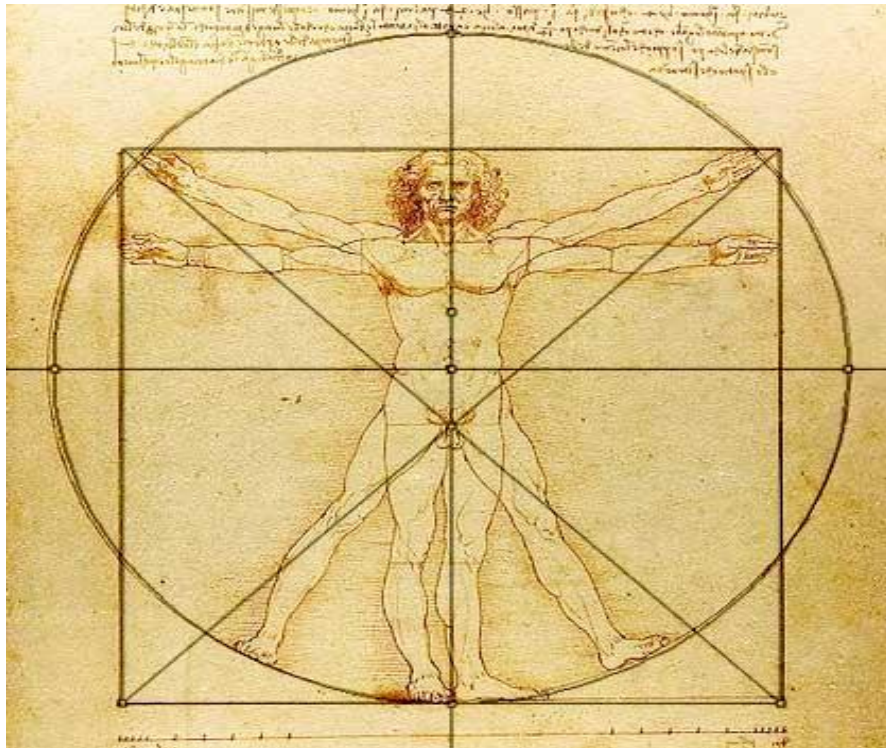


COMPOSITION OF MAN



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Forward

It is without a doubt that Orthodox Christians today are confused about the composition of man, the inner workings of what makes us click. It is probably even fair to say that Christians of all denominations suffer the same ignorance when it comes to a true understanding of the communion that exists between the body, soul and spirit. This confusion has arisen due to the combination of many things, none greater than a lack of care in the preaching of clergy who interchange between the soul and spirit, without actually understanding the full extent of their message.

The importance of knowing one self is pivotal in any Christian's life. Understanding the very wars that take place in our own lives every day is crucial in attaining salvation. The church fathers placed so much importance on understanding the workings of man. St Anthony states in one of his well known sayings, that "to know one self is to know God".

For this reason what follows is an explorative exploration of the composition of man, capturing the inspired words of God and the plethora of wisdom and spiritual understanding that is encompassed in the teachings of the church fathers.

THE CREATION OF MAN

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

Gen 1:1-2

To clearly understand the composition of man, there is no better place to begin than in the beginning. Moses in Genesis details the intricacy that is involved in the formation of man.

God did not decide to create man on the sixth day, but in essence the lord had the creation of man in mind from the beginning. He created the heavens and the earth. The earth itself contained the very dust that would become a key ingredient in the creation of man on the sixth day. One must not overlook this, the earth even though it was created with the very dust that would make man, it was void, it was dead, and it had no life. In essence the very dust that the lord had in mind for the creation of man was dead and without form – simply meaningless.

However one must not forget that while the dust was dead, the spirit of God was hovering ready to bring forth creation.

The creation of man

“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 being.”

Gen 2:7

After five days of creating an environment for man to flourish and have dominion over, the scene was set for a remarkable act of grace and love from God.

When time had come to form man, the context changes dramatically, man wasn't spoken into creation but was formed by the Lord God Himself. This is a clear distinction between man and animal and will be a major basis for many discussions later on in the book, and thus it is worth to keep in mind.

The dust that was created on day 1 was molded into man at the desire of the trinity to create man in the image and likeness of God. However the mold was not enough and required a special breath from God to bring him into existence.

This breath contrary to popular belief these days was not the Holy Spirit, for if it was man would not have sinned. The breath was human spirit and this is a testament to the wishes of the trinity

at creation. Man was indeed created in the image of God, and the likeness, however an important aspect of that likeness was the concept of “free will” afforded to man.

For God not to give man free will would have meant that he would not have kept his wishes, and while many argue if God really existed and he loved us why did he let satan attack us and man fall. The answer is simple and does not require a doctorate in theology. God knew very well that man would fall however out of his love he afforded man free will in his desire for man to become like God. This was rightly pointed out by the great St Basil of caesaria who writes “God became like man so man can become like God”.

This is ultimate love, for the creator to create an environment to bring into it a creation that would take the very image and likeness that he himself possess.

So back to our original discussion about the composition of man,

We currently have the body created from dust and the human spirit breathed into us by God. The body as is obvious is temporal, but the human spirit is immortal. The lord says

“From dust you were made, and dust you shall return”.

So the important question arises where did the soul come from, was it breathed into man with the spirit, or was it created from the very dust the body was made. These again are questions that are often raised in today’s society. The answer indeed is very simple and a correct understanding of the soul, will without a doubt increase your spiritual understanding of God and the way he speaks to you.

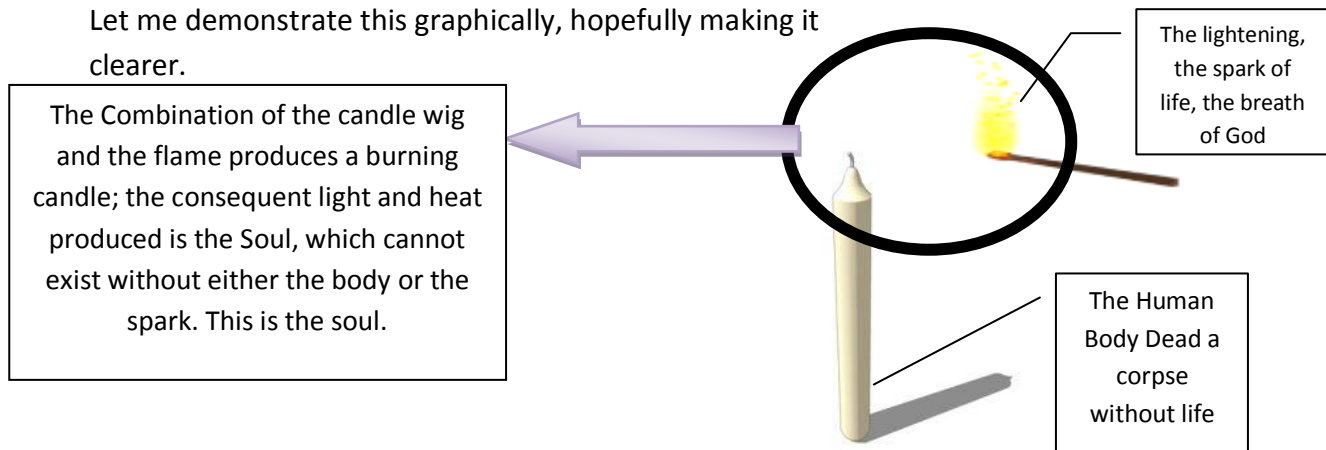
The soul is not a creation but a byproduct of both body and spirit. What do I mean by this?

