**Did Jesus Die Spiritually? The JDS Doctrine**

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If there was ever a doctrine that causes controversy in the Church, this is it.

I have been told that controversial doctrines should be avoided in the Church and I wholeheartedly disagree. Why would a sincere Christian want to avoid any teaching? Some may feel threatened by a particular teaching. Some may believe it will cause division among the Church. We should never be afraid to study God’s Word and find out what it truly teaches!

There are some teachings that are absolutely essential to our faith in Christ. Some of those teachings are, the virgin birth of Christ and also the fact of His death, burial and resurrection. Without believing those things that are essential, we cannot fellowship one with another.

On the other hand, there are many teachings in the Bible that are extremely important but not essential to our salvation. We can believe how we want to believe on those non-essentials and still walk in fellowship with our Christian brother or sister who may disagree, as long as we remain humble.

***“In the essentials, Unity! In the non-essentials, Liberty!”*** This is an extremely important point to remember. The Church has been split for too long because of believers who refuse to give liberty or grace in those doctrines which are non-essential to our salvation.

Why should we dive into doctrines that may seem controversial? Our Heavenly Father wants and desires for us to know the truth. That is one of the reasons Jesus came to this earth as a man. God shows us His nature through Jesus. As we get to know Jesus, the Word of God, we know the Father!

**2 Timothy 3:16, 17 (NLT)**

16All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right 17that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**John 8:31-32 (KJV)**
31  Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32  And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

So we see, ALL scripture is given to us, not just parts. Let’s take it all and learn all that God gives us the grace and mercy to understand. The truth we learn SHALL set us FREE! “Shall” is the strongest word in the English language. If a King told a servant that he “shall” do something, if it was not done, the punishment was probably very harsh. When the Word of God uses the word shall, we can be assured it shall be done! When we learn the truth of God’s Word, we SHALL be set free!

Did Jesus die spiritually? Where did this doctrine originate? Some ascribe this doctrine to the Word of Faith group. Kenneth Copeland seems to be the one who brought the teaching to our modern world. So, let’s take a look and see just what the Bible says.

The scripture that is commonly used to begin this study is this:

**Hebrews 2:9 (ESV)**

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

The idea is that Jesus, being made lower than the angels as a man, just as we are lower than the angels in this body, before our resurrection, tasted death for every person on earth.

Most Christian denominations are pretty much in agreement that if a person dies and has not accepted Christ as their personal savior, that they will spend eternity in hell. In Hebrews 2:9, we are told that Jesus tasted death for everyone. His sacrifice paid that price of spending eternity in hell by Him taking our place for us.

All men and women are created “a little lower” than the angels.

**Psalm 8:4-5 (KJV)**
4  What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
5  For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. (See Heb. 2:6,7)

Jesus, when he was born in Bethlehem, stepped out of His diety (His God nature) and stepped into His humanity. He totally became a man.

**Philippians 2:6-8 (GW)**
6  Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. 7  Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. 8  He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross.

At any time, Jesus could have picked back up His deity, but he did not. Even through his trials, temptations and sufferings, He stood His ground and finished His course!

Some may say Jesus was the “perfect God/man.” I disagree. John plainly tells us that Jesus came “in the flesh.” (See 1 Jn 4:1-3 and 2 Jn 1:7) Our reference above also points out that Jesus divested Himself of His deity completely in a process that is referred to as “kenosis.” Had He walked on this earth as God, then He could not have paid our price for sin!

What exactly does the Jesus Died Spiritually (JDS) doctrine say?

Kenneth Copeland, Joyce Meyer and others seem to agree on five basic points about the JDS doctrine.

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.

(From “Did Jesus Die Spiritually?” https://carm.org/did-jesus-die-spiritually)

Let’s examine each of these points and see what the Bible says.

**Point Number One – Jesus went to hell**

The Bible seems to pretty clear on this topic. The following verse is prophetic. David is talking as the Messiah.

**Psalm 16:10 (KJV)**
10  For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Peter makes it clear that this scripture does, in fact, pertain to Jesus.

**Acts 2:24-27 (KJV)**
24  Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25  For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26  Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27  Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

When I was in my late teens, I had just re-dedicated my life to the Lord. I was in a Sunday School class and the teacher claimed that Jesus had gone to hell. I immediately spoke up and told him he would have to prove that to me. He just as quickly gave me the two scripture references above.

I believe, scripturally, we must agree the Bible tells us Jesus went to hell.

**Point Number Two – Jesus was separated from the presence of God**

Again, what does the Bible say about this?

**Matthew 27:46 (KJV)**
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?

Why would God forsake Jesus? Habakkuk 1:13 tells us that God’s eyes are too pure to look upon sin and iniquity. Jesus did not just take on the sins of every man and woman who would ever live, He BECAME sin!

**2 Corinthians 5:21 (KJV)**
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.

God had to turn and walk away from Jesus, forsaking Him, because He had become the sin sacrifice for all of mankind. This should be enough to prove Point Two but let’s look at another point.

