

What is the difference between soul and spirit?

There are many views regarding the relationship between soul and spirit. Some believe they are two names for the same thing while others regard them as completely separate entities. There are 498 verses containing the word soul and 456 verses containing the word spirit. Of those, there are 10 containing both.

1. Where does each begin?

Genesis 2:7	Psalm 6:3-4 ; 19:7
Jeremiah 38:16	
Numbers 11:17; 11:25-29	Job 27:3; 33:4
Psalm 51:10-12 ; 104:30	Ecclesiastes 11:5
John 15:26	

The soul begins when God brought it into existence. As such it is God that delivers or protects the soul. The spirit comes from God. A renewed spirit is delivered by God.

2. Where does each end up?

Job 27:8 ; 33:29-30	Psalm 16:10-11
Ezekiel 18:4	Matthew 10:28 ; 16:26
Acts 2:31	
Ecclesiastes 3:21-22 ; 12:7	Acts 7:59-60

We are told that God takes away a man's soul. The soul is marked as entering the grave, but keep in mind that such verses are poetic in nature so the exact execution of this thought can be wide ranging. We are told that the spirit goes to be before God. Ultimately God not only gives the spirit but it is the spirit that returns to God (for judgment).

3. What do the shared verses tell us?

1 Samuel 1:15	Job 7:11
Isaiah 26:9	1 Corinthians 15:45

From the shared verses, it seems like the spirit is tightly bound with the source of emotions while the soul is tightly bound with the source of foundational desires and needs. Other verses indicate that the soul is the origins of a living entity while the spirit is that which truly gives the soul life and purpose. It is the spirit here that drives the functioning of the soul.

4. What are other things of significance regarding the soul?

Genesis 12:13 ; 17:14; 35:18	Exodus 30:12
Leviticus 17:10-12; 26:15	Numbers 11:6 ; 21:4-5
1 Samuel 20:3-4	Job 3:20 ; 7:15; 9:21; 33:18
Psalm 30:3; 49:8; 66:8-10	Isaiah 29:8
Matthew 26:38	Mark 8:36-37
Hebrews 10:38-39	1 Peter 2:11

The soul seems to be associated with the purpose of life itself. In the Law delivered by Moses, it is often the soul that is cut off. While it may be associated with a removal of the person from the congregation of God's people, it carries with it a deeper meaning of the cessation of true life. The soul is associated with the grave and eternal condemnation or hell. The battle that we face has to do with the ramifications to the eternity of the soul.

5. What are other things of significance regarding the spirit?

Genesis **6:3**; **41:8**; **45:27**

Numbers **14:24**

Joshua 5:1

2 Chronicles 9:4

Psalms 31:5; **32:2**; 34:18

Ecclesiastes 7:8-10; **8:8**

Ezekiel 1:20-21; **11:19-20**; 13:3; 18:31

Matthew 4:1

John **6:63**

1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 3:16

1 John **4:1-3**

Exodus **28:3**; 31:3

Deuteronomy 2:30

1 Kings 21:5

Job 20:3; 21:4; **32:7-9**

Proverbs **16:18-19**; **25:28**

Isaiah 40:13; **66:2**

Ezekiel 36:26-27; 37:14

John 3:5-7; **3:34**; 4:23-24

Acts 19:15

Galatians **5:17**

It is the spirit of God that has grief over man's sinfulness. It is also the spirit that is troubled when sin is present. This would be similar in concept to the work of the conscience. Likewise it is the spirit that is energized in the presence of good news. It is the spirit that guides the actions of a man. It is the spirit that follows after God or follows after its own pursuits. The spirit of a man needs to be controlled but the man has no real power to keep it around to avoid death. It is the humble or contrite spirit that pleases God. It is the spirit of a man that God will replace with His spirit in the work of redemption. When God gives his spirit to a person, no one receives just a bit of His spirit but the fulness of it. Ultimately it is the spirit that gives life, when it is God's spirit. Even the evil spirits (demons) know who are the believers and who are the unbelievers. It is the spirit that is the ultimate teacher of the things of God. The spirit of God dwells inside the believer. Within each believer, there is a battle of the natural spirit and God's indwelling (transplanted) spirit. A message that is identified as having come from the spirit needs to be tested.