

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

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What Is Your Mindset?

Understanding the Soul and the Spirit

***For the mind set on the flesh is death;
But the mind set on the Spirit is life and shalom.
Romiyah [Romans] 8:6***

When it comes to having a mindset, life and death are the only two choices available. Which one have we chosen?

Life or death: Which one is our mind set on? It is easy to say, "My mind is set on the Spirit;" but is it really? Considering the eternal consequences, it would be best to be honest with ourselves, so that if our mind is not actually set on the spirit we can make the appropriate choices to make this a reality.

This article will hopefully help us identify whether our mindset is on the flesh or in the Spirit.

Always Remember to Pray

As we go through this study please keep an open mind and pray that YHWH will teach us from His Word, in order that we will have life and shalom. That is our deepest desire, to have life, and to have that more abundantly. That is why we are here.

This article may touch on some things that are not commonly taught in the Church system today. The purpose of presenting them here, is to give us something more to think (ruminate - meditate) about as we strive to serve Him more completely.

The Flesh

When we read in Scripture that the mind set upon the flesh is death, it is not referring to one's literal physical flesh. Rather, the term flesh is allegorical in its use. This means that this term is used to refer to something else. In this case the term flesh refers to the seeking after selfish gain. The flesh in the context of this passage and many others like it is referring to fulfilling all the desires of the flesh in a way that is outside of Torah. For example, YHWH created man to be married to one woman. This is the way that He created us from the Garden of Eden. However, since that time man has always found ways in which to pervert sex and his sexuality so that it was outside of what YHWH intended it to be. This is only one example of seeking those things after the flesh.

To live one's life according to the flesh simply means that one is doing whatever one wants to do without any real regard for anyone else or the consequences of those actions. To live according to the flesh is the epitome of selfishness, no good can come from this type of life.

This is contrasted with the body of man. The body of man is not either good or evil. It is simply the temporary housing of the individual who occupies the body. Please note this passage with regard to the body of man.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4-5

4 Hear, Israel; YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one;

5 and you shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Notice that we are to love YHWH our Elohim with all our strength. One's strength comes from his physical body. It is the physical body that is being referred to in this passage with the use of the word strength.

Therefore, one's body is to be distinguished from his flesh in that it is not one's body that makes choices, but the individual who occupies the body. The flesh on the other hand is dealing with those choices that are worldly and in opposition to the kingdom of YHWH and all spiritually good things.

As we proceed in this study please keep this in mind as it is one of the foundation stones to proper understanding of how we are admonished to walk in the Spirit, rather than walking according to the flesh. When we begin to understand the soul or nephesh of man, this is important to know as what the soul is focused upon or what the soul is pursuing in this life.

The Soul of Man

B'reshit (Genesis) 2:7

Then YHWH Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life; and man became a living being.

The three distinct yet integral parts of man listed in this passage that are pertinent to our discussion are: “formed man of the dust of the ground” (physical body); “breath of life” (spirit of man); and “man became a living being” (commonly referred to as “soul”), which is the Hebrew word nephesh in the above passage. The Hebrew word “nephesh” (נפש) is translated into the English as “soul,” or “being.” Sometimes it is also translated as “life,” or “creature”.

The word “nephesh” (נפש) literally means “a breathing creature.” The root word נפש – naphash means rest and return to spiritual repose. The word “nephesh” is intimately linked to the physical life of a creature. As will be illustrated from Scripture, this is true of all creatures that draw a breath. In the Hebrew text there is no distinction between the “nephesh” of an animal and the “nephesh” of a man, indicating to us that they are essentially the same thing – the life of the creature.

B'reshit (Genesis) 1:24

Then Elohim said, "Let the Earth bring forth living nephesh (creature[s]) after their kind; cattle and creeping things and beasts of the Earth after their kind;" and it was so.

In this passage, these creatures that Elohim created each had a nephesh. All living creatures that Elohim made each had a nephesh. In other words, both beast and man are living, breathing creatures. They both have a nephesh. Furthermore, Scripture teaches us the following about animals.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 43:20

"The beasts of the field shall honor Me, the jackals and the ostriches; because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen."

