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The Biblical Perspective on the Mind-Body Problem Part 2

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We come now to the question which is the heart of it all - what is the relationship of spirit to body? Remember, I said that I want to talk about spirit more than about mind because that is where the real issue is. And, we'll see why, I hope, as we observe the relationship of spirit to body in normal activities.

In Gen. 2:7, we read about the creation of man. God first shaped man's body. It was a lifeless lump until He breathed into its nostrils, and man became a living nephesh (soul). The spirit that He breathed into man constituted him a living soul. Before that time the body was mindless. Don't miss that point. Mind was not originally part of the body, but when the body was given life, it began to operate rationally. Mind began functioning; this was man in the fullness of what man is. Man was not truly man prior to that time. Mind entered when life entered, and mind leaves when life leaves. When I look at a corpse lying in a casket as I did two nights ago, I was not looking at something that possessed mind, because it had no life in it. It was a lump of tissue that once lived but now had lost that dimension. Remember this as we discuss mind (or spirit): that it is not body that is the foundation or source of mind, but the spirit. That activity began only when spirit entered the body and man became a living soul.

These words each have a special meaning. The word "spirit" means the inanimate, non-material part of man viewed as out of relationship to the body; separated from it. That same non-material part of man viewed in union with the body is called "soul." This same immaterial part of man viewed as the inner you, over against what you and I see and hear - one's outward appearance - is called "heart." The spirit within is called "heart" as over against the body, the lips, the hands, the voice - the outward appearance. That is the way the Bible uses those terms, and it will help to get these straight as you begin to think about them.

The word "mind," then, means a human being functioning in such a way as to remember, think, decide. At the present time, during the duplex period when body and soul are folded together so that to remove one or the other from that union would bring about death in most instances (and I'll tell you why I'm making that exception later on), you cannot know yourself as pure spirit. Neither can you cannot know yourself as pure body. This fact occasions most of the problems that we have in thinking about the mind-body problem.

There is such a close union between body and spirit that we cannot imagine what it will be like to be "unclothed," as Paul called it (II Cor. 5), when our bodies are laid aside temporarily and we become something less than what man was intended to be (but, this time, in the opposite way). Even though the soul is perfected at death, man is incomplete until a glorified body is someday united to it. But, at this present time, we just can't imagine what that separation will be like. We can only talk about it, understand certain facts about it, but we cannot experience it or even imagine what that experience will be like. Therefore, many of the problems we shall consider can be solved only partially. Some questions must be left hanging. I am not able to answer them because I am neither pure spirit nor pure body.

The members of the body, the hoploi as we saw previously (the instruments or tools that God uses to work through us to understand and affect this material world) include the brain. The brain is to be used by the spirit to serve God, by affecting and being affected by the world. The one exception to which I referred is a most interesting one. It is recorded in the twelfth chapter of II Corinthians. Paul here speaks about something that happened to him 14 years before. He describes himself in the third person to avoid boasting. Indeed, the experience was so exceptional that God gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him from such boasting.

He says, "I shall come next to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a person in Christ, who fourteen years ago was snatched away to the third heaven." (Incidentally, the Bible doesn't say anything about a seventh heaven. That has to do with movies.) The first heaven is the atmosphere around the earth, as when Scripture speaks of "The birds of the heavens" (or "sky.") The second way in which the word "heaven" is used is of the place where the universe is - the stars, the moon, the sun, the galaxies. The third heaven is where God is. Paul says that he was snatched up to the third heaven. Then he says, "Whether in his body or outside of his body, I don't know, but God does, and, I know this person, whether in his body or outside of his body, I don't know, God knows, was snatched away to Paradise and heard ineffable words that it is not permissible for a human to speak." This event raises interesting questions. Paul was postulating the possibility of an OBE (out of body experience). He did not say that was how he had experienced these revelations, but he said that was a conceivable way in which it might have happened. He didn't rule it out. He thought one genuine possibility was that, out of the body, he as pure spirit, could, while still living in this world, have had an experience in the third heaven. We'll come back to this later but that's the exception I have mentioned when I've said that a person cannot be alive when you rip the spirit from the body. James 2:26 says that "the body without the spirit is dead", except, in Paul's very unusual circumstance, we see, such a possibility existed. We'll come back to that in a few moments as we look at some possible implications of Paul's having visited the third heaven without a body in spirit alone. For that matter, the other possibility he mentions, visiting with the body, raises enough interesting issues to keep you busy for the next twenty-five years.

