

I became interested in writing this book about the afterlife a couple of years ago, when I realized with unexpected clarity - out of the blue (I don't know what sparked my thinking) - that the views most people have are not from the Bible. Many people, of course, do not believe in the afterlife at all. But at least in my parts of the world (both where I grew up, and where I have lived my life, first Chicago, then New Jersey, and now for the past 28 years North Carolina) those people who do believe in an afterlife (with a few, but only a very few exceptions), think that your body dies and your soul lives on. In the now traditional Christian idea, your soul goes to heaven or hell.

Where did that idea come from? Most of the Bible, of course, is the Old Testament (it's about 3-4 times as large as the New Testament). And the Old Testament teaches no such thing. Moreover, Jesus himself did not teach any such thing. And I would argue that the no such thing is taught in **most** of the New Testament - though there are some passages people could appeal to in support of the view, even if the passages in fact appear to be saying something else.

What the Bible **does** teach will be a large part of what I want to talk about in the book. But what struck me when I first started thinking about it is that what most Christians appear to think is not what Jesus and his followers originally thought; and it is not taught in the Scriptures that Jesus and his followers relied upon; and in fact it is not directly taught anywhere in the Bible. And yet, in my context...

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