bigger cause than that. The uncaused first cause and what He caused.

The heavens and the earth and all that is in them. Man, homo sapien, is described as the crowning achievement of God's creation. According to the creation order, land and water were brought forth first and made to appear from nothing, followed by light and darkness, followed by all sorts of plant life, followed by the sun and moon, followed by marine and avian life, followed by all sorts of land animals.

Their commonality was in their all being created ex nihilo, out of nothing. All these accounted for the first five days of the creation week.

There is a progression of creative acts of God from the non-living material to the living biological forms in their many kinds. These all progressed to the final creative day six, described as God's crowning creation when He appeared.

Man himself. And what makes Him God's crowning creation? He has something of God built into Himself. He, of all God's creatures, is made in the image and likeness of the very One who created Him.

[3 : 46] This is different. Really different. Radically different. And so is His purpose and destiny. God is spirit.

But what is that? And how do we know God is spirit? We know because it's declared by revelation. Jesus Christ Himself said so. He disclosed this to the woman at the well in Samaria in John chapter 4.

Jesus meant that God is not physical, but that He is non-physical, immaterial. God is not made of physical stuff as our bodies, comprised of flesh and bone.

Yes, Scripture speaks of God having eyes that see all, arms that are everlasting, that bear up all who trust in Him in Deuteronomy 33. And Isaiah 49 reminds us that believers are graven in the palms of God's hands.

So what's the meaning of all these if God doesn't have a physical body? They are not a contradiction to what Christ said in John 4, but they are anthropomorphisms. An anthropomorphism is a literary tool to aid in understanding a concept hard to comprehend.

[4 : 56] Anthro comes from the word anthropology, the study of man, and morphe is a word meaning form or shape. And you put them together, and anthropomorphism means to describe human characteristics to a non-human entity.

God is the non-human entity, but He is portrayed in human terms. Why? Because utilizing something we know aids us in understanding something we don't know.

In this case, God. We know humans. It's non-humans we have trouble understanding. And even though Christ took flesh upon Him and became human, He wasn't always.

An anthropomorphism is the language of condescension. We simply cannot conceive of a God who is not physical because we are physical. We need some basis for making a connection so God graciously condescends and accommodates us by using an anthropomorphism to communicate.

Shortly after His resurrection, when our Lord appeared to His disciples and they couldn't believe it was Jesus, they assumed He must be some kind of spirit. Jesus told them, Handle me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see me have.

[6 : 15] Connect that thought again with what we quoted earlier from John 4, when Jesus said God is spirit. While it is true, Christ the Son of God became flesh when He was incarnated in Bethlehem.

He was not flesh nor human prior to His incarnation. Then what was He? He was spirit, as was and is His Father and the Holy Spirit.

All three members comprising the Trinity were a plurality of spirit beings subsisting in three persons, constituting one God, not three.

This spirit trinity, being non-physical, did not exist in time and space. Spirit does not occupy time or space because it's immaterial. The spirit God inhabited eternity, we are reminded in Isaiah 57.

So before there was time or space or anything made of matter, there was the eternal God, and this God was holy, non-physical in His being, but would enter time and space by assuming a human body in the person of the Son of God made flesh.

[7 : 26] We know that God is spirit because Scripture reveals it generally, and Christ asserted it specifically in John 4 when He declared, God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

But this is still a very mind-bending concept, isn't it? Consider, spirit does not occupy time and space. In eternity, there is no matter, no substance, and no time, nor is there any need for such.

All we can say of the eternal spirit is what Isaiah stated in his 57th, that God inhabits eternity. Eternity is a state, rather than a time or place.

So now we have a God who is spirit, existing in a state called eternity, devoid of both time and space. And this spirit God did not exist there for thousands of years or even millions of years, because both of those are time, and His existence is both timeless and spaceless.

Then, out of His eternal habitation, God, Elohim, plurality of persons, as in Genesis 1.1, created the heavens and the earth.

[8 : 44] Out of what did He make them? He made them out of nothing, because nothing existed from which to make them. Remember? No time, no space, no matter. God created matter when there was nothing with which to make it.

The Latin expresses it as *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. Out of nothing, a non-physical being brought physical substance into being in the form of heaven and earth, along with space and time, in which heaven and earth would dwell.

This means that non-materiality preceded and created materiality. This requires non-matter creating matter.

This also means that non-material spirit is superior to the material, or spirit is predominant over matter. Among other implications, this refutes the concept of pantheism, a primary belief of Eastern mysticism that says, all is God and God is all, the trees, the mountains, people, animals, all are God and God is all.

But scripture makes it very clear that God is not part of his creation, nor is creation a part of God. He is separate from all he has made. God exists outside his creation, not entwined within it.

[10 : 08] Out of his habitation in eternity, he created from nothing the heavens and the earth, as well as time and space with them, in which the heavens and earth would dwell.

It was also from out of eternity that the preexistent eternal Son came when he stepped into the world of time and space.

He had already crafted heaven and earth out of nothing, in concert with his eternal Father and Holy Spirit. It is the physical that is so much with us, but it is the spiritual that precedes and takes precedence over all that is physical.

God is spirit. Christ said so. John 4. As strange as it seems and sounds, it is nonetheless true.

Spirit created matter, or it might be said that non-matter created matter. That is a stretch. But don't make the mistake of thinking that nothing created something.

[11 : 14] When it is said that non-matter created matter, it is not to say nothing created something, but rather spirit created something. Spirit is non-material, but spirit is not nothing.

