

Where We Go When We Die

International Bible Lesson

Acts 2:21-39

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L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

“He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:31—KJV).

“Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption’” (Acts 2:31—NRSV).

When Peter preached on the day the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus’ disciples, Peter did not point only to the disciples experiences with the resurrected Lord Jesus as the only evidence that God had raised Jesus from the dead. As Jesus had done when He taught, Peter also pointed to the teachings and prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament Bible). Peter told them how David had prophesied that though the Messiah would die, “He was not abandoned to Hades” (see various translations of Psalms 16:10). David’s prophecy can be understood in light of Jesus’ parable about the selfish rich man and the needy Lazarus. When they died, the rich man went in his spirit to Hades and Lazarus went to the side of Abraham in heaven (Luke 16:23). When Peter wrote one of his letters, he explained that after Jesus died bodily He was alive in the spirit and “went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah” (1 Peter 3:19-20). David also prophesied that after the Messiah died bodily His flesh would not experience corruption or decay. Though also buried in a tomb, Jesus’ body did not decay as did the body of Jesus’ friend Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead (see John 11:39). Though no one understands how the Shroud of Turin (possibly Jesus’ burial shroud, if authentic) was created, there is no sign of physical decay on the shroud and if Jesus’ body had decayed the shroud probably could not have retained His image.

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