

BIBLE STUDIES

to do at home

Have a relationship with God



that you never thought was possible.

David Sims

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to do at home



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This is Life Eternal

In John 17 we have the transcript of a prayer of Christ. He was already standing in the shadow of the cross, yet His burden is for His disciples. In this touching prayer, rich with meaning, Christ gave a lesson which should be engraved on the mind and the soul.

“This is life eternal,” He said, “that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:3.



This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe.

This is the knowledge which is obtained by searching the word of God. And this treasure may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it.

If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:3-5.

Human beings are infatuated with knowledge. Some spend years on an education; others find out everything there is to know about sports and can tell you every statistic. Others study all about cars and can tell you the smallest differences in the different years and models, while still others know all the movie stars and the intricate details of their personal lives. But what is the value of such knowledge? How can it compare with a knowledge that will enable us to obtain eternal life?

A Casual Acquaintance with God is Not Enough

One day my daughter and I were playfully talking and laughing. Then she said something in a joking way, but with some sarcasm about someone. When I didn't respond, she exclaimed, "You are talking with your eyes!" So I asked, "Well, what did I say?" "You said I am being mean." She knew me well. I didn't have to say anything, she already knew what I was thinking.

Perhaps you have a grandmother, husband or wife, sister or brother, or good friend, with whom you have, or have had, such a relationship. You know them so well, you can tell what they are thinking. You have been together so much, and admire one another so much, that you have come to think alike. When your eyes meet, you can read each other's thoughts. A look, a hand on the shoulder, a hug or a touch on the hand; all communicate a thousand things. You love to be together and you hate being separated.

Have you ever thought of the possibility of having that close a friendship with God? Have you imagined it possible to know Him, to love Him, and to know you are loved by Him *that much*? Have



you thought it possible to trust Him so much that no circumstance can shake your confidence in His love? Do you expect answers to your prayers and receive the things needed, because you asked exactly what He wanted to give you anyway? Do you think just like Him, so that before He asks, you are already thinking of His desires for you and performing them? Have you ever longed for His presence like a weary deer pants for water? Jesus had such a relationship with His Father and this is what we need as well.

His intimate relationship with His Father and the relationship we can have with the Father was the subject of Christ's last public prayer, recorded in John 17.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, **as thou hast loved me.** John 17:23.

And from the following verse also, we learn of the closeness, the intimacy, that God wants us to have with Him.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: **I will guide thee with mine eye.** Psalms 32:8.

Recently I had the opportunity to ride a friend's horse. My friend was training this horse with a special method. The horse was trained to go in the direction its rider looked or pointed, without the rider having to do anything else.

God wants us to be living so close to Him that when we just look to Him, we will understand what His thoughts are and be ready to work in harmony with Him.

Intimate Fellowship with God is Possible

In Hebrews we read of those:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. Hebrews 11:33-35.



What kind of relationship was this, that they could have such experiences!

Daniel was greatly beloved. Abraham was called the friend of God and ate and talked with God. Enoch walked so close with God, that God took him to be with Him. Moses spoke face to face with God as a man speaks with his friend. Job declared concerning God, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." John leaned on Jesus' breast and was referred to as the beloved (loved of Christ). We can have this same kind of relationship with God, for "this is life eternal."

Fellowship with God was Broken

Adam enjoyed this kind of communion and fellowship with God. Morning and evening, in the “cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8), God came and talked with Adam and Eve. But because of sin, God, living in glory unapproachable, could no longer communicate with man.

Without communication even possible, how could man ever hope to know God, much less have a close relationship with Him? We are living in a helpless and powerless state, subject to the assaults of a powerful foe; it is so different to His situation. We are constantly tempted, but He cannot be tempted. How could we ever hope to discover what He is really like; to know how He would respond in an environment like ours; or how He thinks about things? How could we, sinful defiled creatures, hope to ever be able to approach into His presence, and communicate with the high and holy Creator? Besides, our situation, living in a world of sin, is so vastly different to the pure, holy, sinless and glorious environment of heaven.

It has been Made Possible for us Through Christ, for:

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. 2 Corinthians 5:19.

[God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. Hebrews 1:2.

In Christ, we can see and know God. His character and attributes are the same as His Father's.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. John 1:18.

It is one thing to have a knowledge of God through other's lives. But it is another thing to experience God's providence for ourselves, to commune with Him personally, to know our prayers are heard and recognize His leading and involvement in our lives. To have our faith so rooted and grounded in love that we will have an experience like those of Hebrews 11, “of whom the world was not worthy.” **God is calling us to this kind of experience!**



Personality of God

Before it is possible to have that deeper, personal experience **with** God, we must start with a knowledge **of** God.

In Christ's prayer, recorded in John 17,

Christ addresses His Father as a separate person.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Verse 21

He goes on to say in what sense He and the Father are "one."

This unity does not destroy their individuality.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, *even as we are one*: Verse 22

They are one in the same sense that we are to be one with other believers.

Once in conversation, I was asked, "You believe God is in you, don't you?"

Because I had been studying this very subject, I answered "No." (Christ is to be in us in a sense, but not contrary to sense. See page 31) My questioner was a little bit surprised and turning to another man, repeated his question. This time he was rewarded by a "Yes."

This is the answer he had been looking for, and he proceeded to share some of his philosophy with us. He said that he believed that too, and that he also believed that God was in the ocean, in the trees, and in the flowers. He went on to say that he was god, I was god,

and that everything was god. Even a cup of water was god, or a "part of god."

Our understanding of the personality of God is vital to having a relationship with Him. Can you have a relationship with a tree, or a glass of water? Are we to look inside ourselves for God? No, no, no!



To Know God, We Must First Believe that He Exists

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6.

Nature reveals the existence of God. We cannot honestly examine the least creature with its intricate detail, without acknowledging the existence of an intelligent designer, an intelligent Creator. But the creature is not the Creator, any more than the painting is the artist. Yet, something more than mere belief in His existence is needed, even the devils believe. We must not just know about Him, Jesus tells us that we must know Him. Our eternal life depends on it.

