

What Christian Israelites Believe ...

3. About the Spirit, Soul, and Body

Christian Israelites believe that we are made up of three separate parts: the spirit, soul, and body:

I pray God your whole *spirit and soul and body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Thessalonians 5:23 (emphasis added).

What is the Body?

The body is the part of us and others that we can touch and see. It is a physical home that the spirit and soul dwell with and which God created from the earth:

‘The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.’
Genesis 2:7.

Both the body and spirit are his and should be used for his glory:

‘For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.’
1 Corinthians 6:20.

What is the Spirit?

A spirit alone does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). Zechariah tells us that when Adam was created, it was God ‘who formeth the spirit of man within him’ (12:1). Jesus explained that it is the ‘spirit that quickeneth’ (John 6:63), that is, which gives life, keeps us alive, or causes our bodies to move. This correlates with what James wrote: ‘the body without the spirit is dead’ (2:26). As such, physical death occurs when the spirit leaves or separates from the body (as seen in *About What Happens After Death and at the Resurrections*).

Christian Israelites believe that a person’s spirit resembles the appearance of their physical body and can be seen and recognised by some, separate to the body, such as when Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus (Matthew 17:3).

The Bible states that God is the ‘God of the spirits of all flesh’ (Numbers 27:16), and the ‘Father of spirits’ (Hebrews 12:9). Jesus explained that God himself is a Spirit, and those that worship him must worship him ‘in spirit and in truth’ (John 4:24). That is, a person’s spirit is their means of connecting to God and hearing from the Holy Spirit:

‘He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.’
1 Corinthians 6:17.

‘I will pray with the spirit.’ 1 Corinthians 14:15.

‘That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the
knowledge of him.’ Ephesians 1:17.

‘But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the
Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,
and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have
said unto you.’ John 14:26.

It is in seeking the Holy Spirit through our spirits that we can gradually become more like God. We begin to demonstrate the ‘fruits of the Spirit’, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith (Galatians 5:22-23), and are able to exercise the spiritual gifts that God gives us (1 Corinthians 12) – skills that do not operate within our natural ability.

The Bible states that a person’s spirit has knowledge of who they are:

‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit
of man which is in him?’ 1 Corinthians 2:11.

As seen in *About the Trinity*, Christ (separate to Jesus) is viewed as a Spirit. The Bible teaches us to have the ‘mind of Christ’ (Philippians 2:5), and also speaks of ‘the mind of the Spirit’ (Romans 8:27). In like manner, Christian Israelites believe we have a mind and thoughts in our spirits that can be ‘renewed’ to be like the Holy Spirit’s mind, and through which we can learn ‘what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God’ (Romans 12:2). As Paul reiterated:

‘Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.’ Ephesians 4:23.

‘For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power,
and of love, and of a sound mind.’ 2 Timothy 1:7.

It is understood that just as the Holy Spirit can bring thoughts to our spirits, so can Satan. We need to exercise self-control and cast down the thoughts that are not of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5) so that we do not become like an un-walled city, vulnerable to attack:

‘He that hath no rule over his own spirit
is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.’
Proverbs 25:28.

We must also ensure that our spirits' thoughts are obedient and in submission to God's will at all time:

'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Psalm 51:17.

What is the Soul?

The Bible states that the soul dwells in the blood:

'For the life¹ of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.'
Leviticus 17:11².

As per *About What Happens After Death and at the Resurrections*, the Bible also explains that it is the soul that goes to the grave with the body until the resurrection, and which will rise again to give an account of its deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10). As such, the soul is where the memory resides, in that it can remember what deeds it has committed (such as the soul of the rich man in the parable of Luke 16:19-31, who also recognised others and who remembered that he had five brethren). It is where our conscience lies, in that souls feel joy and peace for doing good deeds and condemnation and torment for doing bad deeds (Psalm 25:12-13, Psalm 6:3).

