

Dividing the Soul and Spirit

The Bible teaches that people are made up of a **body**, a **soul**, and a **spirit**:

1 Thessalonians 5:23: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit[#4151] and soul[#5590] and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It's easy to see that each of us have a body. However, the spirit and soul are more challenging. Those parts of us can't be seen. What makes this more complicated is that the Bible tells us there's a difference between the soul and the spirit:

1 Corinthians 15:45: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul[#5590]; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit[#4151].”

What exactly does that mean? How is a living soul different from a quickening spirit?

It's tempting to think that the words “soul” and “spirit” are interchangeable and are referring to the same thing (perhaps some sort of immaterial, immortal essence), but that doesn't seem to be the case. The book of Hebrews tells us that not only is there a difference between our soul and our spirit, but that the word of God can distinguish between them:

Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul[#5590] and spirit[#4151], and of the joints

and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

What's the difference between the soul and the spirit? Since we have no way to independently identify them ourselves, the only way we can answer this question is by going to the Scriptures (which can divide them) and seeing what they have to say about the matter.

Original Languages

The Old Testament was primarily written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. In the Old Testament the word used for “soul” is Strong's #5315 (nephesh). In the New Testament it's Strong's #5590 (psuche).

Likewise, the word used for “spirit” in the Old Testament is Strong's #7307 (ruwach). In the New Testament it's Strong's #4151 (pneuma).

The Soul

The Bible has a great deal to say about our soul. Since there's so much material to cover, this subject has been divided into sections.

Life

People became living creatures after God breathed the breath of life into them. At that point we were called a “living soul”:

Genesis 2:7: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul[#5315].”

Throughout the Bible people are referred to as “souls”. For example, the people of Makkedah were referred to as “souls”:

Joshua 10:28: “And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls[#5315] that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho.”

The same is true for those who were saved on the day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:41: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls[#5590].”

Likewise, the people who are in Heaven are referred to as “souls”:

Revelation 6:9: “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls[#5590] of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:”

Revelation 20:4: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls[#5590] of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with

Christ a thousand years.”

Throughout the Bible when someone's life was in danger it was often said that their soul was being hunted. For example:

Psalm 22:20: “Deliver my soul[#5315] from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.”

Psalm 40:14: “Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul[#5315] to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.”

Psalm 78:50: “He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul[#5315] from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;”

There are also passages that speak of delivering the soul itself from death:

Psalm 33:19: “To deliver their soul[#5315] from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”

Psalm 22:29: “All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul[#5315].”

Psalm 97:10: “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls[#5315] of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.”

In this case the psalmist seems to be talking about being delivered from death, and not his soul itself dying. The word “soul” in this context seems to be interchangeable with “life”.

Death

The Bible tells us that when people die their soul leaves their body:

Genesis 35:18: “And it came to pass, as her soul[#5315] was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.”

This means soul is a part of us that lives on after death. It doesn't die when our body dies. Instead our body dies when our soul leaves.

There's also this famous verse:

Psalm 16:10: “For thou wilt not leave my soul[#5315] in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

This verse is a Messianic prophecy. It teaches that the Messiah will only be dead for a few days before He's raised back to life:

Acts 2:31: “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul[#5590] was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”

Love

Souls are capable of loving other people:

Genesis 34:3: “And his soul[#5315] clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.”

Song of Solomon 3:3: “The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul[#5315] loveth?”

God commands us to love Him with all of our soul:

Matthew 22:37: “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul[#5590], and with all thy mind.”

Desire

Souls are capable of desiring things:

1 Samuel 20:4: “Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul[#5315] desireth, I will even do it for thee.”

Genesis 19:20: “Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul[#5315] shall live.”

Ecclesiastes 6:2: “A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul[#5315] of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.”

God repeatedly commands us to desire Him with all of our soul:

Deuteronomy 4:29: “But if from thence thou

shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul[#5315].”

Psalm 42:2: “My soul[#5315] thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

Souls don't always desire good things. The souls of the wicked desire evil:

Proverbs 21:10: “The soul[#5315] of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.”

Food

Souls can both greatly desire food, and enjoy it as well:

Genesis 27:4: “And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul[#5315] may bless thee before I die.”

Deuteronomy 12:15: “Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul[#5315] lusteth after, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.”

Deuteronomy 12:20: “When the Lord thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because

thy soul[#5315] longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.”

When a person is hungry it's said that his soul desires food:

Proverbs 6:30: “Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul[#5315] when he is hungry;”

There are also times when it's said that a person's soul wants nothing to do with food:

Psalm 107:18: “Their soul[#5315] abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.”

Knowledge

Souls are capable of learning things. God commands us to keep His commands in our soul:

Deuteronomy 11:18: “Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul[#5315], and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.”

