

Acts 2:32-34 in the Navajo Bible

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Díí Jesus jíííinii ląą Diyin God nááhodiisáago nihí t'áá áníiltso dabíínaaągo bił béeedahózinii daniidlı́. 33 Áko Diyin God binish'náájí dah honeesdáago ayóó ájí'té áhoolaa, áádóó aTaa' éí Níłchi'i Diyinii yee nihoní'áanii hwee hazlı́'go nihaazhdiní'á, áko díí k'ad daah'í áádóó dadoohts'a'. 34 Háálá yá'ąashgóó íyáii éí doo David át'íi da, nidi David t'áá bí ání, Bóhólníihii éí shiBóhólníihii áyidííniid, Shiinish'náájí dah sínídá, 35 nida'ana'í bik'i díníł'eezgo ániishłaají'. (Acts 2:32) ¹

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." (Acts 2:32) ²

Introduction

What the Navajo Bible says is, "*Háálá yá'ąashgóó íyáii éí doo David át'íi da, . . .*" (vs. 34). "For the one who went to heaven was not David, . . ." This places the focus on Christ – the One who did go to heaven. I like that emphasis. But it doesn't quite echo the emphasis of the Greek. The Greek is quite simple here (*ou gar David anebē eis tous ouranous*). It doesn't say the One who went was not David; it says David did not go.

"For David did not ascend to heaven, . . ." There is a theology which says that he did. After all, David was a prototype of Christ. He was a man after God's own heart (see 1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22). If David isn't saved, no one is saved. Saved people are in heaven, so that's where David is. David ascended to heaven. But Peter says, "David did not ascend to heaven." He did or did not. What did Peter mean by saying what he did?

Who Was David?

Let's get some background. David was king over Israel and Judah. The first king was Saul, but God rejected him. Next came David, and then Solomon. After this the land was divided – north and south. For the next several centuries there was one line of kings over Israel (in the north) and another line of kings over Judah (in the south). But here we're talking about David. David ruled over the whole land – north and south.

¹ Navajo Bible quotations are from *Diyin God Bizaad. The Holy Bible in Navajo*. Revised edition. New York: American Bible Society, 2000.

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David's name is mentioned more than a thousand times in the Bible. Of the 150 psalms in the Bible, David wrote 73 - just less than half. He was a king, a writer of psalms, and in many ways he was a prototype of Christ.

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Matt 9:27)

All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" (Matt 12:23)
A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." (Matt 15:22)

Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" ³¹The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" (Matt 15:22)

The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt 21:9)

But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. (Matt 21:15)

"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. (Matt 22:42)

These are the eight statements of this type that we find in the gospel of Matthew. There are three more in Mark, and four in Luke. Notice the last quotation especially. "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? 'The son of David,' they replied." When people called Jesus the "Son of David," they were calling Him "Christ," i.e., the Anointed One, the One who would one day come and sit on David's throne.

I mentioned earlier than in two passages David is called a man after God's own heart. I quote them below.

But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command." (1 Sam 13:14)

"After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'" (Acts 13:22)

What does all of this mean? It means that if anyone on this earth will ever be in heaven, it's David. But he is not there yet. "For David did not ascend to heaven, . . ." (Acts 2:34). This fact raises some important questions.

Where Is David?

"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day." (Acts 2:29)

Unless David was among those raised to life when Jesus died (see Matt 27:51-53), he is still sleeping peacefully in his tomb waiting for Jesus to come. Jesus Himself speaks repeatedly about raising the dead at the last day. Here are four such verses:

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. (John 6:39)

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40)

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44)

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:54)

It is at the last day that Jesus comes and personally raises our departed loved ones to eternal life, just as He promised. Notice how He does this. Paul says those we love, who have died, are changed

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 Cor 15:52)

According to this verse, it is not until we hear the trumpet call of God that those we love, who have died, are changed. Until then they have not been changed and have not gone to heaven. Where are they? They are in their graves waiting, like David, for Jesus to come at the last day.

Conclusion

Think of it this way. If our loved ones were already in heaven, why would Jesus need to come back to the earth to raise them to life? If they have life already, why would Jesus need to come and give it to them? "Who hopes for what he already has?" (Rom 8:24). The popular belief that people go directly to heaven when they die sounds comforting, but it removes any need for the second coming of Jesus. Removing our need for the second coming is not a useful thing to do. It is very clearly a biblical teaching.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a

place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11)

Returning to our starting point, if David did not ascend to heaven automatically when he died, no one ascends to heaven automatically when they die. That's not how we get there. We go to heaven together with our loved ones who have died believing in Jesus, at the last day, when He personally comes to escort us there. The problem with holding a different view is not that we got some technicality wrong. The problem is that any teaching which minimizes the importance of the second coming takes something away from Jesus. Any teaching which does that can't be right.