

# WHERE CHRISTIANS GO WHEN THEY DIE Pt.3: LOCATION of GOD, NO ONE in HEAVEN, LAZARUS the BEGGAR, ELIJAH, ENOCH

I want to reiterate something from last week's sermon. The disciples saw Jesus ascend into heaven in bodily form and there was no one else with Him. So those crazy theories that He took the Old Testament saints with Him are way off base. All we have to do to know those theories are wrong is read God's Word. When King David prophesied about The Father not leaving Jesus in Sheol or the grave which our Bibles are poorly translated saying - in hell. Even though our bodies will decay in the grave, Jesus' never did and God showed that to King David by the power of The Holy Spirit. Righteous souls are alive in Sheol but the focus of that prophecy was on Jesus' physical body not decaying in the grave. When Jesus told the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in paradise He clearly did not mean in the third heaven because by the third day Jesus had not ascended into the third heaven. So the thief did not go to the third heaven, Jesus was talking about something else, perhaps Sheol – the side of the righteous dead or that he would be there at a different time but certainly it was not that day.

Thinking about where we go when we die as Christians, let's look at the location of where God is and where we are.

## LOCATION

### GOD:

God is everywhere.

**Psalm 139:1-14** – To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known *me*. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways. For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for

me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell (sheol), behold, Thou *art there*. If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to Thee*. For Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* Thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well.

God is everywhere. He is in sheol, the abode of the dead, at the same time He is in heaven. He is omnipresent. King David knew that there was no where he could go that God would not already be there too.

**John 12:26** – If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will *my* Father honour.

**Heb.13:5** - *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

**Matt.28:20** – (Jesus speaking) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. So be it.

Everywhere you go Christ is with you even though we know He is seated at The Father's right hand. He has told us time and again that He is with us everywhere we go.

## **CHRIST:**

**Col.3:1** – If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

**Acts 2:33** – Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

**Rev.3:21** – To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.

We see these references to Jesus being at The Father's right hand but yet we know He is everywhere all at once too.

**US:**

We tend to only think of ourselves being located here in the physical realm on this earth.

**Eph.2:6** - And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

Some spiritual things are hard for us to grasp with our finite minds. I cannot imagine how Jesus feels with me inside of Him because I mess up and sometimes takes me a while to learn a lesson and so forth. But Scripture tells those of us who abide in Him that He is abiding in us too. **(John 15:5)** While I'm in this body I certainly don't feel like I'm in Jesus sitting in heaven. We take these things by faith because they are spiritual. We think we are only on this earth but the Bible says those in Christ are seated with Him in heavenly places.

**Phi.1:23** – For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Paul was expressing his internal conflict, he knew it was much more advantageous for the church to stay and teach and strengthen them in the faith but for himself personally he was ready to be with Christ for all of eternity. This is a fine balance for each of us as Christians, to continue with this life doing the things we must do all the while keeping the faith and staying in a state of readiness to depart and be with Jesus for all of eternity. We cannot give up on either side but keep a balance and stay ready.

**Phi.3:20** – For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Our citizenship is in heaven, that is our real home even though we are here for right now.

## THE DEAD RISING

Let's take a look at the last question that Chris had asked.

He asked, are our spirit bodies consciously in heaven with the Lord, and at the second coming, the physical bodies here in the ground are resurrected and rejoined with the spirit bodies in heaven? That's a lot to unpack and I've heard the false teachers who serve on satan's altar teach this very thing. In fact, this is what I believed until I talked with Pastor Erustus some years ago and began to look deeper into all of it.

**1 Thess.4:16-17** – For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Jesus returns for His bride at the rapture. The apostles were told He would return the same way they saw Him go and that was alone and in a physical body ascending up into the clouds. The dead in Christ rise first. They rise because they are not already above with Him, they are coming from beneath and this is where their soul has been awaiting Jesus to come and collect His bride. This passage plainly shows us the location of the souls of the righteous dead and it is from beneath. That is from Abraham's bosom and they rise from there. The dead in Christ rising first is not speaking of the physical bodies supernaturally coming together after having been decayed and disintegrated and rising to reunite with the soul in the air. Those who teach that we go to heaven immediately upon death have come up with this idea that the soul is floating around in heaven without a body and when Jesus comes for His bride then they are there with Him in spirit form, hovering in the air with Him waiting on their bodies to come up from the grave so they can then have the whole package like Jesus had when He

resurrected and ascended. That whole theory is a pretty big stretch. They came up with that so that they could teach that no one is in Sheol right now.

God is going to give us a new body, a supernatural glorified body. The focus of that passage of Scripture referring to the dead in Christ rising first is not on the physical body but rather it is focused on the soul, that is what will rise.

I had believed the teaching that when we die we go instantly to heaven and we are just there in spirit form. Then at the rapture we return with Christ and our bodies rise up out of the graves and somewhere in mid air the two, spirit and body are joined together. There is a lot of reading between the lines there with things that just simply are not written in the Bible. No one has all the answers but we certainly should be careful not to fill in blanks when we really don't know.

