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Frank W. Nelte

THE SPIRIT IN MAN

In this article I will present a considerable amount of speculation. My purpose is to open your mind to some understanding of the greater picture concerning the circumstances in which we human beings operate and live our lives. I would like to make you think things through. **A number of the details I will present are my speculations**, in the hope that they may help all of us progress towards a better overall perspective regarding all of God's dealings with us human beings. But being speculations, this also means that I may come to see that some of the analogies and explanations I will present are not correct, and therefore I reserve the right to modify some of the things I will say here, should I come to see that some of my statements are wrong. The things in this article are assuredly not "written in stone".

That's what "speculation" should always mean, right? We speculate because we don't know something for certain. My intention is to come to a correct and also a more complete understanding. So right from the start I am comfortable with the prospect that it is quite likely that there will be some details I may later have to change in the things that I will present in this present article.

Consider the information in this article as **a work in progress** aimed at refining the overall picture and bringing it into a sharper, even if not perfect, focus. So with that proviso here goes.

MATTER AND SPIRIT

We human beings are physical beings, and we exist in an environment that is composed of physical matter. **Not all physical matter is the same**. Different physical elements have different attributes and different characteristics, which makes provision for those different elements to be put to **different uses**. And even though we human beings are physical, that doesn't mean that we blend into our physical environment. Rather, every single one of us human beings is a distinct and separate entity within this whole physical environment which makes up our living space.

But God is a spirit being, and God exists in an environment that is composed of spirit. [COMMENT: In this article the term "God" will in many cases be applicable to both God the Father and also to Jesus Christ. You should be able to recognize when that is the case, as for example in the above statement.]

Now in the same way that not all physical matter is the same, so also **not all spirit is the same**. Different "elements" (for lack of a better term) of spirit can be put to different uses by spirit beings, even as we human beings in our context can put different physical elements to different uses. Why do I say this?

In the New Jerusalem there will be "the tree of life" (see Revelation 22:2). And that tree of life is going to produce "**twelve** manner of fruits" (same verse). Those "12 fruits" are all manifestations of spirit, because that whole new creation will be a spirit environment, essentially composed of the same spirit "elements" that made up the environment in which God the Father and Jesus Christ had existed for past eternity before They created the present physical universe. Those "12 fruits" are **12 different forms of spirit**, which will quite likely be put to **different uses**. They are not there simply to provide some superficial variety of the same thing. They are different from one another.

When God gave Israel the manna in the wilderness, the people could eat it raw, or they could cook it or bake it or grind it. But irrespective of how they chose to prepare the manna, it was always the one same

food. But **that is not the way the "12 fruits" in the New Jerusalem will be**. Those "12 fruits" will be distinct from one another in certain attributes; they will not be the same product presented in 12 different forms of packaging.

Let's take a look at Revelation 22.

> And he showed me **a pure river of water of life**, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God **and of the Lamb**. In the midst of the street of it, and **on either side of the river**, *was there* **the tree of life**, which bare **twelve *manner of* fruits**, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree ***were* for the healing** of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2)

[Comment: The words "***were* for the healing**" are an inappropriate translation of the Greek expression "eis therapeian". There is no verb in this last part of verse 2, and so you see that the word "were" is printed in italics. This statement is not at all talking about "healing" anyone! The Greek "eis therapeian" literally means "towards serving the well-being of (the nations)". The leaves are not for healing anyone. The leaves are for making available **additional benefits** for the spirit-born members of the Family of God, none of whom will ever need "healing". The translators didn't remotely grasp what information this verse presents to us.]

The "water of life" is the holy spirit, which makes life possible. All life everywhere depends on that "water of life", and without that "water of life" life is simply not possible. That water represents spirit, specifically the spirit of God. But this also already tells us that conscious life, be it physical life or be it spirit life, is not possible without the presence of a spirit.

Next, notice that both God the Father and Jesus Christ are sources of this spirit, this "water of life", because it emanates from both of Their thrones.

[Comment: The words "**and of the Lamb**" in Revelation 22:1 are the only statement you need to prove that **Jesus Christ has always existed** with God the Father! If Jesus Christ had at some point in the past been created by God the Father, as some heretics are asserting, then Jesus Christ could not possibly be a source of "the water of life". Therefore this statement about the water of life also proceeding out of the throne of the Lamb is just as powerful an irrefutable proof that Jesus Christ has always existed with God the Father, as the statement "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" is an irrefutable proof that there will be a resurrection (see Matthew 22:31-33). Both these statements have implications that are obvious to a mind that is guided by God's spirit, but which implications carnal unconverted minds are not really capable of comprehending.]

The reference to the tree of life being on both sides of that river of holy spirit coming from God the Father and from Jesus Christ uses the word "tree" in the generic singular, as a category of trees as it were. But in practical terms it means that **there are very many of these specific trees on both sides of this stream of holy spirit**. It is not just one single tree, as was the case in the garden in Eden. Here in the New Jerusalem the picture is one of many, many trees growing on both sides of this spirit river and being nourished by that river.

We have the same type of use of the singular by the Apostle Paul in referring to nine fruits of God's spirit. Notice Galatians 5:22-23.

> But **the fruit of the Spirit is** love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

The expression “the fruit of the spirit is” is singular, with a singular noun “the fruit” and a singular verb “is”. The same is true for the Greek text with the Greek expression “ho de karpos ... estin” expressing the singular case. And then Paul presents **nine different fruits**. So why did Paul use the singular expression “the fruit ... is” to refer to nine different fruits? Why didn’t Paul say “the fruits of the spirit are ...”, which is what we today would expect?

Notice also God’s use of the singular in Genesis 6:3.

> And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always **strive with man**, for that **he also *is* flesh**: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. (Genesis 6:3)

God was here speaking about striving with **millions of people** when God said “... not always strive **with man**”, and when God said “**he** also is flesh”. It is because God has used the singular for man here, and also elsewhere, that we can conclude that the Hebrew word “adam” can also mean “mankind”. Appropriately attaching the meaning “mankind” to the Hebrew word “adam” is a tacit acknowledgment that God will at times use the singular when the plural is really meant.

The point is that here in Genesis 6:3 God clearly used the singular form, and then in the next verse it repeatedly uses the plural forms, as in “giants”, “sons”, “daughters” and “mighty men”. So the singular case in verse 3 obviously included the plural forms presented in verse 4.

So based on the description in Revelation 22:2 stating that the tree of life was found **on both sides of that river** of holy spirit, I conclude that there will be many individual trees growing on both sides of that river. It is the river that makes possible the growth of the tree of life. **The purpose of the river is to produce growth at every stage of its course**, rather than flowing off “into the sunset”, to be utilized in some way somewhere away from God’s presence. I expect both banks of that river to be generously covered by the tree of life, representing abundant and easy access by huge numbers of individuals to the fruits that tree will produce. And there will be no other kinds of trees in that environment.

Anyway, to continue:

It is the holy spirit that emanates from God the Father and from Jesus Christ which is required to produce these specific “twelve fruits” (the words “manner of” are not found in the Greek text).

So I believe that spirit comes in at least 12 different forms. But I suspect that in totality in God’s presence there are more than just 12 different forms of spirit. Consider what Paul explained in Romans chapter 1.

> Because **that which may be known of God** is manifest in them; for **God has showed *it* unto them**. (Romans 1:19)

There are things that God wants us to know, and so God has revealed those things. And there are other things that God does not want us to know, things which Moses referred to as “the secret things” (see Deuteronomy 29:29), and so those things are hidden from us human beings.

As far as the things God wants us to know are concerned: what God has shown us is the physical creation all around us, and of which we are a part. In the next verse in Romans Paul explains exactly what he had in mind with his statement.

> For **the invisible things of him** from the creation of the world are clearly seen, **being understood** by the things that are made, ***even*** **his eternal power and Godhead**; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:20)

Do you grasp what Paul is here telling us?

Paul is saying that the invisible things of God can be known if we are willing to look at **the physical creation**, and if we can understand that it is **patterned after the spirit world** in which God exists. The physical creation can tell us things about both God's eternal power and also about "the Godhead", i.e. about the Family that God is in the process of creating.

In our physical environment we have 94 different elements that occur naturally. (Elements 95-118 only come into existence either in a laboratory or in a nuclear reactor.) So does that suggest that there are at least 94 different "elements" of spirit? I don't know. But the fact that God created so many different elements of physical matter with **very distinct attributes for each element**, and with the ability to form an infinite number of bonds between two or more elements strongly suggests to me that God patterned our physical creation after a considerable number of different "elements" of spirit, each with distinct attributes, but also with the ability for all of these "spirit elements" to form "chemical" bonds with other "spirit elements" (i.e. the spiritual equivalent of H_2O, NaCl, etc.), existing in God's environment. (Obviously, those bonds are not "chemical", but I'd like you to consider the possible parallel in the spirit environment which God inhabits.)

> **We are supposed to understand certain things about God's power by looking at the physical creation around us.**

The "power" in our physical environment is released so that it may be utilized when two or more elements interact in certain ways. **As long as there is only one element present nothing happens.** For anything to happen, i.e. for power to be made available, two or more elements must interact in some way. In our physical environment a common second element needed to cause something to happen is oxygen.

Now is this process in our physical world supposed to tell us something about God's "eternal power" and how that power is released and utilized? **Why** did God create this physical creation so that nothing happens unless two or more elements interact?

Is this perhaps an indication that in the spirit realm nothing happens unless two or more different spirit "elements" interact in some way? Can the "12 manner of fruits" from the tree of life interact with each other in various ways to achieve various results? Can you see potential parallels between the physical creation and the spirit world?

It is clear that God the Father and Jesus Christ are both composed of spirit. Now when They decided to create all the angels, I suspect that they used a form (i.e. "element") of spirit that is different from the form of spirit of which They themselves are composed ... somewhat like carbon, iron, oxygen, gold, etc. all being physical elements, but also all of them being unique and different from every other physical element.

Then, when God the Father and Jesus Christ decided to create a Family of born sons and daughters, I suspect that They decided to somehow use the same form ("element") of spirit of which They themselves are composed, and **that is what makes God the Father "the Father" of His Family**, that we will all be composed of the very same form of spirit of which God Himself is composed. And that is why the righteous angels, who without question are extremely important in God's overall plan, are not

literally “God’s sons” (see Paul’s comments in Hebrews 1:13-14).

[**Comment:** The angels being referred to as “the sons of God” in Job 38:7 is somewhat like Paul calling Timothy “my own son in the faith” in 1 Timothy 1:2. Strictly speaking, the Hebrew word for “son” (i.e. “ben”) literally means “the product of”. The angels are “God’s sons” in the sense that they were created or “produced” by God. But they are not “God’s sons” by means of a specific birth process, which will be the case for all human beings that become a part of God’s Family. And neither are the angels necessarily composed of the same “element” of spirit as God the Father and Jesus Christ.]

Think about the possibility of different forms of spirit! And consider also what Paul told the Corinthians in regard to the resurrection.

> **All flesh *is* not the same flesh**: but *there is* one *kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds. *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another. *There is* one glory of the **sun**, and another glory of the **moon**, and another glory of the **stars**: for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory. **So also *is* the resurrection** of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: (1 Corinthians 15:39-42)

I believe that it is also true to say “**all spirit is not the same spirit**”. The pattern we see in differences between the sun and moon and stars, and then amongst the stars themselves, very likely mirrors different kinds of spirit in the spirit realm, where different kinds of spirit are put to different uses, even as gold and carbon and iron are put to different uses from one another. So while I certainly cannot prove this, it would not surprise me if all the angels were created from one “kind of spirit”, whereas all of us who will eventually be a part of the Family of God will be created from the “God kind of spirit”, **thereby** having been begotten and born as God’s children.

