

# Did Jesus die spiritually?

by [Matt Slick](http://carm.org/did-jesus-die-spiritually) - <http://carm.org/did-jesus-die-spiritually>

There are many Christian preachers today who teach that **Jesus** died spiritually. As defined by them, this concept is a false doctrine.

They are saying that Jesus died on the cross then went to **hell** where he finished the atoning work. This is a denial of the sufficiency of the cross. Some say that Jesus also lost his divine nature and adopted the nature of Satan while in hell. This denies the deity of Christ. Others teach that Jesus had to be born again. This is a denial of the holiness of Christ's nature.

Whichever variation is adopted, it is still wrong. The truth is that Jesus finished the atoning work on the cross, never stopped being divine, did not suffer in hell, and did not need to be born again.

So, let's take a look at what some of the prominent Christian teachers have stated regarding the atonement of Christ.

## JOYCE MEYER

- **JESUS WAS BORN AGAIN:** "Jesus paid on the cross and went to hell in my place. Then as God had promised, on the third day Jesus rose from the dead. The scene in the spirit realm went something like this: God rose up from his throne and said to demon powers tormenting the sinless son of God, "let him go." Then the resurrection power of Almighty God went through hell and filled Jesus. On earth his grave where they had buried him was filled with light as the power of God filled his body. He was resurrected from the dead--the first born again man."
  1. *The Most Important Decision You'll Ever Make*, by Joyce Meyer, second printing, May 1993, page 36.
  2. Bible Says: "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." - John 10:18
- **JESUS WAS SEPARATED FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE FATHER:** "Jesus paid for our sins on the cross and went to hell in our place. Then, as God had promised, on the third day Jesus rose from the dead . . . When Jesus hung on the cross, He took our sin upon Himself. God cannot stay in the presence of sin. As Jesus took our sin, He was separated from the presence of the Father . . . He committed His Spirit to the Father and died. So they put Him— that is, His body— in a grave, and His spirit went to hell because that is where we deserved to go . . . There is no hope of anyone going to heaven unless they believe this truth . . . Jesus went to hell for you. He died for you."
  1. Meyer, Joyce (2008-10-23). *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make: A Complete and Thorough Understanding of What it Means to be Born Again* (Kindle Locations 249-250). Faith Words. Kindle Edition.
  2. We acknowledge that the wording has been toned down by Meyer in her subsequent version of the booklet.
- **VICTORY WAS GAINED IN HELL:** "He went to hell in your place and gained victory there, triumphing over the enemy. ([Acts 2:31](#))"
  1. Meyer, Joyce (2008-10-23). *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make: A Complete and Thorough Understanding of What it Means to be Born Again* (Kindle Locations 287-288). Faith Words. Kindle Edition.