### **NO ONE in HEAVEN**

No one has been raised and entered into heaven yet.

**John 3:13** – (Jesus speaking here) And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

Jesus was standing there telling them He came from heaven and He ended by saying He is in heaven. That's hard to get a hold of because they were standing there looking right at Him. These are supernatural things.

**Acts 2:34-35** - For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD (The Father) said unto my Lord (Jesus), Sit thou on My right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost when he said this. He was referencing Psalm 110:1 which was a prophecy of King David's about The Father speaking with The Son and Jesus being seated in a place of honor at God's right hand. At the time when Peter preached this it was well after Jesus had resurrected and ascended, this teaching was after the Old Testament saints had come out of their graves at the time of Jesus' resurrection and were seen all around town. Peter plainly stated that King David's body was still in the grave, that is he was still in Sheol, he had not ascended.

Clearly the New Testament saints did not believe that the Old Testament saints went with Jesus into heaven or that they went into heaven when they died. We are really being sort of arrogant to believe that if we die then we get to go and experience heaven before the Old Testament saints. King David was a man after God's own heart. **(1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22)** We would do well to pattern our lives after him.

What about Enoch and Elijah? They went up to heaven didn't they?

**Genesis 5:24** – And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.

Enoch is kind of a mystery. There's not much in the Bible about him.

**Hebrews 11:5** – By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

He was a righteous man and God took him from this earth without him dying first. That's what we know. Where God placed him we don't know or have details.

**2 Kings 2:11** - And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

We know that Elijah was worn out and ready to go and be with God and had even asked Him to take His life. He himself said he was not better than his fathers, those men of God who had gone on before Him. God did grant him what he wanted but tasked him to do a few more things before He took him. **(1 Kings ch:19)** When we read that he went into heaven we think he immediately went to the third heaven where God is but it doesn't spell that out for us. They visibly saw him go up but God could have taken him anywhere supernaturally.

We all read about God taking Elijah up in the chariot of fire and believe he went to heaven, what we call the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven. Did he?

**2 Kings 2:11** – And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

The Bible speaks about a 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven. The 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven is where God is (**2 Cor.12:2**). The 2<sup>nd</sup> heaven where the sun, moon and stars are and the 1<sup>st</sup> heaven seems to be our atmosphere, the air around us. The 1<sup>st</sup> heaven seems to fit with satan being the prince of the power of the air because he is the god of this world. Just because it says that Elijah went up into heaven doesn't mean he was taken to the third heaven where God is. He was taken up from the earth but that doesn't mean he was not carried down into the earth at some point, to what is called Abraham's bosom. This was a supernatural miracle and we don't know everything about it.

These two men were not the norm, God did a miracle in each of their situations in bringing them to Him. The Bible says it is appointed unto man once to die yet they did not die. (**Hebrews 9:27**) We do not see God doing these miracles throughout Scripture and so we can deduce that these two men were exceptions but the rest of us will taste death unless we live to the rapture.

**Luke 16:22** – And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;



This is a rendition of Lazarus being carried away by the angels. We know that he did not go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven where God resides, but was carried to Abraham's bosom which to us is geographically down. There is a great chasm or gulf fixed between the righteous dead and those who died in sin against God. This place is not heaven, but a temporary holding place of the dead which the Old Testament calls Sheol, the New Testament calls it Abraham's bosom which is the side of the blessed. You see the angels are carrying him in an upward direction yet we know Abraham's bosom and hell, the side of torment, are in the earth below.

All the pictures I looked at showed the angels carrying him up and so we know they carried him up and away and then supernaturally he was delivered down into the resting place of the dead.

Pastor shared about Abraham's bosom: Mainly bosom signifies intimate and loving fellowship with Abraham, just as it was with Jesus and His Father (**John 1:18**). God told Abraham through him all people will be blessed. So it's like after



death, Lazarus was seen enjoying in the abode of the righteous dead a very blessed place near Abraham.

## **GATHERED to THEIR FATHERS**

**Judges 2:8-10** – And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.

To be gathered to their fathers, meant to be gathered to those that had gone on before them and had kept the faith. They are all still alive.

This next passage of scripture is God The Father speaking to King David:

**2 Sam.7:12** - And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish His kingdom.

### **And when your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers**

This phrase refers to the end of King David's life, a common biblical expression for death, indicating a peaceful passing and joining ancestors. It reflects the Hebrew understanding of death as a return to one's people, emphasizing continuity and legacy. The phrase "rest with your fathers" suggests a burial tradition and a belief in an afterlife or continued existence with one's forebears, a concept seen throughout the Old Testament.

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## **CLOSING**

**Matt.22:31-32** – (Jesus speaking here) But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Jesus spoke this to the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection. So Jesus' point was that everyone does not just die and that's the end – God is not the God of the dead – but He is The God of the living – we go on after this life to live for all of eternity and we will be resurrected some day.

## **PRAYER**