

# Did Jesus Die Spiritually? *Adapted from Dr. Russell K. Tardo's article.*

## I. The Jesus Dying Spiritually (JDS) Doctrine.

The proponents of the JDS Doctrine say that Jesus died unregenerate, went to hell, and then was born again or saved while in hell.

### But the Bible says:

[Heb. 9:26-28]

*For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ **was once offered** to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

## A. The Major Fallacies of the JDS Doctrine are:

**1. Jesus was made to be sin**, He literally became sin itself. To justify this teaching, advocates use this scripture passage:

[2 Cor. 5:21]

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

- Proponents of this doctrine even go so far as to say that sin was in Jesus' spirit. They have no concept of the seriousness of such doctrine. They fail to go back to the Old Testament and study the types of sin offerings.

**2. Jesus died twice**, He died physically and then He died spiritually. As basis of the following Old Testament passage:

[Isa. 53:9]

*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

- They teach that in order for Jesus to identify with fallen mankind, He had to die spiritually. (How Jesus actually identified with mankind was by His birth.)

**3. Redemption was not finished at Calvary** when Jesus said, It is finished. They maintain that Jesus was wrong. He still had to go to hell. They also advocate that the blood of Jesus did not atone for our sin.

**4. God forsook Jesus and separated Himself** from the Son at the cross. God could not look upon Him because He had become wicked and vile with our sin. [Actually, Jesus was never more pleasing to the Father than He was at Calvary.]

[2 Cor. 5:19]

*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

**5. Jesus went to hell where He was held captive by the devil.** Satan was Jesus' master. For three days and nights, the demons paraded Him around. (Actually, Jesus never at any time went to hell or was captive of the devil.)

**6. Jesus had to be born again.** Since He became sin, He was unregenerate at the cross and needed the new birth.

**7. Our redemption was accomplished in hell** since it wasn't finished at the cross. (See point 3.)

## **We can see the danger of believing this kind of teaching:**

[2 John 9-11]

*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*

### **B. The Refutation of the JDS Error.**

**1. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

[2 Cor. 5:21]

- Did Jesus actually become sin in His spirit? Of course not! What is actually meant by this scripture is that Jesus, by His death, was made an offering for sin. Sin and sin offering are the same word in Hebrew and the context determines how it should be translated. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures, i.e., the Septuagint, the word means sin offering over 50 times in the book of Leviticus alone. Jesus was not sin. He was a sin offering, i.e., a sacrifice for sin.

[Heb. 10:5-12]

*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.*

- Jesus' body was the offering for sacrifice, i.e., a physical death. There was no second death, no spiritual death.

[Isa. 54:10]

*Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin....*

**2. Jesus was not made to become sin because it would violate all principles taught in the Bible about sin offerings. Nowhere in the Bible could anyone get the idea that Jesus became sin.**

[Lev. 4:3]

*If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering.*

- In order for a sacrifice to be acceptable to God, it had to be holy, without defect or blemish, or God would not accept it. If imperfect, the sacrifice was unacceptable. Animals were the usual form of offering and they did not become sin, they were simply the sacrifices for sin.

[Lev. 6:25]

*Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy.*

- The sin offering is holy before its offering. Even after its death, the sin offering is still most holy. Jesus was our sin offering. He was holy before death and remained holy after His death. Jesus was the fulfillment of sin offering.

[Mal. 1:6-8, 10-14]

*And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.... I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.... and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept his of your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed by the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts and my name is dreadful among the heathen.*

[Heb. 9:13-14]

*For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

[1 Pe. 1:18-20]

*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*

**Spiritual Principle: NEVER does at any time the sacrifice becomes sin.** It was and is and always was an offering for sin.

## **II. A Heretical Doctrine**

### **Error #1: Jesus was made sin on the cross.**

[Isa. 53:9]

*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

- Those advancing the JDS theory use the above scripture as the basis for their belief. To deny the complete humanity of Christ is heresy, which is exactly what these folks are doing.

