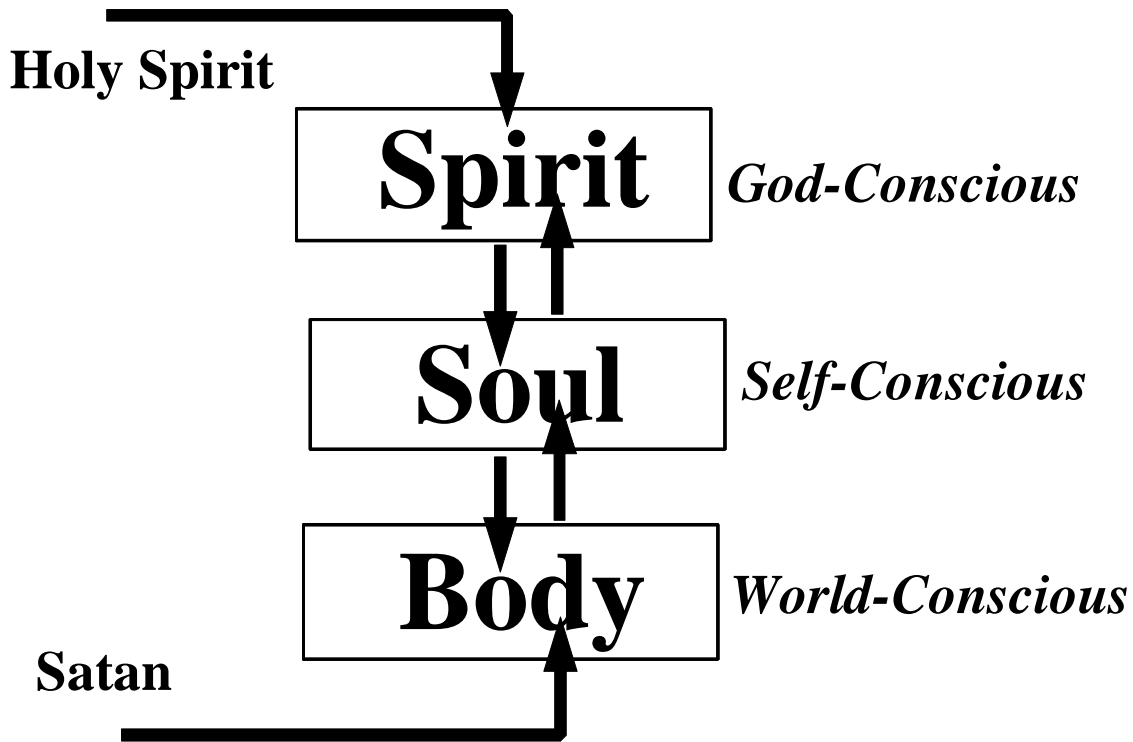


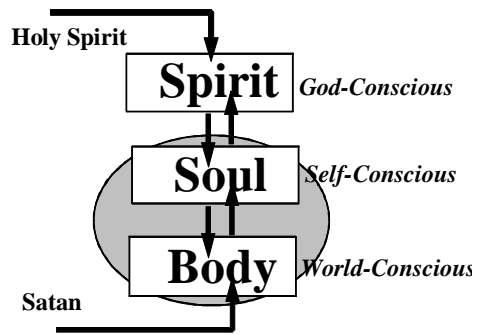


SPIRIT-CONTROLLED
or
DEMON-POSSESSED?



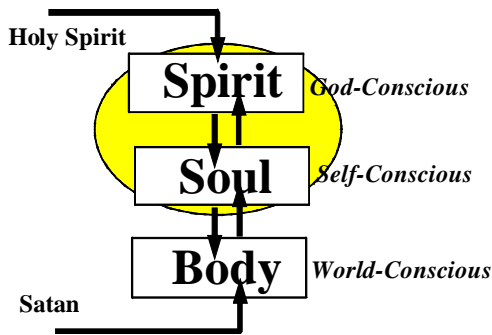
Man was created a tripartite, or three-fold, being (I Thessalonians 5:23). As God is simultaneously Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so man is simultaneously spirit, soul, and body. Man's spirit gives him a consciousness of God; his soul gives him a consciousness of himself; and his body gives him a consciousness of all that is around him in the world-at-large.

When man sinned, sin permeated all his being. He was "darkened," leaving him to live in the combined realm of Body and Soul. He continued to know that God existed (Romans 1:20), but his preoccupation with himself and the world around him left him devoid of any practical knowledge of God. Thus, it took the Lord's intervention to "awaken" man from his spiritual plight and affect his





redemption.



When man becomes a believer, he ceases to live in the realm of body and soul, choosing rather to live in the realm of soul and spirit. He has not ceased to occupy his body, but he is no longer *preoccupied* with it. God’s intervention through His Holy Spirit has changed all of that.

The Holy Spirit commences His redemptive work via man’s human *spirit* (Romans 8:16). Gaining entrance, He thereafter forthrightly seeks control of man’s *soul*, and finally of his *body*. The body is the last of man’s being to be surrendered, and someone has astutely noticed that the last facet of the body man surrenders is his *tongue*.

When the Holy Spirit has gained total control of a man, the man may be said that to be “*Spirit-controlled*” (a more accurate term than “*Spirit-filled*”). However rare Spirit-control may be said to be in a believer, it is, nevertheless, our Lord’s fervent desire for all His children (Ephesians 5:18). We might quickly assign this appellation to the Apostle Paul, except that he himself said, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, **among whom I am foremost of all**” (I Timothy 1:15).

The Adversary, on the other hand, commences his work in the realm of man’s body. It is understandable, therefore, why the “works of the flesh,” described by Paul in Galatians 5:19-21, are largely *body-works*--provoked by mental-attitude sins that arise from the soul, that indomitable area so sensitive to attacks upon one’s *self*.

When Satan has gained virtual control of the body, he works to gain lordship of the soul. When man is thoroughly given over body, soul, and spirit to the control of the Evil One, he may be said to be *demon-possessed*.

Notwithstanding the theological impossibility of a believer’s ever being fully demonically-controlled, believers who are fleshly exhibit a trend in their lives that is more *downward* than *upward* (cf. Acts 5:1-11). Whether one is truly an *unbeliever*, having never been genuinely born-again, or is simply resistant to the Holy Spirit’s efforts to fully control his life, is ultimately known only to the Lord Himself. Provisions for dealing with such unweary persons are established in Scripture (I Corinthians 5:1-5; Titus 3:10-11).