Next, while we human beings are all physical beings, we are nevertheless very emphatically distinct individual beings in the overall physical environment that God has created (i.e. the whole universe). Likewise, while God is assuredly a spirit being, God is at the same time distinct from the overall spirit environment in which God exists. God the Father is a distinct individual, and Jesus Christ is a distinct individual, and all of the angels are distinct individuals within the overall spirit environment in which God exists and functions.

TWO BROAD CATEGORIES OF SPIRIT

There is **one type of spirit** to which God by a specific process can impart a consciousness and an awareness and an identity. This type of spirit **can have a mind**, and **an independent will**, to think and to reason and to reach decisions totally independently of any other person or any other mind. This is the type of spirit that is present in every angel and obviously also in God, and **this type of spirit enables spirit beings to have the minds and the identities that they have**. Perhaps this is a category of spirit that God the Father and Jesus Christ were able to somehow bring into existence from the second category of spirit discussed below?

There is **a second type or category of spirit** that may not have the potential to have an awareness or a consciousness or a mind. This category cannot guide or direct itself. But **if utilized** by a conscious mind it is extremely powerful. There may perhaps be many different kinds of spirit that fall into this category, but I really don’t know that. This category of spirit is used by spirit beings that have independent minds. This category is used to achieve and to accomplish goals and to get work done. This category consists of the types of spirit that we also collectively refer to as “**the powers of God**”.

This is the category of spirit that is represented by the “pure river of water of life” in Revelation 22:1. This category of spirit is in a sense the building block for the twelve fruits (and any others?) mentioned in Revelation 22:2; those fruits are produced by utilizing this second type of spirit.

As a broad parallel to these two big categories of spirit perhaps we can think of “organic substances” and “inorganic substances”. Perhaps there is a parallel here?

I don’t have any ideas whatsoever regarding how God, who has always existed, was able to change some spirit that has no consciousness and no awareness or individual identity, since there was a time when God the Father and Jesus Christ were the only “individual identities” in existence, into a type of spirit that can generate its own thoughts and wishes and desires; in other words, the type of spirit that can have its own individual identity. But that is what God was able to achieve when God created first the angels and then later also human beings.

Whether we call it “a category of spirit” or whether we refer to it as “God is able to instill consciousness and awareness and identity and free will into some spirit essence that previously lacked these attributes” is not really of any consequence. What is important is that God is able to infuse some spirit essence into a body, which spirit essence will then give that “body” awareness and a free independent will.

We should recognize that the first category of spirit I have listed above does not of and by itself have any consciousness or awareness or identity. It cannot express these specific attributes on its own or by itself. It is only when this type of spirit is placed within a body, be it a spirit body or be it a physical body, which body has a brain (or in the angels the equivalent of a brain) to control the functioning of that body, that then this category of spirit is able to express these attributes. In effect, this category of spirit is **an enabler to a brain**. It empowers that brain to express identity and awareness and consciousness. But without a brain in a body, this category of spirit is probably quite similar to the second category of spirit, the pure river of water of life.

That brings us to the time when God created the angels.

THE CREATION OF THE ANGELS

At some point God the Father and Jesus Christ knew that They could create free independent minds if They first created a body with a brain (or equivalent) to control all the functions of that body, and if They then added this first category of spirit to that body.

For the creation of human life God followed two steps:

First God created the body for Adam “of the dust of the ground”. That body was designed to be controlled by the brain within that body. Then, secondly, God “breathed into his nostrils” (Genesis 2:7), giving Adam the spirit in man, and Adam became “a living soul”.

I suspect that **this two-step process** followed a precedent which God had previously established when God created the angels. First God created the spirit bodies for the angels, and then God placed the “first category of spirit” within the “spirit brain” of each of these spirit bodies for the angels. In that way God imparted life to all the angels. And every angel instantly had a mind and a unique identity and an awareness of the environment all around.

For every angel there are two distinct components: there is a mind that resides within a spirit body and which mind controls that spirit body. Put another way, the mind is composed of the first type of spirit, and it resides in a body composed of the second type of spirit.

Having two distinct components is also true for us human beings: we all have a mind which resides within our physical bodies and our minds control our physical bodies. And that will still be true in the resurrection: our minds will then reside within spirit bodies. We need to grasp that for every spirit being there are two very distinct components: a spirit body and a mind that controls that spirit body. That amounts to a spirit residing within and controlling a spirit body.

[COMMENT: My understanding here is obviously vague. I don't know that angels necessarily have "a spirit brain" with two hemispheres, like our physical brains. But somewhere in each angel there is a "command center" or a "control center", where the angel's thoughts originate and are processed. That "control center" I believe is in the head of each angel, and above I have referred to it as "a mind". For lack of a better way to express this concept I will also use the term "spirit brain".]

Creating the angels was a totally new experience for God. With the angels God had created beings with independent minds and independent thoughts. God is always positive, and so God anticipated the best possible results, largely assuming that all the angels with independent minds would use their minds in exactly the same ways that God the Father and Jesus Christ use Their independent minds. But that assumption needed to be tested. And therefore God exposed all of the angels to certain testing conditions.

The test for one third of the angels, under the leadership of the one we know as Satan, was to prepare this planet Earth for God's next major project, the creation of human beings. The other two thirds of the angels were most assuredly also tested somewhere in some way. But that information is one of "the secret things" and it is not revealed, and it is not really for us to know. What we do know is that all of them remained faithful to God. But the one third under Satan's leadership all rebelled against God. Leadership, both good and bad, can have very powerful consequences for the individuals who are under such leadership.

I don't know exactly how this works, but when this first category of spirit is placed within a body with a brain, then the individual with this spirit influencing and motivating his brain has a totally free will and free choice for a period of time. As that free will makes decisions, so that spirit starts to lose some of its flexibility, and it starts to solidify ... perhaps somewhat like extremely wet cement very gradually drying out and hardening. That's the best analogy I can currently think of. I have no idea how long that flexibility remains. But with every decision that the independent mind makes it becomes more inclined to make future decisions based on the same moral criteria as the past decisions.

So making right decisions increases the likelihood of making more right decisions. And making wrong decisions increases the likelihood of making more wrong decisions. There are only two basic choices: are decisions motivated by selfish incoming thoughts and desires, or are decisions motivated by selfless outgoing thoughts? Is the motivation for all decisions based on "the way of give" or is it based on "the way of get"?

> **At some point the spirit influencing that body with a brain becomes set in its views and perspective of life. I have no idea regarding how long that might take.**

What I do know is that the spirit controlling the spirit brains of all the angels that rebelled with Satan has set! At this stage it cannot ever change. And the spirit controlling the spirit brains of all of the righteous angels has also set. It also can never change.

How long it took for both groups to get to this point is not revealed or even hinted at. But both groups, God's holy angels and also the demons, are now irreversibly locked into the moral standards they have accepted. The minds of the holy angels are now set in God's outgoing way of thinking, and the minds of

the demons are now set in Satan's selfish way of thinking. Neither group is now able to change to the opposite perspective. But within those two respective ways of thinking they still have their free will; it is just that the moral standards that will dominate their decision-making are now irreversibly fixed.

This means that the demons can never be rehabilitated, because they cannot change away from their selfish way of thinking. So God will banish them to "the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 1:13).

When God created the angels, God had committed unconditionally to giving them an immortal existence. There was no threat to any angel, such as "if you don't toe the line then I will just blot out your existence and you will cease to exist". There was no reason for any angel to have a spirit of fear. So when one third of the angels did rebel against God, then blotting out their existence was not an option for God. Therefore God determined to banish the rebel angels to "the blackness of darkness".

This penalty of banishing the demons to "the blackness of darkness" is to me a clear indication that God had not actually been prepared for this rebellion amongst the angels God had created. Had God actually anticipated this kind of rebellion by some of the angels God had created, then I believe God would have up-front also made provision for blotting out the existence of all those angels who would rebel. Satan's rebellion caught God somewhat unprepared, even as man's perverse and "only evil continually" nature (see Genesis 6:5) also caught God somewhat unprepared for this universal level of evil. The flood was God's response to this unexpected development amongst humans, and banishment to the blackness of darkness will be God's response to the unexpected rebellion amongst the angels.

But this experience with the angels also showed God that in the future God had to be prepared to deal with any free, independent minds that would not accept God's outgoing selfless way of thinking. A more desirable solution than banishment was to completely erase the existence of such rebellious minds, to permanently blot them out and to destroy any record or memory that they (the rebellious minds) had ever existed. And that is what God will eventually do with human beings that don't meet God's conditions.

THE CREATION OF MAN

So God determined to create human beings out of physical matter, with the certainty of death for rebellion against God built into this creation up front. Guaranteed automatic immortality, as was the case for the angels, was not a part of that picture. Rather, all those human beings who would not at some point voluntarily accept God's way of thinking would in due time be permanently blotted out.

Now let's for a moment consider the category of spirit that imparts consciousness and self-identity and a free will to a body with a brain, the one I earlier referred to as "the first category of spirit", the category that at some point becomes set either in its agreement with God's standards or else in its opposition to God's way of thinking.

With the angels God had put this category of spirit into their spirit bodies, putting a spirit into spirit beings. With human beings God put this category of spirit into physical bodies. So we human beings are physical beings with a spirit that enables us to have consciousness, awareness and a mind that can freely make its own decisions.

We refer to this spirit that enables us to have these attributes as "**the spirit in man**". I believe that likewise there is a spirit in the angels that imparts to those spirit beings these same attributes of consciousness, awareness and a free mind. We might call it "the spirit in angels". The angels have very powerful minds, but they don't think with their hands or their feet. And it is not the whole spirit body of the angels that does the thinking. It is "the spirit brain" inside their spirit bodies, controlled by that first category of spirit, that controls all the thinking the angels engage in. They think with their "spirit brains".

For us human beings the process is somewhat different. For us it is a case of a spirit controlling a physical body. Our bodies and our brains are composed of physical matter. But the spirit in man is non-physical. So for the non-physical spirit in man to exercise control over a physical human body requires **some kind of transition between spirit and physical matter**.

Under normal conditions physical matter cannot communicate with spirit, and spirit cannot communicate with physical matter. So for a spirit to be capable of influencing a physical body, there must be a way for that spirit to communicate with the physical matter that makes up the body. And there must be a way for the physical body to send feedback information to the spirit in man. In today's terminology we would say: it requires **an interface** between the spirit in man and the physical matter that constitutes the body, an interface between the spirit and the flesh.

So let's take a closer look at the spirit in man.

THE SPIRIT IN MAN

Consider the following scenario.

Two men drive out to a ranch. There they see a man riding on a horse. Both men see the identical picture before them. Man #1 thinks "I would also like to ride a horse". Man #2 thinks "no way will I ever get on a horse".

Those are the expressions of the free will of both these men. What happened here is this:

The spirit dwelling in man #1 evaluated the circumstances and came to have a desire to ride a horse. Our thoughts start out being non-physical. Thoughts are an expression of spirit. But as soon as the spirit in man generated those thoughts, the man's brain converted those thoughts into billions of microscopic electro-chemical reactions within the brain. It is those minute electro-chemical reactions that then create an awareness of these thoughts in the man's mind. So **the brain converts non-physical thoughts into chemical reactions that are physical**. The brain provides the interface. (Later I'll discuss this situation with more specifics.)

