

Do Good People Go to Heaven?

Almost every religion in the world teaches that the goal of all good people is to get to heaven. This is true of the American Indians, who looked for the great Father in the Happy Hunting Ground, as well as the ancient Greeks and Romans who looked for an abode somewhere in the heavens. Going back further in time we find many ancient pagan religions also taught a going to heaven, a celestial abode primarily for those who have proved themselves here on earth.

Are believers in the Bible promised heaven after they die? Did the patriarchs of old go to heaven? Do we go immediately to heaven when we die...or to hell? Is heaven a place of eternal joy and relaxation? Will we, as the old spiritual says, "Have nothin' to do but roll round heaven all day"?

A major tenet of Christianity is that the righteous go to heaven and the wicked go to an ever-burning hell fire. But what does the Bible really teach about going to heaven?

The Truth About John 14:2-3

One of the verses used most to teach that we go to heaven is John 14:23. Here the Messiah said, "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 you may be also."

Most Bible teachers contend this is speaking of a type of house with many rooms. The house that Yahshua* the Messiah is speaking of, according to them, is an actual place where people spend eternity. But let's take a closer look at the word "house." House here is from the Greek *oikia* (pronounced oy-kee'-ah). It is properly a residence but usually an abode, either literally or figuratively. By implication it means a family and is translated home or household. If we keep in mind that Yahweh* is preparing a people to become a part of His family, then we get better insight into the true meaning of the verse.

*The true name of the Savior of the Bible, Yahshua, and His Father's name, Yahweh, are restored in this article. Superstitious scribes and misguided Bible translators took away these true names and sub-stituted titles-God, Lord, Adonai. The Sacred Name is easily proved in good encyclopedias and diction-aries under the heading "Yahweh," "Jehovah," "God," or "Tetragrammaton." You may also request our free booklets or read them online, "The Heavenly Father's Great Name," and "The Missing J," which prove these names conclusively.

David had this understanding when he wrote the 23rd Psalm. In verse 6 we read, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of Yahweh forever." He is looking toward dwelling in the family of the Most High for eternity.

In Psalm 27:4 he repeats this hope. "One thing have I desired of Yahweh, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of Yahweh all the days of my life." In John 4:53 Yahshua the Messiah told the nobleman whose son was ill, "Your son lives: and he himself believed, and his whole house." John in this passage used the same term *oikia* to mean family, not abode or building.

This usage is also found in many other places in both the evangels and the writings of Paul. Notice 1 Corinthians 16:15 where Paul refers to "the house (*oikia*) of Stephanas." He is here referring to 1 Corinthians 1:16, the "household" of Stephanas.

The word *oikia*, therefore, means the members of a household or family thereof. It can also mean our fleshly bodies or it can mean the spiritual body we will obtain at the resurrection, 2 Corinthians 5:1. The point is, Yahshua was speaking of the heavenly household and not a house.

Peter revealed that we as a family or house are in fact a collective Body of Believers. He says, "You also as living stones are built up a spiritual house," 1 Peter 2:5. Later, Peter announced, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of Yahweh: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Good News of Yahweh?"

The testing and proving of the believer begins at the house (family) of Yahweh. The family or those who make up the Body of Messiah is in effect a "house." We are the habitation of Yahweh's Holy Spirit, His building, 1 Corinthians 3:9. We are His temple, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16. Paul clearly looked upon the "house of Yahweh" as the dwelling place of Yahweh's Spirit, 1 Timothy 3:15.

The Key to Understanding

John 14:2-3

Yahshua's use of house and mansion in John 14:2-3 to mean the family of the Heavenly Father where the Holy Spirit dwells is perhaps best brought out in Ephesians 2:19-22. Here Paul explains to the Gentile Ephesians that they now have a chance to be included in the household of Yahweh.

"Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of Yahweh. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yahshua the Messiah Himself being the chief cornerstone. In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in Yahweh. In whom you also are built together for an habitation of Yahweh through the Spirit."

Notice that we become a part of the temple through the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

In John 14:2 the Messiah said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." The mansions or rooms in Yahweh's Old Testament house or temple were occupied by Yahweh's priests. These rooms therefore represented authoritative positions. We now understand that He is speaking

about the spiritual tabernacle housing those converted people who allow Yahweh's Spirit to dwell in them and motivate them.

He said there are many mansions, Greek *mone*. In verse 23 we find the same Greek word used. Yahshua said, "If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Here the word "abode" is the same Greek word that is translated mansions in verse 2, *mone*. It simply means places to live. In other words, there are many who will allow Yahweh's Spirit to dwell with them, motivating them, prompting them, compelling them to be obedient and serve the Heavenly Father.

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul defines "house of Yahweh" as "assembly of the living Mighty One." So what the Savior is saying up to this point is in My Father's household are many members with the Holy Spirit living in them.