This is a life and death issue, yet mystery surrounds the character and even the personality of God.

I recently saw a set of tapes with the title “Our Fire and our Friend.” I have no idea what the speaker has to say, but the title serves to illustrate my point. Surely we can be warmed by a fire, but can we be friends with a fire? Can a fire love us? Can it understand our trials and difficulties, and sympathize with us? Can we have a meaningful relationship with a fire, or for that matter, something that is merely a spirit? If we are to know God personally, He must be more than spirit, not something as inanimate and intangible as fire. God is a person. This is one of the first points the Scripture teaches.



Man was Made in the Image of God

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Genesis 1:26-27.

Man was made in the image of God, but this does not include certain attributes such as inherent immortality, for God “only hath immortality.” (1 Timothy 6:16) We can receive immortal life only as a “gift of God.” (Romans 6:23)

Notice in the following text, that the life; the spirit of man; what makes us who we are; was breathed into us by God.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
Genesis 2:7

Whatever man is, then, was received from God. This should inspire us with a sense of closeness with God, for He is not some mysterious entity out in space, but a person, someone that we can fellowship with and know. The Scripture records many people who knew, or saw God as a personal God.



They Knew God as a Personal God.

Enoch Knew God.

And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. Genesis 5:24

Noah knew God.

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. Genesis 6:9.

More than this, Scripture shows evidence that God has a body, He has a form.

The 70 Elders at the very beginning of their commission and work were given a view of God as a personal God.

And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. Exodus 24:10.

God was Seen on Various Occasions

Though no man can see the glory of the face of God and live, yet many have seen the form of God.

And he [the prophet Micaiah] said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. 1 Kings 22:19.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. Daniel 7:9.

God Has a Dwelling Place

When God brought Israel out of Egypt and established them as a nation, He first wanted to impress upon them that He was a personal God, and that He had a specific dwelling place. He told them:

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. Exodus 25:8.

This sanctuary was to be made after the pattern of God's literal dwelling place.

A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Hebrews 8:2.

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. Hebrews 8:5.

This Place is in Heaven

Scripture shows us God in a specific place; heaven. Furthermore, in a specific place in heaven. If He had no form or body, He would need no physical dwelling place. That would make the sanctuary in heaven, and in fact heaven itself, nothing but fiction.



Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. Job 1:6.

The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. Psalms 11:4.

This Knowledge Changes Cold, Formal Religion to Genuine Worship

We need to see God, to know and understand Him as a real personal God. This was such a vital experience for many that it prepared them for their work. For Isaiah, the experience of seeing God, a real physical presence, in a real dwelling place, changed his experience.

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Isaiah 6:1-4.

This vision inspired Isaiah with awe and reverence. It brought conviction of sin, and changed his religion from one of cold formality to one of genuine worship.

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Isaiah 6:5.

See how this vision affected Isaiah's view of God and of himself! He had denounced the sin of others; but now he sees himself exposed to the same condemnation. How little now appears his wisdom and talents as he looks on the sacredness and majesty of the sanctuary. How unworthy he is! how unfitted for sacred service! We can hear his cry, like that of the apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This prepared him for his work:

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. Isaiah 6:6-8.

Revelation's Testimony

From Genesis to Revelation, God has sought to reveal Himself as a real tangible being, with a body and a form; a personal God with whom we can communicate. One whom we can trust. In the following passages from the last book of the Bible, He is shown sitting on a throne, with a real hand that holds something.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. Revelation 4:2.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. Revelation 5:1.

That They Might Know Thee (John 17:3)

I recently heard a missionary story of a boy who got malaria. The widowed mother had already lost her husband to the same terrible fever. She was given instructions by the witch doctor, of how to get her son well. The prescriptions included building a fire on the boy's chest, beating him, forcing him to swallow terrible mixtures, and finally required knocking out all of the boy's teeth. For all of this the witch doctor was paid richly. The widow's water buffalo, her only means of plowing and earning a living; her last bit of rice, even a beam holding up her house had to be removed to pay the "doctor's" bill.

Perhaps we don't do the things mentioned above, but still our lives are shaped by our beliefs about God. Who is God? What is He like? How can we know Him?

Christ Revealed the Personality and Character of the Father

Moses "spoke face to face" with God, yet even he was not allowed to see the glory of the face of the divine person, but only the "back parts." Others have seen His hair, hands, feet, and form, but since sin entered the world and brought about a separation between man and his Creator, no man has ever been able to penetrate the surpassing glory of the face of God. (John 1:18) For this reason Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men. He did so that men might become acquainted with their Creator. He who is in the "express image of His person" (Hebrews 1:3) is our "one mediator between God and man." (1 Timothy 2:5)

"I and My Father are one," Christ declared. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (John 10:30; Matthew 11:27)

Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know about Himself. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom and His love. But God saw that a clearer revelation was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. "That they might know thee." (John 17:3)

Christ's Identity was Preserved in His Humanity. In the gift of Christ, a channel of communication was opened, between God and us. When Christ laid down His divine form, His power and His glory and became a helpless

babe in Bethlehem, did He lose His identity? Did He cease being the divine Son of God? No! He was "Immanuel," God with us. He said, "if you've seen me, you've seen the Father." He was still the divine Son of God, bearing the express image of His Father's character, even though He had divested Himself of His divine form, which was in the express image of His Father's person.

Thus when we see Christ, who of Himself "can do nothing" (John 5:30) in the varied circumstances, trials, and temptations, "that are common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13), we are seeing the mind of the Father. When He was being tempted in the wilderness and would rather die than commit sin we are seeing the abhorrence with which God views sin. When He was nailed to the cross, and prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," or when we see Him telling Mary Magdalene, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more," we are seeing the forgiving heart of God. He spoke and acted just as His Father would have.

...but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. John 8:26.

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. John 8:28.

When we see His life, one of constant self denial, hardly stopping to eat or rest, constantly healing the afflicted and speaking encouraging words, we are seeing the loving, self-sacrificing heart of God.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." John 5:19-20.

