

# The Nature of Man - Trichotomy Stated and Refuted Part 2

by John Murray

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*John Murray explores the nature of man through the lens of trichotomy, emphasizing the unity of body, soul, and spirit under the governance of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 48:35

**Scripture:** Matthew 12:25, Romans 12:3, Hebrews 4:12

**Topics:** "Nature Of Man"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Hebrews 4:12, which states that the word of God is living and powerful. He emphasizes that the word of God is sharper than a two-handed sword and has the ability to penetrate deep into the soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. The preacher also mentions Luke 11:17-18, which supports the idea that the word of God divides and separates opposing parts, rather than simply distinguishing between different entities. He concludes by mentioning that there will be a class test covering the material discussed and encourages the listeners to study and prepare for it.

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## Transcript

I'll be a plant covering the material up to that time. All the chapters in the textbook will be covered by that time. Well, in time, that means time I'll have you, and I wonder how you're getting along.

More particularly, how I'm getting along with you. We were dealing with the subject of psychopathy, and I have been dealing with this topic. This means, for the course following, where you have this expression, somatiticon and somatomicon, and you remember I said that there were two points to be noted here.

First of all, that on the assumptions of psychotomy, their interpretation of Dukas does not really apply here, because this is dealing with the death and resurrection of believers. Psychotomy, you could not call the body of a believer to be a somatiticon on the whole family. But then, secondly, when we come to deal with somatomicon, we can readily see that the psychotomic interpretation cannot possibly apply.

How could it be a body simply indwelt by a human spirit? That would not give us any contrast in respect to believers, because believers are even in dislike. Somaticon, furthermore, could not be simply a body composed of spirit, because that would be self-contradiction. The word somaticon here is certainly derived

and is repelling to the film of the resurrection body.

Influence of the resurrection belongs to the world of the resurrection, and therefore to that world which is nomadic. Well, there are various other references to which I could feel support the same meaning of the word somaticon. There is one place where Paul speaks of the spiritual blessing with which believers are blessed.

Of course, in terms of the context, that spiritual blessing is the blessing of divine origin with divine quality. Then Ephesians 5.19 and Colossians 3.16, where Paul speaks about the spiritual song, the belief of songs indited by the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 2.5 is a reference which clearly shows the impossibility of the tricatonic view.

Paul and Peter speak about the spiritual house, spiritual house, and that means surely a house indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is the house built by the Holy Spirit and dwelt by the Holy Spirit. And so we could proceed with a great many other instances which would establish this same connotation of the word somaticon.

And the fact is that there is not one instance in the New Testament, not one instance in the tricatonic view, spiritual, nomadic house is apparent. Whereas on the other hand, there are numberless instances where it appears that that particular term is derived from the Holy Spirit. And that meaning is in every instance Ephesians 6.12. So I think you can certainly establish that conclusion that in no one instance is the tricatonic view apparent.

In numerous instances the other meaning is apparent and the other meaning is absent. So the contrast in the New Testament, nomadic house, is not between the man who has only a soul and the man who in addition has also a spirit. Anthroposophical man, anthroposophical, means man as he is in himself.

Actuated, directed, and governed by his own self. That is by his own soul. So in a word, it is man as self.

Whereas anthroposophical, spiritual man, means man as he dwelt, actuated, and governed by the Holy Spirit. And the contrast is not between any duality that exists within man himself. I say it doesn't consist in any duality that exists within man himself, or in any antithesis that receives its definition from the component element of human nature.

But it is the contrast between man in his entirety as self-governed, and man in his entirety as God-governed, spirit-governed. So the contrast is really that between man himself and God the Holy Spirit as the governing agent. Ok is frequently used in the Greek as nefesh in the Hebrew as the synonym of the self, of the person.

Sometimes, of course, it is equivalent to the personal pronoun. Sometimes it's used as what you might call reflexive force. And that meaning comes to bear upon the expression anthroposophical in contrast with it.

And it is in that light that we are to understand our Lord's own words as the primary condition of discipleship. If any man will come after me, he says, let him deny himself. Let him deny himself.

It's that very same thought he applied to who knows no other government. Whereas the spiritual man is the man who knows the government of the Holy Spirit. Significance in this matter of sanctification is this expression anthroposophical.

Interpreted and governed. Well, so much for that part of our discussion. I come now to the next session.

This is 5, isn't it? Number 5, isn't it? Oh, that's right. Now we come to 5. And this is the study of Hebrews 4.12, which is, of course, one of the classic passages dealing with this question. You remember what Hebrews 4.12 is.

The Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing unto a division of soul and spirit, of joint and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, and penetrating, deep and luminous discernment. Unto a division that is of soul and spirit, of joint and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

A discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart, literally, without any article of equality. Now, in connection with this, the trichotomic view is that this term, merismon, means a dividing between, a dividing between, and marrow. And so, merismon, this term is interpreted as indicating a separation of soul from spirit, and of joint.

And so, soul and spirit are regarded for that reason distinct powers, organs, constituent elements of our human nature. Now, it is to that, perhaps, the crucial question, merismon, what does the usage of the New Testament, does not warrant the merismon, means a dividing between, a dividing between two things, viewed in their distinctness and separateness. The usage of the New Testament, rather, to the meaning, division of, cleaving, dividing within.

You see the difference, division between, would be distinguishing of these two. The Word of God can penetrate between them, lay them apart, supposed to be joined together, it can penetrate between them and lay them apart, set them forth in their own distinctness. Whereas, dividing within means, simply, that it can enter and cleave this asunder, this one thing.

Now, I think the usage definitely establishes that meaning. So, it is not the dividing between one thing in its distinctness of totality, but the division, or distribution of a thing in itself. Obviously, between, you must have two things.

Division within, requires only one. The word merismos, the substantive, occurs only once, elsewhere in the New Testament. In the same epistle, we use two forms.

But there, of course, it means distributions. Andrew, in our version, gives us the Holy Spirit, literally, as distributions of the Holy Spirit. The thought is, that the Holy Spirit divides out, as He will, distributes.

The thought, of course, is entirely removed, dividing between. This merismos is entirely removed from the idea of dividing between. But, of course, here we have a distinct, distinct pattern of thought.

The verb, that is, the word, is quite frequent, and on some occasions, this verb, the corresponding verb, has the same meaning as the noun in Hebrews 2.4. That is, the meaning, to impart, to distribute. Like Romans 12.3. There, it is the very same thought, which you have in Hebrews 4.2.4, and 1 Corinthians 7.17, for example. However, in a number of instances, the meaning, division, is in the forefront.

Division. And the passages clearly demonstrate that it is not division between, but division within. Sundering within, cleaving within.

Matthew 12.25 and 26. Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. Of course, the thought is clearly that of division or cleaving within.

Not at all desolation of that kingdom from another kingdom, or from another entity. That might be related to it. Cleaving within.

Luke 12.13. Same thought. Speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. Divide the inheritance with me.

Cleaving within. Distributing the inheritance. Giving to one his portion, and to another another portion.

Dividing up a totality. Alien is the thought of distinguishing that totality from another totality. 1 Corinthians 1.13. Is Christ divided? Not at all the thought of dividing between Christ.

But dividing Christ within himself. Dispersing the unity which is his. Or, of course, the impossibility.

God here is clearly dispersing the unity which belongs to Christ. I am an impossibility. Then 1 Corinthians 7.32. 7.33. The married person, Paul says, takes care for the things of the world, how he may please his wife and his divinity.

Probably, right? Or any other, or any such thing. When Paul says that person is divided, he is referring to the distribution of that person's energy and thought and care. And contrasting that with undivided, undivided and unified devotion.

Paul is referring to the division and evaluation of the way in which a single person may be distinguished from a married person in respect of what he would call unified, undistributed devotion. But in any case, the thought is far removed from the way in which a single person may be distinguished from a married person in respect of what he would call unified, undistributed devotion. But in any case, the thought is far removed from that of dividing between.

And so you could go on in this place from other instances. There is a compound word and a compound substantive. Dear married Jojo, you could see that before.

You have also that compound. And the same meaning appears in the compound as appears in the compound noun and verb. Take Luke 12, 51 through 53.

These are both very interesting instances of the occurrence of both the verb and the subject. And the idea here is not that the family is divided from another family or from other social units, but to be divided up into opposing parties. The family is divided up into opposing parties so that these are at variance to one with the other.

The thought is that unity is broken. The unity is broken. And so the family is divided up or divided between.

Take Luke 11, 17 and 18. Luke 11, 17 and 18 to demonstrate the very same. Therefore, there is abundant evidence to support this interpretation of the word of God, which is living and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword.

I am pleased, John, and it is a disturbance to the thought and instinct of the heart. So the thought is not at all that of division between one thing regarded in it from some other thing regarded in its unity or in its distinctive character. I repeat, may I say this, the thought is not that of dividing between one thing in its unity and distinguishing character from something else in it, but it is the division of something within itself.

