



Daily Verse and Comment

[Luke 23:46](#)

(46) Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

New International Version

Because of the widespread (and unbiblical) assumption that mankind possesses an [immortal soul](#) and that even in death the consciousness of a person lives on absent his or her body, many will take [Luke 23:46](#) to mean that [Jesus](#) was with the Father that day in spirit form. Subsequently, they will assume that the criminal next to Him could have been as well.

However, the larger issue is what the Bible consistently shows happens at—and after—death. Yes, the spirits of both Jesus and the criminal returned to [God](#) the Father, as do the spirits of all people ([Ecclesiastes 3:21](#); [12:7](#)). Yet, at the same time, their *consciousness* ended, such that it could *not* be said that they—their complete persons—were with the Father. Jesus committed His spirit to the Father, yet He clearly told Mary after His resurrection, "I have not yet ascended to My Father" ([John 20:17](#)).

What does it mean that His spirit was with the Father, but not His body or soul (see [Acts 2:31](#))? Was His spirit conscious of being in Paradise? Notice what the Word of God says:

- "For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who will give You thanks?" ([Psalm 6:5](#)). Thus, there is no praise of God or even contemplation of Him when a person goes into the grave—yet the spirit is with God!
- "Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your [faithfulness](#) in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" (

[Psalm 88:11-12](#)). The psalmist calls the grave "the place of destruction," "the dark," and "the land of forgetfulness." Consequently, death is a definite stopping point, and consciousness and experience do not continue in the grave.

- "The dead do not praise the LORD, nor any who go down into silence" ([Psalm 115:17](#)). If the dead are automatically taken to the presence of God, why would they not praise Him? How could any being remain silent in the presence of the most awesome Person in the universe?
- "*His spirit departs*, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish" ([Psalm 146:4](#); our emphasis throughout). A person's spirit departs (and returns to God, as [Ecclesiastes 3:21](#) and [12:7](#) show), yet at that point all of his plans (*thoughts*, KJV) perish. This is because the human spirit does not have consciousness inherent within it.
- "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for *there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave* where you are going" ([Ecclesiastes 9:10](#)). It could not be any clearer: The condition of death means a total cessation of consciousness and awareness.

In biblical usage, death is pictured as sleeping—there is no knowledge, no comprehension of the passage of time, no recognition of God, etc. There is no consciousness. The spirit in man allows understanding ([Job 32:8](#); [I Corinthians 2:11](#)), but it depends on a living body for consciousness. The idea that some eternal consciousness continues after death comes from paganism, not the Holy Scriptures! The spirit in man, in its most basic definition, is a person's mind (heart, attitudes, etc.), not a separate sentient being.

As a result, even though all the spirits of all the dead throughout human history have returned to the Father, Jesus' statement, "No one has ever gone into heaven" ([John 3:13](#)), demonstrates that the "spirit in man" is *not* the entire person, just a *component*. Yet, that component, absent a body (physical or spiritual) that can sustain life, has no consciousness of its own. The spirit is given or returned to a body—physical or spiritual—at the time

of a resurrection ([Luke 8:55](#)). Jesus' spirit returned to the Father, yet *He*—the Man, the Son of God, the whole Being—did not ascend to the Father until after He was resurrected [three days and three nights](#) later.

— David C. Grabbe

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