Let us consider the following analogies to explore the soul.

LIGHTING A CANDLE

Say we have a candle that is unlit; let us assume this resembles the human body. You come with a match and light the wig, the match signifies the breath of God which is the human spirit. When the wig is lit a new entity is formed light, this light is the soul. So as is clearly obvious the soul is a byproduct formed when two things meet the candle wig and the fire from the match stick. As a result the soul cannot be sustained if either the spark is not present or the wig is not present. As a result if the body dies the soul dies, if the spirit is taken the soul also dies.

Let me demonstrate this graphically, hopefully making it clearer.



St. John of Damascus says writes that the body and soul are formed and created at the same time, at the moment of conception. This again is reiterated by St. Anastasios of Sinai who writes "We have no existence of the body without a soul nor is there existence of a soul without a body."

Causes of Death for the Soul,

Many questions have arisen over time, mainly due to confusion as to what and when the soul dies. Again the above analogy is useful in discussing a few things.

1. In the case of an accident which would destroy the candle, the flame, of course, would cease; so if the body is destroyed, as by disease or accident, the soul ceases.
2. If the supply of air is cut off from the candle flame, the light will be extinguished even though the candle is not damaged. So the soul, life of man, will cease if the breath of life is cut off by drowning or asphyxiation, while the body might be comparatively sound.
3. A candle cannot be re-enkindled except by an illuminating source, otherwise it remains unlit. Likewise, the human body without the spark of life returns to the dust from which it has been taken

4. The promise of resurrection is therefore a promise of a relighting of existence.
5. Since there can be no being or soul without a body and restored life-power or spirit, it follows that a promised resurrection or restoration of soul or being implies new bodies, new organisms. Thus the Scriptures assure us that human bodies, which return to dust will be transformed; and that in the Resurrection God will give such new bodies as it may please Him to give.

So in summary, the soul is a byproduct of both spirit and body, it cannot exist without the presence of these two entities.

So let us now examine carefully what are the body, soul and spirit.

BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT

Body

It is well known in Greek philosophy that the Greeks held to the view that the body is evil, and unfortunately this view seems to have crept back into many Christians today. They think the body is full of lustful desires and immoral emotions; however this could not be further from the truth.

Christianity in general has often held to the following beliefs in regards to man.

The human body can not be evil, for it was created by God, and to say God creates evil is nothing less of heresy. What we need to understand is that the body is created good, it is man's free will and a lack of self control and awareness of his desires that corrupt the body.

Further how can we say that the human body is bad if it can become a temple of the Holy Spirit? as St Paul mentions in his 1st epistle to the Corinthians.

"do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you"

1 Cor 3:16)

The body is in fact crucial in worship. With the body we prostrate in repentance. With the body we speak praise and honour to our creator.

David the Psalmist says

"Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps 141:2).

He uses his hands to worship the lord, his body is the temple for the holy spirit.

The body itself participates with the spirit in worship. The scripture says, nature magnifies his handiworks, and body is part of the nature that God created, it too if given the chance can magnify the lord. So let us as orthodox Christians move from this devilish thought that the body is evil, the body is not evil, we make it evil by our wicked ways. Always remember the saying of the apostle Paul when in doubt about the worth of the body.

"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor 6:20).

THE SOUL

What is the soul, what are its roles, what does it do in our relationship with God, and how do we control it? These are all questions I would like to endeavour to discuss in the next section of our exploration of man.

The word soul is translated from the Hebrew word "nepesh", a "breathing" creature.

In Greek it is psyche, "breath,". In Arabic it is called "nafs".

The word soul is one of the most difficult words in the Bible. In the Holy Scripture and Patristic literature, 'Soul' has a lot of meanings. Moreover confusion often arises because the word "Soul" and "Spirit" are often used interchangeably in the scriptures.

Let us explore examples of the correct use of the word soul and spirit.

"That his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"

James 5:20

The word spirit here refers correctly to what aspect of man will be saved in the final day. As we mentioned earlier it is the spirit which is eternal.

"Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death"

1 Cor 5:5

The word soul here is correct as well. Soul refers to man, so if a man turns from sin his spirit will be saved.

These two verses reveal the difficulty associated in understanding what is meant by spirit and soul.

As a general rule the believer should keep in mind the following equation,

The soul is temporal and dies with the flesh, whereas the human spirit is immortal and does not die and will live eternally in heaven or hell.

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So what is the soul?

Basically the soul is the way in which life is manifested in man, and while it does not produce life and is temporal, it is expressed by the body and it is not contained within. In essence the soul is man's ego, or even more simply the way in which man realizes life.

The Soul refers to the inner life of man i.e. his emotions, passions, feelings and desires, the bible clearly demonstrates this let us take a look at a few examples,

*"Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. His **soul** was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."*

Gen 34:2-4

As clearly evident, Shechem the son of Hamor could not control the desires of his heart at all, no rationality came to mind, and he lowered himself down to the level of an animal and defiled Dinah. This is the soul which is laced with passion and immoral feelings. In man the soul is the feelings associated with desire, a need to fulfill mortal pleasure.

However in the righteous the soul can also be a means of reflection, a recount of emotions and feelings, when Christ was about to be taken by the soldiers for what would be a weak of humiliation Matthew writes the following account about the emotions of our saviour

"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me"

Mt 26:38

This clearly shows that the soul is the mouth of emotions, it is the aspect of man that makes him feel happy, sad, joyful, sorrowful and so on. Moreover the soul is manifested in the bodily functions of facial expression, thought and action.

However one needs to make a clear comment at this point that the body itself is not the soul, and that the soul is not the body. Further the soul only exists in combination with both body and spirit and is the link between the body and spirit. It animates the breath of life; it basically communicates in man what the state of the spirit is in. It is the mirror of the spirit and enforcer on the body, while the spirit is the reflection of God, if it controls the soul

Moreover to reiterate clearly, the breath of life is not the soul, but that the soul was a product of the unification of both the body and breath of life.

St Augustine says the following in regards to this

"Scripture says, 'And he breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' If up to this point there was only the body, we should understand that the soul was at this point joined to the body. Perhaps the soul had been already made but was still as if in the mouth of God, that is, in his truth and wisdom. But it did not depart from there as if separated by places, when it was breathed forth. For God is not contained by place but is present everywhere."

So what is the Spirit?