Spirit is simply not physical. In fact, the spiritual is more something than is the physical. Spirit is superior to the physical. Spirit is the dominant force, not the physical.

God is spirit. Christ said so. Remember John 4? God, who is spirit, is definitely the ultimate in something, the ultimate being. Our problem in comprehending all this is that the physical and material are so much with us.

If there is anything we are acutely aware of, it is the physical, particularly our own bodies. But what attention have you paid of late to the spirit? Your spirit.

You do have one, you know. In fact, Romans 8 reminds us that it is God's spirit that bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Try to think of the occasion when nothing material existed.

[12 : 19] No people, no planets, no stars, no universe, no anything physical. Yet, there was God, and God was and is spirit, or non-material.

This non-material spirit God decided to bring physical substance into existence. He spoke from his non-material self the very words that caused physical things to be.

Also, there appears to be a distinction made between marine animals and land animals. Genesis 2 seems to say that marine life was created from non-existing materials, but it is different when land animals are described.

We are told they all, including man, were fashioned or constructed from the very earth itself. And it has been noted that the chemical composition of the human body is precisely the same as the elements found in the soil.

And why wouldn't they be? Genesis 2 clearly states that man was made of the dust of the ground, and to the ground his body will return upon death. This accounts for man's physicality.

[13 : 26] He was made, formed by God, from material already in existence. The newly created physical earth on day one of creation. Was man made then by God or created by God?

Both. Adam was made in that God used pre-existing material. He was also created in that God placed into Adam something that had no prior existence, Adam's spirit.

God made Adam's material body from the dust of the ground, but he created Adam's spirit from non-materiality. Genesis 2 tells us God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul.

Here he is, homo sapien, man, physical and spiritual, material and immaterial, fearfully and wonderfully made, God's crowning achievement, a masterpiece. He was made Nothing that God has made so defies understanding, at least in the depth we would like, as man himself.

A human being remains the very most complex and mysterious of all the works of God. It's humbling to admit it, but it is undeniably true that that which most perplexes us is the very species of our own being.

[14 : 51] And this incredible complexity was all resident in the first of the human species God ever made, the man Adam. Was there, in fact, such a being as the historical Adam, the first man, as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2?

Well, of course. Jesus Christ said so. Have you not read, said Jesus in Matthew 19, that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?

Additionally, phrases such as Seth was the son of Adam, who was the son of God, and the first man, death reigned from Adam to Moses. 1 Corinthians 15, as in Adam, all die, and the first man, Adam, was made a living soul.

And following in 1 Timothy, Paul answers us, Adam was first formed, then Eve. Only those denying the inspiration and reliability of the scriptures call the historicity of Adam and Eve into question.

Taking the Genesis text at face value, Adam was the literal, biological, first human being made and created by God. The Hebrew word yatsar is used.

[16 : 04] It means God made man, yatsar, formed or shaped man from the dust of the ground. It's a word used of a potter who molds and shapes the clay.

Yatsar, translated by the English word made, suggests previously existing materials were utilized by God. And the text confirms Adam's being made of the dust of the ground as opposed to bara, which connotes the idea of something having been created or brought into being from nothing, no pre-existing materials.

So Adam is said to have been created and made. Which was it? Both. In his physicality, Adam was made, molded into a human body from pre-existing earth.

But Adam's higher order, his spirit, which was non-physical, was produced out of nothing. Adam was both material in his body and immaterial in his spirit.

When Adam is said to have been created or made in the image and likeness of God, one can only wonder whether the image may refer to the physical appearance of God, while the likeness referred to the spiritual nature of God.

[17 : 18] But it has already been established that God is spirit. How then can one refer to the physicality of God? Good question. A Christophany may be involved.

The word literally means an appearance of Christ. And how would Christ have appeared before he had a body when he became flesh and was born as the babe of Bethlehem? Remember that Christ being eternal pre-existed before Bethlehem?

In that pre-incarnate position, he appeared several times in the Old Testament, well before he was made flesh in Bethlehem. We have noted that Adam was made by God, and the Hebrew word Yatsar conveys the idea of something made from pre-existing materials.

Adam was so made, according to Genesis 2, and the pre-existing material was the earth itself. But something else about Adam needs to be noted. He was created as well as made.

So what's the difference? His being made utilized pre-existing materials, but his being created did not. An entirely different Hebrew word is used for created, bara.

[18 : 30] This implies that there were no pre-existing materials, but something about Adam was created or brought into existence for him that did not exist previously.

In other words, something about Adam was created out of nothing, ex nihilo. And what was that? It was Adam's spirit, the intangible, non-physical part of his being.

Genesis 2 declares that God formed or made Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. The breath of life was the very life principle itself.

Prior to this provision, Adam's physical body was merely a fashion body but devoid of animation. God added to his physical making of Adam's body a component that was not physical, yet just as real as the physical.

And we all have this same component that animates our body, our human spirit, not to be confused with God's Holy Spirit. Every human being has a human spirit.

[19 : 33] It's a vital part of what makes us human and alive. Someone who may regard themselves as having no interest in spiritual matters still possesses a human spirit, whether he knows it or not or believes it or not.

One cannot be human or alive and not possess a human spirit. When your body dies, your human spirit does not die with it because it is not physical like your body and is not subject to the things that make the body die.

Your spirit is indestructible, even though the temporary house your body, in which the spirit lives, is destructible. But you are more than your body.

As long as your spirit is in your body, you are alive. James 2 says the body without the spirit is dead. The human spirit survives without the body, but the body cannot survive without the spirit.

