**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Believers Take Courage. . .Walk by Faith, not by Sight**

**2 Corinthians 5:7**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted.)

 Paul, an eye-witness to the bodily risen Christ, who he met on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), writes to the Believers in Corinth and testifies to them about how their earthly temporal physical bodies (tents) will be torn down (physically die) but replaced. . . as their spirit transcends to be with the Lord through death’s door. . . and receive a new, eternal house (spirit-body) not made with hands. Paul had already witnessed the fact that Jesus lived on the other side of death’s door. So, with Paul’s personal eye-witness Resurrection experience. . . he writes knowingly.

**2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

**1** For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down,

 we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

**2** For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

**3** inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

**4** For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened,

 because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed,

 so that what is **mortal will be swallowed up by life.**

**5** Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God,

 who gave to us the **Spirit as a pledge**.

**6** Therefore, being always of good courage,

 and knowing that while we are at home in the body

 we are absent from the Lord--

**7** **for we walk by faith, not by sight--**

**8** we are of good courage,

 I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

**9** **Therefore** we also have as our ambition,

 whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

**10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,

 so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body,

 according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

 **Jesus taught us to walk by faith, not by sight.**

Jesus demonstrated the ultimate walking by faith by going to the Cross and paying the price for the sins of the world. Why is physically dying an act of faith? Because Jesus had faith in himself in knowing that His divine power and authority could overcome physical death. This is proved by the empty tomb and that no one, including the most powerful empire in the world at that time, could produce Jesus’ body. In addition, there are eye-witness accounts of the Resurrection given by Matthew, John and Paul to name a few. Jesus, walking by faith, to the Cross and the Resurrection, demonstrated His full divine nature, as He was God in the flesh, who dwelt among us (John 1:14). Because. . . “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). God, the Creator of life, has the power and authority to resurrect life.

Jesus’ road to the Cross and Resurrection demonstrates the defining point about surrendering to God and experiencing His Holy Spirit empowering us to overcome this fallen world to achieve the goals He has planned for all of us. This is one of our witness points to non-believers.

Of course, God in-the-flesh constantly demonstrated to all of us to have faith in His plan for our lives. God’s faith-plan, for Himself as Jesus, was to demonstrate to all of us to stay focused and committed to His plan for our lives. Therefore, we will fulfill the mission He has planned for our lives to accomplish.

With the physical death of Jesus at the Cross. . .the expectation from the fallen world . . .that does not have eyes to see and ears to hear. . . is that once Jesus took His last breath, His life ended. Yes, there were rumors about Jesus’ upcoming resurrection. So much so that the Roman and Jewish leadership placed guards at Jesus’ tomb to ensure that Jesus’ body would not be moved. But they could not conceive or understand God’s Spirit-power and authority over life

The Apostle John recorded in the Gospel what he witnessed Jesus say early in His teaching ministry.

**John 2:18-22**

18 The Jews then said to Him,

"What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

 19 Jesus answered them,

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

 20 The Jews then said,

"It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

 22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this;

and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

And the Apostle Matthew also recorded the same Jesus teaching.

**Matthew 12:38-41**

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him,

"Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

39 But He answered and said to them,

 "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign;

and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

40 for just as

JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER,

so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment,

and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah;

and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

The Apostle Mark also records the same Jesus teaching.

**Mark 8:31** And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

 At Jesus’ trial, He was accused of planning to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem, and, at the same time, declared the Resurrection.

**Mark 14:58** "We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands. " (Mathew 26:61)

 Matthew and Mark also record what people said who passed by Jesus as He was on the Cross who had remembered what He said.

. . .and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If **You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." Matthew 27:40**

**Mark** 15:29 Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

**Acts 6:14** for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us."

 Today’s secular atheistic culture rejects the Resurrection but is fascinated at the prospects of the afterlife. Christian or not, around the world, this question draws a response. The Eastern mystic religions such as Hinduism teach that we all eventually blend with the collective whole in the next existence. There is no individuality. Of course, Judaism and Christianity witness our Creator’s plan and desire for all of us (individually) to be with Him in His heaven for an eternity.

The geo-political-military movement, masked as a religion (known as Islam) teaches there is an eternal afterlife. And, if you die in battle fighting the infidels (Jihad: which is everyone else on the planet) or sacrifice your children in Jihad, then you are guaranteed an acceptance into an eternal heaven.

**Let us look at what some scientists are telling us today about the Afterlife.**

What does current science tell us about people who die and come back to life or what they have learned by documenting what people see/report right before they pass? The leading question is. . . is there a life after this one, is there eternal life?

Afterlife study focuses on the nature of human consciousness.

Where does consciousness come from?

Is consciousness generated from biology?

Does consciousness exist inside the biological brain only?

Does human consciousness solely originate and depend on a biological life to sustain its existence?

Or does consciousness originate from a non-temporal source and can it sustain itself after the body dies?

**Book:** Near-Death Experiences by J. Steve Miller (https://amzn.to/3zrX6ZB)

What's the evidence Near-Death Experiences really happen? And what do they prove?

Sean McDowell interview: I talk with Dr. J. Steve Miller about his book Near-Death Experiences As Evidences for the Existence of God and Heaven.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhqLc6GPu-U

**Brain surgeon reveals near-death experience while in a coma**

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/brain-surgeon-reveals-near-death-experience-while-in-a-coma/F4PBSOT7RRJF6STS433S2BFWWY/>

An academic neurosurgeon has opened up about the "life-changing" near-death experience he claims to have had while in a deep coma following a rare bacterial infection in his brain.