The word spirit is translated from the Hebrew word ruah meaning "breath or wind" or "breath of life".

In Greek it is Piepnevma, "wind, breath," the "vital principle,".

The word 'Spirit' is used in the Scriptures generally to denote the spiritual, immortal part in man. It is related to worship and divine communion between man and God. It is in essence the way the lord communes with man, for spirit can only commune with spirit and God is Spirit.

The spirit gives life, it's the animating spark that we spoke of earlier, it was breathed into Adam by God himself, it has its own personality and is immortal.

Without spirit man is dead and it is clearly seen in scripture that this is the case. St James in his epistle writes the following;

- "The body without the spirit is dead"

James 2:26

This clearly shows that man's spirit is an essential ingredient in sustaining his life. Adam was blessed with this spirit from God, and through disobedience his spirit was taken away by the lord when he was 930 years old. His body became useless, it became lifeless, his soul was dead and as promised by the lord his body would return to dust and the spirit returned to its creator. The lord privileged man with spirit and did not make him like animal, but man abused the free will afforded to him and lost his way. However through utter divine grace the lord gave mankind a second chance with the incarnation of the son who would die for all mankind to open the gates of paradise and give hope to all believers. St Paul rightly states in his epistle to people of Corinth the following

"And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit"

1 Cor 15:45

As a result, believers can commit their spirits (power of life) into God's hand as did Stephen, having faith in the resurrection.

Having confirmed that the breath of life is the human spirit granted to us we still have not fully identified what the role of the spirit is in man.

Simply put the spirit refers to the mind and will, the will of God is revealed through the spirit of man. Let us take a few examples of what the spirit does in man.

"Paul purposed in the spirit (mind) to go to Jerusalem..." (Acts 19:21).

As we see St Paul was led by the spirit, but how can the spirit lead? There is only one solution that it must be the mind of man.

"...a gentle and quiet spirit is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Pet 3:4).

Again we see here that a quiet spirit shows the will of man, if man thinks to do well and does no evil, his will is aligned with his heavenly father. We pray daily the lord's prayer and as is mentioned "thy will be done", what does it mean thy will be done? If God is spirit, he speaks to mankind through the spirit, and his will to do good will be carried out by the spirit.

The lord himself speaks in the scriptures and says, my will is to do the will of my father who sent me. The will of man is his spirit; if the will is strong it can conquer the desires of the body. The body was not designed to do badly, but through sin we do not lose the image of God but we lose his likeness. To become like God means that man's will, must run parallel to the will of the father and that will is the spirit of both man and God. However will without the mind is futile. Without a mind, will does not exist, for this reason it is important to understand that the spirit is the mind and will of man and it is the link between man and God.

The immortality of the spirit is the foundation of Christianity; if nothing was immortal there would be no point in worshipping God. God would not exist because he provided nothing after death.

The Spirit is what lives when we leave this earth and this is clearly evident

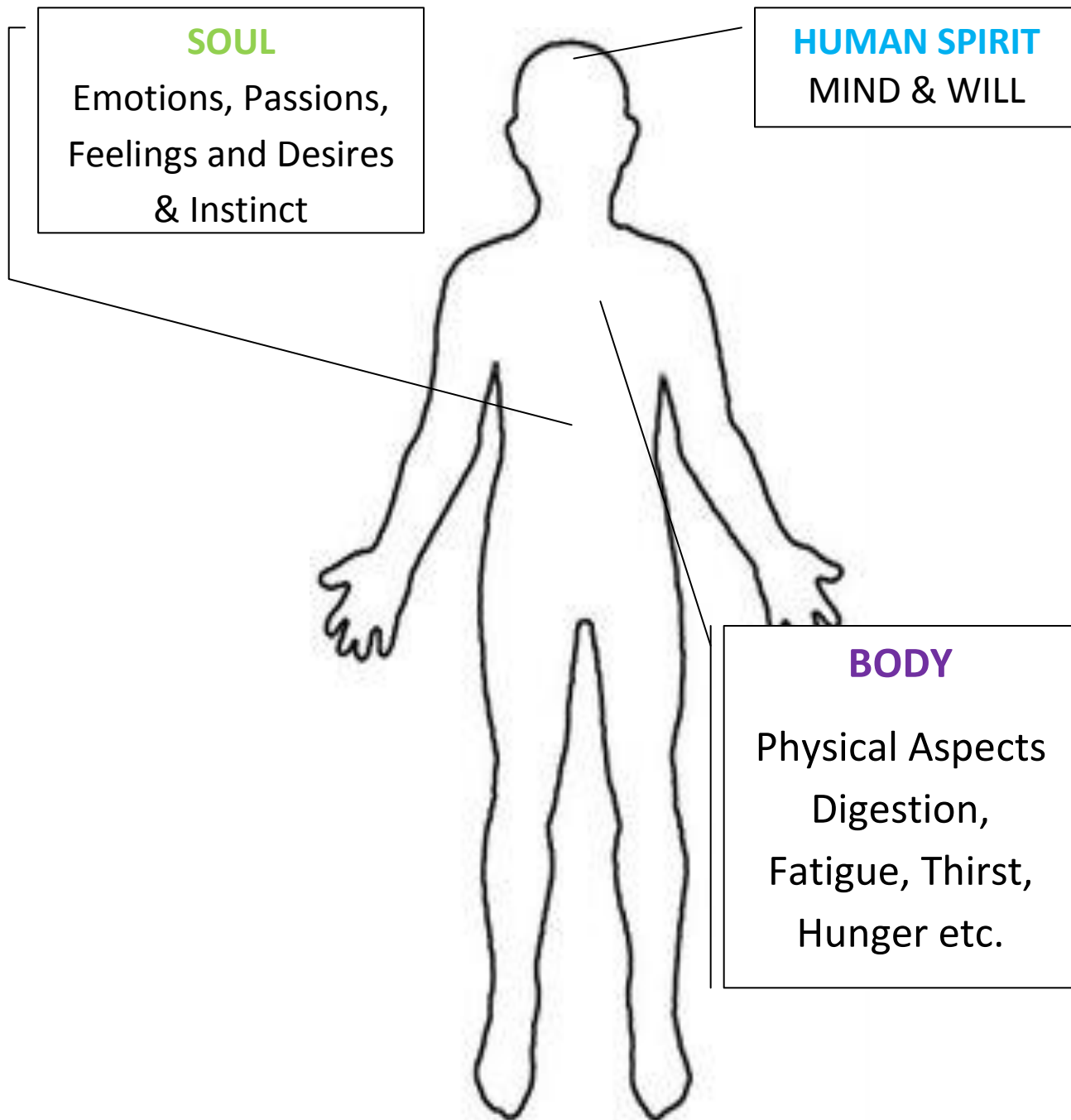
- "The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

The lord himself says

"Into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46).

So to recap the spirit is the mind and will of man.