Spirit, or mind, now functions (with this exception) only in the duplex relationship of the body and brain. Duplexity exists to the very end: death. Stephen standing there, being stoned and about to die, says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He doesn't say, "... receive me," because he is still in that duplex relationship. Yet, he knows that duplexity is about to end. So, he says, "Receive my spirit," knowing that duplexity will soon become dichotomy. He's going to leave that body, and he's going to be received by the Lord Jesus Christ. But, to the very end he still talks about his spirit in his body, because it has yet to be released. It is interesting how one talks about himself. The language used to describe duplexity is informative, especially as the apostle Paul uses it in the sixth and seventh chapters of Romans, where he writes, "I do what I don't want to do, and I don't do what I want to do." Think about the "I" in that sentence!

In II Corinthians 4:4 we read that man's mind is "blinded" until such time as regeneration occurs. It's blinded by the sin with which each one comes into this world. Man's corrupt nature keeps him from finding God. Reason cannot take you to God, in spite of some people who think, Thomistically, that it can. The mind, itself, is defective. There have been noetic effects of sin upon the capacity to think: that's why we have erasers on pencils. That's why word-processing is so valuable -you don't have to retype everything because of one error. The world's history would have been different had we had computers from the Garden of Eden.

1 Corinthians 2, is a significant passage. Failure to understand 1 Cor. 2 means inability to understand anything at all about the mind-body problem. Without interpreting the passage in depth, notice, Paul teaches that regeneration is absolutely essential for understanding God's truth. First Corinthians 2:14 says that "a natural person does not welcome the teachings of God's Spirit." That means he does not welcome Scriptural teachings. "And, they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know about them, because they must be investigated spiritually."

Anywhere you are there are sounds and sights that you neither hear nor see. But, if you had a television set you could hear those sounds and see those pictures. The reason that you don't see and hear is because you do not have a receiving set. God says that the unregenerate person (one without the Spirit of God) cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, because he doesn't have the capacity - the receiving set- to pick them up. Verse 9 says, "As it is written, the eye has not seen and the ear hasn't heard, and what hasn't been conceived by the human heart is what God has prepared for those who love Him." So, the unregenerate human being does not have that capacity, as verse 14 says, to investigate Spirit-given truths, and doesn't welcome them. God has supplied these things only for those who desire them, whose ears have been unplugged, whose eyes have been opened and whose hearts have been made ready to receive them. In verse 10 Paul writes, "To those who believe in Him God has revealed these things by His Spirit. The Spirit searches into everything, even the deep thoughts of God." The Holy Spirit is the One who knows the deepest thinking that goes on in God. "Who knows," verse 11 asks, "the thoughts of a person except the spirit of the person in him." Notice, it is the spirit in the person. "So, too, no one knows God's thoughts except God's Spirit." And, then, he says, "Christians have not received the world's spirit, but the Spirit who is from God so that we may know that which God has freely given to us."

In a sense, Paul is saying, when the Holy Spirit enters a believer's life it is almost like a brain transplant. That's something we can't even fathom or begin to conceive of. We can talk about it with laughter, but the complexities of such a thought far outstrip anything we can ever dream of. But, God thought about it. It's like sawing off the top of your skull, removing your brain and putting God's brain in instead. When the Spirit comes in the Spirit becomes the receiving set for the things of God. And, so, in verse 16 he says, "we have the mind of Christ" because dwelling within us we have the Spirit who knows the mind of God.

All of the foregoing is to say that the relationship of spirit to body is often thought of in the

Scriptures. This question does arise, and the matter does become significant in Scripture; it's not avoided. It's something about which the Bible has a number of things to say from which we may learn.