The Bible tells us that souls can talk and cry out to God (Revelation 6:9-10), and that they can love him (Luke 10:27). But souls can also be damaged by sin, which is why they are in need of salvation, healing, and redemption (Psalm 41:4, Psalm 23:3, Psalm 34:22, 1 Peter 1:9). In fact, the Bible teaches that the soul can be cast down and disquieted (Psalm 42:11), anguished (Genesis 42:21), bitter (1 Samuel 1:10), lustful (Deuteronomy 12:20), consumed with grief (Psalm 31:9), weary of life and mournful (Job 10:1; 14:22). It also explains that souls are where our worries and troubles are found (Psalm 88:3) and that they can be subject to deceit and violence (Psalm 72:14).

But it is also through the soul that we achieve personal intimacy with God. It can be poured out to him (1 Samuel 1:15), long and faint for him (Psalm 84:2), trust in him (Psalm 57:1), rejoice in him, (Psalm 71:23), praise him (Psalm 103:1), and contain

¹ The Strong's Concordance explains that the Hebrew word used for 'life' here is *nep̄eš*, the same word used for and defined as 'soul', and which is used for 'soul' later in the same verse.

² This is why Christian Israelites don't eat the blood of either clean or unclean animals ('but flesh with the life [*nep̄eš*/soul] thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.' Genesis 9:4) and why James instructed us to abstain from things strangled and from blood (Acts 15:20). As explained further on, this is also because Christian Israelites believe that the evil of mankind – which Satan attracts and uses to tempt our souls to sin – dwells in the blood (which therefore needs to be cleansed (Joel 3:21)).

knowledge about his ways (Psalm 139:14). As such, our souls are emotional and relational, and are the part of us that allows us to connect with others.

The Heart of the Soul

Just as our physical hearts are the central figure of our circulatory systems, so are our non-physical hearts at the centre of our souls (e.g., if the soul was a car, the heart would be its engine). As Jesus explained, it is where we ultimately make decisions that lead us into good or evil:

‘A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.’ Luke 6:45.

The heart is therefore very important in determining who we are and how we act and is the fountain of our emotions (which is why we can feel broken-hearted, disheartened, fainthearted, and sometimes even experience a physical heartache when we are emotionally distressed).

As mentioned, the spirit has a spiritual mind; likewise, the heart has a soulish mind with flesh-based thoughts and intents:

‘For the word of God is quick, and powerful ... and is a discerner of the *thoughts and intents* of the heart.’ Hebrews 4:12 (emphasis added).

The Bible often uses phrases such as ‘he said in his heart’ (e.g., Genesis 17:17) to indicate that a person can have a certain thought and/or motivation in their heart. It was the evilness of people’s ‘thoughts in their hearts’ that led God to destroying the earth with the flood (Genesis 6:5).

Our hearts’ thoughts can war against our spiritual thoughts and cause us to be double minded:

‘But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.’ Romans 7:23.

‘For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.’ Romans 8:5-6.

‘A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.’ James 1:8.

The Bible states that the heart is where our motives, secrets, and desires are found (Psalm 37:4, 44:21). It is where God can place wisdom (1 Kings 10:24), and from where we trust him (Proverbs 3:5). Solomon instructed, ‘keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life’ (Proverbs 4:23), again meaning that everything we do depends on the state of the heart.

The heart is where we reason (Mark 2:6) and where we are convicted of our sins (Acts 2:37). God looks at the heart to see what kind of person we are (1 Chronicles 29:17) and is interested in the condition of even our deepest parts:

‘Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.’
Psalm 51:6.

‘Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.’ Psalm 44:21.

David bravely asked God to:

‘Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’ Psalm 139:23-24.

If someone is sinning – sin being the action of breaking one of God’s laws and commandments (i.e., of straying from his will) (1 John 3:4) – it is likely because they are indulging their heart’s ungodly thoughts. Jeremiah wrote that the heart can be ‘revolting and rebellious’ (5:23), and ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked’ (17:9). Jesus taught that ‘out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies’ (Matthew 15:19), while James said that bitter envying and strife are found there (3:14).

