

Acts Chapter 2:27-28

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

For you- Since this passage is talking about Jesus, we are led to ask Who the “You” is. We could safely say that it is God who will not leave His only Son sealed in the tomb. We could also say that this is God the Father, since Scripture speaks of the Father sending His one and only Son. John 1:14 says “we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Will not abandon- Abandonment is one of the worst things that a parent can do to their child. It leaves the child feeling unwanted and unloveable. Sometimes, even a very flawed parent’s presence is better than nothing. Unbelievers or critics of Christianity speak of what the Father does to His Son Jesus as “cosmic” or “divine child abuse.” This thinking is reductionist, since it ignores the reasons why Jesus needed to be sacrificed and the relationship Jesus has with His Father throughout. Nevertheless, Jesus does suffer through the anticipation, the trials, the flogging, and the crucifixion, as well as the Father turning away from Him on Golgotha. Jesus cries out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?,” because He was suffering hell on the cross. That’s the definition of hell: A place where God is not present and we receive nothing good from Him. Even in a sinful world, God is omnipresent, but in hell, God withholds His presence and His blessings. In the end, the Father does not leave His only Son in the grave, but raises Him from the dead.

My soul- Jesus, as the God-man, has a human body and soul. When Jesus died, He said “Father, into Your hands, I commit My spirit (soul).” When He bowed His head, Jesus’ soul left His body. Jesus’ body hung on the cross until Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus got permission from Pontius Pilate to take it down. Then His body was laid in a new tomb, where nobody had been buried yet.

There is some debate about whether a human is composed of body, soul, and spirit, rather than just body and soul. There are many other descriptors of the whole human being used in Scripture, such as heart, mind, etc. The most consistent description is body and soul. When we die, the body remains here on earth, but the soul departs to be with the Lord. In the “interim state,” the soul waits for the Last Day, when it can be joined again to the body. This body will be a new, glorified body which will not be capable of dying ever again.

To Hades- Again, the word “Hades” is connected with the Old Testament concept of “Sheol.” Sheol is the word that, in the Old Testament, referred to the grave or realm of the dead. “Hades” carries certain baggage stemming from the Greek god of the

underworld, but serves the purpose of bringing the concept into English. Essentially, referencing Hades is reminding us that Jesus did really die, but that Jesus returned to the land of the living (Psalm 27) by rising from the dead.

Or let your Holy One- This seems to be a double fulfillment. To be “holy,” means to be set apart. In one sense, David was set apart from the rest, especially from the rest of his brothers and from King Saul, when he was anointed king. David also enjoyed a special relationship with God throughout his life. In another sense, we are “holy ones” by faith in Jesus, because Jesus has made us saints through His death and resurrection. However, when a demon-possessed man in the synagogue confronted Jesus, the demon said “I know Who You are! The Holy One of God!” This is capitalized in the English translation because it is a title (like “Son of Man”). This may be in the same vein as calling Jesus the Messiah (“Anointed One”). From this, we can see that Jesus is *the* Holy One, although there may be many holy ones. No one is like Jesus. He is anointed. He is chosen. He’s the only One like Him.

See corruption- Although moral corruption does eventually lead to physical corruption in human beings, corruption here is not really in the moral sense, but more in the physical sense. Physical corruption is closely connected to decay and the decomposition process in human beings. In the ancient world and even the near past, death was not completely understood medically. Even if a person had not moved or opened their eyes for quite a while, there was still the possibility that they could just be very ill and recover. This is the origin of the “wake.” Family and friends would often know for certain that their loved one had died when they could smell the stench of decay.

When Lazarus died, he was in the tomb for four days and Martha remarked that there would be an odor. Judaic custom said that the spirit remained with the body for three days, so there was hope up until the 4th day. Jesus waited not only until he had died, but until there seemed to be no hope to raise Lazarus from the dead. Christ, by only being in the tomb from Friday to Sunday morning, avoided any suspicion of decay, thus fulfilling the prophecy of David.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

You have made known to me- In the sense that this is talking about David, we know that David had a special relationship with the Lord and they communicated often. In the sense that this is talking about Jesus, it brings up some interesting considerations. Jesus does say that the Father knows things that He does not know. For example, the Father knows the day and the hour when the world will come to an end. However, there are also points when Jesus is able to see into people’s hearts, seeing people’s malice against

Him. Jesus also knows that His hour has not yet come until it actually does. This whole discussion is part of something called Jesus' humiliation. Jesus' humiliation began with His incarnation, in which He descended from His heavenly throne to become a mortal man. It continued throughout His ministry, where His true nature and His glory were concealed from the human eye almost all the time, except for His miracles and the Transfiguration. Jesus is now seated in glory at the right hand of God in heaven. While in a state of humiliation, Jesus chose not to have certain things that He could have had according to His divine nature. It was self-denial by submitting to the will of His Father. That includes not only a lot of divine power, but also knowing certain things, like the timing of the Last Day.

The paths of life- Path or road or way is a metaphor that is often used in the Scriptures. Life and its events are often pictured like a road. For us as believers, we know there is only one straight and narrow path to life in Christ. However, we wonder what this means if the Father revealed the paths of life to Jesus. In the context, in which we are talking about Christ's death and resurrection, paths of life seems to heavily point to God raising Jesus from the dead. It's interesting to think about it like a passing of knowledge or a guiding to the right place, rather than the way we usually think about it. It is also interesting and seemingly noteworthy that "paths" is plural, but it's not quite that simple. It does not mean that there were multiple ways to life for Jesus after He was crucified.

You will make me full of gladness- We often think of Jesus' humiliation as pure drudgery, meaning it was extremely difficult and unpleasant for the Son of God to humble Himself and carry out His work. There's no doubt that it was hard for Jesus, but there was also joy in what He was doing and there was joy at the end of His work. Christ had compassion on people because He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. Healing them and giving them relief, even momentary relief, gives Jesus gladness. And when He spoke Mary's name in the garden by the tomb, we have to imagine He was glad to have completed her salvation and that of the whole world.

With your presence- For the times that Jesus' humiliation was especially difficult, He had His Father to lean on. Jesus often went off by Himself to pray to the Father. He taught His disciples and us how to pray. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' prayed to His Father without ceasing, though His disciples could not keep watch for even one hour. Due to His human nature, Jesus was weary and exhausted at many points. Jesus models for us the healing power of God's presence in our lives, just as He models a prayer life and a life of righteousness.