## KENNETH COPELAND

- **DENIES JESUS PAID FOR OUR SINS ON THE CROSS:** "For three days He suffered everything there is to suffer. Some people don't want to believe that. They want to believe that after His death, Jesus just stayed in that upper region of Sheol that the Bible calls paradise, but they're mistaken! If He had simply stayed there, there would have been no price paid for sin." (Believer's Voice of Victory, Vol. 19, No. 9, Sept. 1991) (Emphasis added)
  1. <http://moriel.org/MorielArchive/index.php/discernment/church-issues/word-faith/the-jesus-died-spiritually-doctrine-of-the-word-faith-teachers>
  2. Bible Says: Rev 5:9 (Jer) ... with your blood you bought men for God.
  3. Bible Says: John 19:30 (NEB) Jesus took the wine and said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and died.
  4. Bible Knowledge Commentary: *Tetelestai* is the word in Greek translated here 'it is finished'. Papyri receipts for taxes have been recovered with the Greek word *tetelestai* written across them, meaning 'paid in full'.
  5. Bible Says: Hebrews 9:22 - And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.
- **JESUS WAS SEPARATED FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE FATHER & JESUS PAID FULL PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION IN HELL:** "The death God warned Adam about was spiritual death. It's the inward death that takes place when a spiritual being is separated from God. That's what spiritual death is—separation from God. Adam experienced it the moment he sinned. He was immediately cut off from his fellowship with the Father, and the light of God's life and glory within him was snuffed out. For Jesus to become our substitute, He had to go through the same kind of separation. He had to die, not just physically, but spiritually, and descend into hell to suffer the whole penalty of sin. It shocks some people's religious sensibilities to think of Jesus in hell, but that doesn't change the fact that He went there. The Scriptures verify it again and again. They tell us that He descended " . . . into the deep [or the bottomless pit]" before He was brought up from the dead ([Romans 10:7](#)); and that "his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" ([Acts 2:31](#)). Psalm 18, which paints a detailed, prophetic picture of what Jesus went through between the cross and the throne, declares, "The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me" (verse 5). Not only did Jesus go to hell, He sank to the deepest, darkest part of it to suffer everything that was necessary on our behalf. We'll be forever glad He did, too--because had He not gone to hell, we would have to. Had He stopped short of paying that price, we would have to pay it ourselves. The only reason we can walk debt-free through heaven's gate is because He paid it all."
  1. Copeland, Kenneth (2011-06-30). THE BLESSING of The LORD Makes Rich and He Adds No Sorrow With It [Proverbs 10:22](#) (Kindle Locations 2776). Kenneth Copeland Publications. Kindle Edition. (emphasis added)
- **JESUS' BLOOD DID NOT ATONE ON THE CROSS:** "Jesus went into hell to free mankind from the penalty of Adam's treason . . . when his blood poured out it did not atone . . . Jesus spent three days and nights in the bowels of this earth getting back to you and me are right with God." (Dr. D.R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* [Peabody, Massachusetts; Hendrickson publishers, 1988], p. 120, footnote 27, "Personal letter from Kenneth Copeland," Fort Worth, Texas, March 12, 1979). (emphasis added)

Bible says: [Col. 2:14](#), "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

## FREDERICK K. PRICE

- **JESUS' PUNISHMENT FOR OUR SIN WAS TO GO TO HELL, NOT THE CROSS:** "Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on a cross? If that were the case, the two thieves could have paid your price. No, the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God . . . Satan and all the demons of health thought that they had him bound, and they threw a net over Jesus and they dragged Him down to the very pit of hell itself to serve our sentence." (*Ever Increasing Faith Messenger* [June 1980], p. 7; quoted in Dr. D.R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* [Peabody, Massachusetts; Hendrickson publishers, 1988], 120). (Thanks to *Christianity in Crisis* by Hank Hanegraaff for this reference)

## KENNETH HAGIN

- **JESUS WENT TO HELL IN OUR PLACE:** "He tasted spiritual death for every man. He died on the Cross and took our place in spiritual death. His spirit, His inner man, went to hell in our place."
  1. Hagin, Kenneth E (2010-05-14). *The Name of Jesus--Legacy Edition* (Kindle Locations 382-383). Faith Library Publications. Kindle Edition.

## CHARLES CAPPS

- **JESUS DID NOT FINISH THE WORK ON THE CROSS:** "Notice that when Jesus said, 'I have finished the work' [[John 17:4](#)], we know that he had *not* finished the work. but I want you to catch something in the way he prayed and the way he talked-*he spoke the end results*. He never spoke what *was*. He never admitted death or defeat . . . Jesus was speaking the end result in his prayer to the father." (*Authority in Three Worlds*, 258-59, emphasis in the original). (Citation found in *Christianity in Crisis* by Hank Hanegraaff, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene Oregon, 1993, p. 382, #38).

According to these teachers, we can now summarize the teachings of what it means for Christ to have died spiritually.

1. Jesus went to hell
2. Jesus was separated from the presence of God
3. Jesus finished the atoning work in hell
4. When Jesus' blood was shed on the cross it did not atone ("completely atone" is the implication)
5. Jesus was born again

## Analyzing their position

Is what they are saying biblical? Did Jesus suffer in hell and finish the atonement there? To answer that, we will have to take a look at what Scripture actually says about the atonement and where it was accomplished. We will also need to address verses that talk about what happened to Jesus during the time between his death and resurrection. Let's take a look at what the Bible says about the atonement of Christ.