One of the last utterances our Lord made as He was dying upon the cross was, Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit. And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

- [20 : 41] Luke 23. The Genesis 2 text makes it clear that Adam was made physically from the pre-existing material of the earth, and then God breathed into Adam His non-physical spirit that animated His body.

The two combined components of body and spirit comprise the human soul. If this is correct, it means that instead of man possessing a soul, we are a soul.

Our soul is made of a physical body and a non-physical spirit. On occasion, these terms appear to be used interchangeably and other times separately.

However, we do remain fearfully and wonderfully made. The Genesis text in chapter 2 is very forthright.

God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. The soul constitutes the totality of our personhood. It appears the soul is part physical in our body and part non-physical in our spirit.

- [21 : 48] Spirit plus body comprises the soul. A distinction between them is made in the Magnificat of Mary in Luke 1. Upon hearing the angel Gabriel tell her she was to be the mother of Israel's long-awaited Messiah and Savior of mankind, the Virgin Mary exclaimed, My soul exalts the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Her usage of these terms in a separated fashion leads us to think of them as being different. Some would say Mary meant the same thing with the terms being synonymous. Yet, in Greek, the words for spirit and soul are decidedly different.

Pneuma and psuche. Many times, the spirit and soul are used quite differently in both testaments. Yet, in all fairness, they do appear to be instances where they seem interchangeable.

We think it preferable to appeal to the clear and different meaning of each word. In doing so, we will see spirit, pneuma in Greek and ruach in Hebrew as referring to the non-physical essence that is an essential component of every human being.

All humans possess a human spirit. The soul, we refer to as the totality of our humanity. The formula, then, would be the physical body plus the non-physical spirit constitutes the soul, the totality of our being.

- [23 : 16] Should the physical body die from any cause, the spirit leaves that body. As James 2 tells us, the body without the spirit is dead. Genesis 2 tells us that, at least in Adam's case, his body was inert, unanimated, until God breathed into his lifeless but newly formed body the breath of life.

Then it was that Adam's body came alive. It almost sounds like Adam was jump-started, doesn't it? What was that scenario precisely? God could have spoken Adam alive, as he did in so many of his creative acts, by simply saying, let there be light, and there was light.

God merely spoke it into existence by the word of his mouth. God can do that, and did that. But this text says God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life.

If this was not literal, why is it so described in such literal terms, especially when surrounded by other things brought into being merely by God's spoken word?

The physical details given with the creation of Adam appear to very deliberately set his creation apart from that of others God created.

- [24 : 31] All this points to a special characteristic imbued in Adam, not present in any others of God's creation. Adam alone was made in the image and likeness of God.

Surely, said the psalmist, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that my soul knoweth right well. Amen. In examining the creation account of Adam in Genesis 2, one is struck by the distinction made between his creation and that of animals.

Of Adam alone, it is said that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. There is no indication that God breathed into the nostrils of an ox or a dog, but he did so for man.

The text says Adam received special attention from the Creator God, not enjoyed by other biological species. In fact, all throughout Scripture, the fact of man being special, superior to all other created beings, is obvious.

Man alone bears the fingerprints of God in a way no other created being does. He alone is said to be created in the image and likeness of God. This dramatically sets him apart from the remainder of creation.

[25 : 51] Additionally, his creation came with a God-given supremacy over all else God had created. He was told to exercise dominion over the earth to dominate the planet in an official headship role delegated to him by God.

Adam's origin was different from all else created, and his rank and purpose were different as well. But back to his origin. When God breathed into Adam's nostrils, how did he do that?

It does not say God put breath into Adam's nostrils, but God breathed into them. Does God have a mouth? Did God perform CPR on Adam?

We've noted that God is spirit, a non-physical being as opposed to materiality. So, what were the mechanics of this once-in-all of creation event?

We've also addressed the issue of anthropomorphism, anthropopathisms regarding God. They are literary tools used throughout Scripture assigning human physical characteristics to God, as well as human emotions to God, when in reality God has neither.

[26 : 58] These literary tools are language of accommodation designed to communicate to mere mortals in a way we can understand. God condescends to us in using our terminology when speaking of himself, because there is no communication or comprehension if he doesn't.

God is spirit, not physical. Christ informs us in John 4. So, how do we account for clear literal inferences attributed to God in his breathing into Adam?

If God is spirit, not having a physical body, how did this occur? One might suggest it was via the Christophany. The what? The Christophany.

It literally means Christ appearing, or the appearance of Christ. In Genesis? How could that be? Jesus Christ doesn't appear in Scripture until the New Testament.

But let's not forget, Christ as the Son of God did not begin in Bethlehem. He always was, with the Father and Spirit, with whom he dwelt in eternity. It was Christ, the Son of Man, who began in Bethlehem, born of Mary.

[28 : 05] Are we saying Christ as the Son of God made entrance upon the earth and related to people long before his physical birth in Bethlehem? Precisely. We shall see.

Upcoming. God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The creation account of Adam's spirit was very much a physical matter, that is, the manner in which his spirit was imparted to him.

The Genesis 2 text says that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul. He was already a body because God had made him one out of the dust of the ground.

But he was an inanimate body until God animated him with the breath of life. It appeared that Adam was all put together, however God did that, and was all ready to go, to begin life.

One thing he lacked was life itself. The body without the spirit is dead. It wouldn't appear correct to call Adam's body dead at this point, but we would at least have to say he was not yet alive.

[29 : 14] Not until God himself breathed that very breath of life into his body and animated him. Was Adam all ready to go, to walk and talk and relate to his creator, lacking only this one critical thing, life, the breath of life itself?