We are seeing the orderly mind of God when Christ, paying attention to details, folded with His own hand His grave clothes before leaving the tomb. And we see the compassion of God when Christ ministered to the physical wants of the people in feeding the 5,000, and when He thought of the emotional needs of His mother at the cross.

In all of this we are seeing the great heart of God. When having such a close personal friendship with John who leaned on His breast, or when being so humble as to wash His disciples feet, calling them "friends" (John 15:15), in all of this we are seeing the personal, friendly, humble ministering traits of our Father. We are seeing just what the Father would do in the same situation.

In the life of Christ we see the character of God manifested in the very same

circumstances we are placed in, with the very same capabilities and liabilities. It is thus that we can get to know Him intimately. Only by studying the life of Christ, can we know the heart of God. And it is by contemplating and appreciating His character, that we are transformed into the same image.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:1-3.

When we truly have this fellowship with our Father and His Son, we will come to love him with all our hearts, love Him for what He is and who He is. **And we will become like Him.**

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2.

Then we shall receive answers to our prayers, and we will know that they are heard. Then we shall understand how His going forth is prepared as the morning.

And thus we will find the truthfulness of Christ's words,

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. John 17:3.

Only by studying
the life of Christ,
can we know
the heart of God.



The Father and the Son

Christ addressed His Father.

In Jesus' prayer recorded in John 17, He was addressing His Father.

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "*Father,*" John 17:1.

The Old Testament testifies that God had a son even before the creation of this earth.

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? Proverbs 30:4

He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Daniel 3:25

In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God.

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35

After the resurrection, in His glorified state, Christ calls God His Father.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. John 20:17

The measure of God's love for us is recorded in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." Can we trust God to tell us the truth? To know God, we must believe His word, and we must believe His love for us. But, I have actually heard church people say that Jesus was just playing a role. They said that the Father could have been the Son and the Son could have been the Father. In fact that is what the majority of churches

teach. But is that what we have just read in the passages above? Other Scriptures testify to the fact as well, that Jesus is really the Son of God and God is really the Father of Christ.

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. 2 John 1:3.

That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:6.

“Christ” was synonymous with “Son of God” to the Hebrews.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1.

And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. John 6:69.

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. John 11:27.

The condition for baptism was believing that Jesus was the Son of God.

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Acts 8:37.

This was the first thing Paul preached.

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. Acts 9:20.

This was the reason the gospels were written.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. John 20:31.

The Scriptures probably contain more testimony referring to Christ as the Son of God than any other subject. If we deny this truth, we make God a liar, and we might as well deny the entire Bible.

Anti-Christ denies this father and son relationship.

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 1 John 2:22.

The antiChrist is a professedly Christian power, and the verse above says that this power denies the relationship of the Father and the Son. The Scripture never even hints that we are to understand these verses talking about Christ as the Son of God to mean anything other than the obvious. Believing the doctrines taught to us by our pastor, priest, or the creeds of our church has no

power to sanctify us. It is by believing the truth, as revealed in the Bible, that we are sanctified. (John 17:17)

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.
2 Thessalonians 2:13.

If we will take the word of God for just what it says without bringing our preconceived ideas to it, we will know the truth.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32.

The truth that Christ is the Son of God, is the gospel.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
John 3:16.

This truth is the foundation of the Christian church.

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [*the truth that Christ is the "Son of the living God"*] I will build my church. Matthew 16:16-18 (see 1 Pet 2:4-8)



“The Only True God”

“...Thee, the only true God...” John 17:3

In this phrase “the only true God,” the first point is the obvious contrast between the Creator, the source of all life, with all other gods men make for themselves. Men make gods of gold, silver, and stone and even their stomachs.

But there is another point. The Father, Himself, calls His Son “God” and elsewhere, the Scripture clearly calls Jesus “God.”

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Hebrews 1:8.

How then do we harmonize these Scriptures with those which speak of the Father as the only true God?

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. 1 Corinthians 8:6.

Who is Christ if His Father is the only true God? Does that make Christ a false god?

I can't believe that Christ was in these words, denying His own divinity or that He is a false god. There must be a harmony in these passages. After many months of prayer and study the effort was richly repaid with precious light on the character of God that I would have missed otherwise. Nothing in God's word is unimportant, even if we don't readily discern them. Whenever we come across texts that seem to contradict, it is because we are missing some vital points. Here is what I found.

Though Christ:

- ▶ has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels -the name of His God, His Father (Hebrews 1:4)
- ▶ has all the attributes of His Father, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9)
- ▶ has life in Himself (John 5:26)
- ▶ is before all things, and by Him all things consist (Colossians 1:17).

Though all of these things are true of Him, notice what is said of Him.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But *made himself of no reputation*, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:6, 7

This describes what Christ did in His incarnation, but much more than that as we shall see. There is no contradiction in the Bible's reference to the Father as the "only true God" (John 17:3) or the "one God" (1 Corinthians 8:6) and those verses that speak of Christ's divinity, such as Isaiah 9:6, which calls Him the "mighty God." Because even still, Christ, as a son, voluntarily submits to His Father's greater authority.

Though Jesus is rightfully called God by His subjects, He recognizes/honors His Father as the higher authority. ("...to my God and your God" John 20:17) This is only reasonable, for though my son may grow to adulthood and become equal to me in every way, or even exceed me in strength, talents and abilities, yet, if he is a loving, dutiful son he will always respect my greater authority, because I am the father and he the son. So with Christ. As a son, He will ever maintain submission to His Father.

Christ is in Voluntary Submission to His Father

1. On earth

He was in submission to His Father while on earth. In this He has set the perfect example for us in how we ought to treat our parents.

I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things... I do always those things that please him. John 8:28-29.

2. Not only on earth did He set an example of submission, but even in heaven prior to His coming to earth as a babe in Bethlehem.

The Son wrought the Father's will in the creation of the world, for we read; ...[God] created all things by Jesus Christ. Ephesians 3:9.

3. He is in submission now, after His ascension

Upon His ascension, Christ stated, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18. Yet He is still in submission to His father. Jesus calls His Father, "my God."

