

The Trip to the Afterlife

Doug Hamilton

We are made in the likeness and image of God.

Genesis 1:26, Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...”

Notice the call of *God* in the plurality. The word for God in this text is Elohim, which is plural. We have a triune God, being God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They were one God with three components. The Father is the Planner, His Son is the Builder, and the Holy Spirit is the Completer of all in the universe. They always work in concert with each other.

Creation

God planned the creation.

- Jeremiah 10:12 states He “established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.”
- Job 38:4, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding”

Jesus Built in creation.

- John 1:3, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”
- Colossians 1:16, “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

The Holy Spirit finished creation.

- Genesis 1:2, “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”
- Job 26:13, “By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens”

The Word

God planned the words.

- John 14:10, “The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works”
- John 14:24, “the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.”

Jesus spoke the words.

- John 1:14, And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The Holy Spirit completed the words.

- Mark 16:20, “And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”

Salvation

God planned salvation.

- Ephesians 1:4, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”

Jesus built salvation.

- John 14:6, Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

The Holy Spirit completes salvation.

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- Romans 8:11, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

All three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are one. Before time, during time, and after time, they are working together. The Scripture makes a clear connection of the three. They are in concert with each other, functioning as a Triune Being.

- Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”
- 2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

We are also triune in our existence, being body, soul, and spirit. This also is confirmed through the Scriptures. This is captured in the following three verses.

- Matthew 10:28, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
- Hebrews 4:12, For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and fable to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are body, soul, and spirit, equally triune. In this way, we are made in the likeness and image of our triune God. Why is it important to understand this at the beginning of our study? It is because we cannot understand the trip to the afterlife without knowing the components of humankind.

The Three Dimensions of Man

1. The Body

Our body is the part of man for which we are all familiar with. It is what we know of every person, for it was designed for our presence in this realm. Additionally, it is the portion of man which will perish in temporality.

- Psalm 103:15-16, “As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its place acknowledges it no longer.”
- Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die”
- Philippians 3:21 refers to this as the “body of our humble state.”

2. The Soul

Our soul our inner being, encompassing our sexuality, personal preferences, intentions, knowledge and memories. If we desire to have a steak, it is because our “soul desires to eat flesh” (Deut. 12:20). When we long for God, it is our soul which thirsts for Him (Ps 63:1). The knowledge of being fearfully and wonderfully made is captured in the soul (Ps 139:14). When you remember someone who has passed, it is your soul which remembers (Lam 3:20). Our soul is the real version of ourselves, being our “inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).

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Though our body is temporary, our soul is eternal. Long after we pass from this life, the soul will continue into the afterlife. *Corinthians 4:16*, “*though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*”

3. The Spirit

Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that we have a spirit, soul and body, but what is the spirit for which he speaks. The word “spirit” can mean many things such as the following.

- (a) Wind -Hebrews 1:7 (KJV, NKJ)
- (b) Breath -II Thessalonians 2:8 “spirit of his mouth” (KJV)
- (c) A Resurrected Soul -1 Corinthians 15:45
- (d) Personal Sentiment -Matthew 5:3, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”
- (e) Intentions - Philippians 1:27, “standing firm in one spirit”
- (f) Holy Spirit -Acts 2:38 And Peter {said} to them, “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”



None of these fit the context, yet there is one definition which does apply, being the “spirit of life”. The spirit of life is what was God breathed into Adam and made man a living soul. *Genesis 2:7*, *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* The spirit of life is what was driven from those who were drowned in the Great Flood. *Genesis 7:22* “*in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.*”

The “*spirit of life*” is the life force which energizes the body and soul of man. The body cannot live without the spirit of life, neither could the soul. It is the mysterious life force which powers the being, for which science cannot dismiss nor explain.

- Ps 104:29, “Thou dost take away their spirit, they expire, and return to their dust.”
- Job 33:4, “...the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”
- Job 34:14-15, “If He should determine to do so, if He should gather to himself His spirit and His breath, 15 All flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.”

The body cannot live without the spirit of life and neither can the soul. According to the Scriptures, when our physical body dies, the soul dis-associates from the body, taking the spirit of life with it. It is the spirit of life that keeps the soul alive eternally alive, for it was what made man a “living soul”. The “spirit of life” that God has connected to our souls makes it possible to continue to eternal life or eternal damnation.

TO CANAAN'S LAND I'M ON MY WAY #867

To Canaan's land I'm on my way, Where the soul (of man) never dies;
My darkest night will turn today, Where the soul (of man) never dies.
Dear friends, there'll be no sad farewells, There'll be no tear-dimmed eyes,
Where all is peace and joy and love, And the soul of man never dies.