Joy

Souls can be joyful:

Psalm 35:9: “And my soul[#5315] shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his

salvation.”

Humility

Souls can be humbled. One way to do this is through fasting:

Psalm 35:13: “But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul[#5315] with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.”

Psalm 69:10: “When I wept, and chastened my soul[#5315] with fasting, that was to my reproach.”

Hope

Souls are capable of hope:

Psalm 42:5: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul[#5315]? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”

Satisfied

Souls can be satisfied:

Psalm 63:5: “My soul[#5315] shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:”

Psalm 107:9: “For he satisfieth the longing

soul[#5315], and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

Proverbs 13:25: “The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul[#5315]: but the belly of the wicked shall want.”

Blessing

Souls can bless God:

Psalm 104:1: “Bless the Lord, O my soul[#5315]. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.”

Sweet

It's possible for things to be sweet (pleasant) to our soul:

Proverbs 16:24: “Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul[#5315], and health to the bones.”

Souls can be delighted:

Proverbs 29:17: “Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul[#5315].”

Patience

Souls can wait:

Psalm 62:5: “My soul[#5315], wait thou only

upon God; for my expectation is from him.”

Rest

Souls can be given rest:

Matthew 11:29: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls[#5590].”

Damage

Souls can be damaged:

Psalm 106:15: “And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul[#5315].”

Proverbs 6:32: “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul[#5315].”

It's possible for a person to do wrong to their own soul:

Proverbs 8:36: “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul[#5315]: all they that hate me love death.”

Habakkuk 2:10: “Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul[#5315].”

Sin and wickedness wage war against a person's soul:

1 Peter 2:11: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as

strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul[#5590];”

2 Peter 2:8: “(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul[#5590] from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)”

Anguish

Souls can experience anguish:

Genesis 42:21: “And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul[#5315], when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”

They can be vexed:

Judges 16:16: “And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul[#5315] was vexed unto death;”

Psalms 6:3: “My soul[#5315] is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?”

They can be bitter:

1 Samuel 1:10: “And she was in bitterness of soul[#5315], and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.”

They can be greatly sorrowful:

Matthew 26:38: “Then saith he unto them, My soul[#5590] is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”

Healing

Souls can be in need of healing, and can be healed:

Psalm 23:3: “He restoreth my soul[#5315]: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”

Psalm 41:4: “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul[#5315]; for I have sinned against thee.”

Sin

Souls are capable of sin:

Micah 6:7: “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul[#5315]?”

Pride

Souls are capable of pride:

Habakkuk 2:4: “Behold, his soul[#5315] which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

Redemption

Souls can be redeemed:

Psalm 49:8: “(For the redemption of their soul[#5315] is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)”

Psalm 49:15: “But God will redeem my soul[#5315] from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.”

Psalm 71:23: “My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul[#5315], which thou hast redeemed.”

James 1:21: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls[#5590].”

1 Peter 1:9: “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls[#5590].”

Souls can be purified:

1 Peter 1:22: “Seeing ye have purified your souls[#5590] in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”

Souls can be converted:

Psalm 19:7: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul[#5315]: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.”

Souls that aren't redeemed will be lost:

Matthew 16:26: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul[#5590]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Destruction

Souls can actually be destroyed:

Matthew 10:28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul[#5590] and body in hell.”

James 5:20: “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul[#5590] from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Since the wicked experience everlasting torment, this doesn't mean they're annihilated and no longer exist. Instead their body dies and their soul is destroyed, but their anguish lives on (perhaps because their spirit endures, since people are more than just body and soul).

Summary

Here's what the Bible has to say about our soul:

- People are called living souls (or just souls)
- When a person dies, their soul leaves their body
- Our soul can be in Hell
- Our soul is capable of love, desire, joy, and hope
- Our soul can have knowledge
- Our soul can be humbled
- Our soul can be satisfied
- Our soul can bless God
- Our soul can find things pleasant
- Our soul can hope in God
- Our soul can be given rest
- Our soul can be damaged, and one of the things that can damage it is sin
- Our soul can experience anger, vexation, bitterness, and sorrow
- Our soul can be healed
- Our soul can sin, and be proud
- Our soul can be redeemed, purified, and converted
- Our soul can be lost
- Our soul can be destroyed in hell

Next we will take a look at our spirit.

The Spirit

People aren't just a body and a soul. We have a spirit as well:

Job 32:8: “But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”

Psalm 31:5: “Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord

God of truth.”

There are a lot of similarities between what the Bible has to say about our soul and our spirit. However, there are also some differences (which is what we're trying to find).

Spiritual Beings

As a side-note, the Bible frequently refers to beings called “spirits”. These are creatures that exist in non-physical form, such as angels and demons. For example:

Leviticus 19:31: “Regard not them that have familiar spirits[#178], neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.”