Continuing, we ask what is this "place" He is preparing? He is doing the preparing right now. "Wherefore He [Yahshua] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto Yahweh by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." The Savior is right now at the right hand of the Father appealing to Him on behalf of all who profess His Name and follow in His footsteps. In the *Arndt and Ginrich Lexicon*, the Greek word for "place" is *topos*, and can mean position or office. Yahshua is interceding as High Priest to make a position in the Father's family for each penitent follower of the Messiah. The Messiah said in Matthew 6:33 to seek first the Kingdom of Yahweh, not seek to enter heaven. And Matthew 7:21 says the obedient will enter the Kingdom of heaven, not the Kingdom in heaven.

Earth is the Reward of the Saved

But some would look at Matthew 5:12 and say this is a promise to go to heaven. It reads, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

Matthew 5:12 is not a contradiction of Old Testament passages, such as Psalm 37, and New Testament passages, such as Matthew 5:5 and Revelation 5:10, that clearly state that the EARTH is the reward of the saved ("Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth"; "and has made us unto our Elohim kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth"). The Bible never contradicts itself. Matthew 5:12 is simply explaining that the reward is being worked out in heaven by the Savior, our intermediary with the Father. Yahshua brings our reward when He returns, Revelation 22:12.

Read the parable of the nobleman in Luke 19:12-26. Yahshua is the nobleman, we are His servants, and the citizens are the world. In the parable, He goes to get a kingdom and RETURNS. The prophet Isaiah said in 40:10, "He will come and His reward is with Him," having been brought from heaven. Why would He bring His reward to earth if we will get it in heaven?

What About 1 Peter 1:4?

Others may turn to 1 Peter 1:4 and use it to "prove" that our inheritance is in heaven. Let's

look at this verse: "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you." This does not mean that there is an inheritance waiting in heaven that we must go to get.

It is actually telling us that the promise is made from on high, that we will obtain a promised inheritance and the guarantee of this inheritance is from Yahweh Himself who dwells in the heavens high above the earthly realm of man.

Again, Daniel 7:27 shows that our inheritance will be on earth. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Note that the kingdom and dominion are "under the whole heaven." In Matthew 5:5 the Messiah said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Multitudes of What in Heaven?

Revelation 19:1 has been used in efforts to teach that there will be a great multitude of humans in heaven. Here is how it reads: "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, 'Halleluyah; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto Yahweh our Elohim.'"

The word "people" is from the Greek *oeblos*. It is more accurately translated "multitude, throng, company"--meaning simply a number of voices in heaven. A better translation would have been, "I heard a great voice of a throng in heaven." Obviously these are the voices of the angelic throng in heaven, not humans, praising Yahweh.

As we look into the Old Testament prophecy of Zechariah 14:4 we have the clear statement that the Messiah's feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the East. At the climax of this age, when nations are fighting around Jerusalem, Yahshua shall be standing right here on earth. (We don't go off to heaven for a thousand years while the earth remains desolate. This is not a teaching from the Bible. Zechariah 14:16 says those still alive after the battle around Jerusalem shall keep the Feast of Tabernacles from year to year at Jerusalem right on this earth.)

But Aren't Patriarchs in Heaven?

Has anyone ascended to heaven yet? The Messiah said in John 3:13, "And no man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven even the Son of Man which is in heaven." Yahshua clearly and emphatically declared that NO ONE has gone to heaven except Himself, who had been with the Father in heaven.

Do you believe what the Savior said? Let's examine some widely touted cases in which some claim certain men of old went to heaven.

David

In Acts 2:34 Peter said plainly, "For David is not ascended into the heavens." A person like David, who the Bible says was a man after Yahweh's own heart, would surely be in heaven with Him today if that is where the righteous go. But Peter emphasized again in verse 29, "Men and brethren let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David that he is both dead and buried and his sepulcher is with us unto this day." David is not in heaven but is still in his grave awaiting the resurrection!

If a righteous man like David never went to heaven, how can we believe that we will go there immediately after we die?

Enoch

In Hebrews 11:5 we read, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because Yahweh had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased Yahweh." Examine this verse carefully. First, it says Enoch "was not found." It does not say, "Enoch went to heaven." Why? Because there are two translations spoken of here. Just as Moses was taken and buried by Yahweh (Deuteronomy 34:5-6), so was Enoch. Therefore, no one could find his body. It was translated or carried away to an unknown place and buried. The same word, "translated" (*metatithemi*) is used in Acts 7:16 where Jacob was literally carried to his grave.

The other translation was spiritual, so that "he should not see death." This type of translation is mentioned in Colossians 1:13, "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." This, then, is a spiritual act of deliverance from Satan to all who have faith in the promise of Yahweh.

Note that Enoch's spiritual translation is in the conditional tense - "that he should not" - meaning he is translated so that he would not in the future die the second death at judgment, John 8:51; 11:26. (There are two deaths in Scripture: the physical death we all face, Hebrews 9:27, and the death of sinners after the resurrection and judgment, Revelation 20:6, which can be escaped.)