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. John 20:17.

4. And His example of submission will continue even into eternity.

Although

...it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. Isaiah 25:9.

Yet,

...when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:28.

To Know Christ

“...and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

The blessings of redeeming love, our Savior compared to a precious pearl. He illustrated His lesson by the parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls “who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” Christ Himself is the pearl of great price. In Him is gathered all the glory of the Father, the fullness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person.



The glory of the attributes of God is expressed in His character. Every page of the Holy Scriptures shines with His light. The righteousness of Christ, as a pure, white pearl, has no defect, no stain. No work of man can improve the great and precious gift of God. It is without a flaw. In Christ are

...hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:3.

He is

...made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. 1 Corinthians 1:30.

All that can satisfy the needs and longings of the human soul, for this world and for the world to come, is found in Christ.

A knowledge of Christ means our eternal life. It is more important than anything else in this world. Paul was led to exclaim:

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. Philippians 3:8.

Knowledge of Christ is the means by which the sinner being re-created

And have put on the new man, *which is renewed in knowledge* after the image of him that created him. Colossians 3:10.

Through this knowledge we partake of the divine nature.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. 2 Peter 1:3.

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Ephesians 3:19.

We are commanded to grow, to increase in the knowledge of Christ.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18.

Consider Christ.

We are told to consider Christ; to keep Him in mind and contemplate His life of ministry on earth and in heaven.

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Hebrews 3:1

It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we meditate on His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will grow, and we will be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.

By considering Jesus continually it will transform us and make us like the one we adore.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Paul tells us how important the knowledge of Christ was to him as a minister.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:2.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ephesians 3:8.

There is salvation in none other.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6.

He is to be lifted up in all His beauty.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the

Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:14-15.

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:24.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. 1 Corinthians 1:30.

We should honor the Son as we honor the Father

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. John 5:21-23.

Christ Existed Before His birth in Bethlehem, and all Things were Created Through Him

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: *For by him were all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. Colossians 1:14-16.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Micah 5:2.

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. John 8:42.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. John 1:1-3.

The Word was with God in the beginning—so far back in the days of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man. He was before this world and before the angels, “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Colossians 1:17-19

The ages comprehended in this phrase cannot be grasped. It is not for us to know when or how Christ was begotten; but we know that He was the Divine Word before this world was created.

The last prayer of Christ (John 17) also reveals that Christ existed with the Father before the worlds were created.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. John 17:5.

Christ is Divine

In many places in the Bible Christ is called God.

God has, in direct address to the Son, called Him by the same title.

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter. Psalm 45:6.

The casual reader might take this last verse to be simply the Psalmist's ascription of praise to God, but when we turn to the New Testament, we find that it is much more. We find that God the Father is the speaker and that He is addressing the Son.

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Hebrews 1:8.

This name was not given to Christ in consequence of some great achievement, but it is His by right of inheritance. Speaking of the power and greatness of Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says that He is made so much better than the angels, because:

He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
Hebrews 1:4.

A son always rightfully takes the name of the father; and Christ, as "the only begotten Son of God," has rightfully the same name. A son, also, is, to a greater or less degree, a reproduction of the father; he has, to some extent, the features and personal characteristics of his father; not perfectly, because there is no perfect reproduction among mankind. But there is no imperfection in God, or in any of His works, and so Christ is the "express image" of the Father's person. (Hebrews 1:3) As the Son of the self-existent God, He has by nature all the attributes of Deity.

Christ is Worthy of Worship.

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. Hebrews 1:6

Christ is the Son of God

Angels are sons by creation.

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Job 38:7.

Adam was the son of God by creation.

Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God. Luke 3:38.

We are sons by adoption.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Romans 8:14-15.

Christ is a son by right, not elevated to that position.

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Hebrews 3:6.

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. Hebrews 3:3.

Christ is the only begotten Son.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

Christ at His Incarnation,

took human flesh, degenerated by thousands of years of sin.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 1 John 4:1-3 .

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest

in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:16-17.

Man is composed of a concrete portion and an abstract portion. We call these body and mind or flesh and spirit. The mind is our identity, it is who we are. Christ had a divine mind. It was His identity, it was who He was. He had this mind in a fleshly body. Just as we can have this same mind that was in Christ Jesus, in our fleshly bodies.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:5.

And be not conformed to this world: but *be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Romans 12:1-2.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Ezekiel 36:26-27.

Christ did not exercise divine power that we can not also have.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. John 14:12.

When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. But He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the “Master of earth and sea and sky” that He rested peacefully. That power He had laid down, for He said, “I can of Mine own self do nothing.” John 5:30. He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith—faith in God's love and care—that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God.

He came in human flesh for a number of specific reasons:

1. That God could communicate to man through Christ

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:19.

2. That He could reconcile man and God

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5.

Communication was cut off between man and God because of sin. To intercede, to mediate, to restore that communication, is a great object in the

plan of salvation. He began this work from the moment Adam fell.

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2.

He was:

...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8.

3. That He could be tempted as a man

It was necessary to see God's character tested by our earthly, sinful environment in order to really know God. If Christ used His divine power for Himself, there could have been no temptation for Him.

...for God cannot be tempted... James 1:13.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:18.

4. That He could be our perfect example

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. 1 Peter 2:21.

5. That He could die for man

Divinity cannot die, so Christ had to lay down the powers of His Divine nature so that He could die.

That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. 1 Timothy 6:14-16

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:8

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Hebrews 2:9

6. That He could be a prophet and priest before reigning as king

• Jesus while on earth held the office of a prophet.

The glory of God must be veiled for man to behold God. Christ took humanity, laying aside His glory that He might speak to man on behalf of God. This is the work of a prophet.

This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall

the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. Acts 7:37.

- **When He ascended, He took up the work of priest.**

To be a priest—one who speaks to God on behalf of men—He had to take on our human nature.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:16-17.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Hebrews 4:14.

- **And when Jesus comes again He will reign as king**

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. Revelation 19:16.

