

Where Did Jesus Go When He Died? (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] The question that I'm going to tackle tonight, and my answer to it, or the answer that I believe is the biblical answer, is a question that where the answer differs among conservative.

Theologians. And so the position that I'm going to present to you tonight on this question, the question being where did Jesus go right after he died, my answer to that I'm going to bring to you from Scripture.

However, just know that this is going to be my take on it. And I've got some pretty good guys and theologians on my side on it too.

However, on the other side, there are some pretty, I would say, powerhouse theologians on that side. Matter of fact, I'm going to, and this is going to be hard to swallow, I'm going to disagree with John MacArthur on this particular...

Now, just right off, you're ready to leave, aren't you? Anywho, let's just tackle it, okay?

[1 : 25] Where did Jesus go right after he died? And two popular answers. Now, there are a number of answers. Actually, there are really just two main answers, and then there are kind of some variations of these two.

But the first one I have portrayed or characterized there on the piece of paper, I will go ahead and tell you that Bruce has had a lot of fun with this.

Why do you call me out like that? I'm sorry. Are you talking to Lee? You know, I just normally don't like to... Amy was involved in it too. Sorry. Well, but she was led astray by you.

I can't help it if she had a weak, you know, a weak vine. But somehow when he looked at my little design, he got the idea that Jesus was sliding down one of these water slides, you know, in the park, and so anyway.

However, getting back to it here, try to be serious. Yeah, at the altar for confession, okay, Bruce?

The first popular conclusion or answer to the question is that Jesus, right after he died, he descended into Hades or hell.

[2 : 51] Well, really, Hades or the other word is the Hebrew word is Sheol. And I have that pictured for you there. It's also called the two-compartment theory.

Or, well, as you see it there, you have two compartments. On the top is paradise or Abraham's bosom where all the Old Testament saints, these are all the Old Testament believers, those of the faith like Abraham, you know, who believed God and was accounted unto him for righteousness, and so he was a believer.

I expect to see Abraham in heaven. But until Jesus came and died upon the cross, according to this view, before he came and paid the price with his blood and atoned for sin, that all the Old Testament believers went to Abraham's bosom, which is the upper part of Sheol.

And then there's that great gulf fixed, not golf, gulf fixed there, and Luke 16, 26. And you're probably familiar with that story about Lazarus and the rich man.

And that's where those who hold to this theory get this. And then the lower part is the place of torment. All right, so, you know, referring to Luke 16, the rich man is the one who went to the place of torment.

[4 : 23] We're all Old Testament unbelievers. It's all those living prior to the cross, according to this theory, where they went. And altogether, it is Sheol.

And so the theory is that when Jesus died, and based upon some scriptures, some interpretation of some scriptures, some of them I've listed here, many of them we're going to look at before we're done tonight, according to this theory, Jesus, after he died, descended into the lower parts of the earth, or into the place of torment, and inside Sheol, preached unto the spirits in prison, 1 Peter 3.19, led there out of Abraham's bosom, led all the Old Testament believers, led them out of

paradise, led captivity captive, Ephesians 4.8, and led them to heaven.

All right, so that's basically the theory that Jesus, when he died, he descended into Sheol. All right, the other theory, which is the one that I ascribe to, is that Jesus went directly to heaven after he died.

All right, he did not go to hell. He went to heaven. Now, that may seem obvious, but actually, the passages of scripture that are used to support the first view are quite a few, and they are not just real clear cut.

Now, I think I can offer tonight an answer, but when we're all done with it, you're going to have to decide for yourself. Study these scriptures yourself, and I would also say to you that if you take the first view, that does not mean that you're an unbeliever, that you're some kind of heretic.

[6 : 18] It's not a heretical view whatsoever. Again, there's some pretty high-powered theologians that hold to that view. All right, so, if Jesus went directly to heaven, let's just look at some of these passages real quickly that are used to support that view, and the good thing about it is that the scriptures that are used to support that view, many of them are the same scriptures that are used to support the first view.

