

Hot Button Questions

Part 4

4/3/19

Q: This week I watched my best friend pass away. My question is, does the spirit leave the body with the soul? Do the spirit and soul stay as one?

A: The Bible says that when a person dies, their spirit goes immediately into eternity.

"James 2:26 ...'For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.'

The spirit is that part of us that is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) prior to coming to Christ.

Then when we are saved, our spirit is made alive: "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions..." (2:4-5)

The Bible teaches that when a Christian dies, their spirit immediately goes into the presence of the Lord. "And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Ecc. 12:7).

Paul states that he is confident in his eternal destiny and longs for the day when he can be “absent from the body” and be present with the Lord he loves and serves.

To be “absent” from one’s body simply means the spirit is separated from the body at death and moves into its eternal abode—either heaven with the Lord or hell, separated from God for eternity.

When Jesus raised a young girl known only as “Jairus’s daughter” back to life, the Bible says, “...he (Jesus) took her by the hand and said, “My child, get up!” 55 Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up” (Luke 8:54-55).

Where had her spirit gone? Well, since Jesus had not yet been crucified and risen from the dead, we can only assume her spirit had gone to the good portion of Hades. When Jesus touched her, her spirit returned to her body and she was resurrected. He will do the same thing with all believers that have died when He returns.

“The dead in Christ shall rise first...” (1 Thes 4:16)

ILLUS: The glove

Q: The Bible says God created everything in the world. If this is true, why is there so much sickness and human suffering? Has creation gone wrong? Or has God forsaken humanity altogether?

A: First, yes, "God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). In the beginning, God created a pristine and perfect world. After finishing His amazing creation, God said "it is good!"

But the Bible reveals that the first man, Adam, sinned, and the consequences were catastrophic: "...sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Ro. 5:12).

When Adam sinned a terrible door was opened...the door of death, and all things that cause death—sickness, disease, violence, and so forth.

But even though Adam fell into sin and the whole world with him, God has not forsaken us. The Bible says that God promised a Redeemer immediately after Adam's fall, way back in Genesis 3:15, "And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

When God sent Jesus, this promise was fulfilled. On the Cross, God not only showed us how much He loves us, He also dealt a death blow to Satan.

So yes, the world is filled with pain and suffering. But no, God has not forsaken the world, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."

And one of my favorite verses, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro. 5:8)

Q: When reading the Bible, I always find myself stopping short because it's very difficult to understand. Is it possible to be saved without knowing exactly who or what for instance Abraham, Isaac, David, Luke, John, Joseph, James, Simeon, Judas and many of the names of the Bible played parts in?

A: Absolutely! Most people know very little about the Bible when they first come to Christ. Christianity is a faith in which we all grow from spiritual infancy to maturity.

The Bible says, "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet 2:1-3).

This means that God's will for a new believer is to fill yourself with the basic, foundational teachings of Scripture, listed in Hebrews 6 as 1.) salvation by faith, not works, 2.) faith in God, 3.) water baptism, 4.) spiritual gifts, 5.) resurrection from the dead, and 6.) eternal judgment.

Q: During the rapture:

1. Will the children of unaccountable age, believing wife, & unborn child go in the rapture & the unbelieving father be left behind?

A: The Bible is silent on children below the age of accountability being raptured. My own opinion would be that they will. Who would raise them if mom and dad are taken? Someone who would encourage them to take the mark of the beast? Who would raise them but a godless home? Does that sound like the faithfulness of God? Based on His mercy, I believe God would keep the family together, and that includes an unborn child.

As for an unbelieving father or mother, no, they would not be taken.

2. If both mother & father are nonbelievers will their children of unaccountable age & an unborn child go in the rapture leav-

ing both the parents behind? Or will the whole family be left behind to go through the 7 year tribulation?

The NT is silent on this. But based on OT examples, I believe the children of unbelievers will remain on earth at the Rapture as they are the responsibility of their parents. When Sodom was judged, young and old alike perished. In Noah's day when the flood came the entire earth perished, young and old alike. Unbelieving parents will answer to God for how they raised their children!

Q: The book of Daniel says that the Temple will be recreated in the last days during the reign of the Antichrist. Currently the Dome of the Rock is in the way of the area where the temple originally stood. Is the removal of the Dome a necessity for the temple to be rebuilt?

A: There are many theories on this. Some say the Dome of the Rock is not actually standing directly where the original Temple stood, so the Temple will be built elsewhere. Others believe something catastrophic like an earthquake will occur, destroying the Dome of the Rock and making room for the Temple to be rebuilt.