### John 19:30

- [John 19:30](#), "It is finished."
  - "The sixth word or saying that Jesus spoke from the cross was the single Greek word *tetelestai* which means 'It is finished.' Papyri receipts for taxes have been recovered with the word *tetelestai* written across them, meaning 'paid in full.'"
    - Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (2:340). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
  - "Perhaps the most meaningful meaning of *tetelestai* was that used by the merchants: 'The debt is paid in full!' When He gave Himself on the cross, Jesus fully met the righteous demands of a holy law; He paid our debt in full."
    - Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt.* ([Jn 19:28](#)). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.
  - "As he died, he cried out, 'It is finished,' marking the completion of his atoning work for the sins of the world."
    - Willmington, H. L. (1997). *Willmington's Bible handbook* (622). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

As you can see, [John 19:30](#) tells us that Jesus finished the atoning work on the cross. Jesus speaks in contradiction to the faith teachers who deny that Jesus finished the atoning work on the cross.

### Colossians 2:14

- [Col. 2:14](#), "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."
  - "This new life came when God **forgave us all our sins** for He **canceled the written code**."
    - Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:678). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. (emphasis original)
  - "The blood of Jesus washed all that was written against us off the bill of indictment, and we are free."
    - Richards, L. O. (1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed). (814). Wheaton: Victor Books.
  - "He canceled is the Greek verb for "wipe out, erase"; used also in [Acts 3.19](#) (sins), [Rev 3.5](#) (name), 7.17, 21.4 (tears); the corresponding Hebrew verb in the OT is often used also with "sin(s)" as the object (compare [Psa 51.9](#), [109.14](#), [Isa. 43.25](#)). In order to express the concept of canceled, it is possible in some languages to use a phrase such as "to tear up," "to throw away," or "to declare that it is no longer valid." "The . . . record of our debts represents a Greek noun which is literally "a handwritten document"--an IOU, (that is, "I owe you") personally signed by the debtor, acknowledging his debt. The

. . . record of our debts may be rendered as “the paper that says how much we owe,” or “the list of all that we owe,” or “the page that tells how many are our debts.”

- Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. (1993], c1977). A handbook on Paul's letters to the Colossians and to Philemon. Originally published under title: A translator's handbook on Paul's letters to the Colossians and to Philemon. Helps for translators; UBS handbook series (60). New York: United Bible Societies.

[Colossians 2:14](#) tells us that Jesus "canceled out the certificate of debt." Other Bibles translate [Colossians 2:14](#) as . . .

- ESV, "canceling the record of debt . . . nailing it to the cross."
- KJV, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances . . . nailing it to his cross."
- NKJV, "having wiped out the handwriting of requirements . . . having nailed it to the cross."
- NIV, "having canceled the written code . . . nailing it to the cross."
- NRSV, "erasing the record that stood against us . . . nailing it to the cross."
- YLT, "having blotted out the handwriting in the ordinances . . . having nailed it to the cross."

When was the sin debt cancelled, blotted out, wiped away, erased? It was taken care of at the cross; not in hell and not by Jesus suffering there. Nowhere does the Bible teach that the atonement was finished in hell. This is so serious that anyone teaching that the atoning work was not finished in the cross is denying the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

### **Isaiah 53:4-6**

- [Isaiah 53:4-6](#), "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

The Old Testament prophecy that deals with the atoning work of Christ tells us that he was "pierced through for our transgressions," "crushed for our iniquities," and that "the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him." The context is the cross. There is no mention here of any atoning work, of any payment for sins, or of any suffering of Christ other than in the crucifixion ordeal. However, this has not stopped many Bible teachers from saying that Jesus went to hell and suffered there.

Now we need to turn our attention to verses they use to support their doctrine. When you read them, see if what they say is in the text.

### **Verses that talk about where Jesus was between his death and resurrection**

- [Luke 23:43](#), And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”
- [Acts 2:27](#), "Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."
- [Acts 2:31](#), "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 13:35](#), "Therefore He also says in another Psalm, ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.’"
- [1 Pet. 3:19](#), "in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison."

None of these verses say that Jesus went to hell and suffered (See [What are the verses that mention hell in the New Testament?](#) See at bottom of this article). None. So, how can people such as Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Copeland, Fred Price, Charles Caps, etc., say Jesus suffered in hell and paid our price there? They can't because it doesn't say anything of the sort. For anyone to say that Christ actually suffered in hell at the hands of the devil by taking our place, the person has read into the text things that are simply not there. It is not proper to interpret Scripture in any manner that is not faithful to the text. We see from the verses listed above that Jesus was going to Paradise, that his body did not undergo decay, and that he made proclamation to the spirits now in prison. It does not say in any of the verses that he suffered in hell. It just isn't there. If the Bible doesn't teach it, then neither should these so-called Bible teachers.

