

## Christ Confirmed That the Dead Do Not Go to Heaven

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In many religions of this world, it is believed that the dead go to another place following their death. This afterlife is described differently depending on one's religious affiliation. The majority of those who regard themselves as Christian believe they go to heaven where God exists. For the purpose of this study, the teaching that the dead go to heaven will be examined in a manner that includes some of Christ's statements on this subject.

To begin with, the power to bring the dead back to life is held by Almighty God alone.

Then Jesus answered and said to them (the Jewish religious leaders), 'Most assuredly, **I say to you, the son** (Christ) **can do nothing of himself**, but what he sees the Father do; for whatever He (God the Father) does, the son also does in like manner (Jn. 5:19; NKJV used throughout; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

However, God the Father has delegated His power to resurrect individuals, to Christ.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the son and

believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day (Jn. 6:40; ESV).

Christ confirmed that at some point in the future he would resurrect many people. Christ associated one of these resurrections with a period of judgment for those who did not live according to his Father's will during their previous lifetimes (Rev. 20:6).

For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the son (Christ) gives life to whom he will. **For the Father** judges no one, but **has committed all judgment to the son** (Jn. 5:22; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

There is another resurrection that will not involve a period of judgment because it will consist of those who previously lived a life of trust in, and obedience to, God's word.

He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. <sup>13</sup>But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup>and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. **For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just** (Lk. 14:12-14; ESV).

Based on many scriptures, it is certain that no person who died prior to Christ's ministry could have been resurrected to everlasting life. One of these examples is as follows.

Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead (now) and (still) buried, and his tomb is with us to this day (David is still not resurrected, even after Christ's resurrection) (Ac. 2:29; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Solomon confirmed that his own father, King David, was dead and totally unaware of what was happening on earth.

For the living know that they will die; but **the dead** (including King David at this point in time) **know nothing**... (Eccl. 9:5a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ confirmed that he is the only one that has ascended to heaven.

No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven (Jn. 3:13; ESV).

Even infants, who died not long after birth or in the womb, are not resurrected or taken up to heaven. They too sleep and await the second resurrection.

Why didn't I die while I was still in the womb, or die while I was being born? <sup>12</sup> Why was there a lap to hold me, and why were there breasts to nurse me? <sup>13</sup> **'If I had died, I would be lying down by now, undisturbed, asleep, and at rest'** (Job 3:11-13; ESV; emphasis added).

Or why was I not buried like a stillborn child, like babies who never saw the light? (Job 3:16).

The state of the dead is the same for everyone. The wicked do not go to a place of eternal torment, which is commonly known as hell, nor do the righteous go immediately to heaven following their death. Instead, the dead see nothing, do nothing, and hear nothing. No one has any advantage over others in death. They all wait together for Christ's return, or the judgment of the second resurrection.

In that place, the wicked stop causing trouble, and there those whose strength is exhausted are at rest. <sup>18</sup> In that place, those who once were prisoners will be at ease together; they won't hear the voice of oppressors. <sup>19</sup> The unimportant and the important are both there, and the servant is free from his master (Job 3:17-19).

We are intended to work hard at our responsibilities during this short life

because in death there is nothing anyone can do.

Whatever presents itself for you to do, do it with all your might, because there is no work, planning, knowledge, or skill in the grave where you're going (Eccl. 9:10).

The dead are described as being asleep, or in an unconscious state (Dan. 12:2; Job 3:13). Because David was dead and unaware of what was happening on earth, he did not know how powerful and famous his son, King Solomon, had become.

You (Almighty God) prevail forever against him (because death reigns due to man's sins; cf. Rom. 5:17), and he passes on (dies); You change his countenance (because the physical body decays at death) and send him away (from any communication with God). <sup>21</sup> **His** (the dead man's) **sons come to honor, and he does not know it** (Job 14:20-21; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ's judgment commenced with those who comprise the Body of Christ, which is the true church of God.

For **the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God**; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God (1Pet. 4:17; NKJV; emphasis added)?

We can see this judgment of the house of God in progress in the letters Christ addressed to the angels of the seven churches. In these letters, characteristics or traits unique to each of them are listed (Rev. 1:20; 2:1-11; 12-17; 18-29; 3:1-6; 7-13; 14-22).