Now, we have viewed God's description of the body in normal activity. But, what about bodily injury? What about impairments and incapacities of the body - brain tumors, fevers, comas, drugs, alcohol, various things affect the body significantly? The question: is the spirit so tied to the body in this duplex form in which we now live that it loses ability to relate to this world as the body becomes impaired? The answer is, obviously, "yes." Though the spirit has an interest in doing things in this world, both learning from it by gathering data from it through the senses, and acting toward this world through the members of the body, it becomes difficult for the spirit, when the body is impaired, to do what it wants to do. It has a broken tool that it's trying to use and finds that this becomes a hindrance. The spirit is hindered from working properly by this damaged tool, and the mind, therefore, does not always function even in full capacity, because, even internally, when a man thinks within himself, as he carries on a dialogue inside, this too depends on the interaction of spirit and body. Even within the mind then, let alone in the outward gathering of data and affecting of the world, bodily impairment causes a problem.

When the body becomes impaired, the spirit does not function with reference to this world as it was intended to. That failure, of course, results from Adam's sin, not necessarily from the individual's sin. The mind functions poorly when it uses inaccurate or inadequate data. If your senses do not work well, then you gather inadequate data. I'm beginning to learn more and more about that. I have a bit of a hearing problem, and people always mumble, it seems. So, through the years they mumble more and more. It's amazing how they've gotten worse and worse!

If I'm hearing one word and somebody is saying a different word that sounds like it I could get a very wrong concept of what he is talking about. My spirit has to operate with the data that it receives through my senses. If it receives inadequate data then it's going to act in an inadequate or inaccurate way. The reaction may do harm rather than good. Thus the body does affect the spirit in that way. Senility -physical brain deterioration - really is accurately described as losing ones mind, because the mind loses more and more contact with the world when it recedes into the background as brain cells die. The person is not capable of doing things that he once did and is unable to communicate and relate to other people and his world as he previously could. The mind does not function as it should because the spirit is unable to get out there to gather data.

Yet, of course, we know this is not absolute. Even in deep comas, or under anesthesia, the mind may function in spite of the failure of some bodily organ to function. We've all heard of experiences such as, for example, the nurse who was sued because of a comment she made when she thought a patient was unable to hear because of anesthesia. When a fat woman lay on the table before surgery, she said to another nurse, "What is this, another beached whale?" The woman who was anesthetized heard her and sued her afterwards. How much gets through and how much doesn't is extremely interesting.

Then comes the question of death - and the relationship of spirit to body in death. It's from death that we learn a lot about life. It's from this separation of the two that we learn many of the things that we know. That the two aspects of man can be separated and are separated is very plain from the words of Christ Himself. In Matthew 10:28 He says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body, in Gehenna." When He talks about "both" He's making it clear that there are two items, two aspects of man.

Many today will tell you there is no way you can ever separate, even at death, the body from the soul. They simply do not agree with our Lord Jesus Christ. They keep telling us that the Hebrew concept of man did not allow for the separation of one from another. And, yet, here is Jesus Christ, with all His Hebrew background, making it explicit that there are two separable elements. Reject that kind of teaching; it will only confuse. This view has been prevalent, not only in liberal circles where it began, but in the last twenty years has gained great acceptance among conservatives who think that man is a unified being, period. On this view, at death, nothing remains. Yet, the opposite is precisely what Jesus was talking about - that the body and the soul can be thought of as separate units, and that they can be treated differently at death as separate units. So, He says "both." Christ viewed man as composed of two elements.

Do I need to turn to Philippians 1:23, for further proof? There Paul says that it is "far better to depart and be with Christ" than to remain in this world. And, yet, it was necessary for the Philippians that Paul remain, so that he could be a blessing to them. "Far better" for what? It is certainly not far better for Paul's body for him to depart because the body dies. The body disintegrates. The body rots in the grave. So, he must mean that it is far better for the spirit which continues after death and is with Christ. He talks about that spirit "departing" and being "with Christ" - literally, "setting sail," as though it were to leave the port behind and set sail for a new adventure. In second Corinthians 5:8, Paul describes death as being "absent from the body." Words could not be clearer. To be absent from the body is for the spirit to be "at home with the Lord." What is absent from the body? What is at home with Christ? Certainly not anything material. The spirit is what he refers to. To die, therefore, is "gain," because the spirit leaves this world of sin, sorrow, heartache and sickness and death behind. It is gain for your spirit to be with the Lord.

