

- That Jesus was crucified, buried, raised from the dead.
- That He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.

Did Jesus go to hell between His death and resurrection?

There is a great deal of confusion regarding this question. The concept that Jesus went to hell after His death on the cross comes primarily from the Apostles' Creed, which states, "He descended into hell." There are also a few Scripture passages that, depending on how they are translated, describe Jesus going to "hell." In studying this issue, it is important to first understand what the Bible teaches about the realm of the dead.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word used to describe the realm of the dead is sheol. It simply means "the place of the dead" or "the place of departed souls/spirits."

The New Testament Greek equivalent of sheol is hades, which also refers to "the place of the dead."

The New Testament indicates that sheol/hades is a temporary place, where souls are kept as they await the final resurrection and judgment.

Revelation 20:11–15 makes a clear distinction between hades and the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the permanent and final place of judgment for the lost.

Hades, then, is a temporary place.

Many people refer to both hades and the lake of fire as "hell," and this causes confusion.

Jesus did not go to a place of torment after His death but He did go to hades.

Sheol/hades is a realm with two divisions—

1. A place of blessing
2. A place of judgment Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27–31.
 - The abodes of the saved and the lost are both generally called "hades" in the Bible.
 - The abode of the saved is also called "Abraham's bosom" or "Abraham's side" in Luke 16:22 and "paradise" in Luke 23:43.
 - The abodes of the saved and the lost are separated by a "great chasm" Luke 16:26.

When Jesus died, He went to the blessed side of sheol or paradise. (Some believe, based on a particular interpretation of Ephesians 4:8–10, that Jesus took believers with Him from sheol to another place of bliss that we now call heaven. Ephesians 4 refers to the ascension of Christ.

All the unbelieving dead go to the cursed side of hades to await the final judgment. All the believing dead go to the blessed side of hades to await the resurrection.

**Did Jesus go to sheol/hades?
Yes, according to Jesus' own words,
He went to the blessed region of sheol.**

Some have the viewpoint that Jesus went to “hell” or the suffering side of sheol/hades in order to further be punished for our sins. This idea is completely unbiblical.

**It was the death of Jesus on the cross
that sufficiently provided for our redemption.**

It was His shed blood that effected our own cleansing from sin 1 John 1:7–9.

As He hung there on the cross, He took the sin burden of the whole human race upon Himself.

He became sin for us: “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

This imputation of sin helps us understand Christ’s struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane with the cup of sin that He asked to pass from Him, Matthew 26:39.

As Jesus neared death, He said, “It is finished” John 19:30.

His suffering in our place was completed.

His soul/spirit went to hades (the place of the dead).

Jesus did not go to “hell” or the suffering side of hades; He went to “Abraham’s side” or the blessed side of hades.

Jesus’ suffering ended the moment He died. The payment for sin was paid.

He then awaited the resurrection of His body and His return to glory in His ascension.

4. He was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.

Christianity is the only religion that bases its claim to acceptance upon the resurrection of its founder.

The Resurrection is fundamental to Christianity!

1 Cor 15:14-17 Paul said without the resurrection, “your faith is vain and you are still lost in your sins.”

v. 18 – you have perished.

The entire message of the Gospel is predicated on the resurrection of Jesus from the grave.

It was upon this resurrection message of the eyewitnesses that they were willing to give their lives in defense of the Gospel.

Christians throughout time have been willing to suffer persecution, martyrdom for the sake of the belief in the resurrection of Jesus.

Evidence of resurrection:

- The soldiers came to Pilate to share the news of an empty tomb.
- The Pharisees paid the soldiers to tell a lie the disciples had stolen His body.
- The disciples themselves didn’t believe the report until they saw and touched Him.
- Angels themselves testified that the tomb is empty – He is not here.
- The tomb was and is empty.
- Other religious leaders’ tombs still contain their remains.
- Jesus appeared to other people and the leaders for 40 days after His resurrection before He ascended to heaven.

His resurrection body is the first fruits of our resurrection bodies:

It was a supernatural body able to pass through barred doors – John 20:19-20

“That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!

“Peace be with you,” he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!”

- Not recognizable at times: John 20:14 “She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus but she didn’t recognize Him.”
- 21:4 “At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach but the disciples couldn’t see who He was.”
- Mark 16:12 “Afterward He appeared in a different form to two of His followers who were walking from Jerusalem into the country.”
- Able to vanish out of sight – Luke 24:31: Suddenly, their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And at that moment He disappeared!”

- **John 20:19, 26** “That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!”
“Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them.”

He Ascended to the right hand of the Father and today is the Intercessor for us:

Two terms meaning:

1. **The Ascension** – the event where Jesus visibly departed from His disciples to heaven – **Acts 1:9-11** “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven.”
2. **The Exaltation** – where Jesus is risen and given the place of power at the right hand of God.
Phil 2:9 “Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.”
Eph 1:20, 21 “He [God] wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power.”

The nature of the Ascension and Exaltation of Jesus Christ –

1. **It was a bodily and visible ascension** – **Acts 1:9-11** “After saying this, He was taken up into a cloud while they were watching and they could no longer see Him. As they strained to see Him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven but someday He will return from heaven in the same way you saw Him go!”

Luke 24:51 “While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up to heaven.”

It was a body of flesh and bones, not a body of flesh and blood – **1 Cor 15:51-52**
But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die but we will all be transformed!

He took His place at the right hand of the Father –

Eph 1:20 “that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.”

Col 3:1 “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand.”

The right hand of the Father is the place of intercession –

Rom 8:34 “Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us and He is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us.”

Psa. 110:1 “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit in the place of honor at My right hand until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet.”

The purpose of the Ascension was as a Forerunner –

Heb 6:20 “Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.”

He has entered the place where we are to follow; one sent to prepare, a scout.

Gone to prepare a place for us –

Heb 9:21-24 “And in the same way, He sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and on everything used for worship. In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. That is why the Tabernacle and everything in it, which were copies of things in heaven, had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals. For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human hands which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven itself to appear now before God on our behalf.”

John 14:2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

He is gone to make preparations to receive His bride to Himself.

He now appeals to the Father on our behalf –

Heb 9:24 “For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human hands which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven itself to appear now before God on our behalf.”

This assures us of our free and confident access into the presence of God –

Heb 4:14-16 “So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testing’s we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

We have an assured hope of immortality –

2 Cor 5:1-8 “For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh but it’s not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared us for this and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit. So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies for then we will be at home with the Lord.”

In this assurance we can also have the confidence that the Lord is working all things together for our good –

Eph 1:22: God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church.”

Col 1:15-18 “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation for through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him. He existed before anything else and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So, He is first in everything.”