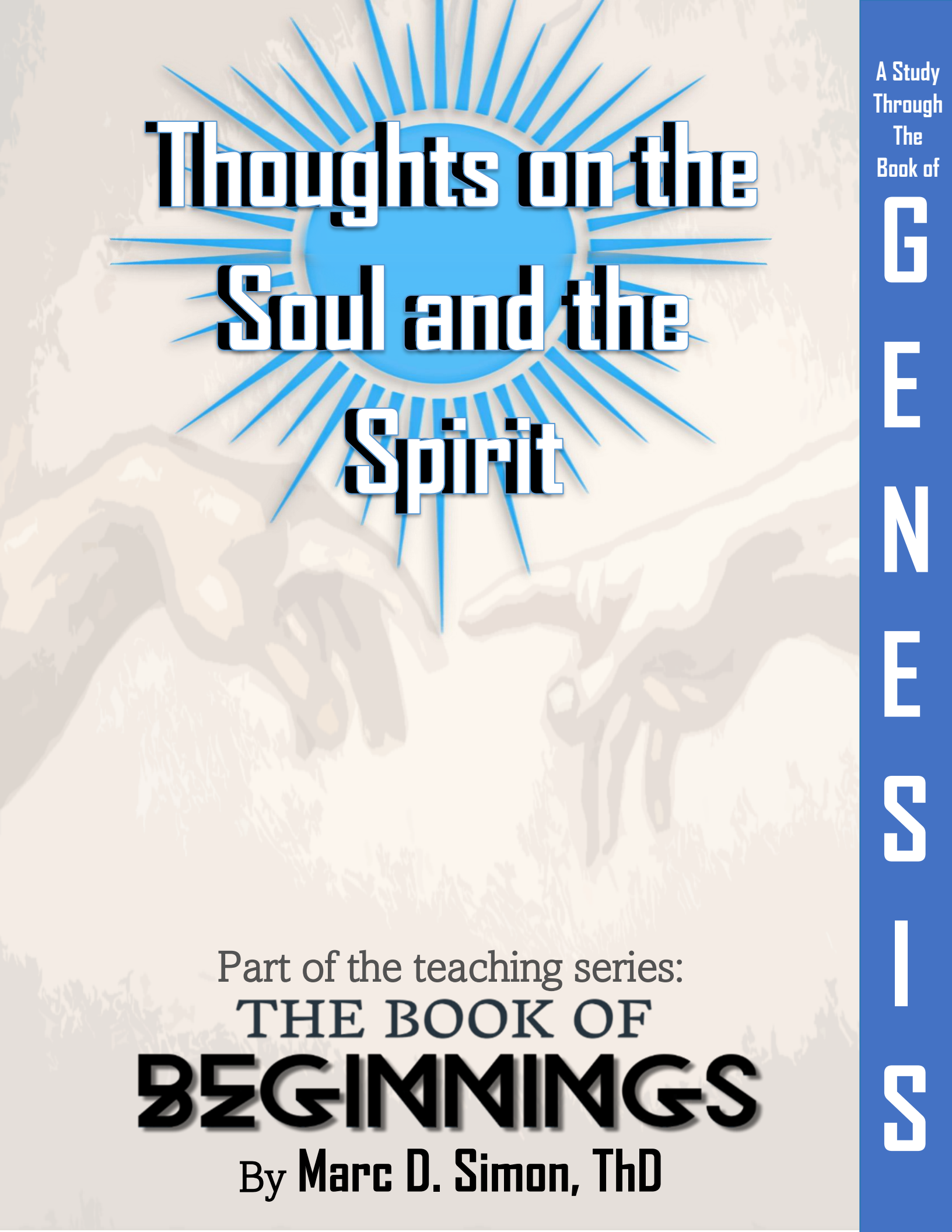




Thoughts on the Soul and the Spirit

Part of the teaching series:
**THE BOOK OF
BEGINNINGS**

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A Study
Through
The
Book of

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Earth, Water, and Breath

The two primary places in Genesis that help us better understand the nature of man (human beings) are Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 2:4-7. These verses tell us something about who we are as created beings.

We'll begin by looking at Genesis 2:4–7 and examining what it says about our creation and constitution.

When the LORD God* made the earth and the heavens, neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land. Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living soul. (Gen. 2:4-7)

After springs rise from the ground and water the earth, God takes the watered soil and forms man. In fact, the Hebrew word for “*man*” (*adam*) is formed using the Hebrew word for “*ground*” (*adamah*).

* Yahweh Elohim

The Breath of God and the Soul of Man

He breathed the breath of life into man's nostrils, and man became a living soul. (Gen. 2:4-7)

While man is physically formed from the elements of the earth, it is not until he receives the breath of God that he is called a **“living soul”** (*Heb. **nephesh hayyah***). But man is not the first “living soul” spoken of in the Bible. In Genesis every animal that dwells in the earth, sky, and water is called a ***nephesh hayyah*** – or **“living soul,”** cf. Gen. 1:21, 30; 2:4-25.

Not only are all living creatures referred to as living souls, but in Psalm 104, the animals of the earth are also said to possess the ***ruach*** (***spirit/wind/breath***) of God.

All creatures look to you...when you take away their ruach (spirit, breath), they die and return to the dust. When you send forth your ruach (spirit, breath) they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. (Psa. 104:27-30)

So, all living creatures are “souls” in the biblical Hebrew, and each one is created and given life by the spirit (ruach) of God.

How then is man different from other living beings?

According to the Bible, it is not SPIRIT, BREATH, or SOUL that makes us different from other life forms on the planet. It is, in fact, these very things that connect us to them. This may sound strange for some, but it is the picture being drawn in Genesis!

Ironically, the thing that truly makes us different from other lifeforms is the Word of God Himself. His “image” in man is not our possession of “soul” or “spirit,” but a “divine likeness” rooted in our mandate ***to exercise divine authority on behalf of God Himself.***



Then God said, “Let us make man in our image and our likeness. And let them rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the animals on the earth, and the animals that move along the ground.” So God created the man in His own image. In the image of God He made them; creating them as male and female. Then God blessed them and said: “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that move along the ground.” (Gen. 1:26–28)

That man exists in the unique “image” and “likeness” of God is reflected in his five-fold blessing, which illustrates how the divine image is properly expressed through human beings. In short, we exist to be fruitful, multiply and have influence on the earth, and to exercise God’s authority over all things – *including sin* (cf. Gen. 4:7). To do this, in the mind of the first biblical writers, was to live in the image and likeness of God Himself!

Grace and blessings!

– Pastor Marc