In this way our brains make possible the communication between spirit and matter. What starts out as spirit (i.e. our thoughts generated by the spirit in man) is by our brains converted into matter (i.e. the electro-chemical reactions in our brains). And it is only once the thoughts generated by the spirit in man have been converted into matter that we ourselves become aware of those thoughts. In practice **this all happens instantaneously**, with billions of these electro-chemical reactions taking place every single second in our brains.

In this picture the influence of the spirit in man is seen where one spirit in man triggers the thought "I also want to ride a horse", while the other spirit in man triggers the thought "I don't ever want to ride a horse". These two different thoughts result in two completely different cascades of electro-chemical reactions in the brains of these two men. Those two cascades of reactions take completely different synaptic routes through the brains of these two men, even if both cascades occur in the same general areas of the brain.

Now it gets a bit complicated. What seems to me to be the situation regarding the spirit in man is as follows:

1) The spirit in man is something that we ourselves cannot really perceive. And so not surprisingly modern science doesn't believe that we have a spirit within us that goes back to God when we die. Science denies the existence of this spirit in man.

2) We human beings are physical and God created us in a way so that **we can only perceive things that are physical**. Our perception is restricted to input that reaches our brains coming from one or more of the five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. And the initial phase of perception then takes place in our brains, where all the information received is converted into billions of microscopic electro-chemical reactions every single second.

> To be quite clear: **our perception is always a consequence of, or a response to, those microscopic reactions** that were triggered by the information that reached our brains.

That initial phase of perception consists of a series of chemical reactions in our brains. But that is not the final perception, or let's call that "the conscious perception". Conscious perception only occurs one step further down the line. I'll explain in a moment.

3) Now thoughts are not physical. Thoughts are produced by the spirit in man, and thoughts are spiritual.

4) To bring those thoughts to our conscious awareness, the brain also turns our thoughts into microscopic electro-chemical reactions.

A DIAGRAM ANALOGY

In **a simple diagram** form we can draw three small circles on one horizontal line next to one another. The circle on the left we call "**spirit in man**", the circle in the middle we call "**the human brain**", and the circle on the right we call "**the five senses**". The circle in the middle is joined to the circle on the left by **two parallel flow-lines**, with the top line having an arrow pointing to the left circle, and with the bottom line having an arrow pointing to the circle in the middle. Then we draw the same two flow-lines between the circle in the middle and the circle on the right.

Here is what this diagram pictures:

The human brain is in the middle. The brain receives **input** from the spirit in man on the left, and it receives input from the five senses on the right. But the brain also forwards **output** to both the spirit in man on the left and to the five senses on the right. That is pictured by the two flow-lines on either side of the circle in the middle. Can you see how this presents the brain as an the interface between spirit and matter?

5) Now the spirit in man itself is an extremely complex entity, with a range of different functions dealt with by different parts of that spirit in man.

Let me give you another speculation, which I don't think you have ever considered:

We know that our brains consist of three major parts: the cerebrum, the cerebellum and the brain stem. But the cerebrum is also divided into different parts known as lobes. Different lobes of the brain control different functions. All this you already know.

> **Now I suspect that the structuring of our physical brains is based on the way God has structured the spirit in man. In other words, our brains are in a manner of speaking a physical representation of the way the spirit in man is organized.**

Our brains are extremely complex, but they are structured to very efficiently deal simultaneously with vast amounts of input. I believe that the spirit in man is likewise structured to simultaneously deal with

numerous different forms of input.

We simply cannot pigeonhole the spirit in man to one function and one function only, when the human brain is capable of simultaneously dealing with a vast amount of input that arrives in different forms. If anything, I suspect that the spirit in man is even more diversified, to deal with many more different situations than the physical brain.

6) Earlier I referred to “initial perception” taking place in the brain when those microscopic reactions take place. But this is only the first step towards our conscious perception. I believe that those microscopic reactions that constitute that initial perception send signals back to the “perception center” of the spirit in man. And that “perception center” (or “perception lobe”?) of the spirit in man then translates this into our conscious awareness. Now we are finally aware of things.

Let’s use another analogy to look at this from a different angle. This analogy is from the world of computers:

A typical personal computer has a **CPU** (central processing unit) where all the information available is processed, where the number-crunching takes place. It also commonly has a **HD** (hard disk) for storing vast amounts of information. And then it can have several **input devices**, like a keyboard, a mouse and CD/DVD drives. For **output** the computer may be attached to a monitor and to a printer and to a pair of speakers.

There are different ways this analogy can be applied to the relationship between the physical brain and the spirit in man. Here’s how I would like to use this analogy:

A) The **spirit in man** is like the CPU **and also** the huge hard disk for storage rolled into one. And the **physical brain** is like an input device **and also** an output device rolled into one.

B) The brain constantly receives a staggering amount of input from the environment via the five senses. The brain superficially processes this information, much like a keyboard converts every keystroke into a series of electric impulses which the CPU will understand, and the brain then forwards that partially processed information to the CPU part of the spirit in man.

C) There, in the CPU part of the spirit in man, that information is really processed. Processing in the CPU of a computer is very much dependent on specific software programs stored on the computer’s hard disk that the CPU is given access to (i.e. whichever programs are open at the time the information is sent to the CPU).

D) Now if access to specific software programs is denied to the CPU (i.e. those programs have not been opened) then the information sent to the CPU is useless and does not accomplish anything.

E) Likewise, the CPU part of the spirit in man draws on information stored on the hard disk part of the spirit in man in order to process the information it has received from the brain.

F) Having processed the information, the CPU part of the spirit in man then makes a decision regarding what actions should be taken. That decision is then forwarded to an output device in the form of a thought, the equivalent of a physical CPU sending information to a monitor or to a printer. For the spirit in man CPU the output device is the physical brain, to which the spirit in man sends the decision (i.e. the thought) it has reached.

G) In the brain that thought (i.e. the decision) is converted into physical microscopic reactions, billions of them every second. Those microscopic reactions in the brain are sent back to the “perception center” of

the spirit in man, which then enables us to consciously perceive that thought.

Yes, this certainly is a major speculation on my part, and the analogy may fall short in certain ways. But let me present **another parallel**.

On my computer I have a word processor program called “Word Perfect” (WP). I also have a number of Bible software programs, including one called “The Online Bible” (OLB). Now while both of these programs are on the hard disk of my computer, they don’t really talk to one another. So I might be typing an article in WP. Then I want to include a verse from the Bible. So I exit WP and enter the OLB program. There I enter an instruction which amounts to saying “I want the text of Romans 1:20 inserted into the WP document I am working on”.

While I am doing that in the OLB program, the WP program is totally oblivious to where I have gone; WP has no idea that I am now looking at something in the Online Bible. The Online Bible, in turn, has no idea that I am also working on a document in WP. So when I then say “I want Romans 1:20 copied into my WP document, the Online Bible has no idea how to find the WP program, even though both programs are stored on the same hard disk.

So I have to accomplish my task in a roundabout way. I copy Romans 1:20 from the OLB program to the computer’s “Clipboard” (like sending a thought from the spirit in man to the brain). Then I go back into WP and retrieve Romans 1:20 from the Clipboard (like the awareness center in the spirit in man retrieving the processed thought from the brain).

In this whole process the two different programs (WP and OLB) have no idea that they are in fact neighbors on the same hard disk. They can only talk to each other through an intermediary (i.e. the Clipboard), which intermediary never reveals the actual locations of each program to any other program. The Clipboard in effect says to the word processor: if you want to receive any information from any other program, then you must always work through me.

No doubt this analogy also falls short in certain respects. But my point is this: is it perhaps possible that a number of different “programs” are stored in the spirit in man, and some of them cannot communicate with one another except through the interface of the physical brain?

Consider another computer analogy:

Let’s say you install a dozen different software programs on your computer: word processors, spreadsheets, language software, etc. Each one of those programs had a specific “install” file, which told the computer where to find that program and how to access it. Then you for some reason “uninstall” one of those programs, say your word processor. Later you want that word processor back on your computer. But instead of using the “install” file, you simply copy the whole program CD to your hard drive. And then when you try to open that word processor, it doesn’t work! It’s sitting on your hard drive okay, but your computer can’t find it in order to open it. That’s because you didn’t “install” it properly. Your computer doesn’t know that it is there, and so your computer won’t let you access it.

My point is: Can there be things “installed” in our spirit in man that we ourselves are not even aware of, simply because the conscious awareness program in our spirit in man could only find those things by going through “the Clipboard” (i.e. the brain) to recognize those things?

So my speculation is: There may well be any number of things that are already “installed” in our spirit in man that we ourselves are not even aware of. That’s because those things can only be accessed by our conscious awareness going through the interface of the physical brain, even though our conscious awareness is also located in the spirit in man. And we ourselves are not aware of those things because

they have thus far never yet been addressed by our conscious awareness.

Some things are pre-installed in our spirit in man at the time when we draw our first breath. And other things are only installed in our spirit in man at various times throughout our lives.

Pre-installed things in the spirit in man include:

1) The carnal mind that is hostile towards God.

2) Our conscious awareness of self and of our environment.

3) Our free will, our decision-making center.

Things installed in our spirit in man at some later time include:

1) A spirit of fear.

2) The holy spirit.

3) Character. etc.

As far as the pre-installed things are concerned: we are readily aware of our own free will and our awareness of who we are. But our carnal mind that is hostile towards God is usually not something we are aware of. That is somewhat like one of the hidden programs that is always running in the background of our minds without ever revealing itself.

As far as the things that are installed later in our spirit in man are concerned: We usually are quite aware of having certain irrational fears (of the dark, of strangers, water, snakes, heights, etc.). But the holy spirit is not really something we are aware of. Yes, we can boldly assert that we have God's spirit guiding our minds, but we can't really sense it physically. And there have been huge numbers of people over the past 2000 years, probably running into the millions, who confidently believed that they also had God's spirit, when they in fact didn't have God's spirit at all. The same goes for character ... we ourselves aren't really aware of our own character, though we may have "an image" of ourselves.

Here are some things for us to consider, how the spirit in man and/or the brain are involved in the following processes:

1) The generation of a thought.

2) Becoming aware of that thought.

3) Evaluating that thought. Taking control of the thought.

4) Exercising free will to make a decision in response to that thought.

5) Where appropriate, going about converting that decision into action.

6) The development of godly character.

These are things that you can think about and then try to reach your own conclusions. Here I want to just briefly consider the process of someone coming to repentance:

Thoughts are generated by the spirit in man. But it is also the spirit in man that harbors a spontaneous hostility towards God; it is the spirit in man and not the physical brain that is responsible for “the carnal mind” (Romans 8:7). It follows that therefore **the spirit in man must also be involved in the process of repenting**.

Now when someone comes into contact with God’s Church and then “wants to repent”, they change some of their conduct and actions (e.g. replace breaking the Sabbath with keeping the Sabbath, etc.). That’s fine and it is a good start. But that is only the beginning of the process. The main part still lies ahead.

> When I say that repentance involves changing the way we use our minds, then I mean that **something in our spirit in man has to change** when we repent.

Now we get back to those things installed in our spirit in man that we usually are not even aware of. We are (or were) not aware of those things because we had never before addressed them with our conscious awareness. They have been like hidden programs installed on the hard disk of our spirit in man.

So starting to implement God’s laws in our own lives (e.g. keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days, not eating unclean foods, tithing, not smoking, etc.) focuses our conscious awareness on all these things, things we had never before been motivated to do.