- In Hebrew it is a common practice for Old Testament writers to use a plural noun when it should be a singular noun. This is called the emphatic plural and is used for emphasis of a point. Hebrew authors made use of this throughout the Old Testament. [In the margin of many Bibles is noted of Isaiah 53:9, that death is plural or deaths. JDS says therefore that Jesus died more than one death. Actually, it is only the emphatic plural to denote the violent and painful manner in which He will die.] Let's examine the following verse:

[Eccl. 5:2]

*Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.*

- The Hebrew name for God is ELOheim and that is in the plural form. The plural in this case refers to death(s) and denotes a violent or painful death and refers to the violent nature of an individual's death.

[Ezek. 28:8]

*They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.*

- When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, i.e., the Septuagint, the emphatic plurals were translated into the singular.

## **Error #2: Jesus died twice.**

**Let's examine some additional scriptures in the New Testament concerning Jesus' death.**

[Heb. 9:28]

*So Christ was **once** offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

[Heb. 10:10]

*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

(This speaks of physical death only.)

[1 Pe. 2:24]

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

[1 Pe. 3:18]

*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

[1 Pe. 4:1]

*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*

[Col. 1:21-22]

*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.*

## **Error #3: Man's redemption was not finished at Calvary.**

[Rom. 3:24-25]

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*

[Eph. 1:7]

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

[Col. 1:14, 20]

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.... And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

[Heb. 10:19-20]

*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*

[1 Pe. 1:18-19]

*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

[Rev. 5:9]

*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

#### **Error #4. God forsook Jesus at the cross.**

[Matt. 27:46]

***And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?***

JDS proponents use that verse to support their theory. They maintain that Jesus actually became sin on the cross, that He became what man was. Therefore, God couldn't look at Him because God cannot look at sin. This group also upholds that it was not Jesus' body that became sin, but it was His Spirit that became sin. Heresy! At no time did Jesus become sin. He was the substitution for our sin, a sin offering.

#### **What the Bible says...**

**A. At no time did God abandon Jesus on the cross.** It's impossible to separate the Godhead. Each divine personality possesses the divine essence.

**B. Jesus had just prayed,** Father, forgive them. Obviously, He was speaking to God the Father.

**C. Jesus' going to the cross was God's idea from the beginning.** Jesus was God's own sacrifice, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Jesus was never more pleasing to God than He was at Calvary.

[Eph. 5:2]

*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.*

[Ps. 22:1]

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?....

**What did Jesus mean when He asked God why He had forsaken Him?** This was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. That's how men would recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus was quoting a verse from the Psalms.

[Reference: Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22.]

Jesus identified Himself as the One who was to come. It was a prophetic utterance. This phrase also speaks of a legal separation. Instead of the Father delivering Jesus from death as He had on several occasions in the past, He delivered Him unto death.

## **Error #5. Jesus went to hell.**

The proponents of the JDS theory say that Jesus went to hell where He suffered untold agonies. This was because Jesus became unregenerate at the cross and by so doing, Satan became His master.

They use the following scriptures as the basis for their reasoning:

[Col. 2:14-15]

*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

[Acts 2:31]

*He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

**This view is grossly errant.** In this latter passage from Acts 2, Peter is talking about Christ's resurrection, quoting Psalms 16:10.

[Ps. 16:10]

*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Also, when Jesus spoke to the thief on the cross:

[Luke. 23:43]

*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

(Jesus Himself must obviously have thought He was going to heaven and not to hell.)

[John. 13:1]

*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

[John. 16:28]

*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

## **Truth is Jesus is God.**

[Col. 2:9]

*For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

[Jo. 16:32]

*Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

[2 Cor. 5:19]

*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

## **Here's another scripture used erroneously:**

[Eph. 4:8-10]

*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

- This is another scripture that the JDS proponents quote, saying that Jesus descended into hell. Paul is actually speaking here of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, of His descent from heaven to the earth.

[Matt. 12:40]

*For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

- This is another scripture which they use, saying that Jesus had to go to hell. The verse actually refers to Jesus' body being buried and in the tomb.

[Ps. 139:8, 15]

*If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.... My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.*

- David's reference is not to hell but rather to the lower parts of the earth, as opposed to the upper parts of the earth which he refers to as the heavens.

## **Unfortunately the King James translators had only one word for *Hell***

**Not so with the Hebrew or Greek languages.** They had several words, i.e., **Hades** meaning the place or realm of the dead. For the word hell, they used **Gehenna**. Both *Hades* and *Sheol* are translated as the grave. That is what is meant in Acts 2:31, that Jesus' body was not left in the grave to decay or become corrupt like other mortal bodies.