This point is probably the most critical in determining if Jesus died spiritually. What is the Biblical definition of “death?” As humans, the Bible is clear that we are a spirit and we have a soul (our mind, will and intellect) and a body (our “earth-suit” which enables us to live on this earth.) Death is nothing more than a separation. When our body dies, our spirit and our soul are separated from the body and it returns to the dust from which it was made. Our spirit and our soul either go to heaven to be with God or they go to hell for eternal punishment. Follow the following link to read verses on death <http://www.openbible.info/topics/death_and_dying>

We see clearly in Matthew 27:46 that Jesus was separated from God BEFORE He died upon the cross. If death is a separation, as we see clearly in the Bible, then Jesus’ spirit and soul were separated from God when He became sin on the cross. Just after this, his body died and was later buried in the tomb. From this we can see that Point Number Two is scripturally correct.

**Point Number Three - Jesus finished the atoning work in hell**

I think it will serve us well to look at Point Four in conjunction with Point Number Four since they both tie together closely.

Point Number Four - When Jesus' blood was shed on the cross, it did not atone ("completely atone" is the implication).

The scripture used commonly by those who oppose the JDS doctrine is John 19:30.

**John 19:30 (GW)**
30  After Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said, “It is finished!” Then he bowed his head and died.

Those who oppose the JDS doctrine say this scripture proves that Jesus’ work was completely and utterly finished on the cross when He died. Those who embrace the JDS doctrine believe things went further. They believe Jesus’ work continued into the grave and for the three days that He was in hell.

Did this doctrine start with those of the Word of Faith movement? Apparently it did not.

John Gill (1697-1771) was a Baptist preacher who was also a Greek scholar. He made this comment on Heb. 2:9: Gill uses some pretty strong language to express what Jesus went through in his comments on Hebrews 2:9.

**that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man**; that is, Christ was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and assuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: to "taste death", is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings; (See Gill on Matthew 16:28) and signifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterness of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curse of the law; though he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taste; **and it includes all kinds of death**, he tasted of the death of afflictions, being a man of sorrows all his days, and a corporeal death, **and what was equivalent to an eternal one**; **and so some think the words will bear to be rendered, "that he by the grace of God might taste of every death"**; which rendering of the words, if it could be established, as it is agreeable to the context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an a rgument from this place, in favour of the universal scheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any disregard to him, or because he deserved it, but his "grace", free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ransom; to preordain him to be the Lamb slain; to send him in the fulness of time, and give him up to justice and death: the Syriac version reads, "for God himself through his own grace tasted death for all"[6]

**c** [**gave up the ghost**] Gave up His soul and spirit which left the body and went into hell to preach ([1Pet. 3:19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Pe+3%3A19)), and liberate all righteous souls ([Ps. 16:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ps+16%3A10); [Mt. 12:40](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+12%3A40); [Eph. 4:8-10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eph+4%3A8-10); [Heb. 2:14-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+2%3A14-15)). The soul never goes to the grave with the body nor is it unconscious ([Jas. 2:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jas+2%3A26); [Php. 1:21-24](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Php+1%3A21-24); [2Cor. 5:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Co+5%3A8); [Heb. 12:22-23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+12%3A22-23); [Isa. 14:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Isa+14%3A9); [Ps. 16:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ps+16%3A10); [Rev. 6:9-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+6%3A9-11); [20:11-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+20%3A11-15)). All souls are immortal ([1Pet. 3:4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Pe+3%3A4); [4:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Pe+4%3A6); [Lk. 16:19-31](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+16%3A19-31); [Mt. 10:28](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+10%3A28)). Souls go out at death and come back into the bodies in resurrection ([Jas. 2:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jas+2%3A26); [1Ki. 17:20-22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ki+17%3A20-22); [Job 14:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Job+14%3A10); [2Sam. 12:19-23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+12%3A19-23); [Lk. 8:49-56](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+8%3A49-56); [16:22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+16%3A22); [23:43-46](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+23%3A43-46); [2Cor. 5:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Co+5%3A8); [Php. 1:21-24](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Php+1%3A21-24); [Rev. 6:9-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+6%3A9-11); [2Pet. 1:13-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Pe+1%3A13-15)).

Dake's Annotated Reference Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments of the Authorized or King James Version Text.

There are some commentators that use stronger language when expressing their comments on Hebrews 2:9. An example can be found in the commentaries of John Gill (1697-1771). Gill was a Baptist preacher who was also a Greek scholar. He made this comment on Heb. 2:9:

However, if Gill's language seems somewhat ambiguous to the reader, Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown's commentary state their belief in no uncertain terms:

"Taste death" implies His personal experimental undergoing of death: death of the body, and **death (spiritually) of the soul**, in His being forsaken of the Father. "As a physician first tastes his medicines to encourage his sick patient to take them, so Christ, when all men feared death, in order to persuade them to be bold in meeting it, tasted it Himself, though He had no need" [CHRYSOSTOM]. (Heb\_2:14-15).[7]