

Where are the
Dead?

Christendom celebrates All Saint's Day on November 1, in honor of all saints known or unknown.

The origins of Halloween dated back to the Celts of ancient Ireland and Scotland around the time of Christ.

On Oct. 31st, the Celts celebrated the end of summer and the beginning of a new year with thanksgiving to the sun god for the harvest. This was important because it was when animal herders would move their animals into barns and pens and prepare to ride out the winter. This was also the time of the crop harvests.

At the same time, with the onset of the winter solstice the day was held to honor the Samhain, the “lord of death”.

There was much superstition associated with this ancient pagan festival including the belief in ghosts and immortal souls. The Druids believed that the spirits of the dead within the past year wandered around looking for bodies to inhabit.

It was a pagan belief that on Halloween, the souls of the dead return to their original homes. Since the living did not want to be possessed by spirits or cast spells on, they dressed up in costumes and paraded around the streets making loud noises to confuse and frighten the spirits away.

Sacrifices and offerings of foods were made to the dead spirits who were thought to be visiting former friends and relatives. If they were satisfied with the offerings, they would leave you in peace.

In modern day setting of Witchcraft and Occult, Samhain is known as the day when Satan himself comes to “fellowship” with his followers.

Around the 7th century, the Roman Catholic Church took over the Samhain celebration. The Pantheon at Rome was eventually made into a Cathedral and renamed the Church of the Blessed Virgin and All Martyrs.

The day that honored all the “hallowed” saints was first observed on the evening of May 13, and was known as the All Hallows Festival. Later, it was moved to November 1 to coincide with Samhain to become "All Hallows Eve" where all the saints of the Catholic church were honored.

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

God instructs, "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. (10)

"There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, *or one* who interprets omens, *or* a sorcerer, (11) "*or one* who conjures spells, *or* a medium, *or* a spiritist, *or one* who calls up the dead. (12) "For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.

Isaiah 65:1-4

I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.' 2 All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations-- 3 a people who continually provoke me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick; 4 who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil; who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of unclean meat

Ephesians 5:11-12

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. (12) For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

The day commemorates all those who have attained eternal bliss and are in heaven with God.

The All Soul's Day falls on November 2. The day commemorates the departed faithful, who have not yet been purified and have not yet reached heaven.

Almost all religions of the world believe that the “soul” of the dead (depending on how people live their lives on earth), end up in a place of bliss, limbo or worse, in an abode of perpetual torment.

For traditional Christians, the dead are either in heaven, purgatory or hell.

If in heaven, they must be blissfully enjoying the company of the angels and of Christ.

If in purgatory, they have to patiently wait for the prayers of their faithful loved ones on earth to be granted by God for them to be transferred in heaven.

If they are in hell, they will be tormented
day and night in the lake of fire.

So where are the dead really?

Are they still “alive” and conscious of their whereabouts?

Or are they in heaven,

purgatory, or hell?

If there is anyone who should know where they are, it has to be Jesus Christ. He was with the Father in Heaven and He came down to Earth.

If the saints are in heaven, Jesus would
have seen them.

He would have met the faithful like Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samson, David, Elijah, Daniel, Isaiah, Ezra, etc.

Yet, this is what Jesus said in John 3:13:
“No one has ever gone into the heaven
except the one who came from heaven –
the Son of Man.”

Jesus confirms that no one, not even Abraham, Moses or David is in heaven.

Yet, all churches teach that the dead are in heaven gazing at the face of God. And, millions upon millions of Christians believe it without question!

Again, Jesus declared in John 1:18: “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side has made Him known.”

If any one wishes to argue with Christ or contradict His statement and insist that the saved are in heaven, it is their prerogative.

But if one truly believes that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Master, this is what Jesus said:

“No one has ever gone into the heaven”,

Personally, and as a church,
we believe His statement 100%!

The Apostle Peter affirmed this in Acts 2:34, saying: “For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand.”’”

Peter said that even the patriarch David did not ascend into the heaven even after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Therefore, do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe Him when He said: “No one has ever gone into the heaven?”

Where Are The Dead?

So, if none of the saved are in heaven,
where are they?

The apostle Peter said in Acts 2:29:
“Brothers, I can tell you confidently
that the patriarch David died and was
buried, and his tomb is here with us to
this day.”

The simple truth is that David is dead
and still in his graveyard.

The writer of Hebrews wrote: “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.” (Hebrews 11:39-40)

Therefore, the dead are still dead and buried and waiting. Waiting for what you might ask?

The answer is in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

20. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

22. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

23. But each in turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

But, in the meantime what happens to
the dead?

By this time many of you may be confused.
Perhaps your mind is telling you that we
might be lying and teaching falsehood.

Bear in mind that we are only reading to you directly from the pages of the Holy Bible, and simply repeated the words of Jesus Himself.

If we tell you what Jesus said about the state of
the dead - you won't even believe us, would
you?

Jesus said the dead are sleeping!