All right? So, we'll try to, or I'll endeavor to explain some of that. The first one that I want you to look at is Acts 2, verse 20. Actually, I want to start with verse 24, and I'll try to read these as quickly as possible and just point out a few things about them.

Get over here in the right place on my notes. All right, verse 24, But God raised him, that's Jesus, of course, raised him up again, putting an end to the agony of death since it was impossible for him to be held in its power, the power of death.

For David says of him, now that's a key thing here, that Paul, or Luke rather, is introducing a quote from Psalm, one of the Psalms, and he's saying, David says of him, of who?

Of Jesus. Says of Jesus, I saw the Lord always in my presence, for he is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue exulted.

[7 : 56] Moreover, my flesh, or body, also will, and the New American Standard, has the word live. King James uses the word rest, and really I think rest is a better rendering of that.

Not live as in alive, but rest. It's the body resting in hope, in the hope of resurrection. All right? Is the idea here.

Because you will not abandon my soul to Hades. Now who's talking here again? All right? It's Jesus speaking. This is a Messianic Psalm. It's Jesus speaking.

You will not abandon, or leave, my soul in Hades, or Sheol, nor allow your Holy One to undergo decay.

You have made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence. Now, someone will say then, there it is right there, in the Bible, it's very clear, it says there that Jesus went to hell.

[9 : 03] Four times. You will not leave my soul in hell. All right? So, that's where those who hold that first view would go. But let me just point out a few things. Number one, and this will, we'll need to put all these together.

Number one, verse 26, the idea in verse 26 says, the body is placed in the grave. Now this is my understanding of this text.

That the body is placed in the grave, waiting for the resurrection. All right? Jesus' body was placed in the grave. In the Sheol. Not in hell, but in Sheol.

In the grave. Now see, the whole key, to this text, as well as several others, the whole key to understanding whether or not we're talking about Jesus going to hell, or Jesus just going to the grave, is our understanding of the word Sheol.

And it's not clear. And it's used throughout Scripture. There are times, clearly, where Sheol is used in reference to hell.

[10 : 12] But primarily, Sheol is used in reference to the grave. All right? So we're not talking about the body going to hell. We're talking about Jesus being placed in the grave.

We're talking about resting there in the grave, waiting for... In fact, the word, by the way, the word that's translated live, in the New American Standard, rest, in the King James, and some other translations, is a word that really means to pitch my tent.

To pitch my tent. And the metaphor really alluding to the body. That is, the body is pitched its tent in the grave.

It's placed in the grave. All right? Verse 27, and this is in direct reference to Jesus, that Jesus' body won't be there long enough to begin to decay.

Verse 27, Because you will not abandon my soul in Hades, nor allow your Holy One to undergo decay. When Jesus' body was...

[11:14] I mean, He really was dead, was placed in the grave. His body did not decay there. Did not see corruption. And He didn't have to wait long for the resurrection, is the idea here.

You're not going to leave me. You're not going to abandon me here. Again, this is a quote from David, who's speaking about Jesus. Psalm 16, by the way, if you want to jot that down.

And, verse 31, in fact, verse 31 also clarifies that. He looked ahead, this is David, He's speaking of David, He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Sheol, nor did His flesh suffer decay.

So He quotes it again there in verse 31. Do you see that in Acts? Quotes that again. So the whole idea is not going to hell to do some kind of preaching ministry, or to do some kind of deliverance ministry.

The whole idea, the whole context, is the death and the burial of the body of Jesus in Sheol, for a time waiting for the resurrection.

[12:24] David was speaking of Him there. The word abandoned, in verse 27, repeated again, same word, in fact, in the New American Standard, they used the same word.

I believe in the King James, it's leave instead of abandoned. Left instead of abandoned, in verse 31. Same word, it's a strong word, that means to desert.

Not desert as in cherry cheesecake. Okay. Dessert to leave. Help. I always have to throw in that cherry cheesecake thing, you know, just to keep you mindful of that.