The fact that the spirit departs at death raises questions. Stephen can say, "Lord, receive my spirit." Jesus could say in similar language: "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit." The fact is that he did go into the unseen world. Peter and Acts 2 quote the Psalm that says, "I will not leave his soul in Hades." Don't get the idea that Hades means the place of punishment; it is simply the word that means the "unseen world." The unseen world is composed both of the place of torment and the place of blessing, Paradise. Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Today, you will be with me in Paradise." That's where His spirit went when He died. Nevertheless, it says in the second chapter of Acts that God did not abandon Christ to the grave (Peter is quoting the passage from the Psalm) but He raised that body on the third day. That's the point that he's making.

Now one of the problems related to this concept is that the storage capacity for memory seems to be in the brain. Storage, as Penfield's experiments seem to indicate, is located in various areas of the brain. Stimulate one area and you smell baked goods that you smelled when you were a kid, just as if you were back in the kitchen with mom. Stimulate another chunk of brain and something now appears on the TV screen of your imagination. When people talk about wracking their brains for something they are trying to remember they express the idea that it is in the brain that memory is stored.

The problem is, then, how does the spirit retain memory after the brain is left behind? That is an interesting question. Does the spirit gain new ways of knowing and remembering? Or, is the brain itself only one way of storing and remembering material? Or, is memory not a capacity that is needed by the spirit in the new world? Does God wipe away all memories of the sinful world from a believer?

But, that doesn't solve the problem because in Luke 16 we have the unbeliever remembering his brothers back on earth. And, yet, are we trying to cull too much from that example? Lots of questions arise. I don't have all the answers to them. Note well, however, that mental capacity entered the body as the spirit came in at creation. And, it seems like the mental capacity that the body possesses leaves when the spirit departs at death. So, in some way, the mental capacity goes with the spirit. I don't understand how it happens, but that is what the Scriptures teach. The spirit is self-conscious (as Philippians above says) when it has departed from the body. As pure spirit, it has been made perfect according to Hebrews 12:23, "... the spirits of justified men made perfect." That, also, is important to understand. The spirit is not perfect in this world and needs to be made perfect at death.

If we were to chart this whole process you could say that at creation a body and a spirit come together. The spirit brings the mental capacity into being, which becomes a nousomatic (mind-body) being. At death, however, when these two separate and the spirit goes to be with God and the body goes into the ground, mental capacity does not go into the ground but goes with the spirit. The spirit which was oriented toward this world to work from it and toward it through the body, now is oriented toward the unseen world to work in and toward that world. The laws of working as a pure spirit, in an unseen world, where there is no need for the senses that we depend on today, may require entirely different ways of knowing, remembering, and deciding, which we don't now know about.

Both the spirit and the mind need to be changed in conversion. In Ezekiel 36:26 we read that the Holy Spirit gives a new heart. This heart is this inner you, thinking, willing, remembering. It's the place from which the issues of life flow like streams. That heart, at birth, is a heart of stone, according to Ezekiel, dead as far as the things of God are concerned. It is lifeless, cold, unreceptive to the things of God. At regeneration the heart (or spirit) is transformed. It is, says Ezekiel, like ripping out the heart of stone and replacing it with a heart of flesh, that is, a heart that's alive, warm, receptive, malleable, rather than hard, firm, and unmoved. At regeneration God changes the spirit so that now it seeks, and is able to do those things that please God. He enables the spirit to so orient and utilize the body that its members are yielded to righteousness leading to further righteousness, rather than yielded to sin leading to unrighteousness. The body, then, is freed from the tyranny of sin and it is day by day being renewed in its patterns of life. It's being rehabilitated just as the spirit within. The Holy Spirit, working through the spirit within, begins to transform one's way of life. These things are all taught in a number of places in Scripture that I haven't time to go into here. But, if you want to read further about them, I have considered the question in depth in my book, *The War Within*.