> **This becomes the critical moment!**

By our conscious awareness focusing on all these aspects of implementing God’s laws in our own lives, we have the opportunity to actually identify some of those “hidden programs” in our spirit in man. At this point some people will see these hidden aspects of their own spirit in man, and other people who have also started to apply God’s laws in their lives will not see those hidden aspects.

Put another way, at this point some people will see that hidden “enmity towards God’s laws” program in their spirit in man, and other people won’t see it. This has major consequences.

Seeing this hidden “enmity towards God’s laws” program in our own spirit in man is a prerequisite for changing the way we think, the way we use our minds. Those people who, after starting to keep God’s laws, cannot see this hidden program are also not able to change the way they use their minds. In other words, those who cannot see this hidden program also cannot really repent. That is because real repentance involves confronting specifically this particular program hidden in the unexplored corners of our spirit in man.

In plain words: repentance is a response to having recognized that enmity towards God’s laws in our own minds.

That is what repentance is primarily all about, confronting our spirit in man’s spontaneous animosity towards God and God’s laws. The outward trappings of repentance (i.e. keeping the Sabbath, etc.) are only secondary, in so far as they are inevitable consequences of having first confronted and then rejected that spontaneous animosity, and replaced it with a willing obedience to God.

Anyone who does not willingly obey all of the laws of God that he is aware of obviously still harbors that resentment and animosity. Someone like that is obviously unrepentant.

Here is what we need to recognize:

The real power resides in the spirit in man making choices and expressing desires and preferences. Our free will and our awareness and our identity all reside in the spirit in man. And therefore it is the spirit in man within us that must come to repentance. That is the spirit that goes back to God at death, and which God at the time of the resurrection will place within a spirit body.

As far as the origin and the processing of a thought are concerned, here is an over-simplified sequence of the events that are involved:

1) The spirit in man generates a thought (e.g. I want to ride a horse).

2) But by itself the spirit in man has no awareness or consciousness, and our spirit in man cannot communicate directly with our conscious awareness.

3) So we personally are not yet aware of the thought the spirit in man in us has generated.

4) Our brains then convert our non-physical thoughts into billions of microscopic electro-chemical reactions, where chemical messages are transferred between various parts of our brains.

5) It is those billions of electro-chemical reactions in our brains that create in us an awareness of the thoughts, which thoughts the spirit in man within us had generated.

6) The speed at which these reactions take place in our brains is beyond our comprehension, so that for all practical purposes the generation of a thought by the spirit in man and our conscious perception of that thought are simultaneous, even though they very likely are consecutive.

The important point here is that we understand that it is not our brains that generate the thoughts we have. **Our thoughts are generated by the spirit in man**, which spirit God has committed Himself to give to every human being at birth. The function of the brain in this specific process is to convert something that is spirit into matter by means of electro-chemical reactions. Those chemical reactions are then processed by our awareness center in the spirit in man, and we become consciously aware of them. That's like taking a verse from the Bible program and placing it in the Clipboard before pasting it into our word processing document, where the Bible program and the word processor are in fact neighbors on the hard drive to start with. Can you follow the analogy?

The main point I am trying to make here is:

The human brain provides the interface between the spirit world and the physical world.

<u>THE BRAIN DOES NOT ORIGINATE THOUGHTS</u>

To discuss this a bit further, it is common for people to believe that our brains originate all our thoughts. We might think that all our actions start as thoughts in our brains. **But that cannot possibly be correct!**

Our brains are physical matter. And it is impossible for physical matter to ever originate a thought! **A thought is not physical.** And by itself matter cannot originate something that is non-physical.

We need to also understand that **the brain is not an initiating organ**. The brain is simply a responsive organ, which endlessly performs billions of microscopic electro-chemical reactions in response to input that has been received by the brain. That is a key we need to keep in mind. The brain constantly receives vast amounts of input from all of the five senses, as well as from the spirit in man. The brain then responds appropriately to all that input by sending out instructions to every part of the body, and by

also sending feedback to the conscious awareness center in the spirit in man.

> **But the brain itself never initiates a decision regarding something for which it has not received prior input.**

Thus, the brain itself can never originate the thought “I want to write a book about history”, or the thought “I want to calculate the distance from our Earth to the sun”, or the thought “I want to find a way to create a completely new musical instrument”, etc. The reason the brain cannot originate these thoughts is because none of them are based on any specific input that has reached the brain. All of these thoughts are totally unrelated to any outside stimuli that might have reached the brain.

On the other hand, when the body is low on energy supplies, then the brain can **respond** to those messages and reach the conclusion “I am hungry and I want to eat something”. And when the brain receives messages that the body is tired, then the brain can **respond** to those messages and reach the conclusion “I am tired and I want to sleep”.

Note that I said “the brain reaches the conclusion that ...”, which is a response to input that has been received. I am not saying that the brain then “thinks the thoughts” that I have stated above regarding eating and sleeping.

Here is what I believe happens in these situations:

Messages of low energy levels, tiredness, etc. reach the brain. There these messages are expressed in billions of specific electro-chemical reactions. These reactions in the brain are then converted into thoughts by the spirit in man. It is the spirit in man that then thinks “I am hungry, thirsty, tired, cold, happy, sad”, etc.

We might think of this as **an endless loop between the spirit in man and the brain**. The spirit in man originates a thought (to go for a drive, play tennis or golf, design some furniture item, etc.) and the brain then converts that thought into electro-chemical reactions, which reactions we then perceive as thoughts.

To over-simplify this:

In these cases the brain receives its original input from the spirit in man, and the brain responds to that input by forwarding it to the body to take appropriate actions (get in the car, pick up a tennis racquet, go to the workshop, etc.).

But the body itself also constantly bombards the brain with vast amounts of input received from outside the body through the five senses, causing cascades of chemical reactions in the brain. Those reactions are then recognized by the spirit in man, which then exercises its free will by deciding what thoughts to think (e.g. I do or don’t want to ride a horse). **In this case the brain received its original input from the body and/or from the environment**, and the brain responds to that input by forwarding it to the spirit in man to process in the form of thoughts, which we then perceive consciously.

I suspect that every thought we think has come to our conscious awareness from the spirit in man via electro-chemical reactions within our brains.

Some of those thoughts **originated** in the spirit in man without any kind of outside input being received by the spirit in man. And **other thoughts were triggered** in the spirit in man as responses to input the brain had received and then forwarded to the spirit in man as a myriad of electro-chemical reactions, that the spirit in man converted into thoughts. And those thoughts in turn **then triggered additional**

reactions in the brain that brought those thoughts to our conscious awareness. The whole process unfolds at a speed of billions of reactions per second.

Let's move on to another point.

THE SPIRIT IN MAN RESISTS CHANGING

The physical human brain is malleable and changeable, and brain cells are constantly renewed. But the spirit in man has a much harder time as far as changing is concerned. **The spirit in man basically resists changing.** This means that the spirit in man is largely predictable, because on its own it will not change.

You know this about your own mind, right? I mean, once you have formed an opinion or adopted a point of view or reached a decision, then you don't really like to change away from that. And so you will argue to defend your opinion; you'll resist adopting a different point of view; and you cling to your decision as long as possible. And when you are forced to acknowledge that your opinion / view / decision was not right, usually you will justify your position. All of us are like that because our own spirit in man spontaneously resists changing.

This is why it can be predicted that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). This hostility of the natural mind towards God and His laws is predictable because the natural mind will not change without some outside help from God.

Consider the following:

Old Testament Hebrew did not have a word for "a mind". So various other words are used to refer to the mind. The most common Hebrew word used to refer to the mind is the Hebrew word for "**the heart**". You are undoubtedly already aware of this. So let's look at Jeremiah 17.

> The heart *is* **deceitful above all *things***, and desperately wicked: **who can know it**? (Jeremiah 17:9)

It is the human mind that is so deceitful and so extremely wicked. The question "who can know it?" implies that this is something most of us don't understand about our own minds. **That deceitfulness and wickedness resides in the spirit in man within us**. It does not reside in our physical brains.

Now here is the point:

> We ourselves are simply not able to perceive everything that really resides in our own spirit in man! The only aspects of our own spirit in man that we are actually able to perceive and see are those issues that our minds have dealt with in the past.

But **the latent hostility** and hatred for God and for anything that represents the true God, a hostility that resides in the natural human mind, we never see **until circumstances arise** that give the spirit in man an opportunity to focus on the things of God.

For example, let's suppose you have a friend who has a great hatred for the Japanese people (or the Chinese or Germans or anyone else), but you are not aware of that hatred. So for ten years you interact with your friend socially and in business situations, etc. and never once do you realize that he has this great hatred.

Then one day, after you have been good friends for over ten years, the two of you have to deal with some Japanese people, or the conversation for some reason deals with the Japanese people. And all of a sudden your friend's great hatred for the Japanese people comes out into the open, as his mouth speaks "out of the abundance of his heart" (see Matthew 12:34). And you are shocked!

You say: "I had no idea that you have this hatred for the Japanese people".

The point is: **he had this hatred all along** throughout the entire time of your friendship. But the circumstances to bring that hatred out into the open had simply never arisen before.

That is what the natural spirit in man is like!

We ourselves are simply not aware of our own spirit in man's attitude towards things that have never in the past been brought out into the open. The good friend that "secretly hates the Japanese people" is really our own spirit in man and its spontaneous attitude towards God and the things of God.

We human beings cannot really see directly what our natural minds are like, because we cannot communicate directly with the spirit in man. **The only way we can understand what our spirit in man is like, is to go through the interface of our own brain.** The only aspects of our own spirit in man that we can understand are those areas that have at one time or another in the past been addressed by our minds through the interface of our brains.

But for many people the hidden hatred for God and animosity towards God can remain hidden from view for decades, just like your friend's hidden hatred for the Japanese people, because the circumstances that would bring that hatred out into the open have thus far never arisen. This also applies, for example, to people at the end of the millennium when Satan is released for a little season.

And because the circumstances to bring that hatred out into the open have thus far never yet arisen, therefore **the people themselves don't know that their spirit in man harbors a hatred for God**. They cannot communicate directly with their own spirit in man ... they can only perceive those things from their own spirit in man that have at some point in the past been converted from spirit into electro-chemical reactions in their brains.

> It takes unusual circumstances to bring some of the really bad aspects of our own spirit in man out into the open. And usually we are not very comfortable with such situations.

THE MAN JOB

For the man Job it took God Himself speaking to Job "out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1) for Job to recognize that "**behold, I am vile**" (Job 40:4), and for Job to reach the decision "**wherefore I abhor myself**" (Job 42:6). Unusual circumstances had brought certain hidden aspects of his own spirit in man out into the open for Job to understand.

Now consider this carefully.

Job was a good man, or as God said, Job was "a perfect and an upright man" (Job 1:8) who feared God and hated evil. Up to that point in time Job had never done anything that was wrong. He had always used his spirit in man to reach decisions that were right and good in the sight of God. And that is what God was acknowledging with the statements God made about Job.

It is not that Job had done anything wrong before his trials began. And there was no reason to assume

that he ever would break God's laws in any way. His resolve to obey God was strong. And Job was committed to God.

Yes, Job did lose it somewhat when his three friends without any real justifications kept implying that Job had surely sinned in some ways. But all their accusations were invalid. They had unknowingly done Satan's work in trying to provoke Job. Not surprisingly they missed the real problem, because the real problem was something they themselves also didn't really understand.