1 Samuel 16:14: “But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit[#7307] from the Lord troubled him.”

1 Kings 22:21: “And there came forth a spirit[#7307], and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him.”

Job 4:15: “Then a spirit[#7307] passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:”

Psalm 104:4: “Who maketh his angels spirits[#7307]; his ministers a flaming fire:”

Luke 24:37: “But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit[#4151].”

Since the scope of this study is the spirit component of humanity, these references are being set aside as not relevant. That being said, there are times when these entities are referred to using the same word for spirit (#7307).

There are also times when the Bible refers to the Holy Spirit as a spirit (#7307):

Numbers 11:17: “And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit[#7307] which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.”

2 Kings 2:9: “And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit[#7307] be upon me.”

Isaiah 11:2: “And the spirit[#7307] of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit[#7307] of wisdom and understanding, the spirit[#7307] of counsel and might, the spirit[#7307] of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;”

Since this isn't a study of the Holy Spirit, these references will be excluded. However, that word is the same word for spirit (#7307).

Death

A body that doesn't have a spirit in it is dead:

James 2:26: “For as the body without the spirit[#4151] is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

Like souls, spirits live on after death:

Ecclesiastes 3:20-21: “All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit[#7307] of man that goeth upward, and the spirit[#7307] of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?”

Ecclesiastes 8:8: “There is no man that hath power over the spirit[#7307] to retain the spirit[#7307]; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.”

Ecclesiastes 12:7: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit[#7307] shall return unto God who gave it.”

Acts 7:59: “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit[#4151].”

It's interesting that both people and animals have spirits that live on after death.

When a spirit returns to a body, the person comes back to life:

Luke 8:55: “And her spirit[#4151] came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.”

Anguish

Spirits (like souls) can be in anguish:

Exodus 6:9: “And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit[#7307], and for cruel bondage.”

Job 7:11: “Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit[#7307]; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.”

Spirits can be troubled:

Genesis 41:8: “And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit[#7307] was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.”

Daniel 2:1: “And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled[#7307], and his sleep brake from him.”

They can also be vexed:

Ecclesiastes 1:14: “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit[#7307].”

People can groan in their spirit:

John 11:33: “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit[#4151], and was troubled.”

Wisdom

Unlike souls, there's something called a spirit of wisdom:

Exodus 28:3: “And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit[#7307] of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.”

Jealousy

There's also something called a spirit of jealousy:

Numbers 5:14: “And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit[#7307] of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:”

This is another distinguishing factor from souls.

Willing

There's a consistent theme that spirits (unlike souls) can make people willing to do something:

Exodus 35:21: “And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one

whom his spirit[#7307] made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.”

1 Chronicles 5:26: “And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit[#7307] of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit[#7307] of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.”

2 Chronicles 21:16: “Moreover the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit[#7307] of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians:”

Ezra 1:1: “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit[#7307] of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,”

This verse seems to be related to that same concept:

Numbers 14:24: “But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit[#7307] with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.”

Spirits can also be hardened so that a person is unwilling to do something (which is another difference from souls):

Deuteronomy 2:30: “But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit[#7307], and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.”

Overwhelmed

There are times when a person's spirit was said to be melted or overcome by some enormous, overwhelming event (which is another distinction from the soul):

Joshua 5:1: “And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over; that their heart melted, neither was there spirit[#7307] in them any more, because of the children of Israel.”

Psalm 77:3: “I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit[#7307] was overwhelmed. Selah.”

Psalm 143:4: “Therefore is my spirit[#7307] overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.”

Another example of this is when the Queen of Sheba went to visit Solomon. She was overwhelmed by what she saw:

1 Kings 10:5: “And the meat of his table, and the

sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit[#7307] in her."

Evil

The spirit of a person can also be evil (or hostile):

Judges 9:23: "Then God sent an evil spirit[#7307] between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:"

It can be a source of guile (deception):

Psalm 32:2: "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit[#7307] there is no guile."

It can be perverse (wicked):

Isaiah 19:14: "The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit[#7307] in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit."

Hosea 5:4: "They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit[#7307] of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord."

This is different from demonic "evil spirits", so it doesn't

seem to be referring to some sort of supernatural entity. Spirits can be hostile, which is another difference from souls.

Revived

Spirits can be revived, which is another distinction from souls:

Genesis 45:27: “And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit[#7307] of Jacob their father revived:”

Judges 15:19: “But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit[#7307] came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.”

They can also be renewed:

Psalm 51:10: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit[#7307] within me.”

Sorrow

Spirits (like souls) can be sorrowful:

1 Samuel 1:15: “And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit[#7307]: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul

before the Lord.”