In I Peter 1:18 there is a very interesting passage, I want to translate quite closely to the original: "Knowing that you were not set free from the useless behavior patterns that were passed down from your forefathers by the payment of a corruptible ransom like silver or gold, but with Christ's valuable blood." Christ's blood has set us free from useless behavior patterns that have been passed down through the generations. We are bound no longer by what posterity has said and done and the models they have provided. One tires of hearing people say that you can't love others unless somebody loves you first. They say that you have a wrong view of God unless your father was the right kind of a father and that models that came out of childhood are so determinative of what we are or what we will become that we are stuck with them for the rest of our lives. That strange dogma is taught even by Christians, though it comes straight out of pagan views of Abraham Maslow. Peter, in contrast, teaches that change is possible. One may break from the influence of the third, fourth, fifth -or hundredth - generation. I don't care how many generations have promulgated a way of life, through Christ a person can break out of that, fully. He is not bound by

what his ancestry has done. He is not stuck!

Moreover, it's time to get rid of that Freudianism, which seems to permeate everybody's thinking, and return to the Bible. If the Bible teaches that Christianity does anything it teaches us that it frees us to serve God - no matter what has happened in the past. It's so tiresome to hear people saying, "I was abused as a child. I've been abused as a teenager." Well, I don't want to minimize the tragedy of true abuse or the sin that was behind it. But, then, psychologists teach people to build a lifestyle around the abuse: "I am an abused person." Not "I'm a farmer, a mother, a child," or anything else. I'm an "abused person." A whole present lifestyle is built around the past.

Do you believe that in Thessalonica and Corinth - where a thousand prostitutes from the temple legally plied their trade on the streets - that in pagan cities of the Greek and Roman world where infanticide was the rule (if the father didn't like the child he just exposed it), do you believe with the kind of background that paganism provided that there was no abuse? Do you believe that nothing wrong was ever done to children, that they all grew up under wonderful, favorable, optimal conditions? Of course not! If anything, things were worse than they are in this country today (as bad as it is here). But, do you ever read - even once - that the apostles Paul or Peter or John or James said, "Oh, I know you were abused. I know that you have this terrible background. I know all these things have happened to you. You come out of a culture where you've been trained for generations in this way. I don't expect much change from you. I certainly understand and I realize how hard it is to make change. I'm not expecting much, or, at least, not much for a long while, until we love you lots so you can learn to love others." Not once do you read that kind of nonsense. What you read is, "You turned from idols to serve the living and the true God." Get with it! That's what you read in your New Testament. You have all the resources in the Word of God and the Spirit of God dwelling within you to do everything that God ever asked you to do. Now, use them! Stop wallowing in the past. The more tragic it may be, the less reason to wallow in it. Romans 5:20 is still in my Bible!

So, then, at conversion, the human being is freed to serve God. That body, which had been held captive, and whose members had become slaves of sin, are now freed to become the slaves of Jesus Christ. Rehabilitation enables the spirit to function properly toward the world. As one is rehabilitated, sanctified more and more, learning to live according to the biblical alternatives and the ways of God, he becomes more efficient in the use of this body not only to evaluate things properly and to store the right kinds of memories - that he can call upon in making decisions in days to come -but also in making decisions right now to do the things that ought to be done. But, the effects of sin on the body - a body that was injured before conversion - if they can be repaired by a physician will more fully allow for rehabilitation and sanctification. Seize that fact brothers! Your job is not merely repairing bodies; it is enabling the spirit to work with and through a body so that God's will can be done, so that the things of God can be accomplished by that body. You, therefore, are involved in a very spiritual activity. I hope you'll remember that when you're just playing around week after week after week with colds and snotty noses and that kind of thing because, even in this, more than a snotty nose is involved.

Now we come to that time toward which everything has been moving in these lectures - some observations, some questions, some answers, and a few conjectures. If my spirit uses my body to gain access to and affect the physical world, through the senses and other bodily members, does physical injury or incapacity (short of death) impair or stop the spirit's learning and functioning? The answer is that it would seem that the body may frustrate the spirit in this as well as in other ways. When the spirit is willing but the flesh (material side) is weak, Paul indicates, problems do arise. Here is a sick person. Here is an old, worn-out body. These people just don't (and are not able to) learn the Word of God well when it is taught to them, or when they study it. Pain may get in the way of study. Dizziness that accompanies atrial fibrillation would certainly do so.