Overall, the heart has a tendency to lead us away from God, yet it is also where Christ chooses to dwell when we accept him as our saviour (Ephesians 3:17). In fact, he was sent to ‘heal the brokenhearted’ (Luke 4:18). It is in our hearts that belief resides (Romans 10:9-10), and it is through belief in Jesus Christ that even the vilest of hearts can be redeemed and purified:

‘Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.’ Hebrews 10:22.

‘And God, which knoweth the hearts ... put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.’
Acts 15:8-9.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’
Matthew 5:8.

All things considered, our souls, driven by our hearts, can be understood as our moral character. Through its unique desires, the soul determines what deeds we do and whether or not we will be obedient to God – whether we will choose good or evil, life or death, blessing or cursing (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19). These choices come together to form the greater part of a person’s personality. However, as the spirit also has a mind, Christian Israelites believe that a person’s essence is shared between both spirit and soul and that we are only fully ourselves when they are both together.

The Salvation of the Soul

As mentioned, our souls are subject to and can be damaged by sin. Christian Israelites believe that Adam and Eve’s original sin caused their blood to be defiled with evil, and that this transferred to their descendants, who continue to struggle with sin today (Romans 5:12). Satan and his demons attract the evil within us (usually by way of evil thoughts and by exacerbating our weaknesses, such as lust or gluttony) to tempt our souls³ to commit both ignorant and intentional sins (Numbers 15:28-30, 1 John 3:8). Thankfully, Jesus gives us authority over Satan (Mark 16:17, Luke 9:1), and God promises to heal our souls so that door is no longer open to Satan or his demons (Psalm 41:4). When we seek to honour God by following the law and gospel (as per *About the Purpose of the Church*), God also promises to cleanse our blood of all evil so there is nothing left for Satan to attract (Joel 3:21). The Bible states that we all have a responsibility to avoid sin by writing God’s words, commandments, and instructions in our souls (Deuteronomy 11:18), so that we operate in God’s will and grace at all times and can be given new hearts (Ezekiel 36:26). This can only be achieved through the help of the Holy Spirit:

‘And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.’ Galatians 5:24-25.

‘For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.’
Romans 8:13.

However, as we all often fail to follow God’s Word, our souls are in continual need of redemption and healing. In the Old Testament, the consequence of sin was usually literal death (see Genesis 9:6, Exodus 21:12, 17, and Leviticus 24:16 as examples). This is because:

‘The wages of sin is death.’ Romans 6:23.

³ The soul also being in the blood.

As Adam and Eve’s story demonstrates, sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2) because he is holy and cannot be in the presence of unholiness. However, because he loved the Israelites, God made a way for their souls to be cleansed and saved. This was through the sacrificial law, wherein clean animals suffered death in place of the sinner and paid the price for the sin the human soul had committed (see Exodus 29:10-14, Leviticus 16:24, 27, and Numbers 28-29 as examples). This allowed that person to be saved from their sins and to live, the sin of their soul having been transferred to another.

Later, Jesus offered his perfect soul as a propitiation (atonement) for ours (Isaiah 53:10), shedding his pure blood and pouring out his soul on the cross, paying the price for all the sins our souls have and will commit, and becoming the ultimate sacrifice in our place⁴. This made way for all souls to receive salvation (1 Peter 1:8-9), to return to God’s holy presence, and to receive eternal life:

‘And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.’ Hebrews 9:22.

‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.’ Romans 3:25.

Through Jesus’ sacrifice, we also have access to forgiveness whenever needed (1 John 1:9). Because the conscience is connected to the soul, we may still feel guilty or condemned about sins we have committed, but we need only remember:

‘If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.’ 1 John 3:20.

