

Is Heaven Your Reward?

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This study is intended to clear up several misconceptions that are being passed around today — misconceptions that are truly "muddying up" Bible concepts and interfering with connections between events that need to be thoroughly understood by all Bible students.

Why does the Bible say so little about what "the elect" will do for all eternity? Where does it say that "flesh and blood" humans go when they die? Why have so many different theories about death and heaven been invented? Could it be that our Heavenly Father, Yehovah — our Abba — has something far greater and more amazing planned for us than we have ever imagined? (1 Corinthians 2:9–10)

The modern Christian concepts being taught about heaven are mostly drawn from ancient pagan and even fallen-angel-perpetuated ideas that have been passed down through the ages in pictures, writings, and oral traditions. Why have the Scriptures been ignored in most of those Christian concepts? Scripture paints a completely different — "set apart," holy — picture of Yehovah's children after death and their resurrection.

Is the "Kingdom of Heaven" in Heaven or on Earth from Heaven?

In Acts 2:29–34, the apostle Peter said, "David is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us." Acts 2:29–34 also states that David did not ascend into the heavens. Likewise, Psalms 115:17 and Ecclesiastes 9:5 say the dead know nothing. Yeshua said they are asleep (Matthew 9:24). John 3:13 confirms that "no one has ascended to heaven except He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man, Yeshua." Heaven was not designed for man but for those inhabiting the "out-of-time" spirit realm of Yehovah (Psalms 115:16). Enoch 14:21 says no creature of flesh can look upon Yehovah.

The concept of a person's soul going to heaven is also not found anywhere in the Bible. Here is the question no one ever asks: Why are resurrections prophesied for everyone if almost everyone goes to heaven? Why would they need a resurrection if they are already there?

The concept of the immortality of the soul is found nowhere in the Bible, which states that "the soul that sins, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Also, 1 Timothy 6:15–16 says Yehovah *alone* has immortality. Pagan philosophy and tradition are the true sources of the idea of souls existing apart from their bodies forever. Matthew 10:28 says, "Fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul."

The misunderstanding is usually attributed to scriptures about heaven such as those in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:3 says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:10 says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Verse 12 also says, "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven." Yeshua teaches about heaven but does not explain that the kingdom is not fully set up and active until a much later date — when He returns in power to establish His millennial kingship on earth. In the model prayer in Matthew 6:10, Yeshua said, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

What is the goal of all Yeshua's followers? It is to be in His kingdom, as stated in Revelation 5:10: "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on earth" (Revelation 20:4–6; Luke 20:35–36). To further establish that man is earthbound, in Revelation 21 and 22 the New Jerusalem comes down to the earth, bringing Yehovah and His timeless spirit dimension back — as

it was in the Garden of Eden — so His children can have access to their Father, His throne, and the Tree of Life. This is that unfathomable (Isaiah 64:4) inheritance of eternal, abundant life for all the repentant, obedient, disciplined children who are changed to spirit/flesh like Yeshua at His return at the first resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51–52; John 6:44).

On his deathbed, the apostle Paul said (in 2 Timothy 4:6–8): "I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which Yehovah, the righteous judge, will give me on **that day**" (Revelation 1:10) — "and not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing." That day is the Day of Yehovah, when Yeshua returns — *not* when one dies (Philippians 3:21).

So You Ask: What About Enoch and Elijah — Didn't They Go to Heaven?

1 Corinthians 15:22 says "all men die." Hebrews 11:13 says "these all died in faith," including Enoch. Hebrews 11:5 says Enoch was translated — or transported (as Philip was in Acts 8:39–41, from Gaza to Samaria) — so that he would not be harmed by those who sought to kill him. Hebrews 11:39 says he died in faith, not having received the promise. In the Book of Enoch (which was part of Scripture to Yeshua and His disciples, who quoted from it), Enoch says in chapter 1, verse 2, that he was allowed to have visions from heaven so as to be able to reason with the fallen angels. He did not actually go there. In fact, he was present at the birth of Noah, 69 years after he was transferred — not transfigured or changed to spirit (Enoch 107:2–3).

We know Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the first heaven (2 Kings 2:9) — the atmosphere — and was taken somewhere else not too far away, since 19 years later he wrote a letter to King Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:12–15).

What About the 24 Elders in Heaven in Revelation 5:14?

Enoch says they are an ancient, set-apart council who are not flesh and blood (Enoch 14:21–23).

What about 1 Corinthians 15:23? Yeshua is the firstfruit from the dead, and *afterward* those who are His at His coming. There are not two sets of firstfruits, as some teachers today claim — which would imply two *first* resurrections — obviously without having searched this matter out thoroughly, but rather listening to someone's allegorical interpretation of the firstfruit offering during the Days of Unleavened Bread. This false teaching is based on some of the pseudepigraphal writings of the third century, which insisted that Yeshua took the saints who were resurrected at His crucifixion with Him to the Father after His resurrection as firstfruits — thus depicting the picture of the sheaves being waved before Yehovah by the priests to present them as firstfruits.