Can you visualize the drama of oxygen coursing throughout this inert body, filling his lungs, flowing into vessels and organs, thus activating them all? Believing God to be spirit does not mean he is not very seriously committed to the physical, because he demonstrates throughout his word that he is.

Could God be making and creating Adam both physically and spiritually, and doing it as the Christophany, one of several pre-incarnate appearances of Christ prior to Bethlehem?

Most scholars regard Adam's being created in the image and likeness of God as a tautology, that is, a literary redundancy that needlessly uses a second word that means the same as the first, equating image and likeness as identical in meaning.

But if Adam was both made and created without those meaning the same thing, because made refers to his physical being, and created refers to his spirit being, might not image also refer to Adam's body, its shape and appearance, while likeness refers to Adam's spirit, which, while being non-physical, connects with the spirit of his creator that is also spirit?

[30 : 48] If Adam's physical image was in appearance as God's, doesn't that mean Adam had a body that looked similar to God's? But God doesn't have a body. He is spirit, remember?

Yes, but there is the Christophany, the pre-incarnate manifestation of deity before Bethlehem. Are we saying that the pre-incarnate Christophany of Jesus physically made, fashioned, shaped Adam's body to appear as his own?

Perhaps. Did God, as a Christophany, use his own body as a pattern for Adam's body? And, this is how Adam was made in God's image, and spiritually, he was also made in God's likeness, that is, in his other dimension?

Adam was also non-physical as God was in his spirit, thus Adam was physically made in God's image, and spiritually, he was made in God's likeness. While we cannot be dogmatic about all this, it is food for thought, is it not?

Made and created image and likeness. Compared to a human being's spirituality, our physicality is almost simple in its being.

[32 : 06] Well, no, that's not really true. Matter of fact, there is nothing classified as simple regarding any aspect of our being. Yet, comparatively speaking, we do comprehend a lot more about our physical being than we do our spiritual.

And the reason should be intuitively obvious. Virtually everything about our physical selves can be dissected, weighed, observed, x-rayed, and analyzed while we're alive, and after we're dead.

The human spirit, however, does not lend itself to understanding via any of those avenues. Then really, how do we even know we have a spiritual, non-material self the Bible calls the human spirit?

That's it right there. The Bible tells us so. And pray tell me, how in the world would the writers of the Bible who lived a minimum of 1900 years ago know that?

If we struggle to know it now, how could they possibly have known? Yet, the Old and New Testaments refer to the presence and activities of the human spirit dwelling in the human body repeatedly.

[33 : 20] They knew because God the Holy Spirit who inspired them to write Scripture as they did, revealed it to them. They never knew because they were smart enough to figure it out.

They knew it on the basis of divine revelation, in the same way it is revealed to us. 1 Corinthians 2, for instance, states, What man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man that dwells in him?

The fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians records the prayer that the Thessalonians would have their spirit and soul and body preserved complete and without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord was said to have yielded up his spirit when he died upon the cross, and we are reminded that God's Holy Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God.

No question about it, we have an intangible, non-physical part of our being called the human spirit, but we still don't really know what that is, what its properties are, or how we humans came by this spirit part of our being.

[34 : 35] We know how our physical self came to be. That was through a physical egg released by our mother and fertilized by a physical sperm produced by our father, and voila!

You and I came to be, and it was all through physical means. Microscopic, perhaps, but still very much physical. But all this only accounts for a part of our personhood, and the more obvious part at that, our physical body.

A physical contribution from both our parents accounts for our body, but how was the non-physical essence of spirit transferred from one generation to another?

Or was it? Exploration of this concept must surely be forthcoming. Utterly fascinating stuff upcoming. The scriptures reveal repeatedly that humans possess an immaterial part of our being called the spirit.

This is the human spirit, not to be confused with the Holy Spirit. But from whence cometh this human spirit? If we all have one, how did we get it? When did we get it? What does it do, and what does it consist of?

[35 : 49] We know the physicality of our bodies was conveyed genetically from the preceding generation of our parents. That's amazing enough, so amazing we are almost compelled to pronounce each new birth a miracle, even though it has happened billions of times.

But the birth of the human spirit, now that's another issue altogether, and one that tends to leave us in a quandary. Here are the possibilities for its origin, at least to the extent we are aware of.

Number one, the preexistent theory. It says that God has created a huge warehouse of human spirits, billions of them in fact, and each time a human being on earth is conceived physically, God then dispatches one of those waiting pre-created human spirits to inhabit that particular human.

So, according to the preexistent theory, these in-waiting human spirits are simply biding their time doing whatever human spirits do until being assigned to a new human being just born.

The direct creation theory holds that God creates each new human spirit at the time of its physical conception or at its actual birth. The position is divided as to when, but the idea is that God creates the non-physical human spirit to accommodate and inhabit the newly conceived baby boy or baby girl at the time of conception or later at the time of the actual birth.

[37 : 15] But to date, no one has been able to establish any of these theories with any kind of satisfying certainty. Again, be reminded that our perplexity is due to the unobservable nature of spirit.

It is unobservable, and observation is critical to doing science. As to biblical authority, speaking on the issue of the origin of the spirit, we have only the model of the original man, Adam.

But he is unique in that he got here under entirely different circumstances than all the rest of us. While we all began in our mother's womb, Adam had his beginning by the direct agency of the Creator, who imparted Adam's spirit via the breath of life breathed into him as recorded in Genesis 2.