1 Kings 21:5: “But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad[#7307], that thou eatest no bread?”

Contrite

Spirits can be contrite (repentant), which is another difference from souls:

Psalm 34:18: “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit[#7307].”

Broken

Spirits (unlike souls) can be broken:

Proverbs 15:13: “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit[#7307] is broken.”

Proverbs 17:22: “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit[#7307] drieth the bones.”

They can also be wounded:

Proverbs 18:14: “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit[#7307] who can bear?”

Pride

Just like souls, spirits can be proud:

Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

Ecclesiastes 7:8: “Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.”

Patient

Like souls, spirits can be patient:

Ecclesiastes 7:8: “Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.”

Humble

Like souls, spirits can be humble:

Proverbs 16:19: “Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”

Self-Control

There's a recurring theme in the Bible that the spirit is something that needs to be ruled over. That's another difference from souls:

Proverbs 16:32: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit[#7307] than he that taketh a city.”

Proverbs 25:28: “He that hath no rule over his own spirit[#7307] is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”

Malachi 2:16: “For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit[#7307], that ye deal not treacherously.”

Testing

Unlike souls, God puts our spirit to the test:

Proverbs 16:2: “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits[#7307].”

Judgment

There's something called a spirit of judgment:

Isaiah 28:6: “And for a spirit[#7307] of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.”

This is another difference from souls.

Anger

There are times when a person's spirit can rise up against someone else:

Ecclesiastes 10:4: “If the spirit[#7307] of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.”

Grace

There's something called a spirit of grace, which seems to be related to repentance:

Zechariah 12:10: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit[#7307] of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

Worship

The worship of God is something that involves our spirit:

John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit[#4151] and in truth.”

John 3:6: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit[#4151].”

This is a key difference from souls. Worship is an act of the spirit.

Fear

There's something called a spirit of fear:

2 Timothy 1:7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear[#4151]; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

Knowledge

The part of us that knows us best isn't our body or our soul, but our spirit:

1 Corinthians 2:11: “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit[#4151] of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

Summary

Here's what the Bible has to say about our spirit:

- People die when their spirit leaves their body, and they return to life once their spirit returns
- The spirit lives on after death
- Animals have a spirit
- Our spirit can be anguished, troubled, and vexed
- There's a spirit of wisdom, jealousy, judgment, grace, and fear
- Our spirit can make people willing (or unwilling) to do things

- Our spirit can be overwhelmed
- Our spirit can be evil or perverse
- Our spirit can be revived
- Our spirit can be sorrowful
- Our spirit can be repentant
- Our spirit can be broken
- Our spirit can be proud
- Our spirit can be patient
- Our spirit can be humble
- We can exercise self-control over our spirit
- God tests our spirit
- Our spirit can cause us to rise up against someone
- The worship of God involves our spirit
- The part of us that knows us best is our spirit

Soul versus Spirit

There are some aspects of the soul and the spirit that are the same:

- When people die, both their soul and their spirit leave their body
- Both live on after death
- Both can experience anguish, vexation, and sorrow
- Both can be proud, and both can be humbled
- Both can be damaged and healed

These aspects seem to be unique to our soul:

- Souls can be destroyed in Hell. This isn't true of spirits.
- Only souls are capable of love, desire, joy, and hope.
- Only souls can be satisfied. They can find things to be pleasant or unpleasant.
- Only souls can be given rest.

- Only souls can be redeemed, purified, and converted.

These aspects seem to be unique to our spirit:

- There are spirits of wisdom, jealousy, judgment, grace, and fear. Those concepts don't seem to exist for souls.
- Only spirits can make people willing or unwilling to do things.
- Only spirits can be overwhelmed.
- Only spirits can repent.
- We can exercise self-control over our spirit. That concept doesn't seem to exist for souls.
- God tests our spirit (not our soul).
- The worship of God involves our spirit.
- The part of us that knows us best is our spirit.

A great deal of who we are comes from our soul and our spirit. Our desires seem to come from our soul, while the actions that we take (or don't take) are driven by our spirit. Redemption purifies our soul, while worship is a product of the spirit. The soul experiences love and joy, while wisdom comes from the spirit.

Our body is the part of us that we can see, but our soul and spirit determine who we truly are. Since those live on after death, that means we do as well.

Finally, it's important to note that those who are cast in Hell have their souls destroyed. This doesn't mean they're annihilated, because people are more than just a soul. People have a spirit as well, and there's no indication that Hell destroys a person's spirit. Instead they're losing the part of themselves that's capable of love, joy, and hope – the part that can find rest.

It seems that the body can die and the soul can be destroyed, but the spirit (which is capable of anguish and sorrow) is immortal. If this is true then that means people in Hell can't experience love, joy, or peace, because *that part of their being is gone*. Instead all they can experience is torment and pain.