This is significant because the Bible says, "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other." In my opinion, these Bible teachers have exceeded what is written in the word of God and in so doing violated Scripture.

If the atonement was finished on the cross, then Jesus did not have to go to hell to suffer for our sins; otherwise, it would be denying the sufficiency of the cross. Teaching that Christ went to hell and finished the atonement and/or suffered in our place is heresy. All who teach it should be avoided.

## **Conclusion**

We can clearly see that [John 19:30](#) tells us Christ's atoning work was finished on the cross. [Colossians 2:14](#) tells us that the sin debt was cancelled on the cross. If Christ atoning work was finished on the cross and the sin debt was canceled on the cross, then there's no need for Jesus to go to hell to finish anything or suffer in our place--since it was all done on the cross. Furthermore, none of the verses they used to support the idea that Jesus went to hell and suffered remotely suggest that was the case. Therefore, those who teach that Jesus had to go to hell to finish the atonement and take our place suffering there are denying the sufficiency of the cross. They need to repent.



# What are the verses that mention hell in the New Testament?

by [Matt Slick](http://carm.org/what-are-the-verses-that-mention-hell) <http://carm.org/what-are-the-verses-that-mention-hell>

Depending on the [Bible](#), there is anywhere from 13 to 23 times that the word "hell" appears in English Bibles. The King James has more verses than all the other Bibles because it renders three words (gehenna, hades, tartaros) into "hell" where modern Bibles render them as hell and hades.

- **Gehennah**, [Matt. 5:22](#), [29](#), [30](#); [10:28](#); [18:9](#); [23:15](#); [23:33](#); [Mark 9:43](#), [45](#), [47](#); [Luke 12:5](#); [James 3:6](#)
- **Hades** [Matt.11:23](#), [16:18](#); [Luke10:15](#); [16:23](#); [Acts 2:27](#), [31](#); [1 Cor. 15:55](#); [Rev.1:18](#); [6:8](#); [20:13-14](#)
- **Tartaros**, [2 Pet. 2:4](#)

- **Gehennah, γέεννα, (12)**

- [Matt. 5:22](#), "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the **hell** of fire."
- [Matt. 5:29](#), "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into **hell**."
- [Matt. 5:30](#), "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into **hell**."
- [Matt. 10:28](#), "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in **hell**."
- [Matt. 18:9](#), "And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the **hell** of fire."
- [Matt. 23:15](#), "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of **hell** as yourselves."
- [Matt. 23:33](#), "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to **hell**?"
- [Mark 9:43](#), "And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to **hell**, to the unquenchable fire."
- [Mark 9:45](#), "And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into **hell**."
- [Mark 9:47](#), "And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into **hell**,"
- [Luke 12:5](#), "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into **hell**. Yes, I tell you, fear him!"
- [James 3:6](#), "And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by **hell**."

- **Hades, αἴδης (11)**

- [Matt. 11:23](#), "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to **Hades**. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."
- [Matt. 16:18](#), "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of **Hades** shall not prevail against it."
- [Luke 10:15](#), "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to **Hades**."

- [Luke 16:23](#), "and in **Hades**, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side."
- [Acts 2:27](#), "For you will not abandon my soul to **Hades**, or let your Holy One see corruption."
- [Acts 2:31](#), "he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to **Hades**, nor did his flesh see corruption."
- [1 Cor. 15:55](#), "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"
- [Rev. 1:18](#), "and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and **Hades**."
- [Rev. 6:8](#), "And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and **Hades** followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth."
- [Rev. 20:13](#), "And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and **Hades** gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done."
- [Rev. 20:14](#), "Then Death and **Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."
- **Tartaros, ταρταρός (1)**
  - [2 Pet. 2:4](#), "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into **hell** and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment."

### How many times do different Bibles translate hell in the English?

- KJV, 23 times
- NKJV, 13 times
- RSV, 13 times
- NASB, 13 times
- NIV, 14 times