How we received our human spirit remains a mystery, but it is no mystery that we each have one. We received it from God, however he imparted it, and it returns to God who gave it at the time of our physical death.

All of these, the Bible makes abundantly clear, and they are revealed in Ecclesiastes 12, Zechariah 12, Job 34, James 2. Of the three likely ways we received our spirit, it appears that the traduction is the most plausible.

[38 : 30] It contends that in the same way we receive physical characteristics from each parent via the genetic root, so too our immaterial spirit was received from both parents.

Our difficulty is, we have no idea how a non-physical entity can be transmitted from one person to another, yet we cannot conclude that such is impossible.

The human spirit, possessed by every human being, is that immaterial part of our being that is as real as our physical body. And make no mistake about it, every human person possesses a human spirit.

It is a principal ingredient necessary to humanity. Even if a person declares himself to be very unspiritual or disinterested in things of the spirit, no matter, he can deny it, but he cannot escape it.

He has a human spirit. So what makes up the spirit? Of what does it consist? How does the human spirit operate? For starters, we can only conclude that since the human spirit is not made of matter, it must then be comprised of that which also is not material.

[39 : 46] And what might that be? What is there about you that is very real, that contributes mightily to making you you, but has nothing to do with the physical?

These immaterial ingredients very much establish your identity, and the relating of your unique personhood to others. There is no formal or accepted list of items said to constitute the human spirit, but there are plausible probabilities.

Let's consider your mind as being the key player in your spiritual being. We know we have a mind because the Bible tells us we do. In fact, the scriptures refer to the human mind hundreds of times, more including references to the mind of God.

And despite the Bible's multiplied references to the mind, cutting-edge neuroscientists today insist we do not have a mind. We only think we have a mind.

Well, then, we would ask those who study and research humans for a living, what do we have? We have a brain, say they, and a physical brain only.

[40 : 53] No mind, just a brain. And the brain, they tell us, is itself capable of generating all necessary non-physical impulses that make up thinking and doing by human beings.

According to these highly credentialed neuroscientists, neurosurgeons, brain analysts, we can kiss the outdated concept of the mind goodbye. This is the more common conclusion among many of these top-flight brain specialists today.

And how did they reach this conclusion? Well, it appears to be derived from their huge involvement, study, and treatment of the physical brain. And they are outstandingly good at it, life-saving with it, and simply amazing with some of the delicate, precise surgeries they perform on the brain.

The brain these experts can see, weigh, measure, and evaluate. It's about three pounds of gray gelatinous-like substance encased in a protective skull.

And it's all physical. So, what's physical about the mind? Absolutely nothing. It's non-physical, spiritual.

[42 : 06] And on this score alone, many discount it or deny the existence of the mind altogether. But we have a problem. The Bible, while mentioning the mind multiple times, never once uses the word brain.

This needs more investigation. The non-physical composition of a human being is surely the most complex and mysterious of one's personhood.

Even though there yet remains much about our physical self we don't understand, our non-physical self is simply mind-boggling. We know so little about us that it ought to evoke a profound humility.

Just what it is that makes us tick truly does defy comprehension, at least in many areas of our being. And logically, we ought to know our own humanity rather thoroughly, ought to have answered virtually all questions about our being.

But we haven't. Is there anything we should know better than our very own composition, physically and non-physically? Yet we don't. And only the most arrogant and truly ignorant would say we do.

[43 : 20] Over the past 50 years, we have conversed with many doctors, very learned and capable physicians, well credentialed, who had been in some delicate situations of neurosurgery.

But they were forced to shake their heads and humbly say things like, we haven't figured that out yet. We don't know why that is. Or that's something we're still looking into.

Or we hope to get a handle on that later. Or some say, our best research hasn't been able to understand that yet. And other like statements. And these are the experts.

And we don't like this. We want the experts to have the answers. And while we are grateful for the answers they do have, many of which they didn't have 20 years ago, still, by their own humble admission, there is yet so much we do not know.

And if there is no area of our physicality where this unknowing is so prevalent, as in our brain, the neurological part of our being, it's almost as if our brains defied discovery.

[44 : 25] Oh, to be sure, much has been learned. Real progress has been made in the neurosciences. But it appears that every new venue that seems to be mastered merely opens a new one that is completely untouched.

As though we are looking at an inexhaustible phenomenon, this human brain. Those who know it best continue to marvel at the incredible complexity of what they yet do not understand.

And here is where we can inject a reminder of the psalmist who stated it so well, 3,000 years ago. Surely I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. It's in Psalm 139. Just think of that. Without the benefit of laboratories, microscopes, stethoscopes, x-rays, 3,000 years ago, the psalmist credited his maker with having fashioned the human body in most extraordinary way.

We can only conclude the psalmist had a profound appreciation for the way his entire being was designed and constructed by the creator God he worshipped. He even exclaimed that his soul, that is, the totality of his very being, grasped that concept in a comprehensive way.

[45 : 38] That my soul knows right well, said he. It might well be said that if there is an understatement anywhere in the Bible, this may qualify. Surely I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

That my soul knows right well. 1 Corinthians 2 asks the rhetorical question, What man knoweth the things of a man except the spirit of a man which is in him?

It appears that the human knowledge, which we call intellect, is bound to or located in this non-physical part of our being called the human spirit. The passage is certainly saying that the human spirit knows things about the man in whom it is.

In addition to the intellect, there are personality and temperament realities coupled with an intricate complex of emotions, all very personal and individualistic.