So let us journey further but first let us recap diagrammatically the composition of man



THE HOLY SPIRIT

Having outlined the roles and functions of the body, soul and spirit it is now fitting that we explore the Holy Spirit. What its role is, what it is and how it communes and participates in the composition of man.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Contrary to popular belief the Holy Spirit is not the Human Spirit and we need to make this distinction here and now. The human spirit was breathed into man at the beginning, while the Holy Spirit is one of the trinity, the power of God. If the Holy Spirit was the human spirit, man would not have fallen into sin, for how can God sin?

Let us now take a look at the Holy Spirit in scripture;

Throughout Christ's life he promised on many occasions, that after his departure that he would send a comforter to his people.

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26).

So we know now that the Holy Spirit is a helper but we need to consider here what the term proceeds from the father mean.

The Holy Spirit does come from, and through, the Son (Jesus – the word of God), in the sense that the Holy Spirit is sent into the world by the Son. However, the Father is the Unique Source of the Godhead, the Son is eternally begotten by the Father, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father. This means that both the son and the Holy Spirit are eternally God.

To claim that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son places the Holy Spirit in a state of subordination to the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is Consubstantial with the Father and the Son, because proceeding from the Father, the unique source of the Deity, the Holy Spirit has His own existence and personal function.

His task is to bring about the unity of the human race in the Body of Christ. This point is crucial in our understanding of Man. All men and women have spirits, and they can only be unified to God through the Holy Spirit. For spirit can only commune with spirit.

What do I mean by this? Let us consider the issue of marriage, where man and women become one. What does it mean to become one, it means simply that the will and mind their spirits are

unified. Thus having being unified they are in subjection to the Holy Spirit who brings both of them together. In essence their will and mind is unified with that of God and the church in general.

Let us now turn our attention to the difference between the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When man receives the Holy Spirit he becomes filled with him. As Orthodox Christians we receive the Holy Spirit after we are baptised in the sacrament of Confirmation also known as the Mystery of the holy Chrism or Myron. Our bodies are transformed in baptism, the sin of Adam is removed and our bodies become clean to house the Holy Spirit of God within us.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

(1 Cor 3:16).

So having received the Holy spirit after confirmation we need to understand that the Holy Spirit dwells in us until the time of our death. It is something that believers in the faith are gifted with that God would send the holy Spirit to dwell in his creation. St Johns writes the following in his gospel

"The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (Jn 14:17).

Having understood that we as orthodox Christians house the Holy spirit within us, this is not enough. We must have communion with the holy spirit, the Human spirit must be in total communion with the Spirit of God. For if this is the case, the Holy Spirit will work within us, it will strengthen our Human Spirit and the more this occurs, the more fruits of the spirit we will attain and bring forth into our lives. Man becomes transformed when the holy spirit works with him, his will and mind (human spirit) becomes aligned with that of the Father, he becomes a spiritual person on earth, a person who deals with all things in a spiritual manner not in a worldly way. He believes that the power within is not from himself but from God who communicates and speaks on his behalf through the utterance of the Holy Spirit who is in communion with his mind and will.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The question now arises, if man allows his personal spirit to commune with the Holy Spirit, what do we receive. And to say this is nothing small, we are saying that basically God is the one who is controlling me. God is the one who is giving me power. God is the one who is moving and speaking for me.

To begin let us understand that the fruit of the Holy spirit is the goodness derived from using the gifts given to us by the holy spirit.

Let us look at an example.

Being a doctor if I have the gift of teaching a certain procedure with great success, I produce doctors who are well learned and this is the fruit produced. So fruit cannot exist before the gift is granted. It is the reward of having acquired this gift.

So the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are blessings and abilities given by the Holy Spirit to believers confirmed in the faith for the building up of the Body of Christ.

They do not serve to make man strong, they do not serve to make man benefit only but they generally serve the good of the entire Church. This is the key difference between a gift and a talent, being talented in something only benefits oneself. What do I mean by this, let us return to the above example, if I was that doctor and I was talented in only performing that operation but not teaching it, it is not good for the entire world, but only me, it is my natural talent.

For this reason it is easy to discern between natural gifts or talents. Gifts are for the benefit of mankind, while talents are benefit only to the individual.

So what are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Bishop Youseff writes that there are 10 Specific Gifts of the Holy Spirit that are Biblically documented which are worthy to note.

1. **The gifts of Prophecy.** *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith" (Romans 12:6).*
2. **The gifts of Apostleship.** *"And He Himself have some of the apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11).*

3. **The gifts of healing.** *"To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:9). (This is what you are referring to).*
4. **The gifts of tongues.** *"To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another interpretation of tongues" (I Corinthians 12:10).*
5. **The gifts of interpretation of tongues.** *"To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another interpretation of tongues" (I Corinthians 12:10).*
6. **The gifts of knowledge.** *"For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:8).*
7. **The gifts of exhortation.** *"He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads with diligence; he who shows mercy with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8).*
8. **The gifts of teaching** *"or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching" (Romans 12:7).*
9. **The gifts of giving.** *"He who exhorts in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads with diligence; he who shows mercy with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8).*
10. **The gifts of faith.** *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).*

So we can see that gifts are completely different to the fruits of the Spirit. St Isaac is well known to have said that

"Gifts are not offered for good works themselves, but for the humility by which they are done."

He also says that

"Humility is born from sadness and gifts are given for humility. Thus gifts are not given for good works nor for the sadness but because of the humility which is born from it."

To recap this we need to understand this, the Holy Spirit is the way God communes with man's Human Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not deal with the soul, for it is not an emotion or desire. It is the will and mind of God, the power of God. If the Human Spirit is able to attain perfect communion with the Holy Spirit he will have achieved perfection for he will become a spiritual man. This is what is meant by the phrase a spiritual life, a life where the human spirit communes with the Holy Spirit of God.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

"And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven him"

Luke 12:10

What does it mean to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? I often hear Christians say that this occurs when we don't believe in the Holy Spirit, His divinity or His work. This could not be further from the truth.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a lifelong Endeavour, it is when man does not afford his human spirit the chance to commune with the Holy Spirit, it's a lifelong refusal to allow the spirit to work within him. Why is this big thing one may ask? The answer is simple.

The outcome of such a refusal is lack of repentance from the person's side and consequently, lack of forgiveness from God's side. A person cannot repent without the work of the Holy Spirit in him. St John the beloved writes

"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"

John 16:8

The Holy Spirit reprove the world of sin and in its attempt to make man spiritual it will reward him, show him his errors and encourage him in his spiritual path towards the greater goal of attaining salvation.

Let us also understand clearly that if a person no matter for how long having rejected the Holy Spirit and decides to turn back to him, God will accept Him and his repentance (even if it were during the last minute of his life, like Demas the thief on the right).

This indicates that the Holy Spirit has not given up on the person, and the Holy Spirit will always be ready to convict him of sin; leading the person to repentance.

Simply while man is alive, God will not consider his refusal of the Holy Spirit final until his death where it will not become a refusal but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. In that case the sin cannot be forgiven, and that individual's fate is known.