Have you ever wondered about the approach God took when God started to talk with Job in chapter 38? God didn't actually say anything about Job himself or about the arguments Job had put forward, other than asking Job "just who do you think you are?" God spoke almost exclusively about God's own unlimited power.

So what actually happened to Job when God spoke to him? Do you know? What did Job mean when he said:

> I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but **now my eye sees You**. (Job 42:5)

Obviously Job's "eye" did not literally see God who was speaking "out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1). So what did Job really mean with this statement?

The only thing that had changed for Job when God started to talk with him was that Job had come to see aspects of his own spirit in man that Job had never seen before. Before this time there had never been an occasion in his life that had allowed Job to perceive what his own spirit in man was in fact capable of doing in a negative way. **This trial had brought about circumstances that revealed parts of Job's spirit in man that had never before been revealed**, and that therefore even Job himself had not been aware of.

In plain language: before this time Job had never understood that his own human mind was capable of resisting God and opposing God and even exalting itself above God. When God spoke to him here, that event opened Job's own understanding to the perversity of which his own mind was in fact capable. It's not that Job got involved in doing anything wrong. But when he for the first time in his life saw what his own human mind was potentially capable of doing, it really scared Job.

He could see that his own mind could lead him to the exact same resentment towards God and hatred for God that the vilest sinner was capable of. He could see that **the underlying motivation** in some of his own statements (e.g. "oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for", Job 6:8; "know now that God has overthrown me, and has compassed me with His net", Job 19:6; "let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know my integrity", Job 31:6; etc.) **had in fact been a certain amount of resentment towards God**. Job came to see that the spirit in him "lusts to envy" (see James 4:5). He saw that his own mind was quite capable of **being critical of God**, which is one manifestation of Romans 8:7.

That is why Job then followed this recognition with the statement:

> Wherefore **I abhor *myself***, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:6)

Job had come to see **what his own mind was really like**, and what it was capable of doing **if it was provoked**. That understanding is what motivated Job to then repent, to change his way of thinking.

Now all of us need to understand that Job's statement "behold I am vile" was equally true for us before we came to repentance, and it is certainly equally true for the nicest, sweetest, kindest, gentlest and most charming unconverted people out in the world that we may happen to know. But with those people it is hidden in the yet unrevealed quarters of their particular spirit in man. The heart of such unconverted people is also "deceitful above all things".

[As an aside, this account with Job reveals what true repentance is all about. I have mentioned many times that real repentance involves changing the way we use our minds. When people think about repentance they typically focus on sins they have committed and which they want God to blot out. They think of making a commitment to stop sinning and to live by God's laws. And as far as that goes, it is all good and well.

But the most important aspect of real repentance is not even addressed in the above process. The most important part of real repentance is to really recognize, as Job did, the truly vile tendencies of our own spirit in man, **if our spirit in man is provoked into exposing those vile tendencies** to our own consciousness. We need to come to the realization that our own spirit in man is just as capable of exalting itself against God as Satan himself exalted his own ego against God, if only certain unusual circumstances come about to bring this tendency of our own minds out into the open. That can be a truly scary realization.]

Let's now continue with the next verse in Jeremiah 17, which answers the question that was posed in the last part of verse 9.

> **I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins**, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. (Jeremiah 17:10)

God says that He searches "the mind"; i.e. **God looks at that spirit in man in us human beings**. For those people that God is considering working with in this age, God searches out those areas in the person's spirit in man that need to be brought out into the open to enable the person to understand the truth about his or her own mind.

When you "try the reins" of a horse, you are testing to see how the horse will respond to your actions. So God tests our reins in order to find out **how we will respond to specific circumstances, especially to when we are provoked**. And as a result of searching the hearts God then exposes different people to different trials. Some trials which might reveal the true character of some people may not reveal anything at all about other people, were those other people to be exposed to the same trials. So God is selective in the trials to which He exposes us. It is all based on God having "searched our heart", i.e. having looked into how our spirit in man responds to specific situations.

OVERCOMING THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGING

In the time leading up to the flood God came to see that for the carnal mind "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Left to its own devices, the spirit in man is in a hopeless situation. Even "at his best state" man is "altogether vanity" (Psalm 39:5).

So if man is to be granted salvation, then **man needs help from God**. But man must first actually want that help from God, starting to overcome to some degree that spontaneous animosity towards God. Man must show God that man really wants God's help by meeting the requirements or conditions that God has laid out for those who want God's help.

The help God offers is His holy spirit, and **the requirements** for receiving God's spirit are repentance,

faith and baptism.

So when God gives His holy spirit to a repentant believer, then we have the following situation:

1) Like every other human being, the person has the spirit in man controlling his brain. That spirit is automatically in a state of “warring against” the law of God (see Romans 7:23). That spirit reacts with hostility towards God.

2) Because the person, after God has opened his eyes to some degree, has of his own initiative at least tried to start changing his way of thinking (i.e. he has repented) with the goal of pleasing God, therefore God has given that person His holy spirit.

3) The presence of two distinct spirits in the person’s mind then creates “the war” that Paul speaks about in Romans 7:23. Provided the person always remains repentant and faithful to God, this state of two different spirits **always vying for preeminence** in the person’s mind will continue for the rest of that person’s life.

4) God’s spirit in the person’s mind will do two things. First, it will open a correct understanding of God’s way of life to the person, exposing the bias and hypocrisy and deviousness of the carnal mind on any number of issues. In other words, God’s spirit will first of all make available correct understanding that is simply not available to people who don’t have God’s spirit. That is explained in 1 Corinthians 2:11.

In addition to that, God’s spirit will also educate the person’s conscience. This means that God’s spirit will trigger feelings of guilt whenever the person so much as contemplates doing something the person knows is contrary to what God expects from us.

5) God’s spirit doesn’t make obedience to God easier; it only opens our minds and thereby makes it easier to understand what God really requires from us. It is the better understanding that should help us to strengthen our resolve to be faithful to God in whatever trials may lie ahead for all of us. But obedience doesn’t become easier simply because we have God’s spirit working in our minds.

6) So whereas the spirit in man is almost rigid and inflexible on its own, the addition of God’s spirit makes the person’s mind somewhat pliable and somewhat changeable. That makes it possible for the person to reject and to remove the spontaneous hostility of the spirit in man on one issue after another after another. So while there always remains the danger that the natural spirit in man will “bring us into captivity to the law of sin” (Romans 7:23 again), a pattern of making right decisions before God, with a genuine desire of trying to please God, will strengthen our resolve to resist the pulls and the pressures of the natural mind.

IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT IS ALWAYS THE ISSUE

Let’s now consider a number of Scriptures. Sometimes people try to focus on specific actions or activities they need to change in their efforts to draw close to God. That’s okay but it is not the best focus. Consider the following statements.

> Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and **in whose spirit *there is* no guile**. (Psalm 32:2)

It is “the spirit” that is the main criterion. **“Guile” is a very common and frequent manifestation of the carnal spirit in man.** And guile is something that God will never work with. Guile is always anti-God.

This verse shows that we must exercise control over our spirit even before we work on bringing our conduct and actions into harmony with God's laws. We must do this first because our motivation for obedience must be right before the actual actions of obedience are of any value before God. And **the presence of guile would destroy the value of any and all acts of obedience**.

> **The spirit of man *is* the candle of the LORD**, searching all the inward parts of the belly. (Proverbs 20:27)

Again, it is the spirit in man that God is examining, rather than just the outward acts of obedience. Saying that the spirit is "the candle of the LORD" tells us that it is our spirit that reveals to God what our character is really like. **The spirit in man reveals to God how our minds work**, which thoughts from the spirit in man we process and work with, and which thoughts sent to our brains by the spirit in man we just reject outright. It is our spirit in man that tells God whether or not we are really repentant.

> He that is slow to anger *is* better than the mighty; and **he that rules his spirit** than he that takes a city. (Proverbs 16:32)

We must rule over our spirit in man. That applies not only to controlling our anger, but to every possible response to whatever may confront us in life. In the natural human mind there is very little rule exerted over the spirit. This verse also implies that there is a conflict which requires us to "keep under" our bodies (see 1 Corinthians 9:27), staying in willing subjection to God's laws.

> For all those *things* has my hand made, and all those *things* have been, says the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even* to *him that is* poor and **of a contrite spirit**, and trembles at my word. (Isaiah 66:2)

"A contrite spirit" is basically a reference to a repentant spirit, one with a low self-image. It is the opposite of pride and arrogance. Once again God here spells out very clearly that **God is looking for a certain type of spirit**. The focus is not on the observance of any specific law, but on the motivation for all our conduct. God is focusing on the spirit which motivates us to obey God, that it is pure and without guile.

> God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must **worship *him* in spirit and in truth**. (John 4:24)

How do we worship God "in spirit"? Do you know?

The Greek expression "**en pneumati kai aletheia**" can mean either "in spirit and truth" or "with spirit and truth". The Greek preposition "en" when it is applied to "being instrumental in something" is best translated into English as "with". Thus, for example, of the 2801 times "en" is used in the Greek New Testament, it is translated 1902 times as "in" and 140 times as "with" in the KJV.

Yes, there is no question that most of the time the Greek preposition "en" is used to mean "in". But the 140 places where it is appropriately translated as "with" show that "with" is also a fairly common meaning.

I believe that in John 4:24 the English translation should read that we must worship God "**with spirit and truth**". In other words, first of all, our spirit in man must be actively involved in the worship of God. This statement takes the focus away from acts of obedience to **a voluntary submission of the mind** to God.

If the spirit in man has not rejected its spontaneous hostility towards God and replaced it with an acceptance of God's way of thinking, then any physical acts of obedience are of no value.

> The very first requirement for worshiping God is that the spirit in man has rejected its automatic hostility towards God. Once again it is the spirit in man that God is looking at.

People who do not understand God's truth obviously cannot worship God "with truth" (or "in truth" if you prefer). The worship of millions and millions of people in the religions of this world is of no value because **their worship is not "with truth"**. Those millions of people can be very sincere in their false religions, but that sincerity does not get them any closer to God, because there is no truth in their religious practices.

It is only once we understand the truth, that then we must worship God with our spirit in man seeking to please God. And when we repent, i.e. when we change the way we use our minds, then **it is the spirit in man that must change by rejecting Satan's selfish way of thinking** and installing God's way of thinking.

The spirit in man records our entire life experience, our character, emotions, feelings, conduct, etc. It is the spirit in man that gives each one of us a unique identity. And when we die, then the spirit in man leaves our bodies and returns to God.

> There is **no man** that **has power over the spirit to retain the spirit**; neither *has 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 8:8)

> Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and **the spirit shall return unto God who gave it**. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

God gave the spirit in man when we came out of the womb and took our first independent breath, and then the spirit in man returns to God at the time of death, as we exhale our last breath. And that spirit then contains the only record of that person's entire life and existence. There is no duplicate copy of that person's life anywhere in God's entire creation.

At the time of the first resurrection God will have prepared 144000 spirit bodies, and into each one of those 144000 spirit bodies God will place the spirit in man of one specific human being from that group of 144000 in the first resurrection. It is the spirit in man that will give one spirit being in that group the recognition that "I am Abraham", while the spirit in man will give another one of those new spirit beings the recognition "I am David", and another will realize that "I am Daniel", etc.