And what about memory itself? We know certain parts of the brain control specific parts of our body and its functions, and that super complex neurotransmitters send messages throughout the body to locations assigned to those sections, and this is amazing.

[46 : 53] Yet, what is it that activates the brain to recall past events? The mind likely comes into play here, and we all know the fear of memory loss, short-term or long-term.

And what happens between mind and brain when Alzheimer's sets in? Is the mind and brain interchange compromised when the physical brain deteriorates or is damaged?

We remain with more questions than answers, but it does reinforce the psalmist's exclamation, Surely I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and that my soul knows right well.

Are there other components of the human spirit, and what might they be? Surely there are, and surely they must be real, but they too are not physical. They are spiritual, as is the mind itself.

Please understand that when we speak of the human mind as being spiritual, we do not mean it is religious. It is spiritual only in the sense that it is not physical, and spiritual is the only domain or designation remaining once we consider another category other than the physical.

[48 : 00] What else might reside in the human spirit? Mainly because we don't know where else to put it. How about one's moral character, as in personal norms and standards? No one denies these are real, but no one has ever seen them.

We do see one's norms and standards or moral character played out in behavior and demeanor, but that is only the outward display of their inner and immaterial human spirit.

We tend to use body language to reflect what is inward and comes across as demeanor or behavior. The human spirit contains an impressive inventory, does it not?

Its contents so far include the mind, intellect, volition, personality and temperament, emotions, character, norms and standards, conscience, memory, attitude, and disposition, plus one more important component not yet mentioned but critical.

It's heart, but not the blood pump heart in the middle of our chest. It is the biblical heart, which never refers to our physical heart. Can we be dogmatic about all this? No, not at all.

[49 : 07] There is speculation involved, admittedly. But we don't know how else to categorize these items that clearly exist but do not exist empirically or physically. Like the psalmist said, fearfully and wonderfully made, and that my soul knows right well.

Well, I guess. Under present consideration on Christianity clarified is the most important and complex component of your personhood.

It is little understood and underappreciated, yet its importance cannot be overestimated. Why is that? It's because this component is going to go right on living after your physical body dies.

Given this reality, we ought to pay very close attention to this immaterial aspect of our being. Its being immaterial is the very reason many dismiss it as non-existent.

Anyone who does, does so to their own detriment, even their eternal detriment. We know this because it is this very immaterial human spirit we all possess that is the object of spiritual regeneration when one comes to faith and passes from spiritual death to spiritual life.

[50 : 23] When a person is saved by exercising faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior from sin, it is this intangible human spirit that is saved. The physical body is not regenerated and not made new in Christ.

The human spirit is. And upon your physical death, your body is buried, cremated, or disposed of in another way. But that immaterial component of your personhood, that is, your spirit, becomes absent from your body and enters the presence of the Lord, assuming you are a believer in Jesus Christ.

Does this not make the concept of the human spirit exceedingly important? We believe it does. Accordingly, it appears that everything about your personhood that is not physical is spiritual.

What is not one is the other. Nobody is neither, and nobody is exclusively one or exclusively the other. Everybody is both. No human is devoid of a human spirit, whether he wants one or not, or whether he believes he has a spirit or not.

You have no option. If you are a human being, you have a human spirit, and it is a principal component that establishes your humanity. Adam received his spirit when, in Genesis 2, God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, and he became a living soul.

[51 : 46] We do not have that clear a picture as to how we received our spirit, but the Bible leaves no doubt that we each have one. And again, let's be clear that we not confuse our human spirit with God's Holy Spirit, a member of the triune Godhead.

His spirit does, however, bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God, according to Romans 8. With the issue of our spirit and its needs being so vitally important, according to all of Scripture, it is truly tragic that so many indulge their physical body to such an extreme that they utterly ignore their spiritual self, almost as though they have none.

It is of this very danger that Christ spoke when he said in Mark 8, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, yet loses his soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

If soul consists of body and spirit, and we believe it does, Christ is saying that those who would focus on the material alone, exclusive of the spiritual, will in the end lose everything, physically and spiritually.

With a subject matter like the purpose and function of the human spirit, we have no place to go for information apart from the Bible. But as always, it's adequate. Not that the Bible's answers satisfy all our curious questions, but God the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Bible, has seen to it that the record reveals adequate information for our purposes.

[53 : 21] It's part of the sufficiency of Scripture. So, precisely, what is it that our human spirit does? What exactly does this non-material component contribute to our personhood?

For starters, let's appeal to the books of Genesis and James. Genesis 2 makes it quite clear that it was the very breath of God into the nostrils of Adam that enlivened him.

This infusion of non-matter spirit was the animation of Adam. It appears to be the very life principle itself. And no one has ever actually seen this spirit or life principle.

We only see physical bodies that either have it or do not have it. If you don't have it, your body is dead. If you do, you're alive. You may be close to leaving the living and entering death, but as long as you haven't, you are still alive and your human spirit remains in your body.

Your spirit gives you life and sustains your life. This is of first importance for your having a spirit. Secondly, your spirit works in tandem with your physical brain.

[54 : 31] How can we prove this? I'm not sure it can be proved. Call it speculation, but it seems to be a logical necessity. Yet it must be confessed no one has ever seen the spirit cooperating with our brain, simply because the human spirit can't be seen.

While we can't be dogmatic, it appears that the physical brain and the non-physical spirit and mind work in tandem. The brain is dependent upon the spirit. The spirit is dependent upon the brain.

It appears they are a mutual admiration society with an exquisite function of cooperation. While in the body, these use and work with each other. Immaterial information and signals originate from the spirit and are passed to the brain.

