

**WHAT DOES
YAHWEH'S WORD
HAVE TO SAY
ABOUT**

**THE STATE
OF
THE DEAD?**

The doctrine about the state of the dead is very simple when the Bible is allowed to speak for itself. It is only when man places his own interpretation on the Scriptures that the teaching is changed and the simple is made complicated. The reason for man's interpretation on the state of the dead is because man does not want to die. The Bible tells us that, "...it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27).

The most popular belief about the state of the dead is that, man, or some part of the inner man goes either to heaven or a place called hell after death. Another popular belief is that of a place called purgatory, where one is purged for a period of time. As Bible students we need to search the Scriptures to see whether these things are really true.

THE SOUL

An important question to answer is: what is the "soul?" Consider the creation, when Yahweh created Adam out of the dust of the earth. Adam's body was completely created and lying there on the ground. All was complete except Adam was not alive. In this condition Adam was a DEAD SOUL because "...Yahweh Elohim formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Hebrew - RUACH); and man became a LIVING SOUL." Gen. 2:7.

The only thing recorded in the Scriptures that was given to man after his creation was "the breath of life." From receiving the breath of life a dead soul became a living soul. When a person dies therefore, that person is a dead soul because the breath of life has been removed. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (RUACH - breath of life) shall return unto Elohim who gave it." Eccl. 12:7.

The word "soul" in the Scriptures comes from the Hebrew word NEPHESH (in the Old Testament) and the Greek word PSUCHE (in the New Testament). Actually, according to Strong's concordance, these words have many different renderings and meanings in our English Bible, such as the following: *"any breathing creature, any, appetite, beast, body, breath, creature, dead(ly), desire, contented, fish, ghost, greedy, he, heart, life, mind, mortally, one, own, self, them, yourselves, slay, soul, tablet, they, thing, will, would have it."*

For example, in Numbers 19:11, nephesh is rendered, "dead body." It can also mean the person's thoughts or feelings. This is evident when we read; "...that the soul of Jonathan was knit (very close) with the soul of David,..." I Sam. 18:1. The hearts and minds of these two brethren were very close to each other. According to the Bible, a soul can die! "The soul (person) that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18:20.

There is no record in the Scriptures of the soul existing as a conscious part of man, which leaves the body at death and goes to heaven to be with Elohim. In fact, there is not one solitary verse in the entire Bible that states that a good person goes to heaven when he dies! This belief is only in man's imagination.

What about the immortal soul which some people speak about? As we search the Scripture we find that there is NO mention made of an immortal soul within man! The thought of an immortal soul within mankind is not supported by the Word of Yahweh, only by the writings of pagan philosophers like Socrates and Plato. The only Beings in all creation that have immortality are the Heavenly Father (Yahweh) and His Son, the Master Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. “Which in his time he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY...” I Tim. 6:15-16.

David said that; “...Elohim will redeem my soul (body) from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me.” Ps. 49:15. Souls (people) are in their graves, not heaven, waiting for the resurrection. David also prophesied and said; “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades - the grave, Rev. 20:14); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One (Yeshua) to see corruption.” Ps. 16:10. The Apostle Peter spoke of David's prophecy, and tells us that it speaks of Yeshua's death and resurrection, in Acts 2:27.

Peter went on to say; “...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...He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Messiah, that his soul (body) was not left in hell (the grave), neither his flesh did see corruption.” Acts 2: 29, 31. We also learn in these verses that David did not go to heaven for the verses speak only of Yeshua Messiah, whose body did not see corruption.

We also read from the lips of the Master Himself that, “...**no man** hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” John 3:13.

The patriarch Job understood the matters of life and death and the hope of the resurrection, for we read in Job 14:10-14: “But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.”

ELIJAH AND ENOCH

“And it came to pass, when Yahweh would have taken 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.” II Kings 2:1,11.

These verses are used by those who defend the false teaching of going to heaven at death. The truth is that Elijah was only ‘transported,’ or moved to another place on earth because about ten years later; “...there came a writing to him (King Jehoram) from Elijah the prophet,...” II Chron. 21:12. If Elijah was in heaven with Yahweh there would have been no letter written to the king, unless there is postal service from heaven.

Another Child of Yahweh who was translated (transported) was Enoch. The Apostle Paul wrote that; "...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." Heb. 11:5.

The word "translated" here means moved, or transported. Elijah and Enoch were not taken to the place where God is. The Bible informs us that; "These (including Elijah and Enoch) ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Heb. 11:13.

The "promise" that Paul is referring to is the same promise that Yahweh made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the beginning, Yahweh called out Abraham (Gen.12) and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land (Canaan). Again, Yahweh promises Abraham: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOREVER." (Gen. 13:15). Yahweh didn't promise Abraham "heaven." The promise that Yah gave was the land of Palestine, which included eternal life and eternal inheritance on planet Earth! Notice: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye *Abraham's* seed (children), and *heirs* according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29).

