

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. ^[33] When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, ^[34] And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. ^[35] Jesus wept. ^[36] Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! (John 11:32-36).

Jesus did not weep for Lazarus; Lazarus was doing just fine where he was: in Paradise. Indeed, Jesus was aware that in just few moments He would raise Lazarus from the dead. The truth is that Jesus “groaned in the spirit” when He saw everyone there “weeping” because they could find no comfort.

Jesus knows how we feel. The prophet Isaiah foretold of Jesus nearly seven hundred years before He came to Earth as a human, being born in the manger in Bethlehem, and Isaiah reveals Him to be “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” (Isaiah 53:3).

At the Last Supper Jesus knew that the time was at hand where he would go to be crucified for the redemption of mankind. He knew that His disciples would soon suffer the greatest emotional pain that they would ever know; Jesus would leave them. So Jesus promised, in His great Upper Room Discourse (also called the Farewell Discourse), that He would provide “another Comforter” (notice the capital letter “C” indicating proper name) that would abide with them (and us) forever:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ^[17] *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. ^[18] I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (John 14:16-18).

This “Comforter” that Jesus promised to His disciples (and to us) is the Person of the Holy Spirit of God that would descend from Heaven to dwell within the bodies of the believers in Christ:

But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26).

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separate and unique, and each relates differently to God:

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Thessalonians 5:23).

This passage denotes that we ourselves are a kind of Trinity, not unlike God who is manifested as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (I John 5:7). ²

Just as the three distinct Persons of the Trinity function in unison as a whole, our body, soul, and spirit function likewise as a whole. But at death there is a temporary separation; at the exact moment when the body dies, the soul and spirit depart. We know this because of what the Bible tells us happened to Jacob’s wife Rachel when she died giving birth to their son Benjamin:

And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. ^[18] And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. (Genesis 35:17-18).

God, through the pen of Moses, tells us that Rachael named her son “as her soul was in departing.” God thereby tells us that the soul, which is the immaterial part of us that holds our consciousness, departs the body at death. Jesus tells us about a beggar whose soul and spirit was carried by angels to a predetermined location immediately at the moment of death:

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom . . . (Luke 16:22). ³

² The Word refers to Jesus, the Son: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . .” (John 1:14). “. . . and his name is called The Word of God.” (Revelation 19:13). The Holy Ghost is another name for the Holy Spirit.

³ Before Jesus ascended into Heaven to “prepare a place” (John 14:2) there was a temporary place called “Abraham’s bosom” where the souls of Christians would reside in a state of bliss until Jesus finished His work.

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Had Jesus not taken on mortality, He could not have overcome sin and death, passed down to us from our earliest ancestor, the first man Adam who in the Garden of Eden brought the curse of the Original Sin upon all of his descendants:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Romans 5:12).

For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. ^[22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

It was necessary for Jesus to suffer death for our redemption.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; ^[15] And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ^[16] For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. (Hebrews 2:15-16).

These precious words, God’s Words, words of comfort are found nowhere else but in His Holy Scriptures.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4).

Because God, who “knoweth all things” (I John 3:20), was well aware that not everyone would seek the “comfort of the scriptures” (Romans 15:4) to discover the manifold blessings contained therein, God therefore ordained a plan to reach that large segment of people in that world that would be entirely ignorant, yet in need, of the source of infinite comfort which is found in God’s Word:

Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ^[4] Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

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As Jesus hung on the cross finishing the work of redemption for all mankind one of the two thieves that hung next to Him asked of Jesus a request:

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. ^[43] And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. (Luke 23:42-43).

Jesus told the “Penitent Thief” that in the same day he would be in Paradise ⁴ together with Jesus.

The Apostle Paul was attacked and stoned in the city of Lystra and was presumed to be dead:

¶ And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead. ^[20] Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. (Acts 14:19-20).

When Paul later wrote of the incident he indicates that he may actually have been in fact dead, experiencing for a moment the glories of Heaven, being thereafter raised and healed by God:

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. ^[3] And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) ^[4] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. (II Corinthians 12:2-4).

Although Paul spoke in the third person the context makes clear that he was referring to himself; wondering whether he had an out-of-body experience. But he spoke with the authority of an Apostle (I Timothy 2:6) and reveals the ever important concept of “to be absent from the body:”

We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (II Corinthians 5:8).

⁴ “Paradise” is synonymous with “Abraham’s Bosom” (see the previous Footnote 3).

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