Various kinds of physical problems hinder growth. That means hindering learning as well as functioning in this world. Preachers have to remember this. They can't expect the same results from every person when they teach. But, physicians also have to know that they can cooperate with those who are preaching the Word to help wherever they can. You can't make an old body new, and you can't do a lot of things for a body that is incapable of ever going back to an earlier stage, but, where you can, by healing him, you may enable someone to better learn the Word of God, and live more adequately for Christ. Bodily parts, impaired, worn, dulled, broken are ineffective tools of the spirit. Therefore, medical efforts that enhance bodily function make greater spiritual activity possible.

Medicine, moreover, may serve an evangelistic dimension making it possible for some unbeliever to understand the proclamation of the gospel more clearly. The doctor-patient relationship, as a result, is inevitably religious. It is not neutral. It is inevitably a religious relationship, because if your goal is not merely to heal, comfort, or remove pain, but, first and foremost, to honor God by helping that person to come to faith in Christ. You, as a physician have a religious relationship to every patient.

It is also true that Christians are obligated to seek medical help. It is true that there is no biblical command to go to a doctor, but the conclusion is inevitable. If we want to be fully capable of doing what God wants us to do, we must do everything we can to bring this body up to snuff so that through it we can serve Jesus Christ as well as possible. That means James 5 must be taken seriously. People have wrong ideas about what is taught in James 5. When James says, if you're sick you must call the elders of the church, the first thing that implies is that there is an important

relationship between Christianity and sickness. It is not that you first necessarily call the doctor, but you certainly do call the elders along with the doctor. In those days, especially in the Roman period, when almost everybody did his own doctoring because there were so few physicians around (and many of them were held in very low repute) the elders did three things: the elders prayed over the patient. (Literally, in the Greek it says "prayed over him.") That pictures somebody in a pretty serious condition so that they must bend over him as he lies on the bed.

The second thing is, if he has committed any sin they probe about it and help him to confess it so that, if this is a judgment of God upon him like those people who were judged for their sin and were sick in Corinth, (I Cor. 11) he would be healed.

But, the third thing which the elders did in a day in which everybody did his own doctoring, was to anoint him with oil. People today have made a ceremony out of what was medicine. That passage is not talking about ceremonial anointing at all. The King James did us in again, as it did so many places, by translating two different Greek words by one English word.

There are two words in the Greek that are translated in the King James Version by the English word The word which means a anoint. ceremonial anointing - chreo - is related to Christos or Christ (the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Meshiach, or "messiah,") meaning the "anointed one." This is not the word used in James 5. Kings and priests were anointed to set them apart for their work. But that's chreo, to pour some kind of oil or water, whatever was used in a given case, upon someone to anoint him, set him aside, to that task. That's not the word that's used in James 5. James' "anointing" is not ceremonial. People go around holding little services in which they take flasks of oil and anoint people. This is totally out to lunch as far as James is concerned.

The word he used is ale ipho. Ale ipho is a word used by Hippocrates and all the old Greek physicians. It meant "to rub or smear." It depicts anything but a ceremonial anointing! It was used of rubbing down Greek athletes. Oil and wine, of course, were the two mediums that were used to rub medicinal herbs into a person's body. That's what James is talking about. Greeks even took oil baths. The elders would administer medicine, just as they would pray and they would seek to elicit a confession if there was sin involved in this problem. Sin wasn't always involved, but if it was, confession should accompany prayer and medicine. So, at an early date then medicine had a relationship to the person, and he was obligated to do whatever he could do to bring his body into shape where he could serve Jesus Christ more fully. He was supposed to use medicine, prayer, confess sin - all the possibilities were laid Out in James 5.

Now, for a second question or conjecture on the foregoing relationship of spirit and body. If the disembodied human spirit has a mind, that is, it has the capacity to think, reason, and so on (remember mind is not some little organ or a black box; it's a capacity of a human spirit) then this mind must function differently when in a duplex union with the body than when it is not. But, that is to be expected since, in the disembodied state it relates to the unseen world rather than the material world. God is pure Spirit with mental capacity. Mental capacity, therefore, is not therefore tied to brain. God remembers. In fact, He knows all things from the beginning and all things all the way to the very end. God has total mental capacity, and yet has no physical body. Angels are spirits. They took upon themselves human form now and then and appeared to human beings. But Hebrews says they are spirits sent forth to serve the heirs of salvation. So, here are ministering spirits, angels, who have mental capacity, capability to reason, think, remember, and so on, and yet they don't have bodies, except as they take upon themselves a body to appear in this world to a human being on rare occasions.