The brain interprets these spirit-directed signals and gives orders to the neuromuscular system for their execution. Voila! We walk, we talk, we speak, and do all kinds of wonderful things, because we have a spirit containing a mind and a brain working in tandem to animate us.

Can we verify what was just described? No, we can't. We can't because verification requires visualization. We simply cannot witness the actual carrying out of what was just described.

[55 : 48] Then, how do we know that's how it works? Well, we don't for sure. It can only be said that in taking the totality of Scripture testimony about what the Bible says regarding the human spirit and the human body, this scenario or perhaps some variation of it seems best to fit the overall situation about how we function and respond to neurological and spiritual stimuli.

We will certainly welcome any additional light from other sources far more knowledgeable than ourselves. For now, with limited data, this appears at least possible, if not probable.

Fearfully and wonderfully made? Well, I guess. It has been noted that the presence and activity of the human spirit, which all humans possess, is essential to life itself.

The spirit animates and energizes the physical body. It also works in tandem with the physical brain. Though no one has ever seen such a working, logic compels us to surmise it does, unless we can discover a more plausible scenario.

The great difficulty with spirit and brain cooperation is centered upon our inability to establish this connection, or bridge, between the physical and the non-physical.

[57 : 04] How can a bridge be established connecting materiality, which is the brain, with immateriality, which is the mind or spirit? We simply do not know.

And again, the principal reason being our inability to observe such a connection. But as we've already noted, it is this very immateriality of the human spirit that defies examination.

And this also leads materialistic scientists to deny its existence. Nevertheless, it is a huge mistake to dismiss our human spirit as non-existent, simply because it is not observable, especially in view of the Bible making so much of the spirit that is a critical part of our very personhood.

Again, we are brought to the threshold of the issue of authority. The biblically-minded believer sees the Bible as the authoritative and final answer to the important issues of human existence.

We believe it to have stood the test of its authenticity and reliability through the ages. It is a completed revelation, finished and entire. Science and its achievements can never be regarded in terms of finished or complete.

[58 : 20] Science, to which we admittedly are greatly indebted, is ever a work in progress. Its very lifeblood is in discovery, observation and experimentation.

Science, as any reputable science will be quick to tell us, should never be thought of as a finished or complete thing in any sense. This reality alone should convince scientists that merely because they cannot examine the human spirit does not prove its non-existence.

The very least a self-respecting scientist should conclude is that the jury is still out in regard to presently untestable possibilities. Yet, as regards the Bible, to which we appeal as our sole source of faith and practice, it consistently refers to the presence and activity of the human spirit, without ever giving us details about that mysterious bridge, a bridge that must exist, connecting our physical self and our spiritual self.

Concluding, The spirit is our source of animation. The spirit also works in cooperation with the brain or mind, each having a different but indispensable function, and the human spirit in our personhood is the component of contact between the Creator and the creature.

It is the human spirit that is regenerated by the Spirit of God when faith is exercised in Jesus Christ. We are connected to God in and through our human spirit.

[59 : 59] We have described the immaterial, that is, the non-physical aspect of the human spirit, as that which animates and sustains our physical body. While the spirit is not subject to observation, and no scientific laboratory has ever observed it, The Bible really makes an undeniable case for it, as referenced many times in both the Old and New Testaments.

We already noted it surfacing the first time in Genesis 2, when God imparted the spirit as the breath of life into Adam's just-created, but-not-yet-alive body.

Upon receiving this divine breath of life, Adam was said to have become a living soul. He was now a complete person of humanness. He now has not only a physical body, but also an animating, non-physical spirit, which we are told in the text comprises the human soul.

If we understand this correctly, it is the physical body, which is destructible, plus the non-physical spirit, which is indestructible, that comprises the totality of our personhood called the soul.

We are a soul that possesses a body and a spirit. While soul and spirit are on occasion seemingly used synonymously, we observe a clear biblical distinction between them.

[61 : 20] Mary, the virgin mother of our Lord, upon hearing the angel Gabriel announce that she was to be the mother of Israel's long-awaited Messiah, jubilantly exclaimed, My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

Mary's total personhood is responding to the announcement. She will use her physical body to joyfully and gratefully accommodate the holy child in her womb for nine months, while at the same time responding with her spirit, that is, her emotions and intellect about it all.

Further, and with stunning clarity, a familiar passage in Hebrews 4 tells us, The word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Soul and spirit do not appear synonymous, but require a clear distinction. Perhaps one of the most precise statements about all these components that comprise the totality of human personhood is found in 1 Thessalonians 5.23.

The Apostle Paul nears the end of his letter by stating, And I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[62 : 48] It appears that nothing constituting the totality of our identity is omitted. Spirit may be mentioned first because of its superior importance, and body last because of its lesser importance.

After all, the spirit component of our person is indestructible and permanent. The body part of our person is destructible and temporary, at least as it is in these present earthly bodies.

We see these entities listed separately because they are, spirit, soul, and body, all part of our being, fearfully and wonderfully made. It has already been suggested that the composition of the human spirit includes numerous intangibles.

Intangible, immaterial, non-physical, but very real nonetheless. The list included, but is not limited to, the human volition, intellect, personality, emotions, temperament, creativity, conscience, norms and standards, imagination, memory, and such like.

All very real, and all very invisible, and thus, unobservable. None of these important items that contribute to our humanity have ever been seen, but we exhibit them through the outward expressions of our body, verbally, and through what we call body language.