However, any final rewards and punishment will not begin until Christ returns. It is only at Christ's return that those who willingly lived in accordance with God's law and commandments, and adhered to the testimony of Jesus Christ, will be rewarded by a resurrection to everlasting life (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

Martha understood that her brother Lazarus would be resurrected at the last day of Satan's system, which is identified with the first resurrection.

Martha said to him (Christ), 'I know that he will rise again (from the dead) **in the resurrection at the last day** (Jn. 11:24; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ confirmed this would occur when his heavenly Father gave the signal to commence this miraculous act (Mt. 24:36; Mk. 13:32).

Jesus said to her (Martha), '**I am the resurrection** and the (way to) life (everlasting). He who believes in me (Christ's teachings centered on trust and obedience toward Almighty God), though

he may die, he shall live (Jn. 11:25; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Job understood that those who are faithful and obedient to God will be resurrected from the dead.

If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come (Job 14:14; KJV).

To confirm that Christ has authority from his heavenly Father to resurrect the dead, Christ raised Lazarus back to life, and he was able to live out the remainder of his days.

These things he (Christ) said, and after that he said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.'<sup>12</sup> Then his disciples said, 'Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.'<sup>13</sup> However, Jesus spoke of his death (used sleep figuratively), but they thought that he was speaking about taking rest in sleep.<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead' (Jn. 11:11-14; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Then they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard me (cf. Jn. 11:22).<sup>42</sup> And I know that You always hear me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent me'<sup>43</sup> Now when he had said these things he cried with a loud

voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!'<sup>44</sup> And he who died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth (Jn. 11:31-44a; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So, teaching that the dead go to heaven is a lie and the same one Satan used against Eve when he said, "You will not surely die," in Genesis 3:4. In other words, Eve was deceived into thinking she could disobey God's command and not see death. Why? Because Satan convinced her that she had an immortal soul. This lie continues today, and it permeates many religious systems to one degree or another. The truth is that only Jesus Christ has the authority to raise the dead, and this will not occur until he returns. This is the real meaning behind what Christ said to Martha just prior to Lazarus being brought back to physical life.

Jesus said to her (Martha), '**I am the resurrection and the life** (everlasting) (Jn. 11:25a; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Those who have died in the faith, even from the time of righteous Abel, will be resurrected to eternal life, along with the faithful who are still alive at Christ's triumphant return (cf. Heb. 11:4). It will all happen in a twinkling, or blinking of an eye (1Cor. 15:51-52).

For the majority in the first resurrection, it will be the very first time they see Christ. Regarding the patriarchs, the prophets, and those who obeyed Christ during his earthly ministry, it will be the first time since their death that they have seen, spoken, or interacted with him.

And this is the will of Him (Almighty God) who sent me (Christ), that everyone who sees the son (at the time of the first resurrection; Rev. 20:4-6) and believes in (believed they needed to trust and obey; cf. Mt. 4:4) Him (Almighty God; cf. Jn. 17:3) may have everlasting life; and (because these conditions were met) I (Christ) will raise him (or her) up at the last day (of Satan's system) (Jn. 6:40; NKJV; cf. Rev. 20:1-3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Behold, I (Paul) tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – <sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet (Mt. 24:31). For the trumpet will sound (in the heavenly realm), and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1Cor. 15:51-52; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God's faithful servants are not in heaven right now. Scripture clearly shows that those who have died in the faith will be caught up together with those who are alive at the return of Christ, and not any sooner.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive (at that future time) and remain shall be caught up together with them (those who have been dead until this point) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always (from that point forward) be with the Lord (1Thes. 4:16-17; NKJV; Ed. notes in parentheses).

According to the way that God views death, every person who has lived and died, with the exception of Jesus Christ, is now asleep. When Christ returns, the first of two resurrections will commence. As scripture has pointed out, the first resurrection will occur at the time of Christ's return. Those who are in the first resurrection will never see death again. This is a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35). The second resurrection will take place following his millennial reign on earth (Rev. 20:7-15). Once the millennium is finished, Christ will resurrect the rest of the dead, for judgment, with the goal of rehabilitation leading to their repentance.