As we can see in the above passage as these animals properly exercise their nephesh they are returning to their spiritual repose and rest by giving praise to YHWH for His glorious care of His people.

B'reshit (Genesis) 1:30

"And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has nephesh [life], every green plant for food;" and it was so.

Notice that all things that have a nephesh, the beasts, the birds, and everything that moves, were given the plants to eat as food.

B'reshit 2:7

Then YHWH Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life; and man became a living being (nephesh - soul).

In each of the above passages, the word "nephesh" is translated into English differently. In B'reshit 1:24 it is translated as "creature"; in B'reshit 1:30 it is translated as "life"; and in B'reshit 2:7 it is translated as "being" or "soul". But why the wide assortment of translations into English from the Hebrew word nephesh?

What is a Nephesh?

Since this Hebrew word nephesh has been translated into English with such a variety, then what is a proper understanding of the concept of a soul, or nephesh?

B'reshit 9:4-6

4 "Only, you shall not eat flesh with its nephesh [life], its blood.

5 "And surely I will require the blood of your nephesh [life]; from every beast I will require it! And from man, from every man's brother I will require the nephesh [life] of man.

6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of Elohim He made man."

Note the very close and intimate tie between the blood and the nephesh (soul/life). As the blood is physical, so the nephesh of a living being whether that creature is an animal or man also has a physical aspect to it. If another living creature, be it man or beast, kills a person, then man is to kill that creature, be it man or beast. It is nephesh-for-nephesh: a life for a life.

Note that YHWH does not speak of anything eternal in the text. What YHWH is speaking of in each of the foregoing texts with this word "nephesh", is the physical life of the creature. Please keep this very important aspect in mind as we proceed.

The Soul as Mortal

Scripture tells us the soul or nephesh can be mortal. But it can also be immortal as we will see shortly in this study below. Concerning the nephesh of every living creature, whether it is a bird, beast, or man, all have one thing in common: they can all die.

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:4, 20

4 "Behold, all nepheshot (souls or beings) are Mine.

The nephesh (soul) of the father as well as the nephesh (soul) of the son is Mine.

The nephesh (soul) who sins will die.

20 "The nephesh (person) that sins will die.

The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity.

The righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself."

The person who sins shall die. And that part of the person that will die along according to the passage above is his nephesh, or soul or being; that part of himself that makes him physically alive. It will be the nephesh along with the body that will die. The body and the soul (nephesh) share this common characteristic: if a person sins, then they are both mortal; that is, they, both the body and soul/nephesh, will die or cease to be.

So what we have seen so far is that the soul/nephesh can be mortal and it will die if it sins.

However, this is not the end of the matter to understand that the soul of man must die. Rather, Scripture teaches us that the soul of man can be so united with his spirit that it will live along with his spirit, provided certain things come to pass.

Mishle (Proverbs) 16:17

***The highway of the upright is to depart from evil;
He that keeps his way preserves his nephesh.***

In this proverb we see that those who walk in an upright manner so as to depart from evil, such a person will preserve his nephesh. The English word "keeps" from the passage above is the Hebrew word שׁוֹמֵר – shomer which means to protect or distance from danger (commonly understood and translated as to guard or to keep). In this passage the one who moves away from evil and towards that which is right is the one who protects his nephesh from danger.

Mishle (Proverbs) 19:16

***He that keeps the commandment keeps his nephesh;
He that is careless of his ways shall die.***

Once again we have the contrast between one who guards (shomer) his nephesh with the one who is careless and will die as a result of that carelessness. The contrast is actually between life and death.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:19

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your seed."

To choose life is to choose to keep (shomer) YHWH's commandments. To choose not to keep and do His commandments is to choose death. Part of that life and death is dealing with the nephesh as seen in Mishle 19:16 above. The person who chooses not to keep (shomer) YHWH's

commandments will surely die. This is contrasted with the person who chooses to keep (shomer) His commandments as one who will have life because he has guarded (shomer) his own nephesh through the keeping of His commandments.

Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 12:13

This is the conclusion of the matter when all has been heard; fear Elohim, and keep His commandments; for such is the whole man.