Now, that's entirely in agreement with the main emphasis of the passage. An entire agreement with the main emphasis, because the main emphasis of the passage is the piercing, penetrating qualities of, piercing, penetrating qualities of, It is not that the word pierces between the innermost parts of our being, but that it penetrates to the most occult parts of our being and leaves them there. And the joints and marrow refer to the most occult parts of our physical brain.

The soul and spirit to the most occult parts of our spiritual being. And the thoughts and intents of the heart to the most occult and secret movements of our spirit. You can see the appropriateness of that emphasis.

The whole personality comes under the judgment of the word of God. It is not simply the body as distinguishing from the physical being, but it is the man's physical being as distinguishing from his spiritual being. And it is the movements of his spirit, the psychological movements in distinction from his metaphysical being.

How magnificent it is that it brings the whole personality under it. The inspired writer expresses that in the most eloquent way by specifying the most secret and occult parts of our physical being, of our spiritual being, and of our psychological movement. I might say additional considerations, which illustrate again that by the atomic, the two additional considerations, these are not major arguments.

The major argument is the proper interpretation of Merit Mod and the refutation of the tricatonic convention, that it means dividing between. But these are two subsidiary and confirmatory of corroboration. The first concerns the relationship with joints and marrow that seem to one another in the physical being of man.

The tricatonic use of Merit Mod is to detect that just as a sharp sword is necessary, a very sharp sword is necessary to penetrate between things which are adjacent to one to the other. A sharp sword is necessary to penetrate between things which are adjacent to one to the other. So the word of God is likewise sharp and able to lay bare the distinction between soul and spirit.

That's the reason, you see, that's the idea. Well, that does not comport with the relationship with joints and marrow that seem to one another in the human brain. Joints and marrow are not adjacent.

It requires a sharp sword to get in between joints and marrow because they're not adjacent to one to the other. Bones and marrow are adjacent. Joints and bones are adjacent.

Joints I take to be ligaments. Joints and bones are adjacent. And marrow and bones are adjacent.

But not joints and marrow. So, the bones have written any... Well, you see, this is not the idea. It doesn't comport with the expression joints.

Whereas when you recognize that joints and marrow are the most inaccessible part of our system, the most inaccessible part, then the thought thoroughly comports with the relationship which these sustain to one another and the places that they occupy in the human brain. Now, that was just one barbaric reconsideration, no assessment. But if you are going to make a hard and fast distinction metaphysically between soul and spirit, you have to insist likewise on a metaphysical distinction between soul and spirit at heart.

Because the life and speech not only of soul and spirit, but also of heart. It's a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The passage, whether we support more than the dichotomy.

Well, that's all I'm going to do. In the interest of physical totality. Burden with dichotomy between.

Now, I come to the church of the Lord. I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body. But the God of peace.

Thank you for you calling. And your spirit and soul and body. Blamelessly say thou must be.

What is the opportunity. And that is what we mean by prayer. And I pray God.

The church will be. And I pray God with your spirit and soul and body. So you have the three terms there.

Pluma, Plumae, and Soma. And again, this passage is a metaphysical distinction between soul and spirit. A necessary metaphysical distinction.

Now, what are we going to say about this? Well, first of all, we have found already that it is characteristic of the church to make an accumulation of terms in order to express completeness. Give us an accumulation of terms in order to express completeness. And the writing example we found already was Mark 12, 13.

The sum of devotion. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind. Heart and soul and strength and mind.

And since there is some kind of distinction between soul and spirit. Thoroughly appropriate. The Apostle Paul, he is praying for the complete satisfaction of the saints.

He would use such an expression as this. In order to convey the thought of completeness. The second thing that has to be said is that there are numerous other expressions in Paul's book.

And in the New Testament. Which reflect on the completeness of personality. And the completeness of faith.

Where only two of these are. And we are compelled to lay as much weight, if not more weight. On the numeric instances in which only two terms.

As we are upon this instance for three terms. There we are. We'll stop at that point today.

Now I'll bring this to a conclusion tomorrow. And deal with the distinction which may probably be wrong. Or at least so that a distinction may properly be drawn between soul and spirit.

So not after the fact of fact has happened. The word is forever settled in heaven. And that when we shall appear before thy judgment seat.

We shall be judged according to thy word. Accept of us now, O Lord, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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