



The Life of Jesus (135)

The Crucifixion of Jesus
(13)

The Seven Last Words of
Jesus on the Cross (9)



Luke 23:46

#1 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

This is the 7th and final thing Jesus said before He died on the cross.

Even this last statement was the fulfillment of Psalm 31:5, which says, “Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.” (Ps 31:5)

Again, we see how Jesus faithfully fulfilled God's will and His words to the very moment of His death. He even used His last words to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah.

In this statement, we find one of the most important words that form the basis of Christianity—**spirit**. Jesus said that He entrusted His spirit to God.

This leads us to ask some important questions. What is the spirit? Where does it come from? What is its role? What does it mean to entrust our spirits to God? And what can we learn from this?

#2 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

1) What is the Spirit?

In today's verse, the Greek word that's translated as "spirit" is **πνεῦμα** (pneuma). The word is used extensively in the New Testament in several different contexts.

Firstly, **pneuma means wind**. However, rather than the wind in general, it refers to some underlying force that causes it to blow.

"The **wind** blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of **the Spirit**." (Jn 3:8)

What's interesting here in this verse is that the same word, "pneuma," is translated as two different words—wind and Spirit. This is the second meaning of the word. **It refers to the Holy Spirit**.

Third, **pneuma means breath**. Breathing is a sign of life. This, then, is the fourth meaning of pneuma. It refers to **life**.

#2 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

1) What is the Spirit?

Last but not least, pneuma means spirit. But, there's one more similar word in the New Testament, which is **Ψυχή** (psyche).

Pneuma and psyche have similar meanings. Both refer to breath and life. But when “psyche” is used in a spiritual sense, it's translated as “**soul**.”

The difference between “spirit” and “soul” is not made clear in the Bible. Some passages say human beings are made up of a body and a spirit, pneuma, while others say we are made up of a body and a soul, psyche.

“As **the body without the spirit [pneuma] is dead**, so faith without deeds is dead.” (Jms 2:26)

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill **the soul [psyche]**. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt 10:28)

#3 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

1) What is the Spirit?

for the most part psyche and pneuma are synonymous and can be used interchangeably. They all refer to the invisible, spiritual part of the human being apart from the body.

However, in addition to the biblical passages that suggest that humans are composed of two parts, body and spirit or body and soul, there is one passage that suggests that humans are composed of three parts: **body, spirit, and soul**.

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit [pneuma], soul [psyche] and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Th 5:23)

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul [psyche] and spirit [pneuma], joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Heb 4:12)

#4 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

1) What is the Spirit?

In short, spirit and soul are often used interchangeably. However, there are also passages in the Bible which suggest that spirit and soul are different things.

Some theologians have therefore distinguished between the soul as the human heart, mind, or personality, which functions primarily in relation to other people, and the spirit, which functions primarily in relation to God and is the channel through which we perceive and communicate with Him. The fact that the word psyche, soul, is the root of the word psychology supports this distinction.

Whatever the case, the point is that human beings are not just made up of the physical body that we can see and touch. We are a combination of the invisible spirit and soul and the visible body. That is considered the biggest difference between human beings and animals.

#5 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

2) Where Does the Spirit Come From?

This leads us to the second question. Where does it come from? Why do human beings have spirits while animals don't? We find the answer in the creation story.

Genesis chapters 1-2 describe how God created the world, including every living creature in it. God used His word to create everything.

“**God said**, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” **And it was so**. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.” (**Gn 1:24-25**)

God said something and it was so. And it was good in His eyes.

#6 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

2) Where Does the Spirit Come From?

But when God created human beings, He didn't only use His word.

“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**, and the man became a living being.” (Gn 2:7)

Here, the Hebrew word translated as “the breath of life” is *neshamah*, which also means “spirit.” So we see that **when God created human beings, He gave them His breath, or His spirit, along with their physical bodies.** That is why only humans possess a spirit. Some theologians interpret it as the image of God.

#7 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

2) Where Does the Spirit Come From?

Then, this is what the human beings God created looked like.

The material of which human bodies were made was nothing special: God made human beings from “the dust of the ground.” In fact, modern science has revealed how similar the human body is to the composition of the dust of the ground. Both are made up of the same elements.

But God didn't just use the dust of the earth to create us; He also gave us His breath, His spirit, so that we could become spiritual beings who are able to know, perceive, feel, and communicate with Him, who is spirit.