No. All right, so it's to leave hopeless. So the word hell, here's my understanding of this. The word hell, or Hades in the New American Standard, Sheol in the Hebrew.

Both verses, 27 to 31, is the grave. Speaking of the grave, and so David is saying, my body, or saying of Jesus, Jesus is really speaking, my body has been laid in the grave for a time, waiting for the resurrection.

[13:29] My soul is not here, or that is, it's not there in the grave, but God would not, because God would not abandon my soul to wait in the grave.

And so where is Jesus right after His death? He's in heaven. All right, His body has not been raised, but He's in heaven. Now, why would He need to go to heaven, by the way, if I might just throw in a little footnote here?

After He died upon the cross, and shed His blood, and go to Hebrews, I think, and discover this, Jesus went into the presence of God, the Father, and offered His blood, as the sacrifice for our sin. Now, how do we know that God accepted it? The resurrection. The resurrection is the proof. And so, just like the high priest in the Old Testament entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifice, and God accepted that sacrifice, atoned for the sin of the people for a year, and it had to be repeated again, Jesus entered into the holiest of holies with His blood, in a sense, and God accepted that sacrifice, not to be repeated again, but once and for all, and the proof that He accepted it is the resurrection.

Now, and the resurrection occurred after that. So, Jesus didn't go to hell, quite the contrary, He went to heaven, went to heaven, right after He died, and then the resurrection, of course, the bodily resurrection, His spirit and body were reunited, just like ours will be.

[14:58] When you and I die, Paul said, to be absent from the bodies, be present with the Lord. Jesus, the first fruits, He was the first to be raised, and we will be raised, and changed, but when I die, I die before Jesus comes, I'm in the presence of God immediately, but not in my body, because my body is in the grave, living in hope, the hope of the resurrection, and one day, the body will be raised also, but I'm not going to be sleeping in that grave, you see, I'm going to be with Jesus immediately, and then at the resurrection, then the spirit and the body will be reunited, alright, so, let's go to the next one, real quickly, I don't think there's any way, I'm going to get through all of these, yeah, I didn't jot it down, I don't know, it's in there though, I'll look that up, get back with you, it says that He entered into the Holy of Holies,

I will get that for sure, that was not planned, that little part that I added there, it didn't add, it's just one of those little brain jogs, although it didn't jog me far enough, 1 Peter 3, next one I want us to look at, 1 Peter 3, verse 18, for Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, so that

He might bring us to God, having been put to death, in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also, in which also, in what?

The spirit, we'll get back to that, in which also He went and made proclamation, to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting, in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is eight persons, were brought safely through the water, alright now, the idea here, well let me read chapter 4, verse 6 too, because it goes together, and all that, excuse me, for the gospel, verse 6, chapter 4, for the gospel has, for this purpose, been preached, even to those, who are dead, that though they are judged, in the flesh as men, they may live, in the spirit, according to the will, of God, now, the idea here, in these, these passages, according to those, who hold the first view, is that these spirits in prison, were the Old Testament saints, those who died, prior to the cross, and, and they were sent, to this holding area, the bosom of Abraham, and, they're trapped there, until, the death, burial, resurrection, of Jesus Christ, alright, they're trapped there, in Abraham's bosom, that's the idea, according to this view, but these spirits, were souls,

I believe, not Old Testament saints, but souls, well they were, Old Testament saints, in a sense, they were souls, living in Noah's day, prior to the flood, okay, verse 20, I think makes that clear, that this is the context, that, Peter is not talking about, Jesus going to, some place called, Abraham's bosom, or shield, to preach, to Old Testament saints, who were trapped there, until, until he could come, and give them the gospel, and lead them out, you know, these are, those who were living, in Noah's day, look at, look at verse 20 again, who, once, were disobedient, when the patience of God, kept waiting, in the days of Noah, during the construction, of the ark, in which, a few, that is a person, were brought safely, through the water, correspondingly, verse 21, to that baptism, or symbolically, baptism, saves you, alright, so these are, pre-flood, people, you know, and Noah, preached to them, now let's just, kind of pick this apart, a little bit, in verse 20, the word, who, there, in the new American standard,