I saw thrones, and sitting on those thrones were the ones who had been given the right to judge. I also saw the souls of the people who had their heads cut off because they had told about Jesus and preached God's message. They were the same ones who had not worshiped the beast or the idol, and they had

refused to let its mark be put on their hands or foreheads. They will come to life and rule with Christ for a thousand years.<sup>5</sup> These people are the first to be raised to life, and they are especially blessed and holy. The second death has no power over them. They will be priests for God and Christ and will rule with them for a thousand years. No other dead people were raised to life until a thousand years later. (Rev. 20:4-5; CEV)

But Christ has been raised to life! And he makes us certain that others will also be raised to life. <sup>21</sup>Just as we will die because of Adam, we will be raised to life because of Christ. <sup>22</sup>Adam brought death to all of us, and Christ will bring life to all of us. <sup>23</sup>But we must each wait our turn. **Christ was the first to be raised to life, and his people will be raised to life when he returns** (1Cor. 15:20-23; CEV; emphasis added).

As for the fallen angels, their punishment leading to correction and rehabilitation will begin once the millennial rule of Christ is completed. As scripture points out, Satan will have his spiritual body changed to a mortal one that will die (Isaiah 14:12-20; Eze. 28:17-19; Rom. 6:23a; 16:20). This same principle applies to all the fallen angels. When this occurs, those present will look upon these individuals and ponder how they could have influenced so many people, and contributed to thousands of years of suffering and destruction.

Sadly, mainstream Christianity teaches that mankind has an immortal soul which, following death, allows them to live with God in heaven after they die. At the subconscious level, what they are really implying is that there is no need for Christ's sacrifice because they are going to continue to live regardless, either in heaven or hell. This reasoning also supports the lie that it is not necessary for Christians to obey God's law and commands, which summarize His will (1Jn. 3:4; cf. Mt. 4:4). This invariably leads people to think they can choose, or create, whatever path they wish, and it will lead them to everlasting life, whether they obey God's word or not. Contrary to these erroneous beliefs, Christ said he is the only way that repentant sinners can receive the gift of everlasting life. Christ did not say "I am 'a' way, 'a' truth and 'a' life". Instead, Christ said that he is '**the**' way, '**the**' truth and '**the**' life (Jn. 14:6). Therefore, those who do not repent and begin to obey every word of God, will not be given an opportunity to take part in the first resurrection at Christ's return. They will remain dead until the 1000 years have passed. Consequently, unrepentant sinners cannot play by their own rules and expect to inherit everlasting life. The desire to willingly obey the law and commandments of God is essential. Otherwise, God's family cannot co-exist in perfect harmony for all eternity (1Cor. 15:28; cf. Ps. 19:7-11).

Those who have never heard of the One True God and His son, Jesus Christ, will be given an opportunity to know about them during the period of the second resurrection. They will in no-way be excluded or looked down upon. Everyone will be shown the way to everlasting life.

Those who are called now are not in any way better than those who have not understood the truth about God the Father, and Jesus Christ (Jn. 17:3). In most cases, Almighty God calls those who are considered poor, foolish and/or weak in the eyes of this world to shame the powerful (1Cor. 1:27; Jas. 2:5; cf. Eph. 6:12). The good news is that those who have never known God and His truth will have an opportunity to do so.

God's word, the Bible, is very clear there are only two resurrections. Those in their respective groups will receive either their reward at the first resurrection, or judgment at the second resurrection. The main purpose for God's judgment is to lead every individual to repentance (Rom. 2:4b). For those in the second resurrection, it will come as a surprise to learn about Satan's false doctrines, including the teaching of an immortal soul.

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life (first resurrection),

those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment (second resurrection) (Jn. 5:28-29; Ed. Notes in parentheses; NASB).

It is during the period of the second resurrection that discussions and debates will occur among those who are brought back to life. Thus, Jesus Christ confirmed that these groups and individuals will remain dead until this future point in time. According to the next scripture, some will come under closer scrutiny because of their reluctance to admit error and sin.

The men of Nineveh will **rise in the judgment** (of the second resurrection) with this generation and **condemn it, because they repented** at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here (Mt. 12:41; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Upon closer examination of Matthew 12:41, the original Greek word (SGD 450), translated into the English word "rise", can be used to describe the following action.

"To appear, arise, stand forth as those about to enter into conversation or dispute with anyone...."

Once these conversations and/or debates are finished, a judgment of former conduct will occur. This process is summarized by the Greek word (SGD

2632) translated into the English word "condemn", which can mean.

"Give judgment against, to judge worthy of punishment."