Many examples in Scripture carry a dual meaning, a physical one and a spiritual one. A physical explanation of the phrase, "that he should not see death" is found in the fact that Enoch's physical translation takes place just before Noah's flood. Genesis 5:23 says, "Yahweh took him." This could be that Enoch was taken so he would not see the many die in the world-wide flood.

Enoch had a definite, limited existence with a precise end. "And all the days of Enoch were 365 years," Genesis 5:23. He did not continue his existence in heaven. Further, Hebrews 11:13 says all the famous patriarchs - Enoch included - "died in faith, not having received the promises." None went to heaven. All died. (The promises are eternal life: "The hope of eternal life that Yahweh, who cannot lie, promised before the world began," Titus 1:2. They will be given them after the resurrection, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.)

The idea of an immortal soul that lives on after death is not found in the Bible. It is of pagan origin, first concocted by Satan who told Eve, "You shall not surely die." But she eventually did, just as Yahweh warned her in Genesis 2:17. Solomon wrote that humans die like the beasts: "All are dust and all return to dust." He also said, "The dead know not anything," (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20. 9:5). There is no consciousness after death. "In that very day his thoughts perish," Psalm 146:4.

Elijah

But wasn't Elijah taken to heaven in a whirlwind? What about 2 Kings 2:1 and 11? With a little insight, we see that it, too, harmonizes with the rest of the Scriptures that say no man has gone to heaven except the Messiah. The verses read, "And it came to pass, when Yahweh would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that 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 2:2 and 11.

The Hebrew is more correctly rendered "heavens" rather than heaven. The Bible speaks of three heavens: (1) where the birds fly, Genesis 1:20, Daniel 4:21; (2) where the stars are, Genesis 1:15; and (3) where the Creator is, Psalm 48:1-2. Obviously the whirlwind took Elijah into the first heaven, the atmosphere. Whirl-winds can exist only in the atmosphere of earth!

Where did he go? The sons of the prophets were afraid that Elijah would be "cast upon some mountain or into some valley," 2 Kings 2:16. He was therefore carried to some place on earth. This is proved in 2 Chronicles 21:12, where, low and behold, here comes a letter some 10 years later from Elijah, warning wicked King Jehoram that doom was about to befall him.

Some point to the appearance of Elijah and Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Savior in Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10, and Luke 9:28-36. They say this vision by Peter, James, and John proves Moses and Elijah were alive in New Testament times. Just as John saw a vision on the Island of Patmos of what would occur in our day, so was this a vision of prophetic significance to occur at a much later time. In fact, the Messiah Himself called this a "vision" in verse 9 of Matthew 17. Other Scriptures say Moses was dead and buried, Deuteronomy 34:5-6. Moses, as well as Enoch, Abraham, Jacob, Noah, and others, did not receive the promise of eternal life, Hebrews 11:39. They will not, either, until the great resurrection of the dead at the end of our age. They therefore cannot be in heaven today.

Lazarus

The Messiah told a parable about a rich man and a poor man in Luke 16. From this story many have tried to build the case that the good go to heaven while the wicked go to a torturous punishing in hellfire. The parable was not meant as a discussion of heaven and hell, but as a lesson in spiritual values. This is covered in our booklet on Lazarus, which explains the purpose of the parable.

Where the Righteous Will Go

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul speaks about the resurrection of the body from the death state (verse 34 to the end of the chapter). In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 he speaks about Yahshua the Messiah returning from heaven in clouds. We will meet Him in the air. From there He will descend with us (Jude 14) and shortly afterward stand upon the Mount of Olives to save Jerusalem and to establish His Kingdom on earth (Zechariah 14:1-11).

At that time Yahshua will give us our places or positions in the Kingdom. Our placement will be according to how well we have done with the talents that were given us, Daniel 7:27. We go no farther in the air than the clouds and then return to earth with the Redeemer of His people.

There is no indication in the Bible that Yahshua will go back to heaven. He will stay on this earth and establish His Kingdom here, putting down all unrighteousness and wickedness. He will rule for a thousand years on earth, Revelation 20:1-6. After He has established His rulership on earth, eventually the Heavenly Father Himself will establish His head-quarters here on the earth. We shall live and reign with Him forever (Revelation 22:3-5).

No man has yet been raised from the dead and gone to heaven (except the Messiah). If so, there would be no need for a resurrection, would there? The Savior Himself said in John 5:28 that the "hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." If all the patriarchs who lived righteously have gone to heaven, along with millions of others since (and millions who have "gone to hell"), then no one is really dead.

If that is so, then we can no longer believe the Bible when it tells us many times that the dead are simply that--dead! And there would be no reason for the judgment if people automatically go to heaven or hellfire, would there?

Come to understand the real truths of the Bible. If you would like more information on this and other topics vital to your salvation.

Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah

HalleluYah!