Jesus exercised no power we cannot have. He had trials, was tempted, and knows by experience what we have to go through. We can overcome in the same way, and by the same power that He overcame with.

Christ at His Ascension

Shortly before His ascension, Christ said “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matthew 28:18) He is not lacking any power. This includes the power to be with us wherever we are. Though Christ still bears His humanity, He says:

...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:20.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matthew 18:20.

Christ did not lose any of His divine powers. He is just as much divine now as He ever was. He can still be with us each, wherever we are. He is our Comforter.

How is Jesus with His children all over the earth and at the right hand of the Father at the same time? The same way as His Father can be: in Spirit.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. Psalm 139:7-8.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, *thou understandest my thought afar off.* Psalm 139:2.

With human technology, the internet, I can be seen and heard and both see and hear many people all over the earth from one specific location wherever I am located. My voice, my image, my thoughts may be present in many places while physically, I am in one place. It can be said that my spirit is present with others miles away from where I am physically. How much more can God and Christ hear, and see, and communicate, and even act anywhere and yet still have a physical form, a body in the temple in heaven?

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our Faith

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Hebrews 12:1-3.





The Holy Spirit

(co-authored by David Sims and Bethany Turner)

The Comforter

Jesus speaks of the coming Comforter in John 14.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 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. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. John 14:16-23

Jesus speaks of this Comforter in the third person, but in describing who this Comforter was, Jesus said, “you know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you,” Jesus, in a personal, physical way, was the “Comforter” that was with them. (“...for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:39)

He was to continue to be their Comforter, but now instead of them being able to see Him with their eyes, and hear Him with their ears, He would be seen in their minds, He would be heard by them in their thoughts. He confirms this in the next verse; 18, “I will not leave you **comfortless: I will come to you,**” verse 20, “**I in you,**” and verse 23, “my Father will love him, and **we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.**”

The Greek word used for Comforter in John 14 is *parakletos*, the same word used in 1 John 2:1, where it was translated Advocate and clearly refers to Christ.

Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof.

Thus, no one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.

Christ in You

We cannot all have the physical presence of Christ with us in all our various locations at the same time. But we can and must have the Spirit/Mind of Christ dwelling in us.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:2

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his **Spirit** in the inner man; **That Christ may dwell in your hearts** by faith. Ephesians 3:16-17



The Mind Connection

It was a glorious morning. As I was washing the breakfast dishes, the words from a psalm that I had been memorizing filled my mind and an amazing sense of peace flooded me. I was interrupted when my husband called me to see an Email forward that had just come in. The pictures were of a huge dead bear and they were almost gruesome.

When I got back to the dishes I soon noticed that my mind was now filled with thoughts of the bear and hunter that had killed it, rather than the Word of God. And the peaceful atmosphere had broken.

With an effort to train my mind back to the Word I prepared to make our bed. On the covers sat a booklet on the evils of Harry Potter. Being a reader, I picked it up. I didn't read much but the next thing I knew the words from the

Psalm that I was meditating on were being mixed with words from Harry Potter.

This started me thinking about the role of the mind in the life of the Christian. We have confessed our sins and given our hearts to Jesus. It is the daily walk that concerns us now – how to grow into mature men and women in Christ. We want victory in our lives and freedom from sin. How? “Abide in me” Jesus said. “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.” 1 John 3:6 But how do we abide in Him and how does He abide in us?

Does the person Christ Jesus, come down from heaven to us and physically take up residence in our bodies? Does He 'possess' us in the way that demons did in the New Testament times? Speaking through our mouths and taking us where we don't want to go? Certainly not!

Indwelt by the Spirit

In John fifteen, where Jesus drew the illustration of the vine and told His disciples the importance of abiding, He explained His meaning in practical terms.

If ye abide in me, and **my words abide** in you... John 15:7.

Words convey thoughts. Christ abides in us and we in Him, by listening to His voice through His Word and taking them into our minds; meditating. It's all about the mind!

Let this **mind** be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:5.

The mind is the intangible part of the body – you can't touch it, see it or handle it. What is it that dwells in the mind? Is it not the thoughts? And in words we have an expression of the thoughts. For, “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” Matthew 12:34.

So we can say,



Let's look at a few texts in this connection.

That **Christ may dwell in your hearts** by faith. Ephesians 3:16.

Let this **mind be in you**, which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:5.

Let the **word of Christ** dwell in you richly. Colossians 3:16.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: **that by these** ye might be partakers of the divine nature. 2 Peter 3:4.

So we see that it is by God's promises (His thoughts, or words) that we become partakers of the divine nature. Thus, He dwells in us.

The Bible also speaks of our being in-dwelt by God's *Spirit*.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost **which is in you**, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
1 Corinthians 6:19.

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ **which was in them** did signify. 1 Peter 1:11.

Having Christ dwell in us and having the Holy Spirit dwell in us are talking about the same thing.

The Nature and Spirit of Man

Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? Job 4:17

Man is said to be mortal. So that we will not forget this fact, Paul speaks of God as the one “who only hath immortality.” (1 Timothy 6:16) We only receive immortality as a gift through Christ.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2 Timothy 1:10

Immortality is received at the “last trump,” when Jesus returns and resurrects those who sleep in Jesus.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:51- 53

This mortal “flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God,” yet there is an immortal body, called a “spiritual body,” that will (1 Corinthians 15:50; also read verses 35-56). The righteous must be resurrected before going to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and the wicked must be resurrected before they are judged (Revelation 20:5, 13). Until the resurrection they are said to be sleeping.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring (Greek: “lead”) with him. 1 Thessalonians 4:14

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep....Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. John 11:11, 14

After sin entered the world, mankind lost the right to eat of the fruit of the tree of life.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever... Genesis 3:22

Praise God that He has provided a way that man can once again eat of the tree of life and have immortality.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
Revelation 22:14

The idea that man's spirit can have a separate existence from his body is an idea borrowed from paganism. It is founded on Satan's first lie, spoken to Eve in the garden, "ye shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4) The scripture testifies that when a man dies, "in that very day his thoughts perish." (Psalms 146:4)

So we see that man's spirit is not conscious without the body and therefore it is impossible to communicate with the dead.