For those in the first resurrection the recognition of who we are will not be based on the appearance we will have. It is not that we need to take a quick look in a mirror somewhere, to somehow verify that we are who we think we are. And we will not recognize those individuals in the first resurrection whom we knew in this life based on their looks. **What we will look like in the resurrection has no relationship at all to what we look like now in this physical life.**

That is what Paul explained at some length in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. To look at just a few verses:

> And that which you sow, **you sow not that body that shall be**, but bare grain, it may chance of

> wheat, or of some other *grain*: (1 Corinthians 15:37)
>
> But **God gives it a body as it has pleased Him**, and to every seed his own body. (1 Corinthians 15:38)
>
> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and **there is a spiritual body**. (1 Corinthians 15:44)

That “spiritual body” is not going to resemble the “natural body” in looks or in appearance. The only thing that will identify one spiritual body from another is the spirit in man which God will place within that spiritual body.

Now lest you misunderstand: **I am saying** that in the resurrection we will not have the same features we have today in our physical bodies. So we will not recognize fellow spirit beings based on having known their features in this physical life. **But I am not saying** that all spiritual bodies will look alike, not at all! Every spirit body (or “spiritual body”) will have features that will give it a unique and distinct appearance. No two spirit beings will look like twins. God will give every individual member of His Family “a body as it has pleased God” (see 1 Corinthians 15:38 again). God the Father Himself will determine what every single one of His children will look like with a spiritual body. And maybe the character we develop in this life will even have an influence on the body that God the Father will give us in the resurrection?

Let’s now go back to the matter of the brain being the interface between the spirit in man and the physical material world.

WHEN THE BRAIN BREAKS DOWN

Let’s try to understand what happens when people suffer from **diseases that destroy the brain**, diseases like dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. What happens when a person’s brain begins to lose some of its abilities? What happens to the spirit in man in such situations?

Earlier I mentioned that the brain is the interface between the spirit world and the physical world. It is the brain that turns the non-physical thoughts that originated in the spirit in man into physical chemical reactions in the brain. And those billions of physical chemical reactions bring those thoughts to our conscious awareness, which awareness also resides in the spirit in man (though probably in a different location from the area where the thought originated).

Without those billions of chemical reactions in our brains our spirit in man would not be able to bring any thoughts to the conscious awareness center in our spirit in man. Without those chemical reactions in the brain we would not become aware of any thoughts that originated in another part of our spirit in man.

Consider what Paul said about God to the Romans.

> And He that searches the hearts knows what *is* **the mind of the spirit**, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. (Romans 8:27)

Here the Greek expression “**to phronema** (nominative case) **tou pneumatos** (genitive case)” is translated perfectly correctly as “the mind **of** the spirit”. Paul understood that the mind is a part of the spirit in man and not a part of the brain, even though the spirit in man resides within the brain. Paul is here saying that Jesus Christ can discern the real attitude that resides in our spirit in man, **even when**

we ourselves may not be aware of that real attitude. And for those individuals who are committed to God (i.e. “the saints”) Jesus Christ makes intercession before God the Father for our failings and shortcomings.

But notice that the mind is tied to the spirit in man, rather than being tied to the physical brain. The brain is the interface that enables our own spirit in man to communicate with our consciousness and our awareness.

So consider what happens when the brain breaks down in diseases like Alzheimer’s.

Let’s say that someone wakes up in the morning, and “the mind of the spirit” generates the thought: I’d like to go swimming.

In a healthy brain that thought from “the mind of the spirit” is instantly turned into billions of minute chemical reactions in the brain, whereupon we instantly become aware of this thought, giving us the opportunity to respond appropriately to that thought. So as a result we plan when and where to go swimming.

In a brain that is **in an advanced stage of Alzheimer’s disease** that thought is also turned into minute chemical reactions, but those chemical reactions don’t send the same message to the consciousness. We have no way of knowing what thoughts the spirit in man may generate in such a person’s consciousness. But **even if** the spirit in man were to generate the same thought “I’d like to go swimming”, the person suffering from Alzheimer’s would never become aware of that thought because of the deterioration of the brain. The deteriorated brain will not process that thought correctly, and therefore that thought never reaches the person’s awareness center located in some other part of the spirit in man.

Our spirit in man cannot communicate directly with our conscious awareness. The only way the spirit in man can communicate with our awareness is through the interface of the brain, just like the word processor only being able to retrieve a verse from the Bible program by way of the computer’s “Clipboard”.

Now when the brain is severely diseased with dementia or advanced Alzheimer’s, then the brain is no longer capable of correctly and appropriately converting the non-physical thought into the appropriate chemical brain reactions which would bring this thought to our conscious awareness. So the person with advanced Alzheimer’s disease is not able to perceive the thought to go swimming that would have originated in the spirit in man.

The point is this:

Someone in the final stages of Alzheimer’s may have lost virtually all the abilities of functioning on the human level:

- the ability to speak even a single word,

- the ability to recognize any object in the environment,

- the ability to even express a desire for food and drink,

- the ability to recognize even a single other person,

- an awareness of one’s own identity,

- the ability to process any information, etc.

For all practical purposes someone in that state will not be able to manifest any evidence whatsoever that they still have the spirit in man.

But the spirit in man stays within every single human being until the time of death, at which point it returns “unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). And the spirit in man is immune to any and all physical diseases. So when due to disease or injury a person’s brain loses its ability to function normally, then the spirit in man is unaffected by that disease or injury.

> But **the interface** between the spirit in man and the person’s conscious awareness, which is located in another part of the spirit in man, has been severely damaged.

As a consequence the person’s spirit in man is unable to bring certain thoughts or certain information to the person’s conscious awareness. It is not that all links between the spirit in man and the conscious awareness have been severed, and so **some basic thoughts still manage to pass through that interface**. But the pathways for virtually all complex thoughts will have been destroyed, and so the person is no longer able to consciously think those types of complex thoughts.

The spirit in man is still there, but its ability to bring specific thoughts to the conscious awareness of the person has been severely restricted. And that ability continues to diminish relentlessly as the disease continues to progress.

This situation is not the same as when God actually takes the spirit in man away from a person for a limited period of time, something that has apparently only happened once in human history.

For a period of seven years God took the spirit in man away from King Nebuchadnezzar. As Daniel 4:16 tells us:

> **Let his heart be changed** from man’s, and **let a beast’s heart be given unto him**; and let seven times pass over him. (Daniel 4:16)

Here God said that Nebuchadnezzar would lose the spirit of man for seven years, and instead **the spirit of an animal would “be given unto him”**.

As Solomon pointed out, there is “the spirit of man” and there also is “the spirit of the animal”.

> Who knows **the spirit of man** that goes upward, and **the spirit of the beast** (i.e. animal) that goes downward to the earth? (Ecclesiastes 3:21)

There is a spirit in an animal that enables that animal to function so as to manage the process of its life. But that spirit is on a far lower level than the spirit in man (or the spirit of man). This is indicated by that spirit at the death of the animal going “downward to the earth”. Going downward to the earth indicates that **this spirit of an animal is not preserved in any way**. When an animal dies there is no record preserved that it ever existed.

It is this type of spirit that was specifically given to Nebuchadnezzar for those seven years, so that he could at least function on the level of an animal. Daniel 4:16 was a message from God. So for all practical purposes **it was God who said** “let an animal’s heart be given unto him”. This was something

that was specifically “given” to Nebuchadnezzar. Without this “spirit of the beast” Nebuchadnezzar would not have survived.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s case the spirit in man was taken from him for seven years, and for that period of time it was replaced by the spirit of an animal. **For someone with a disease** that breaks down the brain’s ability to function, on the other hand, **the spirit in man remains in that person**, but its influence in bringing thoughts to the conscious awareness of that person is severely restricted by the breakdown of the interface (the brain).

But the spirit in man is still able to get enough information through the interface of the brain, so that someone with brain disease can function on a basic level without needing “the spirit of an animal” to continue functioning. When that interface (the brain) has broken down to the point that essential information can no longer pass through it and be processed by it, then the person dies.

For Nebuchadnezzar death along those lines (i.e. no spirit in man generating any thoughts at all) was prevented by giving him “the spirit of an animal” to at least still process those functions that are essential to preserving life.

Now let’s briefly consider the building blocks of our physical creation before also considering the concept of the spirit of an animal.

THE PHYSICAL CREATION

Probably the most pervasive attribute of God’s physical creation is that everything can always be broken down into smaller components. For example:

When we look at the sky on a clear night we can see a vast number of stars. But some of the “stars” we can see in that situation are not stars at all; some of those “stars” are in fact huge galaxies consisting of multiple millions of stars. Because they are so far away from our solar system those galaxies appear to the naked human eye as if they were single stars.

Galaxies can be broken down into individual stars. Stars in turn may have their own systems of planets revolving around them. In our environment here on planet Earth we are exposed to thousands upon thousands of different substances, most of which are compounds formed from two or more different elements. Some things may not be “compounds”; they may instead be mixtures made up of different elements, like the air we breathe.

Moving on to the microscopic level, when we examine chemical compounds in our laboratories, we can determine the chemical formulas for those compounds, establishing which physical elements are present in those compounds, and in what quantities or ratios.

On the microscopic level we see that physical matter (e.g. water) is made up of molecules. Those molecules are made up of combinations of atoms. When we search further we see that those atoms consist of a tight relationship between protons and neutrons and electrons (sometimes there may not be any neutrons). When the existence of these protons, electrons and neutrons was first discovered, it was believed that these are fundamental particles which cannot be broken down into anything smaller, that these are the ultimate building blocks of all matter. That was what we were still taught in our science classes when I was in high school 55+ years ago.

In order to study particle physics, scientists then invented machines called “particle accelerators” (sometimes also called “atom smashers”) which led to further discoveries. With the things they learned from these particle accelerators they then concluded that electrons are indeed fundamental particles (i.e.

they cannot be broken down further into other building blocks), but that protons and neutrons are made up of even tinier particles which they named “quarks”.

All these things are already on such an incredibly small scale that we cannot remotely picture them, even if we can talk about them in academic terms. And if our equipment were ever to become even more powerful, I would not be surprised if they found that electrons and quarks can be broken down even further. But that’s neither here nor there for our context.

My point is simply this:

When we examine the physical creation which God has “showed us” (see Romans 1:19 again), then we see that everything, from the whole universe at one extreme down to the microscopic level at the other extreme, can always be broken down into smaller components in an almost endless process. I believe that ultimately all physical matter is something God created out of spirit, that physical matter represents specific manifestations of one or more spirit elements. Matter was created out of “things which don’t appear”, i.e. things which cannot be detected in a physical way. See Hebrews 11:3 for this principle.

So what I believe God is “showing” us with this physical creation is that **the spirit world in God’s presence is extremely complex**, far more so than our physical world. Our physical world was created and developed by God by utilizing a vast range of spirit elements (i.e. matter created from spirit), all of which spirit elements can ultimately be broken down into some basic “fundamental spirit particles”.

Well-ordered complexity in our physical world implies well-ordered complexity in the spirit world in the presence of God and the angels.

THE SPIRIT OF THE ANIMAL

In Ecclesiastes 3:21 Solomon referred to both the spirit in man and also to the spirit in animals, pointing out that at death the spirit of the animal goes to the earth. The spirit of the animal is not in any way preserved after the death of the animal.