The idea from the above passage seems to be that when a person keeps and guards (shomer) the commandments of YHWH, then that person will remain whole and complete. If a person does not guard and keep the commandments of YHWH, then he will lose his nephesh along with his body.

What Scripture seems to be teaching us is that we have two poles of conduct: good or evil. If a person moves towards doing good, then the nephesh is preserved, i.e., the nephesh will live. However, if a person moves towards doing evil, then the nephesh of a person will be lost, i.e., the nephesh will die. It is as if the nephesh is the swing vote between the desires of the flesh (body) and the will of the Spirit. Whichever way we move the nephesh in is what we will reap.

Matithyah (Matthew) 16:22-28

22 And Kepha took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, "Elohim forbid, Adonenu; this shall never happen to You."

23 But He turned, and said to Kepha, "Get behind Me, Satan; you are a stumbling-block to Me; for you mind not the things of Elohim, but the things of men."

24 Then said Yeshua to His talmidim, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

25 For whosoever would save his nephesh shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his nephesh for My sake shall find it.

26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his nephesh? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his nephesh?

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render to every man according to his deeds.

28 Amein, I say to you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom."

In most English translations where the word nephesh appears above will be the word "life". However, when we examine the Peshitta what we find is in fact the word nephesh. When we reinsert this word back into this portion of Scripture it becomes much clearer as to what Yeshua is teaching us when we consider other passages of Scripture as well.

The truth of what Yeshua is teaching us is that in order to gain the world one will end up forfeiting his nephesh in the process. What Yeshua is teaching here is that to gain the world means that one's nephesh will die. And then one cannot and will not have eternal life with Him.

Please note that in verse 28 above that Yeshua states that not everyone who heard His words that day would lose their nephesh to death. That is the context of what He was teaching. Not so much the physical life of the body, but that the life of the nephesh would not be lost.

Yechezqel (Ezekiel) 33:5

“He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him; whereas if he had taken warning, he would have delivered his nephesh.”

YHWH speaking through the prophet Yechezqel tells us that the person who listens and heeds the warning that YHWH gives through His prophets will deliver his nephesh. Now we would certainly understand what it is that YHWH is saying in regard to one’s spirit and his eternal well-being. Nevertheless in this passage YHWH is speaking of more than just one’s eternal well-being as He has included the nephesh as something that a person can deliver. And as we have already seen and which the context of the above passage also includes is delivering one’s nephesh from death. The only true way to deliver one’s nephesh from death as we have seen from previous passages is through the guarding of His commandments.

Tehillim (Psalm) 33:18-20

- 18 Behold, the eye of YHWH is upon them that fear Him,
Upon them that hope in His lovingkindness;***
- 19 To deliver their nephesh from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.***
- 20 Our nephesh has waited for YHWH;
He is our help and our shield.***

Notice that this passage clearly states that YHWH is able to deliver our nephesh from death. YHWH will deliver the nephesh of those who wait upon Him. To wait upon YHWH is to do His will rather than doing one’s own will.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 10:39

But we are not of them that shrink back to destruction; but of them that have faith to the saving of the nephesh.

In this passage we see that we are being admonished to be a part of those who have faith to the saving of the nephesh. The alternative to having such a faith as this is moving backwards towards destruction.

1st Thessalonians 5:23

And the Elohim of shalom Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and nephesh and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of Adonenu Yeshua Mashiach.

Notice also that Shaul admonishes that we be preserved complete and whole to the coming of Yeshua Mashiach. This wholeness includes one’s spirit, nephesh and body. So we see from

many passages of Scripture and we could look at many more, which teach us that the soul of man can either have life or it can suffer destruction. The choice is up to the individual. So, the question for each one of us is: are we living our life to preserve our nephesh, or are we living our life in such a way that it leads to destruction of our nephesh?

Soul and Spirit are Different Things

We have always been taught that soul and spirit are the same thing. Aren't the words "soul" and the "spirit" different words for the same thing? No, the soul and the spirit are not the same thing! As we have already seen the soul/nephesh of man can die, it is not necessarily eternal. As we proceed we will discover that the spirit of man is eternal, it will not die.

