

Life after Death

What do Christians believe about heaven?

Like the story of the sheep and goats, the Bible passages on these pages are 'eschatological' – they try to explain what Christians believe will happen at the end of people's lives, and afterwards.


The first passage is from a conversation Jesus had with one of his female followers, named Martha.

*Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** Those who believe in me will **live, even though they die**; and all those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

"Yes, Lord!" she answered. "I do believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

John chapter 11 verses 25-27

To do...


 As you read it, highlight the uses of the word 'believe' in this passage.

'live, even though they die.'

Jesus refers to an afterlife. Christians believe this is heaven.

To do...

 How does Jesus describe himself in this passage?

 What does Jesus say is necessary in order for people to 'live, even though they die' i.e. to reach heaven?

In the next passage, which is also from John's Gospel, Jesus uses an image of a house to represent heaven. Jesus uses the image of a house with many rooms to help Christians imagine an unimaginable place.

Christians believe that heaven is where people who have followed Jesus go to spend their afterlife. Some believe that it is an actual, physical place, while others see it more as a spiritual dimension. All believe that it is perfect and a paradise, and that God is there.

To do...

 As you read this passage, highlight the uses of the word 'believe'.

*"Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe in God and believe also in me. **There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you.** I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to myself,** so that you will be where I am. You know the way that leads to the place where I am going."*

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?"

*Jesus answered him, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me.** Now that you have known me," he said to them, "you will know my Father also, and from now on you do know him and you have seen him."*

John chapter 14 verses 1-7

'I am going to prepare a place for you.'

Here Jesus is probably foretelling his ascension (see page 35).

'I will come back and take you to myself.'


Jesus promises that he will come back to earth one day, and take people who believe in him to join God in heaven. Christians call this the second coming (the theological name for it is 'the Parousia', which is Greek for 'arrival').

Thomas was one of Jesus' disciples.

'... no one goes to the Father except by me.'

Christians believe that belief in Jesus is the way in which it is possible to reach heaven.

To do...

 True or false? Christians believe...

- that Jesus ascended to heaven. **TRUE**
- that Jesus has gone to heaven and will never return.
- that belief in Jesus is the way to have an afterlife in heaven.
- that Jesus will return to earth one day and take believers to heaven (the Parousia).

 Draw lines to connect these phrases with the relevant part of the Bible passage above.