

Going to Heaven?

In addition to many scripture verses that show we are in a deep “sleep” state after death, and the gospel of the resurrection, there are more verses which specifically address the question of whether or not humankind are “going to heaven” after death.

WHAT CHRIST SAID IN THE BOOK OF JOHN:

John 3:13 “No one has gone to heaven – except the one who came from heaven, the Son of Man.”

Notes: Enoch and Elijah did not ascend to the 3rd heaven. They were carried in the air (1st heaven) to another location. (Elijah wrote a letter to one of the kings several years later.)

John 5:24-29 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when **the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live... v. 28** **“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out –** those who have done good will **rise** to live, and those who have done evil will **rise** to be condemned.” [see **Daniel 12:2-4**]

John 6:39, 40, 44, 54 “... raise them up at the last day.”

John 8:21b “Where I go, you cannot come.”

John 8:23b “(Jesus) You are from below; I am from above. You are from this world; I am not of this world.”

John 11:24 “Martha answered, ‘I know he (Lazarus) will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’”

Notes: Martha did not believe that her Christian brother went to heaven.

John 11:43-44 “...**Lazarus**, come out! The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

John 13:1 “It was just before the Passover Feast. **Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.**

John 13:3 “Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that **he had come from God and was returning to God...**”

John 13:33 “Where I am going, you cannot come.”

John 13:36 “Jesus replied, ‘**Where I am going, you cannot follow** now, but you will follow later.’”

Notes: The word ‘now’ and ‘later’ may imply going to heaven but John 14:3 clarifies this.

John 14:2-3 “In my Father’s house there are many rooms (mansions); if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. **V.3** “And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me that you may also be where I am.**”

NOTES: **Jesus specifies that it is “when he comes back” that believers will be with him.**

John 14:12 “I am going to the Father.”

John 14:28 “...if you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”

John 16:5 “Now I am going to him who sent me...”

John 16:10 “...**I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer.**”

John 16:16 “**In a little while you will see me no more**, and then after a little while you will see me.”

Notes: When Jesus returns, then we will see him again.

John 16:28 “I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

AFTER CHRIST’S DEATH, WHAT WAS TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Acts 2:29b-34 “...the **Patriarch David died and was buried**, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave. God has raised Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For **David did not ascend to heaven...**”

Note: Ezekiel 37 says that David will have authority in the 1,000 year reign of Christ.

Acts 13:36 “For when **David** had served God’s purpose in his own generation, **he fell asleep**; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But **the one whom God raised from the dead,** did not see decay.”

Notes: David will have authority in Christ’s 1,000 year reign on earth, but he did not go to heaven. Only one, Jesus, has been raised from death to life. All others are brought back to life in either the 1st or 2nd resurrections (Revelation 20:4-5).

1 Corinthians 15:20-25 “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep...so **in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits;** then, **when he comes,** those who belong to him. Then the end will come...”

Notes: 1) Death is equated with sleep, an unconscious state. 2) Christ died and was raised to life. 3) Christians will be raised to life again also, when Christ returns at the Resurrection event.

1 Corinthians 15:50-52 “...We will not all **sleep**, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet.** For the trumpet will sound, **the dead will be raised imperishable**, and we will be changed (to glorified, imperishable bodies).”
[One event.]

Notes: 1) The last trumpet is the 7th of 7 trumpet calls, Revelation 11:15. 2) The dead are raised, imperishable. (They rise and do not come down from heaven. They are converted to imperishable bodies all at once, not one at a time. This conversion occurs at the Last Trumpet only.) 3) Given this detailed explanation of the Resurrection, Paul could not have meant in 2 Cor. 5 that Christians go to heaven upon death. He stated his “preference” to be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant of those who **fall asleep**... We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have **fallen asleep in him**. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

v.16 “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of an archangel and with the **trumpet call of God,** and **the dead in Christ shall rise first.**”

v.17 “**After that,** we who are still alive and are left will be caught up (raptured) **with them** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

Notes: 1) Paul equates death with sleep, a state of unconsciousness. 2) Only Jesus died and rose again. 3) The sequence of events are that first, the Lord comes down from heaven (with a loud command, voice of the archangel, and the trumpet call of God); second, the dead Christians are brought back to life and rise; third, the Christians who are

alive at this time are caught up with the revived Christians to meet Christ in the air. (Also see Matthew 24:30-31).

1 Thessalonians 1:10 "...They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."

Hebrews 4:14 "Therefore, since we have a **great high priest who has gone into heaven**, Jesus, the Son of God."

Note: Only Jesus has gone to heaven.

Hebrews 9:24 "For Christ...entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

Notes: If people went up to heaven upon death, why would Christ be appearing "for us in God's presence?"

Revelation 20:4-6

v. 4 "And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received the mark on their foreheads or hands.

"**They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

V.5 "*(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.)*
THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

V. 6 "Blessed and holy are those who have part in the **FIRST RESURRECTION.** The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years."

Notes: 1) Verse 5 is a little confusing with the order of events. The 1st resurrection is when the Christians are raised to life. They are blessed and holy. The 2nd resurrection (for the rest of the dead) occurs when the thousand years are over and is described in verses 7-15 below.

2) The true Christian future is that they are to be Priests and Kings with Jesus Christ on earth (see also **Revelation 1:6 and 5:10**).

Revelation 20:7-15 "When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison (see verses 2-3), and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth...**v.10** And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and false prophet had been thrown. **V.13** The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown

into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the **Book of Life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire."