

NOVEMBER

LIVE AFTER DEATH IN HEAVEN

Most people, especially when they get older, think about death and what will happen after they die. Because many do not know what the afterlife holds for them, they prefer not to think about it. Some say there is nothing after this life, and when they die, that is the end of everything. Regardless of what people think, all will admit that we all will die someday. We spend the time, resources, energy and every effort so that we can live the good life today and hopefully for many years to come. But, death will come, and it could at any age. There is no guarantee as to how long you will live.

Every person must prepare now for what is coming after death. Almighty God has given to us in the Bible the information we need to make the right decisions to prepare us to face death and eternity with peace and joy. When we walk in the path that God has laid out for us, the fear of death is gone, and we face a wonderful future!

There are serious warnings in the Bible about the result of men and women ignoring or rejecting what God has said to us on this most important subject. However, the one who is a Bible-believer, and has trusted what God has said to us about life after death, has great peace and joy in living today and for eternity. We have the absolute assurance of going to Heaven when we die. The peace of God that comes to the believing heart is beyond human understanding, but it is very real!

When I stood at the gravesite of my first wife Doris, after 51 years of marriage, I knew that she was in Heaven beyond any question or doubt. Yes, her human body rested there in the grave, but her soul, spirit and new life from God Almighty was now in Heaven in wonderful peace and joy. Many years before, Doris believed God's Word and her sins were forgiven through faith in Messiah Jesus as her sin-bearer. She had the absolute assurance of her place in Heaven upon physical death. Peace surrounds Bible-believers when they are called to go through the valley of death. Families are sustained by the promises of God when death takes a loved one from our midst.

The Jewish Bible teaches us that there is a wonderful place called Heaven. These are the words of the God of Israel, and they are true! What does God say to us about Heaven in the Bible?

In Psalm 11, verse 4 we read: ***“The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelets try the children of men.”*** God’s throne is in His holy temple in Heaven.

Psalm 103, verse 19 tells us: ***“The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.”*** God made His throne in the heavens from which He rules over the world. This is a literal throne in a real Heaven.

In 2 Chronicles, chapter 18, verse 18 we are told: **“Again he said, Therefore hear the word of the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left.”** There are hosts of people and angels standing about the throne of God which is in Heaven.

We read in 2 Samuel, chapter 22, verse 7: **“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple.”** There is a literal temple of God in Heaven. God hears us when we seek Him.

King David of Israel recorded God’s word in Psalm 23, verse 4, 6: **“Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou (God) art with me...Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”** King David knew God as Lord of his life. He believed God’s way to be forgiven (read Psalm 51 and Psalm 71) through the atonement. He had the assurance that when he died, he would not fear, for God would be with him. At death King David would begin his wonderful new life in which he would **“dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”** David knew that there was a literal Heaven, and he would live there forever.

In the Bible book of Hebrews, chapter 12, verses 22-24: **“But ye are come...unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly...which are written in heaven...”** This speaks of the city of the living God in Heaven. There are multitudes of people there who have been forgiven of their sins and are part of **“the general assembly...which are written in heaven.”**

We read in 1 Peter, chapter 3, verses 21-22: **“The resurrection of Jesus Messiah: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities being made subject unto him.”** This is the fulfillment of the prophecy in the Jewish Bible given in Psalm 110, verse 1: **“The LORD said unto my (King David wrote this) Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”** The Bible clearly shows that Messiah will come to earth to provide the blood of atonement for us to be forgiven of our sins (Isaiah chapter 53). After Messiah Jesus provides the blood of atonement for us, He is risen from the dead and ascends to the right hand of God the Father in Heaven. At a future time, the Messiah is sent to earth again to defeat the enemies of Israel and set up world peace (Zechariah chapter 14).