One thing is certain: There will be a rebuilt Temple based on Jesus's words, "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of

desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing the holy place" then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matt. 24:15).

There can't be a "holy place" without a rebuilt Temple. And let's remember here, the holy place was the 'holy of holies.' It was the sacred, innermost room in the Temple where only the ark of the covenant sat.

The ark was a gold-covered wooden chest 3 3/4 feet long, 2 1/4 feet wide, and 2 1/4 feet high. Inside the ark were three items—a golden jar containing manna (representing God's provision), Aaron's rod which budded (representing God's choosing), and the tablets of the covenant (the 10 commandments).

On top of the ark was the Mercy Seat. The mercy seat was a gold lid with two cherubim formed at each end to create the space where God's glory and Presence would appear.

Let's consider what this represents. Inside the ark were the 10 commandments that God's people, no matter how hard they tried, could not perfectly obey. They represented God's requirements for righteousness, and man's endless frustration and inability to live them out.

And on top of the ark was the mercy seat representing the mercy and grace of God.

Once a year, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the high priest was permitted to enter the holy of holies to burn incense and sprinkle the blood of a sacrificial animal on the mercy seat of the Ark.

By doing so, the high priest atoned for his own sins and those of the people.

How thankful I am that mercy was placed above failure and judgment. God's mercy was manifested in the shed blood of a sacrifice lamb! And that is where the shekinah glory of God was manifested—in the place of shed blood and mercy!

Thank God that while we were yet sinners (breaking God's law continually), God sent His only begotten Son to shed His blood. And after Jesus's sacrifice on the Cross, the Holy Spirit fell upon His brand new church just like the shekinah glory had appeared on the mercy seat!

As James wrote, "Mercy triumphs over judgment"(James 2:13).

Q: What is the easiest way to explain the Trinity? I was always taught about the Trinity, but need a little more explanation. When it says God is 3 persons, but one God, does that mean we will stand in front of 3, or 1?

I know I'm probably over thinking it, but I want to know how to understand it so I can explain it. I was witnessing to someone at work, (who is Pentecostal oneness) and realized its very confusing. I don't believe what they say is correct but not sure where to start.

A: Ok, let's begin with the Pentecostal oneness belief that she mentions. Pentecostal oneness is the belief that the Godhead consists of only one Person and deny the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.

They maintain that the only real "person" in the Godhead is Jesus. Thus, they are often referred to as the "Jesus Only" Movement.

They maintain that God exists in two modes, as the Father in heaven, and as Jesus the Son on earth. Nevertheless, they are the same person, not two separate persons. The Holy Spirit is not regarded as a person at all, merely a manifestation of Jesus' power or a synonym for Him.

Several verses are quoted to establish this view, such as Colossians 2:9 (NKJV), "For in Him (Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Oneness theologians would argue that if the Father and the Son were separate, then the Godhead could not fully dwell in Christ, but would be divided amongst the three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

My response would be that Colossians 2:9 does not teach that the totality of the Godhead was in the body of Jesus, but rather that Jesus embodied the totality of the divine nature and God is totally revealed in Him.

If the Father and the Son are the same person, then the Oneness teachers have a difficult job explaining how the Father and the Son can love each other (See Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 3:35; 5:20; 2 Pet. 1:17), talk to each other (see John 11:41-42; 12:28; 17:1-26), and know each other (see Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 7:29).

Now, as for the Trinity, the Bible teaches that the Father is God, that Jesus is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God. Yet the Bible also teaches that there is only one God. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut 6:4).

So there is one God comprised of three distinct persons.

God is three persons.

Each person is divine.

There is only one God.

In Genesis 1:1 it says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Now, the word "God" is the Hebrew Elohim and it's in the plural form.

Then in verse 26 God speaks to Himself saying, "Let Us make man in Our image..."

After the fall of Adam and Eve, God again addresses Himself saying, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us" (Gen. 3:22).

Isaiah the Prophet had a visitation from a Seraphim during which time he heard God say, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" (6:8)

When Jesus was baptized by John, the Bible reveals all three Persons of the Trinity in one setting: "16 As soon as Jesus (God the Son) was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God (God the Spirit) descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven (God the Father) said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16-17).

And then for me the indisputable home run hitter verse for the Trinity is Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

So while it's difficult to grasp, the Trinity is essentially one God consisting of three coeternal persons—the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. He is one God in three Divine Persons. The three Persons are distinct, yet are one substance, essence or nature.