When Paul was caught up into the third heaven he did not know whether this happened in the body or out of the body. The implications of that are several: First, evidently, Paul thought that it was possible to hear, or to see things, and understand things, whatever was revealed to him, as a pure spirit when he was having an out of body experience, if indeed that is how it happened. At any rate, he conceived of that as possible. If he didn't conceive of that as possible, he would not have said "whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know." He'd have said, "Well, it had to be in the body because that couldn't happen out of the body." But, as it is, he assumed it could happen out of the body. That is, as a spirit he could have engaged in mental activity that did not require the use of his body. Certainly, Paul thought it possible under extraordinary circumstances for a body to continue to survive without the spirit. Seemingly contrary to James 2:26, which must have been the general rule, Paul contemplated an extraordinary circumstance. Here was a body still surviving on earth while the spirit had left it. Then, the spirit returned and the body's soul continued in duplexity. Now, was Paul's body dead - that's the only other possibility -in some sense during that period, or, was there some kind of a coma, some kind of a circumstance, where the spirit left and the body became mindless? Did the spirit enter heaven for a time while out of that body, and yet that body survived?

If so, some very interesting things are possible. Can it be that a body sustained on life supporting systems, may be kept alive as a corpse full of tissue that's alive (like tissue can be kept alive in a petri dish) while the spirit has already left and gone to be with God. Is that possible? Was that little baby in that condition this past week when her doctor, after six codes, still was trying to keep the baby alive, and I was gritting my teeth more and more and more. He was giving her family false hope. I don't know the answer to that, but I can conceive of that as a possibility that perhaps, in some situations where "heroic" measures are used, we have already had death, that is, the separation of the spirit from the body, and all you're doing is retaining some tissue. Now, I know

there are tremendous implications if that could ever be proven true, implications about harvesting organs, etc. But, I'm just asking the question, and it does pose itself, if you think about this situation.

In Revelation 1:10 and 4:1,2, we read that John was "in the spirit" on the Lord's day. And, as such, he went and saw revelations of various sorts and heard various things. All throughout the book of Revelation it said, "Then I saw ..." "Then I heard ..." "Then I saw ..." "Then I heard ..." It seems to be that John had the same sort of experience as Paul (or at least Paul contemplated). John seems definitely to have had an O.B.E. The spirit alone was hearing and seeing, conducting activity, mental activity. Paul considered that spirit alone might engage in mental activity, even though it was brainless activity, toward the non-material, unseen world. And, the body was probably not dead. In these unusual circumstances that means the spirit can act toward the unseen world now. If Paul went to Paradise in the body, then other problems arise. Was he somehow enabled to see and hear that which a physical being cannot ordinarily see or hear in the invisible world? An interesting question! The question arises in the Old Testament passage, II Kings 6:16, 17, where he says, "Those who are with us are greater than those who are against us" and suddenly all heaven was full of chariots and armies that could not be seen normally were seen in that extraordinary circumstance. So there are many things about this invisible world, and the visible world in which we live, that we don't know much about.

But, the problems with the spirit are the same as those we have with heaven and hell, and with the unseen world in other respects. We have to use language and images from this world to describe something very different. Therefore our descriptions are neither detailed nor final. They only give us some indications of what these things are like. And, often, language can be no better than negative when we talk about the invisible world, i.e., the not-visible world. We don't use a positive word to tell us what invisibility means. When we talk about God being "infinite," we mean He is not finite, but we don't know what we really are talking about beyond that. And, if we talk about heaven being paved with streets of gold, these are the best images we can find for something that is far more wonderful. We talk about hell being like a lake of fire, where the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever. Probably hell is far worse. Yet, that is the best human description we can get of it. We're limited considerably when we talk about these things.