The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything.
Ecclesiastes 9:5

Man is composed of two parts. There are the tangible and the intangible parts. We call these the body and the mind, or the flesh and the spirit. This is illustrated in the following text.

They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. Psalm 106: 32, 33.

The children of Israel did not hurt Moses' physical body, but his spirit. It goes without saying however, that it was Moses himself that they provoked and not someone other than Moses.

We know that man was made in the image of God. (Genesis 5:1) And in writing to the Corinthians, Paul likens God's Spirit to our spirit.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 2:11.

Two parallel Bible verses also witness to this connection.

By the prophet Isaiah the question is asked,

Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? Isaiah 40:13.

In quoting this Old Testament passage, Paul wrote,

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Romans 11:34.

So when inspiration speaks of God's Spirit, it is speaking, at least in part, of His innermost person – His mind and emotions.

How does God pour His Spirit upon us?

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Proverbs 1:23.

By making known (or giving us understanding of) His thoughts, and as we mediate on them and fill our minds with them and they become our thoughts, we become partakers of His Spirit.

This conversion is not immediate. Our heart is naturally evil and at variance to God, it is desperately wicked. Our thoughts also are naturally so different to Jehovah's that He tells us,

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:7, 8.

We need a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit. This, God has promised us. But we have a part to play of co-operation.

When Jesus was explaining this truth to a crowd at Capernaum, they were offended and many of his disciples left him. Let us examine this message of Christ's in John chapter six that brought so much opposition.

We must eat His flesh and drink His blood to have life

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Verse 53

He is talking about eternal life

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. Verse 54

By this Christ is speaking of the 'abiding.'

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. Verse 56

What did Jesus mean when he spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood? We know he was not speaking of a literal cannibalistic meal. A little further on in the chapter He explains His meaning:

We abide in Him and He in us by having His word in us and living by it.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. Verse 63

I would like you to notice something here – God's word contains a power and life that ours does not. When God speaks, things happen. There is creative power in His word. Just so, when we partake of His word and it becomes a

part of us, it changes us. Christ's words taken into the heart have a power to recreate our carnal minds and stamp on us the impress of the divine.

The battle for our eternal life lies in our minds.

We have not only to put the Word of God into our minds, but also to watch what other input we are receiving. We are to painstakingly protect our minds.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
Proverbs 4:23.

How is it that God communicates with us? It is through our minds. But how will we ever hear that "still small voice" if our minds are always occupied? The experience expressed in the following verse needs to be ours.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5.

We need to train ourselves to think on heavenly things. Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to have quiet time with God immediately after watching television? Or to meditate on Scripture after reading the news?

There is a battle over our minds, and we must guard the entrance so that only the good will have a place there.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:7-8.

If we desire to partake of God's Spirit, we have our part to play. We must choose to listen to that "still small voice," and not crowd it out with many other thoughts. We must choose to be in communication with God. We must choose to read His word and believe it. We must go where it is being spoken, praying that we might hear His voice through it.

Christ dwells in us when we choose to listen to that still small voice, and not crowd it out. Rather than reading His word to look for proofs to support our ideas or treating it as ordinary words on paper, we need to hear God's voice speaking to us personally through it. We must choose to familiarize ourselves with it by meditation and memorization. And we must choose to trust His promises and obey them.

What means do we know of by which God communicates his Spirit, His thoughts and feelings with men?

The Agency of Angels and the Holy Spirit



Another term for being “moved by the Holy Ghost” is “inspiration of God.”

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God

spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Peter 1:21.

This inspiration/communication from God comes through certain channels.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. Revelation 1:1.

God gave the revelation to Jesus who sent it by his angel to John. When the writers of Scripture were “moved by the Holy Ghost” or “inspired of God,” God was speaking through Christ and/or angels to men. The following verse is another example of this:

And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. Daniel 8:15-16.

We need to become familiar with the ministry of angels, God’s ordained means of communication with man after his fall.

And he (Jacob) dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Genesis 28:12.

Christ is represented by the ladder. He is the mediator, and the angels are the messengers.

And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. John 1:51.

Angels are ministering spirits/messengers

But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Hebrews 1:13,14.

The Agency of Men and the Holy Spirit

When Christ sent His disciples out to preach the gospel, He gave them the promise that God would speak through them.

But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Matthew 10:19-20



Each one is given a measure of the Spirit, that he might be a blessing to others.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
1 Corinthians 12:7

Each disciple is heaven's appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels wait to communicate through **you** heaven's light to souls perishing in sin. And what if you refuse to be that channel? Then to that degree is the world robbed of the promised influence of the Holy Spirit!

It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.

There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. And there is nothing that the world needs so much as human examples of the Saviour's love.

Dear reader, turn your eyes on Jesus. Take time to fill your soul with His word and commune with him as you walk life's pathways. As you look to Christ, He will draw near to you and ravish your heart with the joy and peace that comes with a sense of the abiding presence of Christ in the soul. As your thoughts are exchanged for His, you will be changed also and will reflect the beauty of His character.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 1 John 4:13

A Day With God

The Best Gift

We can be ever thankful to God for the gift of life, and everything good and lovely. But the most precious of all gifts He has given man is the gift of Himself. His presence, and involvement in our lives is the greatest of His gifts. In the garden of Eden the scripture tells us how God walked in the garden at the cool of the day (morning and evening) to commune with our first parents. God knew we needed instruction, guidance, and fellowship. Not only did we have a need, but He wanted our fellowship.



Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and *for thy pleasure they are and were created.*
Revelation 4:11.

Among all the gifts that one can give in a relationship is the gift of their time. All the gifts that money can buy will not equal the spending of time together. This is a gift God gave to man. Besides spending morning and evening with man every day, God also spent man's entire first day of life with him, as well as every seventh day after that. (Man was created Friday, and at sunset, the seventh day, the Sabbath began.)

Consider the fact that time is governed by the celestial bodies and their relationship with one another.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. Genesis 1:14.