I think it's which, in the King James, refers to the spirits, in prison, because he's just, he just mentioned that, verse 20, who, refers back to verse 19, who, who, who are they, the spirits now in prison, alright, prison of sin, alright, by which, verse 19, the, in which, also, that, refers to, the spirit, the word spirit, in verse 18, get the, these connected, the antecedents, corrected here, or connected correctly, verse 19, by which, refers to the spirit, and it's, and it should be capital S, I don't know, who has King James, alright, anybody have King James name, well, that's the Bible Jesus used, I don't know, what's the matter, well, I don't have one in here either, so, but, I believe in King James, the S, it's capitalized, and rightly so, it's the Holy Spirit, we're talking about here, alright, so, let me put this together, the who, in verse 20, are, the, spirits in prison, imprisoned by sin, they are the, the, the, people, the, the population of the planet, prior to, the flood, and the, by which, refers to, verse 18, the spirit, capital S, the spirit, so, the idea is this, that Noah, preached, in the spirit, of Christ, in the spirit of Christ, to, the unbelievers of his day, that is, anybody would give him a hearing, nobody, nobody really gave him a hearing, other than his family, we know from scripture, that Noah preached for 120 years, while he was building that ark, in which, only eight souls, were saved alive, see the context, is not, some, group of people, held captive, in some place, called Abraham's bosom, or some, intermediary place, you know, before going to heaven, the whole context, is, the preaching, of the gospel, the truth, back in Noah's day, to the, people living prior to the flood, and he preached for 120 years, 2 Peter 2.5 says that Noah, was a preacher of righteousness, you see, alright now, what about 1 Peter 4.6,

[22 : 00] I mentioned, added that one in there, look at that again, 1 Peter 4.6, for the gospel has, for this purpose, been preached, for what purpose, by the way, so that people, would repent, you can back up, and see that, but the gospel was preached, even to those, who were dead, that though they are, judged in the flesh, as men, they may live in the spirit, according to the will of God, now what in the world, does that mean, well, Jesus did not, descend into hell, to preach the gospel, to dead men, it doesn't mean that, there's no second chance, after you die, and so, if, we're going to accept, the fact, or believe, that Jesus went, to hell, to preach, to the unbelievers, to give them a second chance, you know, if we believe, he went there to do that, for what purpose, would he do that, would he go and preach, the gospel, to exact judgment, upon them, so, here it is, the idea, that he goes to hell, preaches the gospel, so that God, can rightly, and justly, judged them, because now they've heard the gospel, now I can judge them,

God doesn't need that, or, more maybe, he went there, to give them a second chance, no, that can't be, doesn't line up with scripture, or maybe it's just to let them know, what they missed, you know, he comes waltzing in, to all these unbelievers, all the old testament unbelievers, and he preaches the gospel, to them, and says, but you can't have it, eh, too bad for you, well, that's ridiculous, alright, so, I just, I can't buy into that, so, he didn't go, to some place in hell, or, Abraham's bosom, he went to, or, he didn't go at all, this is a reference, to Noah, a preacher of righteousness, who preached the gospel, to those of his day, and he preached, in the spirit of Christ, the gospel, and they would not repent, and so they were all destroyed, the gospel was preached, though, while they were still living, see, the idea there, if they, he preached to them, to dead men, the idea is, that they're dead now, but, but, when Noah preached, they were very much alive, and, so, they, and they would, will have to give an account, of what they heard, and we understand that, from verse five, all right, how about if I carry this on, next week, I've got several verses, that I want us to look at again, that I have done that, that I have done that, that I have done that, that I have done that, that I have done that, that I have done that, that I have done that, that I have done that, that I have done that, Thank you.