In understanding where a person's mindset is, it is paramount to have a proper understanding of the difference between the soul and the spirit. If one's mindset is to pursue his fleshly desires, then his mindset is upon death, which will cause the soul/nephesh to die. However, if one's mindset is upon the Spirit, then his mindset is upon life and this will cause the nephesh to live.

The nephesh is the bridge between the body of a man and his spirit. It is the spirit of a man which has a connection to YHWH our Elohim. It is the nephesh which is to bring that spiritual connection between the spirit of man and his Creator. This means that the nephesh has both a spiritual aspect as well as a physical aspect. We have already examined the physical aspect of the nephesh in that it can die. The spiritual characteristic of the nephesh is that it does not have to die, i.e., it can live and be joined with the spirit. Now we need to examine this spiritual aspect of the nephesh as well to show that the nephesh has both physical and spiritual characteristics.

Tehillim (Psalm) 146:1

Praise YHWH.

My nephesh praises YHWH.

Notice that the nephesh of man can and should praise YHWH. This is surely a spiritual exercise! Notice also in the following passage what YHWH can do for the nephesh.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 20:13

Sing to YHWH, praise YHWH; for He has delivered the nephesh of the needy from the hand of evil-doers.

YHWH is capable of delivering the nephesh of man from those who would do him harm. This is not the same type of deliverance that YHWH can do for the spirit of man. The nephesh can be delivered in the physical sense as well as the spiritual sense. If YHWH delivers one's nephesh so that we have life, then the nephesh is joined to the spirit so that it will live and not die.

We have already illustrated that the soul has mortality if it sins and life if it pursues righteousness. We will now examine Scriptures showing that the spirit is immortal.

The Spirit of Man

While soul and spirit have similarities, there are also some very marked differences.

Ivrim [Hebrews] 4:12

For the word of YHWH is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

This passage tells us that there is a division of the soul and the spirit. The soul and the spirit of man can and will be separated by the Word of YHWH.

Since we have already demonstrated that the soul can die, we see that the thoughts and intentions of the heart are correlated to the spirit and not the soul or nephesh. It is the nephesh which takes those thoughts and intentions of the spirit or heart of man and causes them to be manifested in and through the body of man.

YHWH will judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart, which correlate to a person's immortal spirit.

We can see this from King Solomon's writing as well.

Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] 12:5-7

5 Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective.

For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street,

6 before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed;

7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit (ruach) will return to Elohim who gave it.

Notice that the body of man will return to dust, but the spirit of man will return to Elohim. As we have already seen above, the nephesh of man can be preserved if that individual will pursue YHWH and His righteousness, that is, His commandments. The choice man must make each day of his life is whether his nephesh is going to pursue the flesh or pursue the Spirit.

Mishle (Proverbs) 19:16

***Whoever is keeping the command is keeping his nephesh,
Whoever is despising His ways dies.***

One of the major things that we need to accomplish in this life is to join one's nephesh with his spirit. Doing so will give one eternal life. The only way to make this joining sure and complete is through Mashiach Yeshua as He fills us with His Spirit to enable us to hear and obey His Voice that we may keep and guard His commandments.

Heart and Spirit

Tehillim [Psalm] 51:10-13

- 10** *Create in me a clean heart, Elohim,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- 11** *Do not cast me away from Your Presence,
and do not take Your Set-apart Spirit from me.*
- 12** *Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
and sustain me with a willing spirit.*
- 13** *I will teach transgressors Your ways,
and sinners will turn back to You.*

Melek (King) David wrote this after his sin with Bat Sheva (Bathsheba). Notice that he is pleading with YHWH to cleanse his heart, and restore his ruach (spirit).

It is the heart or the spirit that is immortal. The nephesh of man needs to be joined with his spirit in order to preserve the nephesh and give it life.

Similarities/Differences between the Soul and the Spirit of Man

Each person has within his being, a mind that gives him the capacity to think and to reason. Along with that capacity, there is also the capacity to feel emotions. Then, beyond that, there is the volition (or the free will of man), which gives him the ability to choose what he has desired.