Notice something God said to Noah after the flood:

> And **the fear of you** and the dread of you shall be **upon every beast** of the earth, and **upon every fowl** of the air, **upon all that moves** *upon* the earth, and **upon all the fishes** of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. (Genesis 9:2)

God is implying that this was something new, that before the flood this had not been the case. So animals before the flood did not automatically fear human beings, but after the flood animals had an automatic fear of human beings. **All animal life underwent some kind of change after the flood.**

All animal life will once again undergo some kind of change when Jesus Christ starts His millennial rule. We are all familiar with Isaiah chapter 11, that wolves and lambs and lions and bears and cows, etc. will dwell together peacefully side by side. As the summary verse there states:

> **They shall not hurt nor destroy** in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9)

This is repeated in Isaiah 65 in the context of the 100-year second resurrection period.

> The **wolf** and the **lamb** shall feed together, and the **lion** shall eat straw like the **bullock**: and dust *shall be* the **serpent's** meat. **They shall not hurt nor destroy** in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 65:25)

So here is the point:

The brain is a responsive organ; it responds to input it has received. The brain does not initiate actions or processes for which it has not received prior input. The brain is not capable of anticipating any events for which it has never received any prior input. This principle applies to human brains and to animal brains. A brain on its own can never generate its own thoughts. Every brain is designed to process input from various sources.

So when God after the flood changed the natures of animals to have an automatic fear of human beings, then God did this by changing something in the spirit in the animals. And when God once again changes the natures of animals at the start of Christ's millennial rule, then God will once again change something in the spirit in animals.

Compared to the spirit in man, the spirit in animals certainly has its limitations. But the primary function of the spirit in an animal is to make life possible for that animal. We generally refer to the abilities conferred on animals by the spirit in animals as "instinct". "Instinct" implies certain species-specific abilities in addition to what the brain on its own is able to accomplish. We recognize that a lion has a different instinct than a dog, and a horse has a different instinct than a sheep.

So in the same way that all human beings have one type of spirit (i.e. the spirit in man), so every species of animals very likely has its own type of spirit, and that type of spirit is then responsible for the differences in instinct between different species of animals.

Now a human being will die if the spirit in man leaves (or is not immediately replaced by another spirit, as in Nebuchadnezzar's case). Likewise, an animal will die when the spirit in the animal leaves that animal to go down to the earth into anonymity.

Here is a basic point we need to grasp:

Life that is controlled by a physical brain is simply not possible without the presence of a spirit. Consider what Jesus Christ explained in John 6:63.

> **It is the spirit that quickens**; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. (John 6:63)

The English word "quicken" means "to make alive". The Greek word "zoopoioun" here translated as "quickens" is a compound word formed from the two Greek words "zoon", meaning "a living creature", and "poieo", a Greek verb that means "to do, to make, to produce".

So in John 6:63 "zoopoioun" literally means "to make alive" and "to produce life". "Quickens" is certainly a correct translation.

In plain terms Jesus Christ said "**it is the spirit that produces life**".

The conclusion we should draw from Jesus Christ's statement is that **life that is controlled by a brain is simply not possible without the presence of at least one element of spirit**. Can you understand that?

The reason is that a brain always needs input to make decisions regarding what to do. Consider the following situation:

When you get out of your car to walk up to your front door, your dog wags its tail and jumps around enthusiastically. The dog is obviously happy to see you. When a stranger gets out the car to walk up to your front door, in many cases that same dog will bark aggressively at that stranger. The decisions to express joy at seeing you and aggression at seeing a stranger approach your door are made in the dog's "spirit in the animal", which decisions are then instantaneously converted into billions of chemical reactions in the dog's brain, to be immediately perceived as instructions for how to respond to the situations confronting the dog.

When a dog, or any animal for that matter, is trained to respond in certain ways to very specific situations, then that training is recorded in the spirit in the animal, to be called up whenever certain circumstances present themselves.

So the spirit in the animal can be taught to overcome its spontaneous fear of human beings, by learning that certain human beings, or even all human beings, need not be feared, and they may even be recognized as providing food and other comforts for the animals. The spirit in the animal, while limited compared to the spirit in man, has the capacity to learn certain things. Such learning will influence the decisions that spirit in the animal will send to the brain, to adopt certain forms of behavior in interacting with certain human beings, or even with all human beings.

As far as proof that animals also have a spirit rather than merely having "a breath" is concerned, consider the following incident during Christ's ministry.

Matthew 8:28-32 shows Jesus Christ meeting two demon-possessed men in "the country of the Gergesenes". When the demons knew that Jesus Christ would cast them out of these two men, the demons asked Christ for permission to enter into a herd of pigs. Mark 5:13 shows that there were about 2000 pigs in this event. You are familiar with this story.

The point is this: **demons can only enter into any person or creature that already has a spirit**. If those pigs had not had a spirit of some kind, then it would have been impossible for the demons to enter into those pigs. Without an animal-specific spirit present demons are incapable of bridging the chasm between spirit (i.e. the demons themselves are spirits) and matter (i.e. the pigs, including their brains, are physical matter).

The demons could only influence those pigs to self-destruct because their brains had been created by God to act as an interface between spirit and matter. If God had not given the pigs, like all other animals, a spirit, then the brains of the pigs would not have had the potential to be influenced by spirit beings (i.e. demons). So the fact that demons were able to possess pigs tells me that pigs must have some kind of spirit to start with, the spirit Solomon spoke about in Ecclesiastes.

Demons cannot enter into stones or trees or rivers or mountains. There must always be "a spirit host" before demons can enter into that person or creature.

So much for the spirit in the animal.

Now let's get back to the spirit in man and consider something else that influences the spirit in man.

A SPIRIT OF FEAR

Earlier I mentioned an example of two men seeing someone riding a horse. One man thought "I'd also

like to ride a horse", while the other man thought "no way will I ever ride a horse". Both these thoughts were generated by the spirit in man within both of these men.

But we should recognize that the thought "no way will I ever ride a horse" was motivated by a spirit of fear imposing itself on the second man's spirit in man.

I also mentioned earlier that the spirit in man gives us awareness, a sense of individual identity and a free will. At no stage in this present life does God force us to choose His way of life. Rather, God says to all of us, even as God said to ancient Israel:

> I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* **I have set before you life and death**, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live (Deuteronomy 30:19)

God sets before us a choice. We are forced to choose between God's outgoing way of using our minds and Satan's selfish way of using our minds.

Satan, on the other hand, **never offers anyone a choice** between these two ways of thinking. Rather, Satan always tries to force and to pressure human beings to accept and to adhere to his selfish way of thinking.

Satan's most important tool for imposing his way of thinking on us human beings is **a spirit of fear**. By far the most important purpose for a spirit of fear is **to take away free choice** from us, and to force us to accept Satan's way of using our minds.

A spirit of fear is the worst kind of slavery. Fear paralyzes its victims in a state of inactivity and indecision. Fear twists and distorts the rational thinking of a sound mind.

Let's define what we mean by "a spirit of fear":

> **Any and every fear that is irrational is due to a spirit of fear which comes from Satan.**

So God gives every human being the spirit in man at birth, which spirit empowers us to have truly free minds, minds that are free to accept and also free to reject God's way of life.

Satan then comes along very early in life, while we were still very small children, and seeks to instill a spirit of fear in our minds. Satan's success rate here is very close to 100%, so that virtually all small children have any number of irrational fears by the time they are five years old. We need to recognize that every irrational fear at any age is a manifestation of a spirit of fear. And Satan is the author of every spirit of fear.

> For God hath not given us **the spirit of fear**; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

The spirit of fear is something we must overcome and reject, because God's spirit of power and love and a sound mind cannot co-exist with a spirit of fear.

Here is the situation:

1) We start out in life with the spirit in man in full control.

2) Very early in our lives Satan managed to instill some irrational fears in us (e.g. the fear of the dark). We then had two spirits: the spirit in man and a spirit of fear.

3) That spirit of fear seeks to control our spirit in man, and to force us into certain ways of thinking, which ways of thinking will restrict our freedom of choice in certain situations.

4) As we matured into our teenage years, so some fears were replaced by other fears. Example: the fear of the dark was replaced by the fear of what our peers think of us. We came to fear the thought of rejection by our peers.

5) As we matured into adulthood some of our teenage fears were once again replaced by other fears, like the fear of failure or any number of phobias.

6) **The key is this**: At every stage of our lives, from early childhood to old age, Satan has available for us a tailor-made selection of fears. Satan knows that as we mature so we will outgrow some of those fears. Therefore at those periods of transition Satan is always ready with a totally new selection of fears. And as we finally overcome some of our fears, so Satan is ready to install some totally new fears in us. Satan's intent is to never let us achieve a status where we are totally free of all fears.

7) For most people these fears only influence certain limited sectors of their lives. Overall, most of the areas of their lives are not controlled by those fears. What this means is that for most areas of their lives their spirit in man has not given in to the demands of the spirit of fear. It is only in certain limited areas of their lives that the spirit of fear managed to impose itself on their spirit in man (e.g. they have irrational fears of heights and snakes and water, etc., but in practical terms those fears feature only very rarely in their daily lives).

8) Then the person starts to understand the truth of God and comes to repentance. Repentance means that we change the way we think. So one of the first things we really have to do is expel that spirit of fear from our lives. We must do this first because the spirit of God will not co-exist with a spirit of fear.

9) It is like the old saying "two's company, three's a crowd". In effect the holy spirit says to our spirit in man: you have to choose whether you want me or whether you will stick with the spirit of fear, because I am not prepared to co-exist with that spirit of fear.

10) The most pervasive fear is **the fear of death**. As Satan put it: "**all that a man has will he give for his life**" (Job 2:4). When the spirit of fear has the opportunity to threaten the spirit in man with death, then the spirit in man almost always caves in and submits to the spirit of fear. **That is what Satan is counting on.**

11) So the fear of death is the greatest fear we must overcome. That is something Jesus Christ pointed out.

> He that finds his life shall lose it: and **he that loses his life for my sake shall find it**. (Matthew 10:39)

> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and **whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it**. (Matthew 16:25)

In these two Scriptures Jesus Christ was confronting the fear of death. Notice especially Matthew 16:25. The fear of death will motivate us to do whatever it takes to “save our lives”. And as long as we have that fear motivating our actions and conduct, we will be on a course to lose out on eternal life. In Jesus Christ’s words, we will “lose it”.

12) When we are prepared to lose our lives for the sake of living by God’s laws and commandments, then that proves to God that we have rejected the spirit of fear. Overcoming the Satan inspired fear of death opens the way for us to become “the children of God” (Galatians 3:26).

So much for the spirit of fear.

Now let’s go back to something I briefly mentioned earlier.

EVEN GOD’S ETERNAL POWER CAN BE UNDERSTOOD

That is what Paul tells us in Romans 1:20. So exactly what about “God’s eternal power” can we understand by looking at the physical creation all around us, and of which we ourselves are a part? That really depends on just how much we actually understand about the physical creation.

Consider the principle involved in God’s instructions to Moses.

Exodus 24:18 shows that Moses “was in the mount forty days and forty nights”. In the next verse we have God speaking to Moses. After addressing certain offerings the people were to bring, God then said to Moses:

> According to all that **I show you**, *after* **the pattern** of the tabernacle, and **the pattern** of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make *it*. (Exodus 25:9)

The Hebrew word “tabniyth”, here twice translated as “**pattern**”, means: likeness, pattern, form, similitude, construction. “Pattern” and “likeness” are acceptable translations in this context. Next, the Hebrew verb “ra’ah”, which is here translated as “**I show you**”, means: to see, to show, to look, to behold. We should note that here this verb “ra’ah” is used in the hiphil form, which form is used in Hebrew to express **a causative action**. This form literally means “I caused you to see”, a statement that implies a very specific purpose for having shown Moses something.