The day is determined by the rotation of the earth, the month by the rotation of the moon around the earth, and the year by the rotation of the earth around the sun. But have you ever wondered where the week comes from? The only reason we can point to is the fact that creation week was seven days. Let's bear in mind also that it took God just six days to create the heaven and the earth. So why seven days? God created one more day, and concerning this day we are told "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."
Genesis 2:3.

This day was created for the express purpose of blessing us.

Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.
Ezekiel 20:12.

This is the day upon which God especially wanted us to remember Him. God knew we would be prone to forget, so He said “remember.”

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Exodus 20:8-11.

God is jealous of our time on this day. He says:

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. Isaiah 58:13-14.

A Particular Day

God has set apart time for us, one whole day a week, for the people of this planet. Ought we not set apart time for Him? Will just any day be okay? God didn't say, remember to spend time with me, and then leave it up to us to decide when was convenient. He specified a certain day of the week, and a particular time that He wanted us to devote to Him. And lest this time be confused when translated into different languages, he calls it by its number, the *seventh*. This day of the week is His memorial of creation. It points to His creative power, and testifies that the same power that created the heavens and the earth, can re-create us, and change us into His likeness.

Is there any confusion as to which day the seventh is? The day the Bible writers, the prophets and apostles, as well as Jesus Himself kept, was the day we call Saturday. This day has been kept from the time of Christ continually by Jews and some Christians. There is no confusion which day is the seventh day, the Sabbath. The Scripture says that Jesus rose on the “first day,” and the whole world recognizes that as Sunday. That makes Saturday the seventh day.

Ten Commandments

Scripture is entirely silent concerning any change of the Sabbath to any other day. The excuse some give that the law was done away with at the cross is without any true Scriptural evidence, and it is unreasonable. The Sabbath is the fourth commandment of the Moral Law. If the law was done away with, then we are at liberty to kill and steal and commit adultery and take God's name in vain, etc. No one ought to assume that the Moral Law was done away with. Why do some Scriptures *seem* to indicate that the law was done away with? Because it is talking about the law of types and shadows that were for the specific purpose of bringing to mind and explaining the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ. Things such as the Passover, and Pentecost, the sacrificial system, as well as the National Civil Laws that pertained specifically to the Jews as a nation.

The Ten Commandments written with the finger of God on tables of stone, are expressive of the whole duty of man to God and man to man, they were not done away with. They are summed up in the two principles,

- ❖ Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and
- ❖ Love thy neighbour as thyself.

Can we love our neighbour as ourselves and still steal from him, commit adultery with his wife or kill him, breaking the last six of the commandments? Then neither can we love God with all our hearts without observing the first four commandments including the fourth which requires us to set apart the time that He has asked us to spend with Him.



God's Love on Trial

A wrong view of God's character is one of the main reasons why people have trouble getting to know and trust Him. The teaching of eternal torment has done more to drive people to atheism and insanity than any other invention of the devil. It is slander to the loving character of a tender, gracious heavenly Father. In His word, God tells us He has no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). It is called a strange work (Isaiah 28:21). Not only is the idea of eternal torment contrary to God's love and mercy, it is not even fair or just. What just earthly judge would sentence a criminal to be beaten continuously and roasted over a slow fire, for any length of time? Then shall not "the judge of all the earth" "judge righteously?" (Genesis 18:25; Psalms 96:10) "The wages of sin is death," not eternal torment. (Romans 6:23)

Then what really happens when someone goes down to the grave? and what will happen to the wicked?

Man is Mortal, and only Receives Immortality at the Resurrection.

Previously we have seen that man is mortal and only receives immortality if he accepts Christ. We have also seen that the righteous receive immortality when they are resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Let's have a look at some further evidence for this:

David expected to receive immortality when he awoke in the resurrection.

I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. Psalms 17:15

Peter declared that righteous David has not yet gone to heaven.

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day...

For David is not ascended into the heavens:... Acts 2:29, 34

Peter's argument to prove that David is not in heaven was that David's body was still in the tomb. He understood that there is no such thing as disembodied souls. Christ, Elijah, Enoch and Moses, all ascended to heaven bodily. Other than a few exceptions, the righteous dead have not been raised, and have not yet gone to heaven.

Paul did not expect to receive his crown until the day of Christ's second appearing, along with the rest of the righteous.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:7, 8

The Reward of the Wicked is Complete Annihilation.

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Ezekiel 18:4

Wicked are turned to ashes

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Malachi 4:1-3

They are consumed into smoke.

But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. Psalms 37:20

The fire will go out.

Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. Isaiah 47:14

They will be unconscious forever.

In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 51:39

The wicked will cease to exist.

For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. Obadiah 1:16

When are the Wicked Destroyed and Where?

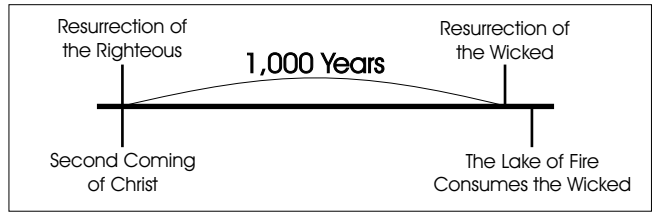
No one is burning in hell right now.

Malachi 4:1, 3 speaks of a future time: “the day *that cometh* shall burn them up...” and 2 Peter 2:9 says they are reserved “unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

A thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous

Revelation 20:4-6 describes the resurrection of the righteous and says “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years are finished.” A blessing is pronounced on him “that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power...” Then the passage goes on to

describe a judgment,
And whosoever
was not found
written in the
book of life was
cast into the lake
of fire. Revelation 20:15



The lake of fire happens on this earth

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner. Proverbs 11:31

Malachi 4:3, as mentioned earlier, says the wicked will be “ashes under your feet.” This shows us that the fire will occur in the place inhabited by the righteous afterwards, which is this earth (Matthew 5:5). Also, Revelation 20:8, 9 says the resurrected wicked will be on the “four quarters of the earth” and the next verse says:

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. Revelation 20:9

Isaiah describes the earth at that time in Isaiah 24:1, 9, and Jeremiah also, saying: I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man... and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. Jeremiah 4:23-26

The earth will be created anew.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:12-13

The Bible is clear, there is no burning hell right now, rather, the wicked will be judged, and destroyed in the lake of fire, after the 1,000 years, and they will cease to exist. They will not burn and suffer through eternity. Why then are there scriptures that seem to say otherwise? God’s word does not contradict itself. We need to study deeper and adjust our understanding to see the harmony in all of God’s word.