To teach that these two faithful saints are in heaven with Yahweh is a direct contradiction of the Holy Scriptures, for we read that; "...no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." John 3:13.

We must conclude therefore that, Elijah and Enoch were moved from one place on the earth to another by Yahweh. They were preachers of righteousness and were strongly persecuted for their words by people who were being constantly rebuked for their sins. They both died and are in their graves, sleeping until the resurrection of the saints, to take place at Yeshua's second coming. To read more into the context than that which is clearly written, is to deal unjustly with the Word of Yah and not rightly divide the Word of truth.

We find in the Bible three (3) heavens mentioned:

- The first heaven is where the birds fly, known as the atmosphere. Gen.1:20 says; "And Elohim said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth IN THE OPEN FIRMANMENT OF HEAVEN."
- The next, or second heaven is where the moon and stars are, commonly referred to as *outer space*. "When I consider the HEAVENS, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou hast ordained." Ps. 8:3.
- We find the "third heaven" mentioned by the Apostle Paul when he wrote: "I knew a man in Messiah above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; Elohim knoweth) such a one caught up to the THIRD HEAVEN." II Cor. 12:2. This realm is beyond outer space.

It is commonly accepted by most Bible students that Paul was (in this passage) actually

referring to himself and whether he was caught up bodily into the third heaven to see these revelations or if he just saw them in a vision when he was on the earth, was a mystery even to him; however, the fact remains that Paul was alive and not dead when he experienced this.

Yeshua is the only one who has been received into the third heaven, for He testified of this in John 3:13; "...no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." We can understand then, that the heaven into which Elijah and Enoch were taken through was only the first heaven, or the atmospheric heaven.

DEATH - A SLEEP

When a person dies the Bible tells us that they are in a sleep, or they are sleeping. The Apostle Paul writes; "But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Yeshua will Elohim bring with him."

We read further that, "...the Master shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Master himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of Yahweh: and the dead in the Messiah shall rise first: ...Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I Thess. 4:13-18.

When Job spoke about mankind, he said; "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Job 14:12.

Job also said; "...for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." Job 7:21.

David said; "Consider and hear me, O Yahweh my Elohim: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." Ps. 13:3.

Yahweh said to Moses; "Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers;..." Deut. 31:16.

Yeshua spoke of death as a sleep. We read where Yeshua said; "Our friend Lazarus slepeth; but I go, that I may wake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Master, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Yeshua spake of his death;..." John 11:11-13.

Every person experiences sleep every single day of their lives. When a person has slept well there is no remembrance of anything. The mind is in an unconscious condition. We do not know what may have taken place during the time of our sleep. We awake refreshed for a new day. In this manner we have a daily reminder of what the state of the dead is. "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything,..." Eccl. 9:5.

The Son of Elohim in His natural body went through the sleep of death. Yeshua said that for "three days and three nights" the Son of Man shall be in the heart of the earth. Matt. 12:40.

Yeshua experienced dying and went through the sleep of death the same as all mankind. During this sleep of three days and three nights, the breath of life was taken from Yeshua and

His thoughts perished.

We understand this because the Psalmist writes of the natural man; “His breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Ps. 146:4.

“But we see Yeshua, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of Elohim should taste death for every man.” Heb. 2:9.

THE RESURRECTION

The hope of all Saints will be fully realized at the resurrection. Every Child of Yahweh from the time of Adam has looked forward to the time of the resurrection. Yeshua was the first to be resurrected from the grave unto eternal life.

Yahweh has established an order to the resurrections, for there are more resurrections than one. Paul writes; “But every man in his own order: Messiah the first fruit; afterwards they that are the Messiah's at his coming.” ICor.15:23. We continue in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians; “...and the dead in the Messiah shall rise first.” I Thess. 4:16. We should note here that the Scriptures state “RISE” (from the earth) and not coming down from heaven with God (Elohim).

Among all mankind there are two general resurrections, and Yahweh has placed them according to His will. The first to be resurrected will be Yah's saints from all the ages. This first resurrection takes place at the Second Coming of Yeshua the Messiah; “For the Master himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of Yahweh: and the dead in the Messiah shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Master in the air; so shall we ever (in this manner) be with the Master.” 1 Thess.4:16-17.

This is the same scene as foretold by John when he “...looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle... And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.” Rev. 14:14, 16. This is the first general resurrection of the called, chosen and faithful ones, from the grave, unto eternal life, including those who are translated alive when Yeshua returns.

The second resurrection of the dead is for all who have lived through the ages and were not “called” in their generations. Everyone will have an opportunity to repent of their sins (breaking Yah's commandments) and walk in His ways.

All whom Elohim has judged as incorrigibly wicked, will also be resurrected to stand before Yahweh, in judgment, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the throne: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell (grave) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:12-13, 15.

