

Where Was Christ Between His Death and Resurrection?

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The answer to the question has plagued scholars, theologians and those who read the Word of God since the earliest followers of Christ. The notes here are intended to help but from the outset I must declare there is not clear or definite answer. Those who claim to have the complete answer must either stretch scripture to prove their point, take scripture out of context to make it fit their beliefs or go outside of scripture with their own ideas. The following study is designed to present the scriptures and give a brief explanation for each one. I want to make it clear I use the four keys of interpretation of scripture as the foundation for this process.

1. **Scripture interprets scripture.** God has put the information within His Word we need to understand and discern what he wants us to know.
2. **Scripture must be interpreted in context.** The original meaning and setting are vital to understanding what each verse means.
3. **The easy scriptures interpret the difficult scriptures.** God has put many answers within His Word for us. This allows us to know what God intended because he has given us the answers.
4. **Jesus is BOSS!** Jesus, the Son of God, is the final authority. What Jesus says counts the most and is the final word.

Even with this there are times we may not have all the answers to our questions. It is better to say 'I don't know,' or 'The Bible doesn't give us the answer,' than to force or create an answer.

In the study about where Jesus was on the three days he was dead we will need to remember rule four, Jesus is BOSS! There is much we can speculate about but when Jesus speaks we have a solid answer.

The following I am sure of and will show in the next few pages

- ◆ Jesus died and went to the third heaven (paradise) taking with Him the thief on the cross.
- ◆ Jesus was resurrected from the dead following a period of time that corresponded to how long Jonah was in the belly of the great fish.
- ◆ What else Jesus did in those three days is only speculation and the poor use of scripture to prove different points of view.
- ◆ At the end of forty days Jesus' resurrected physical body was taken up to heaven where it was transformed into his eternal imperishable body.

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Scripture Reference	Explanation
<p>[40] for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12.40</p>	<p>This is about the amount of time Jesus would be dead and buried. This is not about what He did or where He went after dying but about being dead and buried for a certain period of time.</p>
<p>[43] And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Luke 23.43</p>	<p>This declaration by Jesus is a key to understanding what happened to the soul of Jesus and the thief when they died.</p> <p>Speaking to the thief on the cross who had just repented and ask Jesus to save him Jesus make a key statement in our understanding of where he was going to spend, at least a part of, those three days.</p> <p>Speaking about a personal experience Paul tells us that Paradise is the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12.4). This is the place of God’s throne and the permanent place of the Tree of Life (Revelation 2.7)</p>
<p>"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46).</p>	<p>This is Jesus preparing to step from the cross into the hands of God at his death.</p>
<p>[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; [19] in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, [20] 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. 1 Peter 3.18-20</p>	<p>This is the hardest scripture on the matter of Jesus and his death to understand and is seen any number of ways. I BELIEVE this is reference to the Spirit of God sharing in the time of NOAH and only finding one family that would respond to the message. This is NOT about Jesus preaching to or giving those who are already dead a second opportunity to repent. The Bible is clear, “The soul who sins will die.” (Ezekiel 18.4) and “it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” (Hebrews 9.27)</p> <p>Reading the rest of the section in 1 Peter 3.18-22 this section is about baptism and accepting Jesus as your savior while a person is still alive and before they die.</p>
<p>[19] So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. Mark 16.19</p> <p>[9] And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Acts 1.9</p>	<p>This is about the final ascension of Jesus to heaven and taking His place as the Son of God on His throne and assuming his position as ‘Lord of Lords and King of Kings.’ (Revelation 17.14)</p>