So let us again diagrammatically summarise the composition of Man having understood what the Holy Spirit is.

**HOLY SPIRIT**

Is the power of God, which aims to make man's spirit aware of its sins, desires man to become in communion with God through the Holy Spirit.

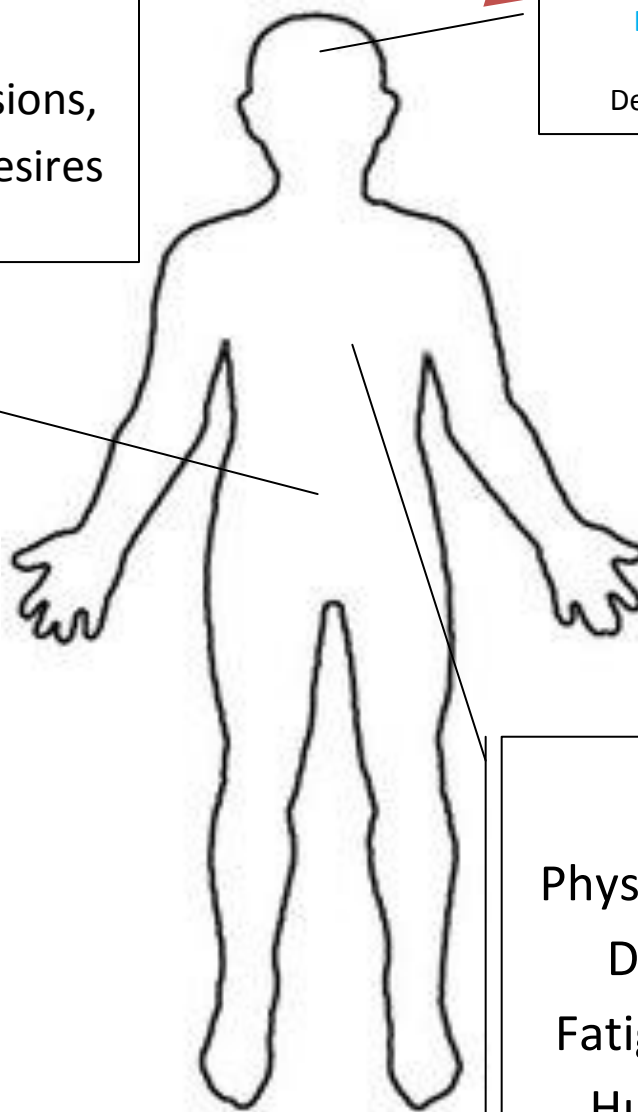
It provides Gifts and fruits and aims to unify all of God's Children. If given the Chance man can hear God's word through the Human spirit via the power of the Holy Spirit.

SOUL

Emotions, Passions,
Feelings and Desires
& Instinct

HUMAN SPIRIT

MIND & WILL
Desires to do Good

**BODY**

Physical Aspects
Digestion,
Fatigue, Thirst,
Hunger etc.

The CONSCIENCE

It is at this time with a clear understanding of body, soul, spirit and Holy Spirit that we can introduce the conscience. What is the conscience you may be asking?

Simply put the conscience is an ability that allows man to distinguish whether his actions are right or wrong. It leads man to feel remorse when he does something that is against his or her moral values and on the other hand it allows man to feel integrity when his actions conform to moral values.

You can perhaps say that the conscience as the attitude which informs moral judgment before an action is performed.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda in his well known book "What is Man", he writes that the conscience is affected by knowledge and experience.

The more knowledge a man acquires the more his morals are changed to reflect the knowledge he has acquired, further the experience of man that something is right or wrong also affects his conscience.

It is often the conscience that is involved in moral decisions. As Christians we believe that 'God gave us our conscience so we would know when we break His Law; the guilt we feel when we do something wrong tells us that we need to repent. This can sometimes lead to moral quandaries as is often faced by youth such as, do I kill if I am at war?

Simply put the conscience is all about knowing the right and wrong, an attitude!

THE MIND

What about the mind, is that part of the soul, or is that part of the conscience, or is the mind that component of the spirit. Simply it is none of this.

The best explanation of the mind is given by HG Bishop Youseff from the Southern Diocese of the Coptic Church in America, he writes the following,

The mind is defined as: the intellectual or rational faculty in man; the understanding; the intellect; the power that conceives, judges, or reasons "*Let every man be fully convinced in his own mind*" (Rom 14:5). The mind is a function of the brain.

NATURAL LAW

How is it fair that God gives only some people the Holy Spirit, those who believe in his name. But he judges us all equally. Are not Christians at an advantage? This is the very questions the Romans attacked St Paul with when he went to Rome.

St Paul writes starkly that not knowing God is no excuse in the final day, he professes that man is inexcusable (Romans 2:1). There is no excuse before God, those who do not have the Word of God and the Holy Bible; may be judged according to their own law which is now known as Natural law.

St Paul says,

"For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Acts 2:12-16).

Natural law is a belief that man has the ability to reason within himself what is right and wrong which in turn will guide man in making ethical decisions.

For us Christians, we have the Word of God to direct us in our lives. We should not depend on our own instinct, ethics, morals or the natural law but on the teachings of God. This is the only Law and commandments we should follow.

One needs to mention that there is a big difference between those who had heard about Christianity but refused to adopt it as their religion and abide by its teaching; and those whom the Word of God has never reached.

In today's world, most, if not all, of the earth's population has heard about Christianity; and it is a personal choice to accept or reject it; and thus be judged accordingly.

THE HEART

At the root of Christianity and scripture we often read about the heart, giving the heart over to God. Many clergy stand up and preach the importance of the heart. But speaking personally I have never actually heard someone define or say what the heart is. However it is crucial to have an understanding of the heart, and what is meant by the heart in the scripture.

Solomon in the Book of Proverbs wisely writes the following,

“My son, give me your heart, And let your eyes observe my ways.”

Proverbs 23:26

We will use this verse to show what the true orthodox meaning of the heart is.

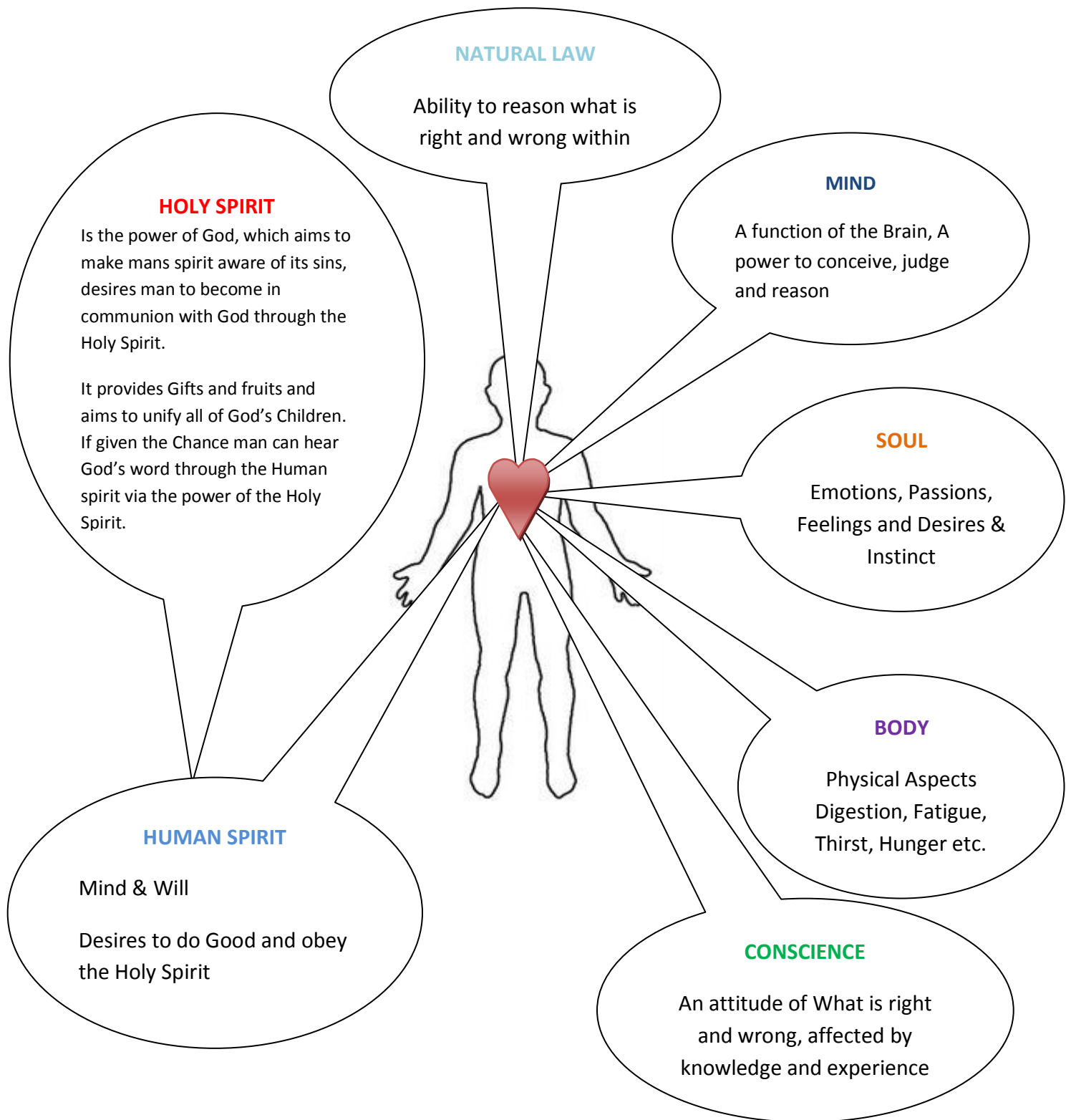
The Heart of man anatomically is often seen as the centre, the midst. It is the essential component to life. Further the heart is used to mean love.

When we read the word heart consider the following as its meaning.

To love him with all the power that you could possibly love anything, To seek him with all the power to think and learn, follow him with all of your passion and drive, and to put every ounce of might you have into serving him

This is the heart, for if the heart is with God, then I assure you that your body, soul and spirit are in communion with him.

Let us now summarise the above concepts in a concept map



THE WAR WITHIN

I want to turn your attention to some amazing passages in the bible to explain the relationship between the needs of the body, the desires of the soul and the will of the spirit.

We begin with the well known account of Jesus going into the wilderness where we see the way in which the body, soul and spirit are held in union.

“Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” ⁴ But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’”⁵ Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered and said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”⁹ Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,’ ¹¹ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” ¹² And Jesus answered and said to him, “It has been said, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’” ¹³ Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. ¹⁴ Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Luke 4:1-15

The account of Jesus’ Journey begins with a calling. The Holy Spirit fills Jesus, and before people start questioning and asking if Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one how can he be filled with Holy Spirit. In this passage we see the humanity of Jesus, and as we see Satan himself was unsure if this was the promised messiah and is instructing Jesus to do miraculous things if he was truly the Son of God. The Lord took the form man while remaining divine.

Cyril of Alexandria writes the following;

“He was led, therefore,” it says, “in the Spirit in the wilderness forty days, being tempted of the devil.” What is the meaning of the word *led*? It signifies not so much that he was led there as that he dwelt and continued there....

He dwelt therefore in the wilderness in the Spirit, that is, spiritually. He fasted, granting no food whatsoever to the necessities of the body. I imagine someone may immediately object to this: And what harm, then, did it do Jesus to dwell in cities constantly? And in what way could it benefit him to choose to inhabit the wilderness? He did not lack one good thing. And why, too, did he fast also? Why was it necessary for him to labor? He does not know what it means to have a depraved desire. For we adopt the practice of fasting as a very useful expedient, by which we kill pleasure and attack the law of sin that is in our bodies and completely destroy those emotions which lead on to fleshly lust. But why did Christ need to fast? The Father slays the sin in the flesh by his body. He kills the motions of the flesh in us. He has abolished sin in miserable beings-in us. What kind of fasting could he need in anything that concerns himself? He is holy, undefiled by nature, wholly pure and without blemish. He cannot experience even the shadow of a change”

So having been filled with the Holy Spirit Jesus is led by his spirit into the wilderness. I want to concentrate here for a moment. The Holy Spirit as we mentioned earlier can only commune with the spirit. So the Holy Spirit filled Jesus, gave a calling and the Spirit obeyed. Now if the spirit obeys, the mind and will are parallel and in fact before the spirit obeys, the mind thinks and mans will determines the action. So we see here the spirit is in communion with the Holy Spirit and aligns its way with that of the Lord.

The next verse reveals the harshness of the desert and we see that Jesus was tempted for forty days. What can be tempted is the body, the desire of the body. The body requires, food and drink and being subjected to forty days and nights without food or drink would mean that the desire for both food and drink would have been tremendous. Luke writes that Jesus did indeed feel hungry. However in our Saviour, the spirit was in communion with the Holy Spirit, and had power over the desires of the soul. Jesus had total control over his bodies emotions including the desire to eat, sleep and rest.

Origen comments on this very issue

“Mark and Luke say that Jesus “was tempted for forty days.” It is clear that during those days the devil first tempted him from a distance to sleep, apathy, cowardice, and other such sins. Then, since he knew that Christ was hungry, the devil came closer to him and attacked him openly”

What follows is an attempt by the devil to conquer the spirit by subjecting the soul to the power of senses. As we said in our discussion of the soul, it is influenced by senses. Initially Satan tempts our savior by asking him to convert stone into bread. While not inherently obvious in medicine it is well known that if one thinks of food, the sensation of eating that food is evoked. However the lord did not fall into temptation and his soul remained steadfast to the will of the Spirit. Satan then takes Jesus to the top of the mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world and promises to give it to him if he bows down and worships him. Here the sense of sight is evoked, but to no avail Satan could not conquer the strong will of Jesus' Spirit. He could not evoke the desire and emotions of the soul to waver against the will and mind of the spirit. Finally Satan challenges the lord to prove that he is truly the Son Of God in a scene worthy of note. The Devil takes our savior to the top of the temple and throws the gauntlet down to Christ asking him to throw himself. However the lord unequivocally blasts Satan telling him not to test the lord God. This indeed is a victory of the spirit over Satan. But it is incorrect to say that the soul and body were not victorious, for in fact it was a victory for all three components of man, body soul and spirit.