The Relationship Between the Soul and the Body

As the soul dwells in the blood, it is closely connected to the body. Our souls affect our bodies in that the thoughts we dwell on, the emotions we feel, and the moral actions we take, are directly connected to our physical health:

‘Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.’ Proverbs 3:7-8.

The two are also often partnered in what the Bible collectively calls ‘the flesh’. The flesh has lusts (1 John 2:16) that usually start with a soulish thought but that can also be enflamed by a bodily urge, both of which have the potential to lead our flesh into sin. Again, this is why Jesus Christ was needed as our saviour:

⁴ Thereby doing away with the need to sacrifice animals/the sacrificial law (as per *About the Purpose of the Church*).

‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.’ Romans 8:3.

We are instructed to overcome all ungodly lusts of the flesh so that we can do God’s will at all times:

‘Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.’ Romans 6:12-13.

It is when we allow our souls to lead our lives that we often fall into sin, and so we must always aim to be led by our spirits – that part of us that is designed to commune with and hear from God – so that our souls may be kept in submission to God’s will at all times.

Do Spirits of Mankind Sin?

As Christian Israelites believe that sin is committed by the flesh, it is likewise believed that the spirits of mankind do not sin in and of themselves. As mentioned, just as the Holy Spirit can bring thoughts to or affect our spirits, so too can Satan inject evil thoughts into our spiritual minds as he did Eve (2 Corinthians 11:3), but these thoughts themselves are not sin unless they enter our hearts, and we act on them with the soul and body. These thoughts are different to the soulish thoughts that spring from our hearts, which indicate the state of our hearts and which indeed may be evil. As Paul wrote:

‘For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.’ Romans 8:6.

As such, it is understood that it is the soul, using the body, that is ultimately responsible for sin, rather than the spirit. However, it is also understood that spirits can be disobedient, that is, that they can operate in opposition to God’s will, as they did in the times of Noah:

‘By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.’ 1 Peter 3:19-20.

When Satan injects evil thoughts into our spiritual minds, we must bring them back into obedience to God, so that we don’t act on those thoughts with our souls and bodies, and thereby sin:

‘Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and *bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*’
2 Corinthians 10:5 (emphasis added).

The Relationship Between the Soul and the Spirit

Solomon wrote:

‘A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.’ Proverbs 17:22.

‘The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?’ Proverbs 18:14.

‘A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.’ Proverbs 15:13.

This indicates that there is a connection between the soul and spirit, in that spirits can become broken or wounded through sorrow of heart. A broken spirit becomes more vulnerable to demonic influences and temptations to be disobedient to God. It can also affect a person’s overall mood and ability to enjoy and express the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), including joy and hope. Thankfully, the spirit can be restored, strengthened, and healed through the Holy Spirit, particularly once the heart is also healed:

‘Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.’ Romans 15:13.

‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.’ Psalm 51:10.

Our Overall Wellbeing

Because the spirit, soul, and body are so intricately connected, to take care of ourselves and address any issue we may face – particularly persistent ones – we must ensure we are addressing it in all three realms.

Often problems are persistent because we have only addressed one or two areas. For example, a person with prolonged depression may have seen a doctor for medication to support hormone balance, and a counsellor for their emotional healing, but if this has not brought freedom, they may also be under a ‘spirit of heaviness’ (Isaiah 61:3) and need spiritual support, perhaps with the help of someone strong in the faith. Or a person may have sought such spiritual deliverance and attended their doctor for physical healing, but not addressed the root emotional problem that allowed the problem to surface in the first place, such as a childhood trauma.

Seeking God's direction first at all times, we must always actively see to and care for all three parts of us so that we can be made whole and 'preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thessalonians 5:23). As the Bible reminds us:

'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' Psalm 139:14.

'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Ephesians 2:10.

How Do We love God With All Our Heart, Soul, and Mind?

'Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.' Matthew 22:37-38.

Jesus is here imploring us to love God with every element of our beings.

To love him with our hearts is to love him with our emotions, affection, and trust, and to keep our hearts' thoughts in line with his:

'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord.' Psalm 19:14.

'Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.' Colossians 3:2.

To love him with our souls is to be obedient – to follow his commandments, or to avoid separating ourselves from him by making our souls unholy through sin:

'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' 1 John 5:3.

'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him ... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' John 14:21, 23.

To love God with our minds is to keep our minds on him and our thoughts in line with his Word:

'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.' Philippians 4:8.

‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.’ Isaiah 26:3.

By loving him in all three ways, we fulfill Jesus’ greatest commandment.

Do Animals Have Bodies, Spirits, and Souls?

Solomon wrote that there is little difference between the physical body of a human and that of a beast or animal:

‘I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?’ Ecclesiastes 3:18-21.

This passage indicates that all beasts have a spirit, too. They are therefore ‘powered’ in the same we are, i.e., with a spirit, and die when the spirit separates from the body. Genesis 1:24-28 indicates that animals – including their spirits – are not made in the image of God. That is a privilege that belongs to mankind only and is one of the reasons mankind reigns over the beasts (vs 26).

It is also understood that animals have a soul, too. Most people would agree that animals demonstrate emotions (such as fear and affection), personality, an ability to build trust and relate to others, and an ability to plan and make decisions based on their desires. As previously mentioned, the sacrificial law included the shedding of clean animals’ blood, or the giving of their life and soul in place of the Israelites’, so the peoples’ souls could be saved. Job 12:10 says that in God’s hand ‘is the soul of every living thing’, which suggests that every living thing has a soul. All of this supports the idea that animals have a soul, as does the fact that God instructed mankind not to eat of the blood of animals because the life of the flesh (the soul) dwells there (Genesis 9:4). However, it is understood that animals’ souls are different to mankind’s in that they are not subject to or damaged by sin (they not being under any laws), are not held accountable for their actions, and are not in need of redemption in the same way that human souls are. Like their spirit, it is understood that their souls are also not made in the image of God, and that they are not redeemed by Jesus’ sacrifice, nor receive eternal life.

Do God and Jesus Have a Spirit, Soul, and Body?

As explained earlier and in *About the Trinity*, the Bible states clearly that ‘God is a Spirit’ (John 4:24). As a spirit, God certainly has a mind (Romans 8:27), and David wrote that God’s thoughts are very deep (Psalm 92:5). Throughout the Bible, God is shown to make decisions and formulate plans, including plans for us (Jeremiah 29:11). As God told Isaiah:

‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ Isaiah 55:8-9.

When considered as a part of the Trinity, the Godhead has a physical body through Jesus being born on earth:

‘I and my father are one.’ John 10:30.

‘And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’
John 1:14.

‘[Jesus] took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.’ Philippians 2:7.

As for a soul, there are several verses where God is described, often by himself, as in possession of one:

‘And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and *his soul* was grieved for the misery of Israel.’ Judges 10:16 (emphasis added).

‘And I [God] will set my tabernacle among you: and *my soul* shall not abhor you.’ Leviticus 26:11 (emphasis added).

‘Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom *my soul* delighteth.’ Isaiah 42:1 (emphasis added).

The Bible indicates that God expresses a range of emotions. For example, he loves (Jeremiah 31:3), has compassion (Psalm 103:13), and gets angry (Ezekiel 5:13). Genesis 6:6 records that he experienced grief in ‘his heart’. He is also recorded as saying that David was ‘a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will’ (Acts 13:22), indicating that he has both a heart and a will.

Again, considering the Trinity as a whole, Jesus, sharing in God’s nature in human form, had a soul, and felt things deeply. The night before his crucifixion, he

described his soul as being ‘exceeding sorrowful, even unto death’ (Matthew 26:38). However, unlike mankind, he and his soul are not subject to sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Overall, God and Jesus both demonstrate elements of a heart, mind, and soul, all of which allows them to relate to us, intimately understand us, and to care about what happens to us.