"By one's good example to render another's wickedness the more evident." The central issue here is **not** that the people of Nineveh were better, or more righteous, than those who lived during the time of Christ's ministry. Instead, those who lived in Nineveh are going to point out that they repented when Jonah preached to them. Therefore, it is implied that many who lived during the time of Christ's ministry are going to justify their sinful actions rather than repenting (Ac. 2:38). It is for this reason that Christ issued a second witness against them as follows.



JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY,  
TODAY, AND FOREVER.  
Hebrews 13:8

The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment (of the second resurrection) with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear **the wisdom of Solomon**; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here (Mt. 12:42; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Although Solomon was very wise, God granted this wisdom only for a temporary

period of time. Whereas Jesus Christ received the wisdom of his heavenly Father from the point of his creation and continued to retain it, except for the three days and three nights he was dead and buried in a tomb.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8).

.... **Christ**, the power of God and **the wisdom of God** (1Cor. 1:24b; emphasis added).

...of **Christ in whom is hidden all** the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge (Col. 2:2b – 3; emphasis added).

And now, O Father, glorify me (Christ) together *alongside* Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was *created* (Jn. 17:5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

.... You (God the Father) loved me (Christ) before the foundation of the world (Jn. 17:24b; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, the generation living during Christ's ministry heard the wisdom of Almighty God through His begotten son, Jesus Christ. This is why God the Father issued the following command, which is actually an old command for those who understand who Jesus Christ was during the First Covenant period.

And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. **Hear him!**' (Mk. 9:7; emphasis added)

Behold, I (Almighty God) send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. <sup>21</sup> Beware of him and **obey his voice**; do not provoke him, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for **My name is in him** (Ex. 23:20-21; cf. Isa. 9:6; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So the generation that lived during Christ's ministry was commanded to listen to the wisdom of Almighty God as communicated through Jesus Christ, but many refused and this will be brought to their attention by those from Nineveh as well as the queen of the South. This will occur during the second resurrection, which will follow Christ's millennial reign on earth (Rev. 20:7-10). It should be noted that although the city of Nineveh repented, they did not continue in this attitude after the threat of destruction had passed (2Cor. 7:10). Consequently most, if not all of them, will come up in the second resurrection.

Finally, Jesus Christ proclaimed a sign by which his authority would be confirmed. As we will see, this was also rejected by the majority of those living at the time, especially most of the Jewish religious leaders.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Mt. 12:40).

So instead of believing God's word, as the people of Nineveh did, the Jewish religious leaders rejected the very miracle that Christ said would prove he was the begotten Son of God (Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:5; 5:5). They did their best to prevent those under their authority from believing what Christ said.

...the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, <sup>63</sup> saying, 'Sir, we remember while he was still alive, how that deceiver said, "After three days I will arise." <sup>64</sup> Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people, "he has risen from the dead." So the last deception will be worse than the first.' (Mt. 27:62b-64)

These same Jewish religious leaders made sure false witnesses were present at a trial that would end in Christ's execution (Mt. 26:59-61). It was at the end of this "charade of justice" that Christ used language that some of these murderers would recognize.

Jesus said to him (the high priest), 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man

**sitting at the right hand of the Power** (Almighty God) and **coming on the clouds of heaven.**' (Mt. 26:64; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ was actually paraphrasing parts of the seventh chapter of Daniel. By doing this, he was telling them that they would remain dead until the judgment of the second resurrection. This sequence is summarized as follows,

I (Daniel) watched till thrones were put in place (Rev. 20:4), and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head was like pure wool, His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; <sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened (Dan. 7:9-10; cf. Rev. 20:11-12; Ed. notes in parentheses).

At this point in Daniel's vision, everything is ready for Jesus Christ to appear and commence judgment because his heavenly Father determined to grant this responsibility to him (Jn. 5:22). After Christ deals with a few more issues, he is seen taking up his position as judge over those who were not part of the first resurrection. Everyone responsible for Christ's execution, during his physical lifetime, will be present as he warned them in Matthew 26:64.

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, **one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!** He came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him (Dan. 7:13; emphasis added).

Therefore, as he approaches his heavenly Father, just prior to taking up his responsibility as judge, Jesus Christ will be seen by those who executed him because he will appear "with the clouds of heaven". Of note, "clouds" are often used symbolically in scripture to represent angels (see study: Christ and the Pillar of Cloud).

In conclusion, by using many examples, including Nineveh, the queen of the South, and referring to Daniel's vision, Jesus Christ made it clear that no one has gone to heaven. Instead, everyone who has died must wait for either the first or second resurrection.

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