Even in this world some sort of distinction may normally be recognized. For instance, the biblical outer-inner distinction is continually made about people who are here now as though we can recognize that distinction. We read about the hands, the lips, the mouth, the outward appearance over against the "heart." In II Cor. 4:16 Paul thinks that way about himself. He says, "As a result, we don't give up even though our outer person is decaying because on the other hand, our inner person is being renewed daily." Paul is saying, "I'm coming apart at the seams physically. The outer man, the physical being, the body that I have is decaying. It's going to pieces. Yet, this inner person that I am, this non-physical part, is being renewed daily." Now, Paul couldn't have spoken of a physical renewal because it was the body that was physically decaying. Physical strength is precisely what he was losing. So, this renewal must involve strength of purpose, resolve, etc., that came from the Scriptures, as the Spirit of God ministered those things to him.

In I Cor. 2:10,11 Paul says that the Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God, and that He knows them just as a person's spirit knows his own thoughts. Notice, he doesn't say brain, or just that the person knows, but that the spirit knows. He locates knowledge in the spirit. He is using the relationship of man's spirit and body to show the relationship of the Holy Spirit to God. The spirit is identified in that passage with mind. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we receive the mind of Christ. That is to say, we can think as God does, think His thoughts after Him. Remember Isaiah 55:8 that says, "Your ways are not My thoughts, your thoughts are not My thoughts." What does God do? Change His ways and change His thoughts? No. God demands that we change our ways and thoughts so that we begin to think His thoughts and walk His ways after Him. In Hebrews 5:12 we read that God's Word judges the desires and the thoughts of the heart. It gets down to the very innermost part of our being.

Now consider the question of demon control, which I am not going to get into in any depth. Demonic control of men seems to indicate something about the body being used by a spirit. In this case, it is a spirit other than the spirit of the individual. The spirit of the demon is in control of his body, using it to do things - destructive things, evil things. The demon used that body as a means of getting at the world. In this case the control and thinking comes from a person other than one's self. How does the spirit enter? Does the demon control cut off the person's spirit entirely? Partially? Does it get in between, so to speak, the spirit of the individual and the body, interposing itself in some way? Does it take the human spirit captive and use it in some way to control the body? We don't know. But, in some way it stands in the position of that human spirit. Possessed persons are used, just as our bodies are "possessed" by our spirits to be used for God's honor.

When one is "absent from the body," at rest, and "present with the Lord," selfhood or "I-ness" passes exclusively to the spirit. We don't read that I am in the grave and I am in a place where I am with the Lord. There is no split in the personality. I am with the Lord. Selfhood goes along with the spirit and the body is no longer the self. It is no longer "I." People may become preoccupied with a body but the body is no longer that person. That person has gone, set sail, left the harbor behind. It's possible to amputate large sections of the body and/or replace large portions by transplants or prostheses. Yet, the individual remains the same person.

I suppose it's theoretically possible over the years to come, to replace almost every part of one's body, so that, a person is only 10% of whatever he was when he first came on the scene. Now, he is all plastic and tubes, or contains pieces (transplants) from other individuals, or a combination thereof, or whatever, and yet he is still the same person; he has the same social security number, you might say. And, he would be the same "social security number" before God, even if he were not, before men. I won't even try to think about what a brain transplant might mean should that ever be possible; we can't even conceive of it now. But, I would think that, if it were possible, a transplanted brain relating to a spirit in a body into which it was placed could not be another person if the spirit remained, because the spirit/mind continues when the body is buried at death, and that new brain would be buried at death as well. Of course, the spirit would have to deal with a whole new set of stored data, habituations, etc. It is almost unthinkable. But, thinking of it gives you the concept that the continuation of the person, of the selfhood, of the "I-ness," is with the spirit, not fundamentally with the body. Does duplexity make the possibility of such transplants always, forever impossible? I would think, probably, so. Last of all, among these observations, weird thoughts, and so on, consider truth-telling by physicians. Patients have a right to know what the doctor knows about their condition. Under many circumstances to withhold this is pure theft. However, the issue in many cases may not be whether to tell someone, but when. The doctor may have to wait until the spirit has full enough bodily access to the data to understand and make intelligent decisions. When a person is feverish, when a person is only half with-it physically, and his spirit is not operating through that body efficiently, a person may misunderstand a great deal of what you say. Thus, there are times, I would think, when it isn't wise to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth because the person can't receive the whole truth.

All in all, the mind (spirit)/body problem is both perplexing and fascinating. I have only scratched the surface today. Go on thinking and contributing to this issue. After all, only Christians can think properly about the matter because only they begin from a foundation of God's Revelation.

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