Everlasting Fire: torment for ever and ever?

The Bible speaks of everlasting fire, burning and tormenting people “for ever.”

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. Matthew 25:41

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Revelation 20:10

But, in the Hebrew mind, “everlasting,” “forever,” and “eternal” were like the word tall. These words describe an unmeasured duration, just as “tall” is used to describe an unmeasured height. The meaning varies depending on what is being describing. You can have a tall mountain and a tall man, but they are not same height.

Jonah describes the time he was in the belly of the whale in one place as “for ever,” and in another he qualifies that as being three days.

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. Jonah 2:6

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah 1:17

In Deuteronomy 23:3, forever means 10 generations. In other cases, it meant “as long as he lives” or “until death.”

...He shall be thy servant for ever. Deuteronomy 15:17

...And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever. 1 Samuel 28:2 (See also 1 Samuel 1:22, 28; Exodus 21:6; Psalm 48:14.)

Mountains that might only be a few thousand years old, dating back to the time of the flood, or possibly to creation, are called everlasting.

He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. Habakkuk 3:6

The Hebrew words for “everlasting” are also translated in other ways that obviously do not mean “without beginning” or “without end.” An example of this is where they are translated days “of old,” (Micah 7:14, Job 20:4; Isaiah 63:11), where it refers to the time Israel entered the promised land, a few centuries previous, the creation of the world, and Moses time.

Unquenchable Fire

He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3: 12

The fire is unquenchable because it cannot be put out. God will not put it out, the wicked cannot put it out and there is no celestial fire department that will come to their rescue. Everything that is wicked will be consumed. We saw an

example of this in the fires that consumed the World Trade Centers in New York, which were impossible to extinguish, but eventually died out after they had burned everything.

We were given an example of this unquenchable fire with Sodom and Gomorrhah.

Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah... are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jude 1:7

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes...making them an example to those that after should live ungodly; 2 Peter 2: 6

Are Sodom and Gomorrhah still burning today? No, they were reduced to ashes.

Their Worm Dieth Not

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Mark 9:43

Just as now the worm symbolizes spoilage and decay, in typical Hebrew poetical parallelism, Job and Isaiah equate the worm with corruption, which is a synonym for mortality/death.

I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. Job 17:14

For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation. Isaiah 51:8

An undying worm, like unquenchable fire indicates the unchangeable, unalterable and eternal results.

No Second Chance

While the punishing is not eternal, the punishment – death, is.

And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. Matthew 25:46

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. Psalms 37:10

Friends, I want to live for ever, with the one that loved me so much that he gave all He could give. I want to live in a place where there is no more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain. Will you join me there?

Appendix

What does "Hell" mean?

The Hebrew word for "hell" is pronounced "sheoul." This word simply means the grave. It was translated 31 times as "hell," 31 times as "grave" and 3 times as "pit."

In the New Testament hell is translated from two different Greek words. The first is pronounced "Hades" and also means the grave. The other is pronounced "Gehenna" and literally referred to the valley of Hinnom which was the city dump where the garbage was burned. Obviously it soon came to symbolize destruction. But it did not imply eternal torment.

This is why it can be said of hell that it will be destroyed along with the wicked, in the lake of fire after the thousand years.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Revelation 20:14

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 1 Corinthians 15:26

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21:4

Next time you read the word hell, remember it refers to the grave, and the certain mortality of man. Soon there will be no more death. I encourage you to do your own word study of the above words.

The Rich man and Lazarus

In this parable a rich man in hell cries in his torment to a poor man and Abraham, both of whom had gone to paradise. Does this teach that the righteous will witness the agony of those in hell throughout eternity? Does it teach that the dead go straight to heaven or hell at death? No! Jesus never intended us to take each detail of an illustration literally. What about parables such as: the lost coin, lost sheep, great banquet or the workers in the field? Of ten coins one is lost - are 9 people saved and only one lost? Are we going to be re-incarnated as sheep? Is heaven just one grand supper? Are there just 12 hours that we are to work for Jesus?

This parable is intended to teach the folly of riches and how a physical lineage with Abraham or a mere profession of faith in Christ won't save anyone. (See John 8:39; Matthew 19:23) It is not meant to teach about death, heaven or hell.

The Thief on the Cross

What about the thief on the cross? Didn't Jesus say that he would be with Him in paradise that same day? "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Jesus spoke to Mary soon after His resurrection and he said: "...I have not yet ascended to my Father..." John 20:17

Here Jesus testifies that before His resurrection He had not been to heaven. So why the seeming contradiction? The answer is really very simple. In the original Greek, punctuation was not used. The translators, not the inspired Bible authors, inserted it. Try reading this verse again in your Bible, with the comma placed after the word "today." A modern English translation of this text would be: "Today, (when it seems that you are forsaken of God and man, dying for your criminal acts), I can truly say, you will be with me in paradise."

Absent from the Body and Present with the Lord

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8

In the immediate context, the apostle Paul speaks of the three states of man.

1. **Earthly bodies**/earthly house: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Corinthians 5:1

2. **Immortal Bodies**/house from heaven: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:" 2 Corinthians 5:2

3. **Sleeping in the grave**/naked: "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." 2 Corinthians 5:3

Paul was looking past the period he would sleep in the grave, to the time when he would receive an immortal body at Christ's return and be present with the Lord.

He was not attempting to contradict what he told the church in his previous letter to the Corinthians, where he told them that death is a "sleep," out of which we will be awakened "at the last trump." 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me *at that day*: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8

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