[64 : 11] Body language is an outward expression of what one is experiencing internally in one's spirit. Scores of examples are given to this effect in the Bible. Daniel tells us in chapter 7 that upon hearing the information he was given, my spirit was distressed within me.

Internally, Daniel was very upset, depressed about the information and its implications. The prophet Zephaniah in chapter 1 speaks of men who are stagnant in spirit.

Don't count on these men for anything. They are inert. Old Testament couch potatoes in their inner being. An example of the opposite of being stagnant in one's spirit is found in Romans 12, where the believers are admonished to be fervent in spirit.

The human spirit is often spoken of as synonymous with one's attitude or disposition. The poetical books of the Old Testament speak frequently. Job speaks of the anguish of his spirit, and the psalmist tells us of a contrite spirit, a right spirit, and a broken spirit in Psalms 34 and 51, respectively.

In Psalms 77, 142, and 143, he speaks of his spirit being overwhelmed within him, and his heart within him being desolate.

[65 : 32] Curiously, in the same Psalms, the writer speaks of his soul as well. Rather than make the soul synonymous with the spirit, as many do, we have suggested that they are related, but different.

The spirit speaks of the immaterial inner being of the human self, while the soul includes both the inner being of the spirit, plus the outer being of the body.

If this is correct, and it appears to be, we are reminded that the equation is as follows. The physical body, plus the non-physical spirit, equal the human soul.

Thus, when the writer speaks of his soul being afflicted, he refers to the totality of his being, internally and externally, material as well with the body, and immaterial with the spirit.

In Psalm 143, he closes with the statement, I lift up my soul unto thee. It appears the psalmist is saying, I lift up the whole of my personhood unto thee.

[66 : 31] It's merely another way of saying, I am fully engaged with God in every aspect of my being. All this is conveyed in the meaning of the soul. So to recap, we do not have a soul, but we are a soul.

And being a soul, we consist of an immaterial spirit, and a material body. The body is destructible, the spirit is indestructible. At death, the body goes to the physical grave, and the spirit returns to God who gave it, in accordance with Ecclesiastes 12.

And how do we know these realities, regarding the human spirit and its existence? Only by divine revelation, that is all sufficient. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in telling the Samaritan woman at the well, in John chapter 4, that God is spirit, clearly established the concept of spirit, or non-materiality.

Other passages, like James 2, inform us that the body without the spirit is dead. And Paul the Apostle, reminds us of our spirit component, by asking, What man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him?

1 Corinthians 2. Add to these compelling passages, that verify the spirit part of our nature, the encounter Christ had with Satan himself. In the account given, of the temptation of our Lord by the devil, as recorded in Matthew 4, Jesus had been tempted to satisfy his physical hunger, by changing the surrounding stones into bread.

[68 : 01] Surely he could do that, couldn't he? Indeed he could have, and it would have been a considerably lesser miracle, and several others he would later be performing. And wasn't his ongoing hunger, hunger that would stretch to 40 days, a perfectly legitimate thing to have satisfied?

Then why didn't he? The answer is very revealing. What Christ said was, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Here our Lord clearly reveals that man, including himself, is not merely a physical being. If he were, then bread would be the only need he has.

And when a man is filled with bread, has a full stomach, that's the end of his needs. But it isn't. Man has a need that mere physical bread cannot satisfy.

And that is because we are more than our body. We are a body plus. And that plus is even more important than our physical body.

[69 : 04] It's our human spirit that is housed in the physical body. The reason it's more important is because that's the part of us that connects with God. It's more important because it's the part of our present being that is indestructible.

It's more important because our spirit actually dictates to our body. Our mind, emotions, will, personality, memory, imagination, creativity, all these intangibles and more are resident within the human spirit.

And when you die, you take all of them with you, leaving your body behind to await a glorious reuniting. The body will then be incorruptible and immortal, which it definitely is not at the present.

Christ's answer emphatically placed the importance of our personhood where it needs to be. Further, not only does man not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And what are those words? They are spirit and content, consisting of whatever truth it is that God is conveying. It reminds us of what Christ also said about his own words in John 6 when he said, It is the spirit that makes alive, the flesh profits nothing.

[70 : 18] The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. As clear a case as could be needed by anyone with an open mind, is established repeatedly throughout the Old and New Testaments.

This is why man cannot be truly satisfied with physical bread alone. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. We'll be into new material in Disc 9 that has to do in a very principled way with the way we are put together and our volition, why it is that God made us as he did rather than make us so we would automatically be obedient, etc.

So we will be discussing the necessity of human volition, which is very critical to understanding why the world is the way it is and how we can account for evil and injustice existing in a world where God is supposed to be almighty and all-powerful.

Only human volition will answer that. We'll look at the divine rationale for creation because God tells us very clearly precisely why he created anything.

And as far as I know, it's really found only in one place in the Bible, and we'll look at that. Human volition and original sin come into play, as well as human intuition versus animal instinct, and we'll note the differences.

[71 : 56] We will discuss why it is that the spiritual is outside of science, how it is regarding the spirit of man and the spirit of animals, because, believe it or not, the Bible talks about animals having a spirit as well as man.

And we are told that when man dies, the spirit goes up. When an animal dies, his spirit goes down. Why is that and the significance of it? God's spirit and man's spirit will look at the first revelation of God's grace, the principle and institution of substitution, the alternative to substitution, the scope of Adam's transgression, and the scope of Adam's reconciliation will answer a lot of questions that many people have.

I hope you'll be able to join us by acquiring the upcoming disc, disc number nine.