

What Christian Israelites Believe ...

10. About What Happens After Death and at the Resurrections

Christian Israelites hope to be amongst those who receive the immortal life of the body when Jesus Christ returns, but until then, death remains a reality in this world. Christian Israelites believe that Satan is the author of death, and that it wasn't part of God's original plan (as per *About Satan*), but that God provides comfort to those who are dying and/or who have lost a loved one, by promising peace after death and eternal life through soul salvation (see the Ensign article, *Comfort in Grief*).

As seen in the lesson, *About the Spirit, Soul, and Body*, Christian Israelites believe that the spirit, soul, and body are three separate parts of a person, and as such also believe that each of these have different outcomes after death.

What Happens to the Body?

When creating Adam, we are told that:

‘And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.’ Genesis 2:7.

Initially, God intended for the body to live forever (Wisdom of Solomon 2:23), but Adam and Eve's sin led to their separation from God (Isaiah 59:2) and subjected them and their descendants to death:

‘For the wages of sin is death.’ Romans 6:23.

Soon after Adam and Eve sinned, God confirmed this curse of death upon their bodies:

‘Cursed is the ground [*the body*] for thy sake ... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’ Genesis 3:17, 19 (emphasised words added).

James wrote that ‘the body without the spirit is dead’ (2:26). Therefore, when the spirit withdraws from the body – either due to old age, disease, flesh wound, or some other fatal infliction – the body loses that which ‘quickeneth’ (John 6:63) or powers it. The heart, brain, and other organs stop working, and the body becomes like a shell. It is then buried in the ground, and gradually returns to the dust it was made from, never to be reformed:

‘All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.’ Ecclesiastes 3:20.

What Happens to the Spirit?

Ecclesiastes tells us:

‘Then shall the dust [*the body*] return to the earth as it was,
and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.’
Ecclesiastes 12:7 (emphasised words added).

Christian Israelites therefore believe that all spirits of mankind return to God’s presence in heaven once they separate from the body.

What Happens to the Soul?

Christian Israelites believe that, just as the spirit and body separate at death, the spirit and soul can be separated, too:

‘For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper
than any two-edged sword, piercing *even to the dividing asunder
of soul and spirit*, and of the joints and marrow.’ Hebrews 4:12
(emphasis added).

Christian Israelites believe that the spirit ‘quickens’ the soul just as it does the body, and so once it separates from the body, it separates from the soul, too. The soul then ‘sleeps’ (1 Corinthians 15:51) with the body in the grave in either misery or happiness, depending on whether or not it was saved through belief in Jesus Christ (or the sacrificial law¹) and thereby redeemed from the sins it had committed whilst the body was alive.

As John wrote:

‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:
Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.’
Revelation 14:13.

That is, those who die with their sins forgiven and their souls saved rest in peace, with nothing searing at their conscience or causing them torment. This is in contrast to those who die without their sins forgiven or their souls saved, as they are tormented by their sins and therefore sleep in misery or hell, like the rich man in Jesus’ parable:

¹ The Bible indicates that it was the same Spirit of God who gave the law to the Israelites (through Moses) that worked through Jesus (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:12-14, 27:10, Luke 3:22). As per *About the Spirit, Soul, and Body*, the Mosaic law outlined what was required to keep their souls pure, holy, and in a right relationship with God. If they strayed from these laws, the sacrificial law allowed their souls to be saved and redeemed from the damages of sin through the sacrifice of clean animals (Hebrews 9:19-22), so that they could return to a right relationship with God.

‘And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.’
Luke 16:23-25.

‘I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.’
John 8:24.

Christian Israelites believe that hell is the grave (particularly sleeping in misery in the grave). The Hebrew word for hell is *sheol*, and the Greek word *hades* – both mean ‘the place of the dead’. Hell is also Satan’s domain. As seen in *About Satan*, part of God’s curse against Satan was ‘dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life’ (Genesis 3:14). As it was from dust that mankind was made and our bodies return to dust in the grave, it follows that the grave is where Satan makes his habitation and why he and his demons continually seek to drive us there (John 10:10)².

As Christian Israelites believe that the soul sleeps with the body, they avoid cremation or spreading ashes so that the soul is not left without a place to rest.

Will There be a Resurrection When Jesus Returns?

Christian Israelites have no doubt there will be a resurrection upon Jesus Christ’s return:

‘Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen . . . For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain.’
1 Corinthians 15:12-13, 16-17.

‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto

² Christian Israelites believe this is why ‘Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation’ (Jude 1:9), as he understood that Satan had a right to the dust of Moses’ body.

salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.’
1 Peter 1:3-5.

‘Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust [*the soul*]: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.’ Isaiah 26:19 (emphasised words added).

Christian Israelites believe that the spirits of mankind return to awaken or ‘quicken’ their corresponding souls, making provision for the soul to face judgement for the deeds it committed whilst in the body:

‘For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.’
2 Corinthians 5:10.

‘So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’ Romans 14:12.

‘And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.’ Revelation 20:4.

What Happens to Those Who Died in the Faith?

Those who have been made righteous and had their sins forgiven, i.e., whose souls have been saved, have no need to fear judgement day:

‘And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.’ 1 John 2:28.

‘Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.’
Hebrews 10:17.

They will be the first to be raised out of the grave:

‘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.’
1 Thessalonians 4:16.

‘And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.’
John 6:40.

‘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.’ Hebrews 9:27-28.

Christian Israelites believe that the spirits of the righteous will be reunited with their souls for eternity, forming an incorruptible, spiritual body:

‘So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption ... It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body ... Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption.’ 1 Corinthians 15:42, 44, 51-53.

‘For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’ 2 Corinthians 5:1.

‘Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.’ John 11:25.

They will be like angels:

‘Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels³; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.’ Luke 20:36.

What Happens to Those Who Died Without Their Souls Saved?

Those who died without their souls saved or without being made right with God are also raised up, but it is in this moment that they realise their error and face their shame:

‘And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ Daniel 12:2.

³ Christian Israelites believe that ‘equal unto the angels’ indicates that they will be like or as angels, but not angels (see also Matthew 22:30). The Bible teaches that angels are powerful, spiritual beings made by God to act as his messengers, such as Michael (Jude 1:9) and Gabriel (Luke 1:19). Angels protect us (Psalm 91:11) and do as God requires, as seen throughout the book of Revelation. As per *About Satan*, during the war in heaven, the angels were divided, with two-thirds of them choosing to fight for God, and one-third choosing to fight with Satan (Revelation 12:4). Those who followed Satan were cast out of heaven with him (Revelation 12:9), becoming what are now known as demons. Overall, angels (including fallen angels) are different beings to the spirits of mankind.

Christian Israelites believe that they are judged and condemned at this first resurrection. The consequence is that their souls are separated from their spirits again, the former returning to the grave or hell for another thousand years:

‘But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.’ Revelation 20:5-6.

‘But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.’ Revelation 21:8.

This is called the ‘second death’ because death is a separation, and the soul and spirit of the unredeemed or unsaved are at this time separated for a second time, which is so painful for them that it is compared to touching or having a ‘part’ in the lake of fire and brimstone (see also Matthew 25:41).

However, Christian Israelites believe there is hope even for these souls. God has promised that ‘all souls are mine’ (Ezekiel 18:4) – both the redeemed and the unredeemed. David wrote that:

‘Great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.’ Psalm 86:13.

After detailing the events of the first resurrection, John went on to write:

‘And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.’ Revelation 20:12-13.

Christian Israelites call this the final or second resurrection, i.e., the moment when the grave, hell, and/or Satan no longer hold any souls captive (Isaiah 61:1; 1 John 3:8). Christian Israelites believe that the wicked are redeemed, their souls and spirits joining to also form spiritual, incorruptible bodies. That is, that every spirit and soul of mankind will ultimately acknowledge Jesus as the Christ:

‘That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’
Philippians 2:10-11.

‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.’ 1 Corinthians 15:22.

‘For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved.’
1 Timothy 2:3-4.

As for Satan, Christian Israelites believe that it is he and his fallen angels or demons that are *cast* into the lake of fire (i.e., not just have a part in it) and obliterated:

‘And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire ... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.’ Revelation 20:14-15.

‘And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.’ Revelation 21:4.

What About Those Who Died in the Period from Adam to Moses?

As mentioned, the sin of Adam and Eve caused their bodies to be cursed with death, which extended to their descendants:

‘Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.’ Romans 5:14.

Those who lived from Adam to Moses were not under the Mosaic law, and therefore it was only their bodies, not their souls, that were damaged by sin:

‘For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.’ Romans 5:13.

‘I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, ‘Thou shalt not covet.’
Romans 7:7.