In 2008, De Eben Alexander, 68, told The Sun he had been skeptical that an afterlife could exist believing that when we die our consciousness dies with us.

But after his near-death experience, he has since experienced a "180-degree flip" claiming he saw heaven with his own eyes, describing it more real than the realm we currently inhabit.

"I basically used to have a very conventional, scientific and reductive materialist view that consciousness was created by the brain, and that only the physical world exists," Alexander said.

"And what my coma journey showed me … is that consciousness is something that is fundamental in the universe and does not originate in the brain.

"What I experienced was the most extraordinary, memorable, detailed, and ultra-real experience of my entire life.

"In fact, the world we live in, this material world, is more kind of cloudy and dreamlike than what I saw on the other side. "That world is sharp, crisp and alive – and very real."

**How did Alexander get to a deep coma state?**

In November 2008, he suffered severe pains in his back and the "worst headache of his life".

He thought it was the flu but a few hours later his wife found him convulsing in his bed with his eyes rolling to the back of his head.

He was taken to hospital and it was discovered he contracted an incredibly rare and aggressive kind of E. coli meningoencephalitis – a type of bacterial meningitis – and within hours the virus began gnawing away at his brain.

Alexander was put into an induced coma and placed on a ventilator with his chances of survival dropped by the hour.

According to Alexander, his medical records showed that his brain was "very badly damaged" with not only the neocortex ravaged by the virus, but his brain stem – which controls core bodily functions such as breathing and heart rate – was also in "deep trouble".

At best, doctors gave Alexander a 10 per cent chance of survival. That number would shrink to just 2 per cent over the next few days.

**Dr. Alexander reflects**. . ."It's been a tremendous gift to me to go through this experience, and then go through the 13 years since then, working with other scientists and experts around the world, to make better sense of the way this universe works.

"I look at it all as just extremely positive."

Alexander believes NDEs may help to unlock the mysteries of human consciousness – and the possibility that it may continue to live on even after our bodies die.

He says he believes his own NDE is proof that consciousness exists separately from the human brain.

He said after studying his own medical charts, he came to the conclusion he was in such a deep coma during his NDE, and his brain was so completely shut down, that the only way to explain what he experienced was that his soul had detached from his body and ventured to another world – a world he believes to be Heaven, The Sun reported.

"In the 13 years since my coma, other scientists have shown me that consciousness is something that is fundamental in the universe and is not created solely by the brain, as materialist scientists believe," he said.

U.S. Government reports: In the US, an estimated 9 million people have reported having an NDE, a 2011 study in Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences found.

 Okay, so, we currently have numerous scientist witnesses to the afterlife. Therefore, some people may be more comfortable in accepting the reality of the afterlife once our temporal lives expire. I, for one, do not need anybody else’s experience to convince me of God’s eternal plan for my life. My own personal experiences have revealed God to me through the creation. Specifically, the pursuit of internal peace by experiencing the necessity for love and forgiveness, and the ramifications of good and evil. Through my life-experiences, I realize that on my own, I will fail to achieve God’s peace in my life. All the “Fruits of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22ff) are from God. If we will accept God’s spiritual gifts to work in our lives, we will overcome. Jesus told the disciples, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful (John 14:26-27).

God knows of our weakness, so we see in these Scriptures that God has planned for Believers to have His Spirit (Helper) empower us to overcome in living by faith and not by sight.

**2 Corinthian’s 5:5**

Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God,

 who gave to us the **Spirit as a pledge**.

This is the Message, the Good News from Scripture, that God does not intend for us to navigate through this very challenging fallen world on our own. God tells us in Matthew 5:48 that we are to be “perfect”. How is this possible? God pledges to Believers the free gift of His Spirit. Again, we see this in John 20:20 when Jesus breathes His Holy Spirit into the Disciples in a way that highlights His overcoming power and authority being transferred to them. This is a one-time God-in-the-Flesh revealing His intention and ability to indwell a person. When a person surrenders to the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John16:8 / cut heart Acts 2:37, Deuteronomy 30:6) and is born-again spiritually (John 3:16), they receive the gift of God’s Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). A person then is empowered to repent (turn) from their former sinful and intentional practiced way of life. From that point, a person matures (sanctification) seeking to be the person God has planned for them to be. This maturing process is a life-long experience.

**Helper Scriptures**

**John 14:16-17, 26**

16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

 **. . .**

 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

**John 15:26 - 27**

26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

**John 16:7**

 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

**Back to 2 Corinthians 5**

Understanding. . .that God does not call us to live a life separate from the fallen world on our own. . . is a life-saving peace of mind. Many people report that they cannot be a Christian, because they cannot live the Christian life. But then, they do not understand that God does not expect us to live the life to which He calls us without His indwelling Helper. . . His Holy Spirit.

**6** Therefore, being always of good courage,

 and knowing that while we are at home in the body

 we are absent from the Lord--

**7** **for we walk by faith, not by sight--**

**8** we are of good courage,

 I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

**9** **Therefore** we also have as our ambition,

 whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

**10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,

 so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body,

 according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**AMEN**