Now, your mind is likely racing in disbelief; how on earth can the soul “sleep” you may wonder!? Certainly, the dead can’t be sleeping, it goes contrary to your preconceived idea about the dead, does it?

But let's allow Jesus to teach us again.

In John 11:11 Jesus said: “Lazarus has fallen asleep” referring to his death. When Jesus referred to death as sleep, even the disciples misunderstood him and were a bit lost and surprised.

They were initially perplexed, but later on they were able to understand and appreciate the full essence of what Jesus wanted to convey.

Now, let us examine the spiritual insight on
what Jesus said.

Let us consider the account of John,
Chapter 11.

John 11

1. Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
2. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.)
3. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

4. When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”
5. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus
6. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days,
7. and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”
8. “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

9. Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light.
10. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”
11. After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”
12. His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.”
13. Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14. So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead,
15. and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”
16. Then Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”
17. On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.
18. Now Bethany was less than two miles[b] from Jerusalem,

19. and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

20. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

22. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

23. Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24. Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

25. Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;
26. and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”
27. “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”
28. After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”
29. When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.

30. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.

31. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

32. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33. When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

34. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

35. Jesus wept.

36. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

37. But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

38. Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

39. “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

40. Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”
41. So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.
42. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”
43. When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”
44. The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

45. Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Jesus was very precise on the use of the terminology. Jesus called the first death sleep.
This is a great insight.

Sleep is the state of the dead prior to the resurrection. Solomon clearly said that there is no consciousness in the grave. Ecclesiastes 9:5-6.

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6

5. For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten.
6. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.

Jesus considers the dead to be asleep
until awakened by the call of God.

Sleep is used as a designation for death, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

**The term “sleep” implies the
future resurrection of the human
body.**

To understand the context of the resurrection, consider:

1. Deuteronomy 31:16 “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers”
2. Job:14:12 “So man lieth down and riseth not: Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, Nor be roused out of their sleep.”

To understand the context of the resurrection, consider:

3. Daniel 12:2, “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.
4. Matthew 9:24 He began to say, “the girl has not died, but is asleep.” And they began laughing at Him.

To understand the context of the resurrection, consider:

5. Mark 5:39, He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."
6. Luke 8:52, The child has not died, but is asleep.

To understand the context of the resurrection, consider:

7. Matthew 27:52 tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;
8. Acts 7:60 “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” And having said this, Stephen fell asleep.

To understand the context of the resurrection, consider:

9. Acts 13:36 “For David ... fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay

10. Ephesians 5:14, “for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: ‘Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’”

Awaken

Paul illustrated in 1 Corinthians 15:12-23; 51-54 the resurrection of those who are asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:12-23

12. But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
13. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.
14. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

1 Corinthians 15:12-23

15. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.
16. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.
17. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

1 Corinthians 15:12-23

18. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

19. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

20. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:12-23

21. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.
22. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.
23. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54

51. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—

52. in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54

53. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

54. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

The description is very clear. Paul further illustrates that Christ “is the Firstfruits of them that are asleep.”

This is a clear affirmation that Christ rose from the dead – He is the Firstfruits of all who have fallen asleep and the guarantee of that which is to follow.

As the Lord awoke from the dead –
so shall all the dead awaken.

How do you awaken someone who is asleep?

You wake him up by calling him, right?

“Hoy gising!”

When there is an emergency, you would shout at the top of your voice. In case of fire, you would shout “sunog... sunog” and everybody will be awakened.

Or you would set an alarm as your wake up call.

Similarly, that would be how Jesus wakes the dead. Lets consider, the following Scriptures:

1. Luke 7:12-14. Arise, means to wake up from sleep. The widow's son was dead and Jesus raised him back to life. So, you call someone out of slumber – to awaken him.
2. John 11: 42. Jesus cried with a loud voice or shouted. Lazarus come out.
3. John 5:28-29. Hear His voice.
4. The trumpet call of God – 1 Corinthians 15:52
5. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. All combined to the great awakening of the dead.

Luke 7:12-14

12. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her.
13. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."
 - Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"

John 11:42-43

42. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”
43. When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

John 5:28-29

28. "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice
29. and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

1 Corinthians 15:52

52. in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
17. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.
18. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Conclusion

We all know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were long dead. The same with David and all the personalities mentioned in Hebrews 11, that they were dead and buried, and their tombs are with us unto this day. Yet Jesus said in Matthew 22:32 “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Why did Jesus say that God is not the God
of the dead, but of the living?

The answer is simple: Jesus knew something that the Pharisees and Sadducees did not.

What is this thing that Jesus knew and they don't?
It is the state of the dead. God looks at death
differently from how we look at death.

We look at death as the cessation of life. God sees death as mere sleep awaiting a future resurrection.

The Bible's use of the word "sleep" to describe death is revealing and full of insight.

From God Almighty's perspective, death is to have 'fallen asleep' waiting for the awakening at the last trumpet call of God and to rise in glory at the return of Christ – the Lord of Glory.

Where are the dead?

They are sleeping, waiting for the resurrection!

They are asleep,
waiting for the resurrection!

The Greatest Love of All

December 6, 2014