St Paul in his 1st letter to the Thessalonians writes the following

"May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Th 5:23

This verse was exemplary in the account mentioned in Luke Chapter 4. The spirit led with its will based on nutritious thoughts, controlling the desires of the soul forcing it to stay awake and pray while the body in subjection did not succumb to the temptations of the evil one. In essence the body, soul and spirit of our savior were all blameless and victorious.

Having taken a perfect example of how the body soul and spirit were in perfect union in Christ, let us now turn our attention to another passage of the bible, where Jesus is total control of his composition, while his followers had no such control.

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." ³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." ⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The

spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”⁴² Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”⁴³ And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.⁴⁴ So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

Matt 26:36-46

Let us explore this passage carefully to understand the war that we always are fighting, however we are not always aware of.

When Holy week was dawning and humanity was about to be redeemed by the crucifixion of our savior, Jesus told all his disciples to sit down in the garden of Gethsemane while he took peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him to pray. Jesus tells them how sorrowful his soul is. What does this mean, we said previously that the soul is the emotion desires feelings and passions. So when the lord says his soul was sorrowful it mean, that he was overwhelmed with emotions of sorrow at the events that were about to happen, he had a feeling that the soldiers would arrest him, he could perceive that the time had come. Matthew writes that Jesus was distressed; this is the soul which speaks for the body.

What follows is a conversation between Jesus and the Father but if one reads carefully we see that the spirit is involved.

³⁹ *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*

We see here the powerful conversation where the soul, body, spirit and the Holy Spirit are in perfect union. The soul was distressed and sorrowful, the body was weak and was about to be subjected to the scourging and whipping which would eventually lead to crucifixion. However the will of the spirit was to go through all of this for mankind. However we need to carefully pay attention to the phrase

“not as I will, but as You will”.

What does this mean? Jesus could have succumbed to his sorrow in heart and turned against the will of the father, however he chose to unify his will with the will of his father. We said earlier that the will of the father and the power to do his will is given through the Holy Spirit. We see here that the Holy Spirit was pleased with the son, and the son’s human spirit was communing with the Holy Spirit.

As the passage progresses we see how Peter is awoken by the Lord and rebuked for not watching as was commanded. If we focus our attention on Peter we see how the soul was victorious over the will of the Spirit.

Without a doubt being late at night, and having labored hard through the day and possibly night, the body was fatigued and the soul desired rest. Peter's soul must have felt drained and desired that he sleep. However the spirit within Peter must have kept him awake and encouraged him to stay awake and watch as was commanded by Jesus. However the spirit was weak it could not fulfill the will of God, but gave in to the desires and emotions of his soul.

It is worthy to note that God himself, came to them and told them three times to stand awake and watch, the spirit was given three rounds of therapy to encourage it to overcome the desire of the soul, however it could not for it was weak it needed power that would come on Pentecost when Jesus would give the church his power through the holy spirit. This very Peter that slept would 57 days later convert 5000 people in one day. How could this be, he allowed the Holy Spirit to strengthen his human spirit, and in strengthening the human spirit it conquered the desires of the soul and the will of the body.

Jesus acknowledges this let us turn our attention to what Jesus says;

⁴¹ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jerome writes on his commentary of the above verse the following which is very useful in our discussion on the composition of man.

*"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation." It is **impossible** for the human soul to avoid temptation. Hence we say in the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," which we are unable to withstand.*

We do not refuse to face temptation entirely but pray for the strength to bear up under it. Therefore he does not say, "Watch and pray that you may not be tempted" but "that you may not enter into temptation," that is, that temptation may not overwhelm you and hold you in its grip. For example, a martyr who has shed blood by professing faith in the Lord was certainly tempted but was not ensnared in the net of temptation. One who denies the faith, however, has fallen into the snares of temptation.

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." This is aimed at those rash people who think that whatever they believe, they can obtain. Therefore, as much as we trust in the ardor of our spirit, so too should we fear the weakness of the flesh. And yet, according to the apostle, the works of the flesh are mortified by the Spirit"

We see that there is a war within man, the spirit wants to do well, however it is confined by the weakness of the body and the soul who desires rest and is tempted. For this reason the Holy Spirit was granted that the human spirit would be able to communion with God, in turn receiving his power to do his will.

What happens at the hour of our Death?

The next section of our discussion of the composition of man is death. What happens after death? We have previously discussed that after death the body and soul cease to exist and that it is the spirit which is immortal that will be judged in the final day.

The journey of the spirit

When we die the spirit is released from the body and travels to where it desired to be. If throughout its life it worked and struggled to remain in communion with God it will be afforded entry into paradise, however if it failed to consider the need to commune with God and was sluggish it will be taken to the gates of Hades. It is worthy note that Hades in Hebrew means unseen land. So after the death of Christ on the cross, and as we say in the Liturgy of St Basil, Christ the Son descended into Hades and took the righteous to Paradise.

Another question arises isn't this the Judgment of God if he does not allow the Spirit into paradise. Of course not, God does not judge, man judges where he wants his spirit to go, the Lord just grants his wish. It was God's desire to have every spirit with him and gives us many opportunities to fulfill his will but it is man who foolishly desires to choose not to commune with him. When his spirit departs it knows its destination, it finds rest in a place which it knows whether it be in Hades or paradise.

However I want to draw our attention to the journey of the spirit out of the body. While the Bible does not reveal explicitly the journey of the spirit to its destination many of the Church fathers speak about it.

To begin let us read an extract from the Life of St Anthony the Great by Pope Athanasius who writes about his life, teachings and experiences.

"Of Antony's vision concerning the forgiveness of his sins

"For once, when about to eat, having risen up to pray about the ninth hour, he perceived that he was caught up in the spirit, and, wonderful to tell, he stood and saw himself, as it were, from outside himself, and that he was led in the air by certain ones.

Next certain bitter and terrible beings stood in the air and wished to hinder him from passing through. But when his conductors opposed them, they demanded whether he was not accountable to them. And when they wished to sum up the account from his birth, Antony's conductors stopped them, saying, 'The Lord hath wiped out the sins from his birth, but from the time he became a monk, and devoted himself to God, it is

permitted you to make a reckoning.' Then when they accused him and could not convict him, his way was free and unhindered. And immediately he saw himself, as it were, coming and standing by himself, and again he was Antony as before. Then forgetful of eating, he remained the rest of the day and through the whole of the night groaning and praying. For he was astonished when he saw against what mighty opponents our wrestling is, and by what labours we have to pass through the air. And he remembered that this is what the Apostle said, 'according to the prince of the power of the air (114).'