Both the nephesh and the spirit share these characteristics. However, there is a very important distinction between the way the soul and the spirit deal with these characteristics.

The characteristics of the spirit (the mind, the emotions and the will), all deal with the rightness or wrongness of any given situation. Morals and ethics are involved.

In contrast, the characteristics of the soul (the mind, the emotions and the will), all deal solely with the flesh. They deal intrinsically with those things we think about, feel, and choose that have nothing to do with eternity. It is important to note that our thoughts, feelings, and choices do not necessarily have anything to do with the rightness or wrongness of our spiritual existence. Sometimes our choices can be spiritually neutral; i.e., they are neither right nor wrong.

What do we mean? Let us illustrate.

Nephesh Choices Which are Neither Right or Wrong

When a person gets up in the morning and gets dressed, he looks in his closet and thinks about what he will wear. Then he will choose something. If it may be a special day, there may even be emotions involved in his choice. However, no matter what he chooses to wear, his choice typically does not deal with right or wrong. It is not a matter of sin or righteousness, whether he chooses to wear green, red, purple, black, or blue.

Spiritual Choices Which Deal with Right or Wrong

When a person reads Scripture or something dealing with spiritual matters he will often experience some very strong emotions. Hopefully, he will also analyze what he is reading; and even if he is not fully aware of it, he will usually make a choice either to agree with or to disagree with what he has read. Furthermore, he will then either make a choice to submit to the leading of the Set-apart Spirit, or to harden his heart against its leading.

These things are all matters dealing with rightness and wrongness. It is either righteousness or sin to each individual. These matters are all done in the spirit of man.

The Difference between Spirit and Soul

The difficulty many people have in living a victorious life for YHWH is making this distinction between the spirit and the nephesh.

When this understanding is not present, a person will often confuse the concerns of the nephesh with the concerns of the spirit, thereby making those things that are not sin, to be as sin. One may also make those things that are sin, not to be sin, leading to a life of defeat and frustration; and perhaps ultimately the loss of one's salvation.

If a person wants to live the life of an overcomer, then he must understand the difference between the nephesh and the spirit. He must also be able to recognize right and wrong, so he can choose righteousness over wrongness (sin).

Another prevalent aspect in understanding these differences comes into focus when looking at the doctrine of what is commonly known as "soul sleep". The basis of this doctrine is fairly accurate. The only problem is that it is incomplete; i.e., it uses the terms "soul" and "spirit" interchangeably when Scripture does not do this, but instead makes a sharp distinction

between them. When we do understand the difference between the soul (nephesh) and the spirit, then we can see errors in doctrines like soul sleep much more clearly.

Operating in the Flesh

It is very easy to operate with the power of the nephesh pursuing fleshly desires because that is what we grow up doing. We first learn to think in the soul/nephesh. We first learn to feel in the soul/nephesh. We first learn to make choices in the soul/nephesh. We grow up learning and knowing one's own soul's power before coming to Mashiach Yeshua for salvation. However, if we are to have a mindset focused on eternal life, then we must learn to focus the power of the soul upon doing spiritual work instead of doing fleshly work. We need to develop a mind that sets itself upon spiritual matters. One needs a mindset that is set upon YHWH and His Torah, upon hearing and obeying His Voice.

Romiyah [Romans] 8:6

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.

As we have already shown, the body of man will die and the soul can be linked to the fleshly desires of the body and die along with it. They both can die if the mindset is upon the flesh rather than upon the spirit. The works of the flesh are many and each and every one of them move us away from Mashiach towards death and destruction.

Galatians 5:19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, impurity, sensuality,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, disputes, divisions, factions,

21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of Elohim.

So where is your mindset? Do you operate with the power of the soul pursuing the works of the flesh? That is to say, do you operate with your mind set upon fleshly desires? Do you operate in such a manner as to pursuing the desires of one's flesh? Or, do you operate in the power of His Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.

Please answer this question carefully, and honestly. If you are operating with the majority of the power of the soul doing fleshly works and seeking fleshly desires, then you are not building His kingdom. If the power of your soul is towards worldly pursuits, then your mind is set on the

flesh. If the power of your soul is seeking the things of this world, then you are, for all intents and purposes, dead in your sins (perhaps without even knowing it).