The actual burnt offering made by the priests was an unblemished lamb (one year old or less) and a barley cake made of finely sifted (13 times) flour beaten from two-tenths of a deal of barley collected after the Sabbath, which was mixed with olive oil and burnt on the altar as a sweet savor to Yehovah (Leviticus 23:12–13). These two offerings were the only ones sent up as smoke and fragrance to the Father, and they signified Yeshua as the *only* offering suitable to be a firstfruit (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23). Besides, Yeshua told Mary Magdalene, "I am not yet ascended to my Father." He would have said "we" if He had others accompanying Him. He knew He was "*the* firstfruit" from the dead and was the only one qualified to be so.

Why do people make such conjectures without checking the Scriptures for accuracy before laying themselves open to shame, thereby revealing their lack of scriptural understanding? Is it an eagerness to come up with some "new" truth from the Bible, or to be seen as an expert in biblical

details? They have taken Ephesians 4:8 and Psalms 68:18 completely out of context and tried to make them say something entirely different from what they were meant to say.

A List of Reasons This False Teaching Is Unscriptural

A few years back I compiled the following list:

1. Why is there no mention of two resurrections of the righteous in the Bible?
2. Why were the saints buried in Jerusalem more qualified to be resurrected at that time and to ascend on high than the prophets, patriarchs, or any other righteous ones?
3. Why are there no statements by Yeshua of ascending with anyone on high at any time?
4. Why were those saints any different from Lazarus, who came back to life in the flesh and later died again in Britain as an old man many years later?
5. Where did the idea of saints going to heaven originate?
6. Why would those saints ascend on Firstfruits and not with Yeshua 40 days later, if He was the firstfruit from the dead?
7. Was their resurrection at the "splitting of the veil" earthquake, or at the earthquake at the rolling away of the stone from His tomb 3½ days later?
8. When did they go through the streets to be seen by many?
9. Isn't the context of Ephesians 4:8 saying that Yeshua goes out ahead of the multitudes of "captives to sin" to free them and take them "captive to Torah" — that is, obedient to His own teachings and instructions for blessed living — as the firstfruits of the believers who will follow in the real first resurrection and will receive the gift of eternal life and rewards of service and position as priests and kings in His millennial kingdom?
10. If no man has ascended to heaven, or is able to, nor needs to — but will meet Yeshua in the air and be changed to spirit with the capacity to then go anywhere, especially with heaven coming to earth later via the New Jerusalem — why would Yeshua share His glorious offering of Himself to the Father with a few less-than-perfect saints?
11. Wouldn't those saints have to be perfected before their "time" of perfection at the real first resurrection, which was prophesied and set into the prophetic timeline in Matthew 24:31 and repeated in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, since no sinful person can approach the Father and live?

Conclusion

Too many theologians have stretched their opinions and pet doctrines too far and expect us "laymen" to eagerly accept them without thoroughly investigating the context of every writing in the Bible. These types of teachings always stand out to me, since I — like Timothy and many of you — grew up hearing and reading the Scriptures daily throughout our entire childhood and beyond. We cannot allow ourselves to be duped by anyone of any reputation, no matter how impressive their résumé is. We must be:

"Bereans" — and prove every word, studying to show ourselves approved to our Abba, who cares for us more than we can imagine and wants us not to be ashamed as we rightly divide the words of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

May we all become spiritually mature — thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:17; Hebrews 11:40).

We will in the near future tackle the "Keys of Hell," the "Second Resurrection," and other topics as we seek to rightly divide His Word.

Brethren, your time is now. Are we going to believe the opinions of the enlightened teachers, or Yeshua's words throughout the Bible? The Holy Spirit is calling you to seek after your Heavenly Father, Yehovah, and His good news brought to you through His earthly manifestation, Yeshua, who made us and gave us His instructions — His Torah. In this place and at this time, you are having your spiritual blinders removed from your eyes and your mind (Acts 17:26–27; Romans 11:7; 1 Peter 2:9; Jeremiah 24:7). This is your opportunity to actually make the varsity team — the starting team, the called-out ones — choosing to be a part of the Kingdom of Heaven as it is set up on this earth in the very, very near future. The priests of Yehovah and His kings will be thoroughly knowledgeable of the Torah, able to apply every principle when needed and to teach the difference between the clean and the unclean in every action, thought, food, boundary, relationship, governing, worship, and word. Why? We will see Yehovah (Psalms 17:15; 11:7; Matthew 5:8).

Please study every scripture listed in this treatise and proceed to fulfill the calling Yehovah has given to you. And as Michael Rood says, we'll see you all when the smoke clears. Shalom, and may the Creator of all things be with you.

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