Scripture Reference	Explanation
<p>[25] “For David says of Him...</p> <p>[27] BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES..</p> <p>[31] he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. Acts 2.25, 27, 31</p>	<p>This reference to Psalm 16.10 shows that God was going to resurrect the Body of Jesus from the dead. The disciples realized the importance of the resurrection of Jesus and the condition or preservation of His body was a miracle of God. In the hot climate of Israel a body would begin decomposing rapidly, yet this did not happen to Jesus’ body.</p>
<p>[3] To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Acts 1.3</p>	<p>The key here is Jesus is ‘ALIVE.’ This is different than when a believe dies and goes to heaven. The believer leaves his body behind. Jesus’ body was resurrected back to life and it would not be transformed until his ascension after forty days with His disciples.</p>
<p>[27] Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.” John 20.27</p>	<p>This is the physical body of Jesus that has come back to life. He was resurrected from the dead. It was not just His spirit walking around He had come back from the dead. This body would be changed (see next box) when he finally ascended to heaven.</p>
<p>[13]. . . I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. [14] His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. [15] His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. Revelation 1.13-15</p>	<p>This is Jesus after the ascension and transformation into His eternal spiritual body. Paul was clear in 1 Corinthians 15.42-49 that we all will be change from the physical bodies that corrupt and die into spiritual bodies that are eternal and imperishable. Jesus’ body is very different here than during the forty days he spent with the disciples after the resurrection.</p>

Scripture Reference

Explanation

[17] Jesus *said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’” John 20.17

Jesus (who is BOSS!) had clearly stated on the cross that he was going to be in heaven with the thief on the day they died. The woman was being told to let go and take the message of his resurrection to the other disciples. Jesus had not ascended and taken his place on the throne and had not received His eternal body. He was still in a human body that had been resurrected from the dead.

[8] Therefore it says,
“WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,
HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.”

The ascension of Jesus was clearly seen by his disciples. Christ is “the firstborn from the dead.” (Colossians 1.15) This opened the door to eternity for all believes which is described as a “Host of captives.”

[9] (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? [10] He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) Ephesians 4.8-10

He descended from heaven to the lower parts of the earth is reference to his coming as a physical human in the form of the child of Mary and Joseph.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

BELIEVERS HAVE WRESTLED WITH THE QUESTION OF WHERE JESUS SPENT THOSE THREE DAYS WITHOUT ANY DEFINITE RESOLUTION OF THE MATTER. I CONTEND BEYOND CURIOSITY IT DOES NOT MATTER. WE HAVE THE WORDS OF JESUS THAT CLEARLY PUT HIM IN HEAVEN ON THAT FRIDAY AND WE HAVE THE WORDS OF THE WITNESSES THAT SAW THE RESURRECTED JESUS ON SUNDAY. IN BETWEEN JESUS’ BODY WAS DEAD AND JESUS WAS PREPARING FOR THE RESURRECTION.

JESUS HAD MET WITH MOSES AND ELIJAH WHO “WERE SPEAKING OF HIS DEPARTURE WHICH HE WAS ABOUT TO ACCOMPLISH AT JERUSALEM.” (LUKE 9.31) BOTH OF THESE MEN HAD FINISHED THEIR MINISTRIES POORLY, MOSES WITH AN ANGRY OUTBURST AND ELIJAH WITH A FEARFUL HEART. THEY WERE SENT BY GOD TO PREPARE JESUS FOR THE COMING CONFLICT AND TO ENCOURAGE HIM NOT TO REPEAT THEIR MISTAKES. HOW MARVELOUS IT MUST HAVE BEEN WHEN JESUS ARRIVED VICTORIOUS IN HEAVEN ON THAT FRIDAY AFTERNOON. A FINAL OPPORTUNITY TO FINISH STRONG HAD BEEN ALLOTTED MOSES AND ELIJAH. THEY HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO JESUS AND ENCOURAGE HIM IN HIS FINAL DAYS AS HE APPROACHED JERUSALEM. I PERSONALLY BELIEVE ONE THING JESUS DID ON THAT FRIDAY IN HEAVEN AFTER HE INTRODUCED THE THIEF TO EVERYONE WAS TO TAKE TIME TO HUG MOSES AND ELIJAH AND THANK THEM BOTH FOR THEIR HELP. REHIII