Building with the Power of Fleshly Desire

If one is operating in the power of fleshly desire, then the things of the flesh appeal to him. He may even do "good works"; but because these come from his own imaginations (rather than from the Spirit), these things do not build His Kingdom.

Qorintyah [Corinthians] 3:11-13

11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Yeshua HaMashiach.

12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

If a person is a charismatic person who draws many people to himself through the power of his personality, that person will find it difficult to operate with the power of the nephesh focused upon His Spirit, making it difficult for him to do any true works in building His Kingdom. Why? We all like to get credit, but we are to give all the praise and glory to Yeshua our Mashiach. If one is seeking to get glory, honor and credit in this life and in this world, then their mindset is upon this world and not upon spiritual matters nor upon His kingdom.

Working with one's power focused upon fleshly desires is something that will have to be guarded against at all times; for working in this manner with the power of one's nephesh pursuing fleshly desires will only build with wood, hay and straw: things that will not last.

Miraculous Works in the Soul

So again, where is your mindset? On the flesh? Or on the Spirit? Are you sure?

Ma'aseh [Acts] 8:9-11

9 Now there was a certain man named Shimon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great;

10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of Elohim."

11 And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts.

Make no mistake about it; there is power in the soul. And if that power of the soul is focused upon fleshly desires, then it quite intoxicating and leads one to death and destruction. When the power of the soul is focused upon pursuing worldly gain it is oftentimes augmented by the power of a demonic being. As appealing and as “charismatic” as this kind of power may be, it can never build the Kingdom of YHWH.

In fact, this kind of power leads to death, not life.

Matityah [Matthew] 7:21-23

21 “Not everyone that says to Me, ‘Adoni, Adoni,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, ‘Adoni, Adoni, did we not prophesy by Your name, and by Your name cast out demons, and by Your name do many mighty works?’

23 And then will I say to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you that work iniquity.’”

It would have appeared to all that looked on these, that they would have been kingdom builders. They cast out demons. They did works of miracles. They spoke prophecy. Anyone looking on would have thought that these surely were workers in His kingdom. However, Yeshua says they were not. The difference is that they were working with the power of their soul being focused upon the desires of the flesh. When they should have been working with all their might and being focused upon His Spirit, they were not. It is a death sentence to work with the power of the soul being focused upon fleshly desires. Let us make sure that what we are doing is for His kingdom.

Building with the Power of the Spirit

It is easy, by tickling the ears, to fill up a building and call it a "church". However, it is quite another thing altogether, to listen actively for His Voice, and to walk in obedience to His Spirit. Listening for His Voice and walking in His Spirit is a very difficult process, requiring much effort, energy, focus, and patience. However, this is the only means by which His Kingdom is honestly (actually) built.

Qorintyah Aleph [1 Corinthians] 2:1-3:1

1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of YHWH.

2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Yeshua Mashiach, and Him crucified.

Notice in this verse the distinction made between operating with the power of the soul (man’s wisdom) focused upon fleshly desires and operating in the power of the Spirit.

3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

4 And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

Again, consider carefully the contrast being drawn between the power of the soul focused upon fleshly desires and the power of the Spirit.

5 that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of YHWH.

Notice "the wisdom of men", which is from the soul focused upon fleshly desires, is the opposite of and opposes the "power of YHWH", which is of the Spirit and resides in a truly Spirit-filled person.

The Christian Church today misconstrues the Apostle Shaul's letters as saying, "Just love." However, this is not the extent of his message at all. His message goes far deeper than that. The Apostle Shaul attempts to lovingly discipline us to do the hard work it takes to actually listen for, and walk in, His Spirit.

6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

7 but we speak YHWH's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden, which YHWH predestined before the ages to our glory;

The wisdom of the Spirit is not of this age, which is going to be done away with. The wisdom of this age is all about feeding one's fleshly desires.

The wisdom of the Spirit is not passing away, as it is eternal (as the Spirit is eternal).

The wisdom of the Spirit is for those who are mature.

Here is a clear indication of the importance of building in the power of the Spirit, rather than in the power of the soul.