The wicked shall be utterly destroyed, consumed by gehenna (hell) fire. “For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Yahweh of hosts; and it will leave them neither root nor branch.” Mal. 4:1.

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul (take away life forever), but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in gehenna (hell) fire.” Matt.10:28. See also Luke 12:4, 5; Rev.20:14, 21:8; Rom.6:23. The Bible DOES teach eternal punishment, but not eternal punishing.

Nowhere in the Bible are the despicably wicked promised eternal life in hell fire, they are given the promise of destruction, perishing and the second death - death for all eternity. See John 3:16.

The bodily resurrection, of which Yeshua was first, is a part of the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah. Today, all of the dead remain in their graves. This is the state of the dead.

The world-famous criminal lawyer, the late Clarence Darrow, once held a debate with a rabbi, a priest, and a minister on the “State of the Dead.” The title meant: “If a person dies now does he become immortal?” This subject of immortality has bothered many people. The clergymen at the debate showed much skill and summoned similes and allegories to set forth the theory that the soul of man is indestructible, not subject to the power of death.

When Mr. Darrow rose he said, “These gentlemen never once used their Bibles to prove their assertions, much less did they quote from its pages.”

Those who preach from the Bible often have no Bible texts for the premise of their teaching. In all fairness it should be said that there are some things “hard to be understood” in the Bible, 2 Pet. 3:15,16. But we must remember that there is no contradiction in the Scriptures and all lines of Bible Doctrine should harmonize. The following is an example of what Yeshua said to the thief on the cross.

WHAT ABOUT THE PENITENT THIEF

Did not Yeshua say, while He was on the cross, to the penitent thief, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise? Luke 23:43.

First of all, what did the thief ask Yeshua? He said, “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Now, when would that be? When would Yeshua set up or come into His kingdom? The thief clearly *did not* say, “Take me to heaven” or “I’ll see you in heaven.” Why would the thief ask to be “remembered” if he believed that he would see Messiah immediately after he died?

In addition to preaching the gospel or good news about salvation through His name, the Messiah also declared the gospel or the good news about the COMING KINGDOM OF GOD! “And this GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matt.24:14). This kingdom of Messiah is referred to as

His Millennial reign (1,000 years) when he will return to planet earth at the END OF THIS AGE to establish His government on planet earth and rule the nations with a rod of iron. (Rev.11:15; 19:15; 20:4-6).

Now Yeshua died first and the repentant thief died later that day, for the soldiers had to break his legs to speed up the process of death because Passover was approaching (John 19:31-36). It must be noted that Yeshua did not go to paradise on that day. “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (the grave).” (Matt.12:40).

‘Paradise’ is where the City, the heavenly new Jerusalem is, which will come down from heaven to planet Earth, after the Millennial reign of the Messiah (Rev. 2:7; 21:1-4) and Yeshua told Mary Magdalene after He came out of the tomb, after His resurrection, “Touch me not (Don’t cling to me), for I HAVE NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER.” John 20:17.

Yeshua was not in heaven *during at least three days after his promise to the thief*. Where had he been? The answer is *in the grave*. What then did Yeshua mean concerning his promise to the thief?

Only this: “You ask me to remember you in my kingdom. I say to you today (in this dark hour), thou shalt be with me in paradise.” The comma in this verse should be *after* the word, “Today,” and not before it. When the Apostle Luke wrote his gospel there was no punctuation in the Greek. The punctuation has been supplied by modern translators. The modern preachers want the soul of man to go into heaven when he dies. In this instance the comma is obviously not in the correct place. The thief **will be** raised in the second resurrection of the dead. (Rev. 20:12, 13).

What did Yeshua mean when He told Martha, the sister of Lazarus, that those who believe in Him would never die? Surely Yeshua’s own words would show immortality of the soul?

The complete text on the discussion of Jesus and Mary and Martha, makes it clear: “Yeshua said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me (the resurrection), though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” (John 11:25-26). Both righteous and wicked people will be resurrected.

In John 5:25-29 we read again what Yeshua said: “Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life...The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live...Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are IN THE GRAVES (not heaven) shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (judgment).

But, didn’t Yeshua say that His Father was not the God of the dead, but the God of the living? YES, but only in the sense of a future RESURRECTION, and NOT an immortal soul! Yeshua said Abraham would receive the promises, including eternal life, through the RESURRECTION: “But *as touching the resurrection of the dead*, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the

God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:31-32).

Yeshua told the Pharisees they would see Abraham in the Kingdom because Abraham, now dead and in the grave, will be RESURRECTED from the dead. “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.” (Luke 13:28).

Knowing the true state of the dead will give us comfort and a message of hope for those who know not the truth. “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” John 8:32, 36.

Dear friend, are you willing to accept the plain teaching of Yah's Word and reject the traditions and fables of men? If you would like to study deeper into this subject, please read our article entitled, “The Rich Man and Lazarus Revealed!”