[Acts 13:28-37]

*And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, **saw no corruption.***

## **Let's look at another passage of scripture where Hades is described:**

[Lk. 16:22-23, 26]

*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; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom..... And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

- Here we see the rich man being in torment, which means it is a place of torment and suffering. At the same time, we see Lazarus, the beggar, who is in a place called Abraham's bosom which is synonymous with paradise. While both the rich man and Lazarus were in hades, one was being tormented and one was blessed.

- In Hebrew, *hades* was the place where all dead went, both good and evil. The dead were conscious, and there was comfort for the blessed and torment for the wicked, with a great gulf separating the two.

- Some theologians believe that originally all righteous dead went to *hades*, but at Christ's ascension, the righteous dead were transported into heaven and since that time the righteous dead go directly to heaven.

[Jo. 20:17]

*Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

- Here is the account where Jesus tells Mary not to touch Him as He had not yet ascended to the Father. What Jesus was actually saying was, "Don't cling to me as though I am going to stay with you here on earth and never leave again".

The Jehovah Witnesses use the following scriptures to support their theory that everyone gets a second chance to hear the gospel, even after death.

[1 Pe. 3:18]

*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

[1 Pe. 4:6]

*For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

## **Some of the thoughts or lines of thinking as to what these verses actually mean:**

**A. Jesus went to Hades and preached to those who lived and died prior to the flood.**

**B. It was not Jesus going to hades but the spirit of Christ preaching through Noah to the people on the earth during the time of Noah.**

**C. Jesus, in His human spirit, was able to go where the evil spirits are imprisoned.**

These were the evil spirits imprisoned during the time of Noah and were the evil angels spoken of in the book of Genesis. These evil angels cohabited with earthly woman and thus the giants of the earth were produced. While in that place of imprisonment, Jesus announced His victory over death and Satan.

[2 Pe. 2:4-5]

*For God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*

[Jude 6]

*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*

[1 Pe. 3:19]

*By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*

**D. Insofar as the second chance that everyone is supposed to have,** Martin Luther and many others said this referred to those who are spiritually dead. This verse probably means preaching to those who are dead now but were not dead



when it was being preached.

### **Error #6. Jesus had to be born again.**

- Did Jesus really have to be born again? Of course not! How could God be born again?

[John 10:30]

*I and my Father are one.*

[John 14:9]

*He who has seen me has seen the Father*

The church and more importantly the Bible recognizes the deity of the Son. Most cults strip him of this making the Son only a man, an angel or at best a secondary divine being created by the Father. They ignore the fact that the son is called God just as the Father is. If one says the Son or Spirit are not called God then they would have to be consistent and say the Father is not either. The reason the Father is explicitly called God by Jesus is because he is honoring another instead of himself. Each person in the godhead does this, yet we find there is a hierarchical structure (a successive order not in time but of position).

Jesus is called the Son over 200 times throughout the N.T. The Father is referred to as distinct from the Son over 200 times. Over 50 times Jesus the Son and the Father are mentioned in the same verse. Yet we find Paul's greeting as grace and peace from both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus identifies himself as the Son of God all throughout the Bible. He is always put on equal status with the Father being able to bestow grace to the believer. The only time he is not equal is by position, never in nature. <http://www.letusreason.org/Trin6.htm>

### **Error #7. Since man is not redeemed at the cross, he was redeemed in hell.**

[Eph. 1:7]

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

## **B. The Two Covenants.**

Between God and man there have been two covenants, both instituted by God.

**1. The Mosaic Covenant.** This covenant fulfilled the law and sacrifice. It is now completed.

**2. The Abrahamic Covenant.** This covenant contains God's promises and blessings to Israel and is still in effect.

[Eph. 2: 1-9]

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

**It is the unregenerate or unsaved people who are spiritually dead.**

The term refers to those bound up in sin, i.e., the vile, corrupt, those with a depraved nature, having no righteousness in them. Consider Jesus' death in light of this and one will readily understand that if Jesus died spiritually, then our very salvation itself is at stake.

[Col. 2:13]

*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*

[1 Tim. 5:6]

*But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*

[Rev. 3:1]

*And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*