For in it the enemy hath power to fight and to attempt to hinder those who pass through. Wherefore most earnestly he exhorted, 'Take up the whole armour of God(115), that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,' that the enemy, 'having no evil thing to say against us, may be ashamed(116).'

And we who have learned this, let us be mindful of the Apostle when he says, 'whether in the body I know not, or whether out of the body I know not; God knows (117).' But Paul was caught up unto the third heaven, and having heard things unspeakable (118) he came down; while Antony saw that he had come to the air, and contended until he was free.

Of the passage of souls and how some were hindered of Satan

And he had also this favour granted him. For as he was sitting alone on the mountain, if ever he was in perplexity in his meditations, this was revealed to him by Providence in prayer. And the happy man, as it is written, was taught of God(119). After this, when he once had a discussion with certain men who had come to him concerning the state of the spirit and of what nature its place will be after this life, the following night one from above called him, saying, 'Antony, rise, go out and look.'

Having gone out therefore (for he knew whom he ought to obey) looking up, he beheld one standing and reaching to the clouds, tall, hideous, and fearful, and others ascending as though they were winged. And the figure stretched forth his hands, and some of those who were ascending were stayed by him, while others flew above, and having escaped heavenward, were borne aloft free from care. At such, therefore, the giant gnashed his teeth, but rejoiced over those who fell back. And forthwith a voice came to Antony, 'Do you understand what you see?' And his understanding was opened, and he understood that it was the passing of Spirits, and that the tall being who stood was the enemy who envies the faithful. And those whom he caught and stopped from passing through are accountable to him, while those whom he was unable to hold as they passed upwards

had not been subservient to him. So having seen this, and as it were being reminded, he struggled the more daily to advance towards those things which were before."

We see in this account by Pope Athanasios clearly that the spirit after its departure is faced with a battle, a battle between its creator and the doer of evil who wants to capture it into his kingdom.

This teaching seems to have been diminished in the Coptic Orthodox Church and may seem foreign to many who read it. However with careful attention to what we pray we see that this indeed is a belief held by the church.

In the 11th hour of the Holy Agpia, in the 3rd part after the gospel we read the following,

*"Our Lady Virgin Mary, guide me to the means of repentance, to you I plea, through you I seek supplication, I call you for help, lest I fail. **Come to my rescue, when my soul (the spirit) departs from my body, defeat the conspiracies of the enemy, shut the gates of hell lest they swallow my soul. O' blameless bride of the true Lord.**"*

We see hear clearly that believer is praying fervently that at the hour of his death that St Mary comes to the rescue of his spirit as he passes through the conspiracies of the enemy. If as people say after we die there is no turning back and we are judged immediately then there would be no need of having St Mary, she would provide no assistance. But the more rational thought is to acknowledge the fear a spirit which is unprepared would face after death and that it needs the assistance of the heavenly to guide it pass the conspiracies of the enemy.

Satan is at war even to the very last moment even after the spirit has separated from the body, he will use all means and trickery to capture the spirit.

I leave you with this extract from the Coptic Sinaxrium on the 27th of Baramhat when the church commemorates the departure of St Macarius the Great.

"In a manuscript in Shebeen El-Koum, was mentioned that St. Babnuda, his disciple, saw the soul of St. Macarius ascending to heaven, and he heard the devils crying out and calling after him, "You have conquered us O Macarius." The Saint replied "I have not conquered you yet." When they came to the gates of heaven they cried again saying "You have conquered us", and he replied as the first time. When he entered the gate of heaven they cried "You have overcome us O Macarius." He replied "Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ who has delivered me from your hands."

As is clearly evident even after departure the spirit is still not safe and for this reason we as Christians must understand the fear that is witnessed by the spirit that is unprepared. As doctors would say there is no cure better than prevention. Let us prepare our Spirits from now , let us give the spirit power to commune with the Holy Spirit. Let us unify the will of human spirit with the will of the Holy Spirit. If we do this the soul will be in subjection and so will the body.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAN AND ANIMAL

The question often arises what is the fate of animals after they die. We see many people speak today about seeing their favorite pets when they die. We have faiths who believe that they will be reincarnated into animals.

The true teaching is orthodoxy and its understanding of how many is by far more superior than animal.

St. Gregory Palamas writes the following about the difference between man and animal

"animals possess a soul not as an essence, but as an energy. "The soul of animals is the life for the body it animates, and so animals possess life not essentially but as an energy, since this life is dependent on something else and is not self-subsistent." Therefore since the soul of an animal's has only energy, it dies with the body. By contrast, the soul of man has not only energy but also essence."

What is this essence that St Gregory talks about? It is actually simple to understand and if understood it reveals a stark difference between man and animal.

In Man as we have laboriously discussed previously that the soul is affected by the will of the spirit. The spirit wants to the will of God; it has a personality of its own. It wants the soul to be in reverence to God and the body to worship God. Man's spirit gives essence to his soul, gives it direction, gives it substance. In animal the soul is just an energy it is not governed by an immortal spirit. So when an animal dies, the energy is taken away from the soul.

Let me explain this further, we said previously that man's spirit was breathed into him by God, in the creation of animal the lord just spoke and animals came into being. There was no molding or breathing of spirit into animal.

Moreover if we say for instance that animal has a spirit, does that mean that a tree has a spirit and it too has immortality. Of course not! It is at this time in our discussion that I would like to draw your attention to the writings of St Maximus the Confessor.

St. Maximus the Confessor states that the soul has three powers or stages, these are the following.

- 1) Nourishment & growth
- 2) Instinct
- 3) Intellect

This is an excellent way to differentiate between all living things. If an object possesses all these things it is able to possess a spirit. What do I mean by this?

- Plants share only the first of these powers, so a plant or tree can not possess a spirit
- Animals share in that of imagination & Instinct as well, they have no intellect they cannot think but their desire to obtain food, survive and mate. Simply animals cannot study philosophy; they cannot obtain higher order thinking. So not having possession of intellect they do not fall under the category of possessing a spirit, and thus they are mortal not immortal.
- Human beings comprise all these powers, they have the ability to grow and become nourished through food, they have instinct as well, for example if a child runs across a street they inherently jump to get them. However what is important is that they contain intellect. They can think of high order powers. And having achieved the possession of all these three stages the lord afforded them with the breath of life the human spirit which is immortal.

So as we can clearly see there is a stark difference between animal and man, and not having spirit when an animal dies it has no immortality. There is no after for an animal, it is all about the now.

CONCLUSION

As we have gathered, man is not merely bones covered in flesh, but rather he encompasses many attributes that need to be understood clearly for him to live a life worthy of living - a life that magnifies its creator.

I hope you have a clear understanding of the composition of man after reading the above, the mission now is to re-spread this understanding amongst man.