8 which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Master of glory;

Why did the rulers of this age not understand this wisdom? It was because this wisdom is spiritual, and they had no spiritual life. They operated in the wisdom of their own souls which was focused on their fleshly desires and fulfilling those fleshly desires, which only brought death.

9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and have not entered the heart of man, all that YHWH has prepared for those who love Him."

10 For to us YHWH revealed through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of YHWH.

Again it is time for brutal honesty: Being a disciple takes discipline.

Do you honestly live up to everything that you understand in Scripture? If not, then perhaps a day of reckoning is at hand.

When you read Scripture, does it seem foreign to you, like you just don't connect as well as you would like to? If your understanding of Scripture is not where you would like for it to be, then you need to search your inner being to see if you are truly filled with His Spirit. Where is your mindset?

If you are not filled with His Spirit, then how can you expect to understand those things that are spiritual?

Do you understand? Do you truly understand? This is a hard question I ask, but it is for your benefit to answer it honestly.

11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man, except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so, the thoughts of YHWH no one knows, except the Spirit of YHWH.

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from YHWH, that we might know the things freely given to us by YHWH,

Have you prepared your heart to receive His Spirit?

Have you failed to prepare your heart to receive Him; and thus have only the spirit of the world, which leads inexorably to death?

Or have you undergone the long, difficult struggle to prepare your heart to receive the Spirit of YHWH, which leads to understanding, and to Life?

13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

Is it not His Spirit that is our Teacher in all matters?

In order to grasp what a true teacher of the Word is declaring unto you, you must have His Spirit.

So, have you prepared your heart to be taught by Him, moment by moment, listening for the sound of His Voice? Or do you still lean upon your own human wisdom, in a pathetic human attempt to do His Will?

14 But a natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of YHWH, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

These may be difficult words to hear, but eternal Salvation is not a matter to be taken lightly.

Do you truly understand the things of the Spirit of YHWH? Or are you having trouble understanding the need for the Laws of Niddah (family purity), and for modesty? Or, perhaps some other aspect of His eternal Torah is giving you difficulty. What about the observance of New Moons, and the search for the Aviv? Do you receive these things? Or are they foolishness to you?

15 But he who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned by no man.

16 For who has known the mind of YHWH, that he should instruct Him?

But we have the mind of Mashiach.

Do you truly have the mind of Mashiach? Or, do strong words such as these upset you?

Are there commandments in the Torah of YHWH, which you understand, but rebel against?

Do you still need to turn your life over to Him, in order to understand the things of His Spirit, and not to be upset by strong words of truth?

3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Mashiach.

So, do you truly have the Mind of Mashiach in you? Can you be spoken to as a spiritual man? Or must you be spoken to as a babe in Mashiach?

Whose Power?

The purpose of this article is not to upset you. The purpose of this article is to show you the difference between the spirit and the soul/nephesh and even more specifically to show the importance of having all our efforts and power focused upon Mashiach Yeshua and building His kingdom. This is necessary, so that you might come to know if you are truly operating in the Spirit of YHWH and are thus building His Kingdom.

Qorintyah Aleph [1 Corinthians] 3:10

According to the grace of YHWH which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

Are you a wise master builder, building in the power of the Spirit? Or are you making a feeble attempt to build His Spiritual Kingdom with the mind, emotions, and will of your soul focused upon the desires of the flesh?

Are you willing to develop the discipline that it takes to be a true disciple? Or do you want to continue to play at the worship of the One True Living Elohim, seeing as your eternal reward hangs in the balance?

Submit to His Leading

Can you now tell the difference between operating in His Power, and operating with your own power focused upon the flesh? Will you be honest with yourself, and with YHWH, and submit to the promptings of His Spirit, whenever you feel them? And will you actively seek them as you seek His Face from moment to moment, so as to be a better servant for His Son?

Whether you choose your flesh or choose His Spirit, it is your choice.

May your mind be set on the things of His Kingdom, so that you might have life and shalom; and may YHWH fill you with His Spirit, so that you might have an inheritance in His Kingdom and in the olam haba.

Amein & Amein.

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