Isaiah, the greatest of the Jewish prophets, emphatically spoke of the bodily resurrection of men and women who put their faith in God’s plan of forgiveness of sin. We read in Isaiah, chapter 26, verse 19: **“Thy dead...shall live, together with my dead body (Isaiah’s body) shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust...the earth shall cast out the dead.”** After death, believers in God and His way for them to be forgiven of sin will live again and sing! Notice that this verse speaks of **“Thy dead...shall live.”** **“Thy dead”** are those who have accepted God’s plan for the forgiveness of our sins; those who belong to God and are a part of His family.

The way people become a part of God's family is clearly given in the Bible. Sin separates men and women from God in this life and for eternity after death. Sin can be forgiven only through God's plan for us. When people put their trust in this plan of salvation, men and women will be forgiven of their sins by the blood of atonement provided by Messiah Jesus' death and resurrection.

In the Bible book of Colossians, chapter 1, verse 12-14, the Word of God says: ***"Giving thanks unto the Father (God), which hath made us meet (qualified) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."***

Many times in the Jewish Bible it mentions ***"saints"*** as people who have been forgiven of their sins and are living for God – Psalm 30, verse 4; Psalm 132, verse 9; Daniel, chapter 7, verse 18 and Zechariah chapter 14, verse 5. These "believers" or ***"saints"*** have a personal relationship to the God of Abraham; it has nothing to do with belonging to a particular religion.

The Jewish Bible and the New Covenant or Testament shows us that there are three areas above the earth that are called "the heavens." The first heaven above us would be the atmosphere and the clouds. The second heaven would be the stars. The third and highest heaven is where the throne of Almighty God and Heaven are found. The following Bible verses give these divisions. Ezekiel, chapter 32, verse 4: ***"And I will cause the fowls of the heaven..."*** The birds live in the first heaven. In Matthew, chapter 24, verse, we have the second heaven: ***"the stars shall fall from heaven."*** Among the Bible verses that speak of the third Heaven are those verses already considered and these given by the Jewish man of God, Paul in 2 Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 2-4: ***"I knew a man in Messiah...such an one caught up to the third heaven...God knoweth...How he was caught up into paradise (paradise is Heaven), and heard unspeakable words..."***

In the Jewish Bible book of Deuteronomy, chapter 10, verse 14 we are told there is heaven and then heavens: ***"Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is."***

Psalms 11, verse 4 in God's Word says: ***"The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven..."***

In the Jewish Bible book of Job, chapter 19, verses 25-27 we read: ***"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold..."*** Job had a wonderful, personal relationship with God. Job knew that when he died, he would see God after his death! For people who believe God's Word, the Bible and have a personal relationship with Almighty God, like Job, they know that death is not the end of life, but the beginning of a wonderful new life with God. Heaven is a very real place where

God's throne is and where believers of all ages will live for eternity in God's presence in peace and joy.

1 Peter, chapter 1, verses 3-4 gives believers assurance: ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Messiah from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”*** What a wonderful inheritance we have in Heaven! Our future in Heaven for eternity cannot be corrupted, nor can it be defiled and will never fade! Our joy in Heaven, after millions of years there, will be the same as it will be on the day we die and entered eternity!

God gives us another glimpse of what it will be like for Bible-believers after death. God wrote through John, the Jewish man of faith, in Revelation, chapter 20, verses 3-6: ***“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”***

What joy it is to know the Jewish Messiah Jesus as our Redeemer, for He has made the way for us to go to Heaven by taking the judgment due us for our sins. Messiah provided the blood of atonement for us. He is our Yom Kippur. There is no sin in God or in Heaven, and our sins must be forgiven by God while we are alive here. The Bible clearly states that there is no second chance to be forgiven of sin after we die. (Read the Bible verses for October.)

Bible believers have peace and joy, for the fear of death is gone! Death for us is the doorway to eternal life in Heaven where we will live with God forever in peace. We will see all the believers that have gone on before us including Abraham, Moses, King David, the Jewish prophets and our beloved ones who have passed from this life to Heaven. We praise God!