A perhaps clearer way to translate this verse is:

> According to all that **I caused you to see**, *after* the pattern (or likeness) of the tabernacle, and the pattern (or likeness) of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make *it*. (Exodus 25:9)

The reason I am presenting this technicality is because God had a very specific purpose for showing Moses a likeness of something. God gave Moses a vision of something that is a reality in heaven in the presence of God, for the explicit purpose that Moses would then be able to guide the construction of the Tabernacle and all the objects associated with the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was to represent, in a physical form, a likeness of a certain environment in heaven in which God exists.

In plain language:

The instructions God gave to Moses for building the Tabernacle and various items associated with the Tabernacle were patterned after certain things in the environment in which God exists, but obviously

adapted to a physical material situation.

My point here is this:

God is showing us with this instruction that our whole physical environment was not something totally new that God developed from scratch! Rather, when God created this whole physical universe, God did so by using His own spirit environment as a pattern or a blueprint for creating the physical material universe.

Many things in our physical world are adaptations from the spirit environment in which God exists and functions. And **that is why we can learn about God's eternal power by examining our physical world** and the way it functions.

When God the Father and Jesus Christ, who have both existed for all past eternity, decided to create a physical universe, then They patterned it after the spirit environment in which They had happily existed for past eternity. They created a physical environment which functioned very much like the spirit environment in which They have always existed. And when we find that certain things are essential for the operation of our physical environment, then that should tell us that this very likely in some way represents a parallel for something that is essential in God's spirit environment.

The way God made our physical environment to function was not random. It was patterned after something that already existed in God's spirit environment. In a very general way God based the material physical creation on the way the spirit environment around God functions and operates. So the more we understand how everything in our physical world works, the more we are in a position to understand key principles about the spirit environment that awaits us in the new heaven and the new earth.

Earlier I mentioned that we know of 94 different elements in our material world. They are the building blocks for an unlimited number of different things. By combining some of these 94 elements in different ratios (e.g. combining elements like oxygen and carbon and hydrogen and sulphur and iron and copper and silicon and nitrogen, etc. with one or more other elements) we come to have every inorganic substance and also every plant and animal. (For this present discussion we won't break things down into molecules and atoms and electrons, etc.)

Now the point is this:

Any chemical reaction always requires two or more different elements to be available. One element on its own can never achieve anything. So in an enclosed space that contains nothing but oxygen, nothing happens with that oxygen. And in an enclosed space into which is placed some iron and then all the air is extracted so that the iron is contained in a vacuum, likewise nothing happens with that iron. But if both the iron and the oxygen are present in that enclosed space, and if we allow rain to also fall in that space, then the circumstances are set up to start the process of oxidizing the iron, to form rust.

Every chemical reaction requires two or more different elements to be present. One element on its own cannot initiate a chemical reaction. This principle applies to the entire physical creation. It is foundational to our physical world.

Why did God create the material universe with this foundational principle?

I believe that this principle also applies to the spirit environment in which God exists and functions. Earlier I speculated that spirit comes in a whole range of different elements. Now I am taking that

speculation one step further.

I believe that for anything to happen in the spirit world, two or more different forms of spirit must interact in some way. And our physical material world is a reflection of this principle from the spirit world.

Let's look at some specifics. Let's start in Matthew chapter 9.

Two blind men were asking Jesus Christ to heal them. So Jesus Christ asked them:

> And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus said unto them, **Believe you that I am able to do this?** They said unto him, Yes, Lord. (Matthew 9:28)

The two men expressed faith in Christ, faith being a spiritual attribute. So notice Jesus Christ's reply.

> Then touched he their eyes, saying, **According to your faith be it unto you**. (Matthew 9:29)

Now **why** did Jesus Christ say "**according to your faith**"? What did their faith have to do with Christ healing them or not? Can you guess the answer?

Here is the point:

Every single healing, and for that matter every single miracle, **requires the interaction of two different spirit elements**. In this instance Jesus Christ made it a requirement that these two men themselves had to each provide one of the two needed spirit elements in order to achieve that "spiritual chemical reaction" required to achieve the healing. (I don't mean a literal chemical reaction, which is physical; I am using this term to express an analogy to what happens on the spirit level.)

To repeat, faith is a spirit element. There is nothing physical about faith, though in our present physical world the presence of faith will commonly manifest itself in physical ways, like a healing in this example, or in the works of faith.

Let's consider a statement from the Apostle Paul.

> But **without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*** ... (Hebrews 11:6)

Here Paul is telling members of God's Church that for any interaction with God to take place, we ourselves must always provide at least the one spirit element called faith. We must provide that one spirit element which can then interact with God's spirit, to achieve some result. Two different spirit elements have to interact in order to achieve anything. And for those people with whom God is working in this age, we ourselves must provide one of those two needed spirit elements.

Now God possesses and controls every spirit element that exists in the spirit world, as indicated in Revelation 22:1 with the holy spirit "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb". So when God chooses to do so, God Himself can always provide the two or more spirit elements needed for achieving anything. Specifically, if God wants to do so, then God can heal even people who don't have faith. But then God may at times also require people to provide one of the spirit elements needed to produce the divine intervention, for which intervention the people are beseeching God.

Now here is a point we need to understand.

For people in the world who do not have their chance for salvation right now God may at times provide both spirit elements to achieve some result or some intervention. But for those people who have their one opportunity for salvation right now (i.e. **for those who are called and chosen**), God will always require us to provide at least one spirit element for the process of God intervening in our lives in some way. Paul's statement "without faith it is impossible to please God" is addressed very specifically to people who have their opportunity for salvation now in this life, since they are really the only ones who are potentially capable of "pleasing God".

So here is what we from our Church of God perspective need keep in mind.

For any kind of guidance or direction from God, or for any intervention in our circumstances by God, we ourselves must always provide at least one spirit element to make that "spiritual chemical reaction" a possibility.

Consider the following analogy, which obviously falls short in certain regards, and I most assuredly don't intend anyone to carry this analogy further than the point I am going to make.

In order to produce water we need to have available both hydrogen and oxygen. For people in the world who do not have their one chance for salvation right now God may at times choose to provide both the hydrogen and the oxygen. But for someone in God's Church who has his opportunity for salvation right now in this life God will provide only the hydrogen; and God will require us to provide the oxygen to make possible the production of water. For us in God's Church God will always require us to provide at least one spirit element in order for any reaction to take place, i.e. in order for God to in some way intervene divinely in our lives.

Can you follow this analogy? God requires more from those who are called and chosen than God requires from people whose minds He has not opened in this life. We need to understand that for any intervention in our lives by God, there is always one spirit element that we ourselves must provide to get that "spiritual chemical reaction" going. Every divine intervention requires at least two spirit elements to get going.

Consider something we are told about Christ's ministry.

When Jesus Christ came to Nazareth the people who knew His family circumstances while He was growing up were very critical of Him, and they became "offended in Him".

> And **they were offended in Him**. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. (Matthew 13:57)

Now notice the consequence of that critical and faithless attitude by the majority of the people there.

> And He did not many mighty works there **because of their unbelief**. (Matthew 13:58)

"Mighty works" require the interaction of at least two spirit elements. Because of the people's lack of faith, the people obviously did not provide that needed spirit element we call faith. And Jesus Christ was not prepared to provide everything Himself, i.e. He was not prepared to provide both spirit elements to make possible the "spiritual chemical reactions", that would have resulted in "mighty works". The lack of faith was just so pervasive amongst the people of Nazareth, who should have known better, that Jesus Christ was not about to perform mighty works.

Consider another occasion during Christ's ministry.

> Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. (Luke 18:41)

Here was a blind beggar who had been crying out for help to Jesus Christ. So they brought the beggar before Christ, who then asked him: what do you want from Me? So the beggar asked to be given his sight. Notice how Jesus Christ then responded to this request.

> And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight: **your faith has saved you**. (Luke 18:42)

Jesus Christ discerned that this man did indeed have faith that Christ could heal him, and so Jesus Christ then did heal him. Again, in this miracle two separate spirit elements were involved: the faith expressed by Jesus Christ and the faith of this blind beggar.

So as far as understanding God's eternal power is concerned, I believe that every expression of God's power is a result of an interaction (i.e. a "spiritual chemical reaction") between two or more spirit elements. And as far as God intervening in our lives is concerned, God always expects us to provide one spirit element for such spiritual chemical reactions.

Consider what Jesus Christ said at another occasion:

When the disciples privately asked Jesus Christ why they had not been able to cast out a demon, Christ said:

> And Jesus said unto them, Because of **your unbelief**: for verily I say unto you, **If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed**, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and **nothing shall be impossible unto you**. (Matthew 17:20)

He told them: you couldn't cast the demon out because you didn't provide the required spirit element called faith. And then Jesus Christ explained that having a small quantity of the spirit element faith is somewhat like having a quantity of fission-grade plutonium or uranium on the physical level: it contains a staggering amount of power that can potentially be unleashed if certain conditions are met.

The tiniest quantity of real faith (i.e. "as a grain of mustard seed") incorporates the potential power needed to move mountains, an absolutely staggering level of raw power.

What Jesus Christ was here saying is that if we can provide the spirit element called faith, then God will provide whatever other spirit elements may be needed to achieve things that are totally impossible for anyone to achieve without real faith. Exercising real faith taps into the spirit world in which God the Father and Jesus Christ and all the angels exist and live their lives. Real faith empowers us to go above and beyond the physical constraints of our present physical existence, and to start tapping into the powers that operate on the far higher level of the spirit world.

Christ's statement that "nothing shall be impossible for you (to achieve)" tells us that **real faith is always one component for any miracle that happens anywhere**. By "miracle" I mean anything that is not a consequence of the laws of physics acting in a physical environment.

Christ's statement also makes clear that God really wants all of us who are called in this age to strive to

develop this spirit element faith in our lives. And real faith must have become a part of our spirit in man by the time we die ... or we will not be able to please God.

Look at it this way:

We are physical mortal beings. God is a spirit being and He is offering us an immortal existence as spirit beings. To get there, we will have to make a transition from physical to spirit. To make that process possible, God has given us the spirit in man, potentially capable of understanding spiritual things. If we willingly change the way we use our minds (i.e. if we repent), then God gives us His holy spirit to unite with our spirit in man.

At that point, once we have received God's spirit, God then requires us to develop the spirit element called faith. It is the holy spirit working with our spirit in man that makes it possible for us to develop faith. And the development of the spirit element called faith then makes possible our transition from physical mortal human beings to spirit-born sons of God, by way of the resurrection. We ourselves have to provide that spirit element called faith to make that transition possible. We provide the one element for that spiritual chemical reaction, and God will provide the other needed spirit element.

And that's about it for this article.

As you have seen, throughout this article I have used various analogies to try to explain certain things in the spirit realm in which God exists. It isn't too difficult to find some weaknesses in some of my analogies. I understand that you could present some questions for which I presently have no answers. My premise is that I am not presenting all these ideas as conclusive proof; I am simply presenting them as points to stimulate your own thinking in the right direction.

I have presented a lot of speculations. And yes, some of them may turn out to not be fully correct. That's partly because some of these analogies fall short when applied to other circumstances. I realize that. Almost certainly there are things in this article that I may need to change or correct. I understand that. I hope that as time passes the overall picture will become clearer. And there are no doubt additional Scriptures that we could look at.

But hopefully I have given you a number of things to think about. Hopefully it has expanded your understanding of the spirit in man. And this present article is certainly not intended to be the final word on this subject.

Frank W Nelte