In fact, that is what truly sustains our lives. It is not because we have a body composed of the dust of the ground that we have life, but because of God, who has given us the breath of life.

#8 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

2) Where Does the Spirit Come From?

What we also know from this is that all people essentially belong to God.

“Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine...” (EZE 18:4, ESV)

God is our Lord because He's the one who gave us our spirits, and so He has the authority to judge us all according to how we have used our souls and spirits.

That's the reason we should value our spirits. If we gain the whole world and lose our spirits, we will be destroyed forever. But even though we may not have and enjoy many things in this world, if we cherish our spirits that God has given us, we will enjoy the eternal life that He gives us after the death of our physical bodies.

#9 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

3) What Is the Role of the Spirit?

This raises the important question of how we can take good care of our spirits. The answer is only by having a close and proper relationship with God.

The primary function of the spirit God has given us is to communicate with Him. Because God is spirit, we can only perceive Him and feel His presence through our spirits.

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God... Why, my soul, are you downcast? **Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God,** for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.” (Ps 42:1-2, 5)

“The human spirit is the lamp of the Lord that sheds light on one’s inmost being” (Pr 20:27)

Jesus said, “**Blessed are the poor in spirit,** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5:3)

Being poor in spirit means that we put our hope in God. The poorer our spirits are towards God, the more we become desperate for Him and seek Him. Seeking God with a poor, humble, and desperate heart is how we preserve our spirits.

#10 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

Human beings are made up of an invisible part, the soul or the spirit, and a visible part, the physical body. Then, what's the biggest difference between the spirit and the body?

It lies in their persistence. **Our physical bodies are finite.** Everyone's physical body is born, grows, reaches its peak of growth around the age of 20, then ages, and eventually dies.

But that's not the case with the spirit. **The spirit doesn't age or die like the physical body.** Then, what happens to our spirits after the death of our physical bodies?

There are different views on this, even within Christianity.

1) After the death of the body, **our souls will be in a state of sleep** and later come back to life at the resurrection of the body on the day Jesus returns.

2) After the death of the body, **the soul exists in another spiritual place** and will be reunited with the body at the resurrection.

#11 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

Both of these views have their basis in the Bible.

We read the story of the beggar Lazarus and the rich man after their deaths. And Jesus said to the criminal on the cross that he would be with Him in paradise that day.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, “Remember him before... The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it”

These are passages that support the latter view.

Either way, what's certain is that both views support life after death. Our lives do not end with the death of our bodies. Even though we experience physical death here on earth, our spirits won't die.

“It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Heb 9:27)

The fact that it is appointed for a person to die once implies that there is life after death. This life after death will be eternal, and where it is spent will be determined at the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ.

#12 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt 10:28)

Then, this is what we know from the words, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Lk 23:46)

Jesus knew that His death would not be the end. He would experience death soon, but His spirit would be with His heavenly Father.

So, the seventh statement Jesus made on the cross gives us hope for eternal life. Even though we will all die like everyone else, we know that we'll be with the Lord forever.

This is the life we as Christians should expect and prepare for. Christians do not see life on earth as an end in itself. So **they live as strangers and travelers on earth** because they believe in eternal life in the Kingdom of God after death.

#13 (7) Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit

They strive to keep their God-given souls untainted by the filth of the world. They are not afraid of suffering and death; they humbly entrust their souls to God and joyfully follow His will, whatever comes their way, like Jesus did.

“Therefore **put away all filthiness** and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.**” (Jms 1:21, ESV)

“Those who suffer according to God's will **entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.**” (1Pt 4:19, ESV)

This is the life to which we must look and pursue by faith. Suffering will come if we live according to God's will on this earth by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. But when it does, instead of despairing and becoming discouraged, we can continue to pursue God's will with joy, overcoming our fear and suffering, because we know that God will bring us to live with Him forever.

Memory Verses

“Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.” (Lk 23:46) (1)

“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” (Gn 2:7) (1)

“Remember him before ... the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Ec 12:6-7) (1)

“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt 10:28) (1)

“Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (Jms 1:21, ESV) (1)

Those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” (1Pt 4:19, ESV) (1)

Reflection Questions

1. Do you think humans have a spirit, soul, and body? What do you think their functions are? Where does the human spirit come from? What is the main difference between the spirit and the body?

2. Why do you think God gave people spirit? What's the role of the human spirit? Do you think you are using your spirit according to that purpose?

3. What do you think happens to your spirit after your physical death? What does Jesus' last statement on the cross say about this? Why is this important for us to know as Christians?