Christian Israelites therefore believe that the souls of the people who lived from Adam to Moses have been able to rest in peace, without torment.

The Bible states that it was the spirits of those who, like Adam and Eve, were disobedient in that period that Jesus preached to, to tell them the good news, i.e., that he had made the way for them to one day raise up their souls and return to God's presence:

‘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: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison⁴; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.’ 1 Peter 3:18-20.

Christian Israelites also believe that Jesus preached to them so that they would become aware of the consequences of the sins they had committed whilst they were in the flesh, so they can face judgement fairly upon his return and be raised with spiritual, incorruptible bodies at the second resurrection, able to dwell in God's presence:

‘For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh [*according to what they did whilst alive*], but live according to God in the spirit.’ 1 Peter 4:6 (emphasised words added).

What About Those Who Died in the Period from Moses to Jesus?

Once the Mosaic law came into place, the soul became accountable for the deeds it committed whilst in the body. The Bible teaches that the Israelites received soul salvation by way of the sacrificial law (see footnote 1). As such, those that died with their souls saved by the sacrificial law also rest in peace and will rise again at the first resurrection.

However, there were many others who dwelt upon the earth between Moses' and Jesus' time, who didn't know or heed God or his laws, and therefore died with their souls unsaved. Christian Israelites believe these people only receive spiritual, incorruptible bodies at the second resurrection, along with the other impenitent souls.

⁴ Christian Israelites believe that spirits being separated from their souls through death is the prison here spoken of, and that Jesus was sent to make their release possible (Isaiah 61:1) at the resurrection through his victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). Christian Israelite teaching is that Jesus released the righteous spirits of those who lived and died from Adam to Moses (they not having committed the same sin as Adam and Eve) by allowing them to awaken their souls (being released from 'prison'), and that these were the spiritual bodies of the saints seen walking through Jerusalem when Jesus was resurrected (Matthew 27:52-53). They showed what the resurrection will be like upon Jesus' return, causing some at the time to (incorrectly) think that the resurrection had passed already (2 Timothy 2:18). However, it is understood that their spirits and souls will not fully become spiritual, incorruptible bodies until the first resurrection, along with the others who have been made righteous.

What are the Different Glories?

As seen in *About the Purpose of the Church*, at the core of the Christian Israelites faith is the belief that 144,000 men and their families (Revelation 7:4, 14:1) who are alive at the coming of Jesus Christ, and who kept both the law and gospel throughout their life, will be made immortal by God's spirit dwelling in them:

'And this mortal must put on immortality.'
1 Corinthians 15:53.

'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.' Revelation 21:3.

'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.'
Philippians 3:21.

'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' Romans 8:11.

Overall, there will be different rewards for different people, whether that be those who receive immortal bodies (spirit, soul, and body together), those who receive incorruptible, spiritual bodies (spirit and soul together) at the first resurrection, and those who receive incorruptible, spiritual bodies at the second resurrection. Christian Israelites believe this is what Paul and Jesus meant when they taught the following:

'There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.' 1 Corinthians 15:40-42.

'In my Father's house are *many mansions*: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' John 14:2-3 (emphasis added).

The glory we receive will give us a particular degree of brightness, just as there is different levels of light between suns, moons, and stars. That brightness is God's spirit dwelling with us in varying degrees:

‘Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’
Ephesians 5:14.

Our glory will depend on what we believe and how we behave whilst we live:

‘Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.’ James 2:24.

‘I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.’
Revelation 2:23.

‘God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

Christian Israelites believe that one of the glories is of the ‘just men made perfect’ (Hebrews 12:23), i.e., those who led such godly lives that God took their spirit, soul, and body to heaven without death, such as Enoch and Elijah⁵:

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

‘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.’ 2 Kings 2:11.

Ultimately, there is a promise that we will all dwell together in a new city, in God’s glorious presence, and without evil:

‘And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it ... And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.’
Revelation 21:23-24, 27.

Whatever we may be enduring in this life, or whatever grief we may feel for a lost loved one, we can rest assured that one day we will be ‘gathered to our people’ (Deuteronomy 32:50) and reunited with them all in God’s glorious presence:

⁵ It is for this reason that Christian Israelites bury their dead within three days, that is, to give God the opportunity to awaken them in the same way that Jesus Christ was, so that their bodies might be preserved alive and taken up to God (as Enoch, Elijah, and Jesus Christ were).

‘So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.

‘And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be ... Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’ Revelation 22:12, 20.