

Jewish Spiritual Life

PEACE THROUGH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

GodAndJews.org

What Happens After We Die By George Gruen

Death is an ever present reality, and we all will face it someday. You can be prepared for what is coming after you die. This preparation will enable you to be at peace, actually to be joyful, for you know what is going to happen to you when you depart this life.

How often have you thought about what will happen after you die? The greatest fear that confronts people is the fear of death. Death can be a terrifying thought. It does not have to be. I know. On October 9, 2001, my first wife, Doris passed from this life into eternity. She trusted what the Almighty God of Israel has said to us in His Holy Scriptures and knew she was going to Heaven when she died. With this foundation for life, we could face death with peace and joy. It is one thing to tell you this from our experience, but I want to share God's Word for you to give to you the promises of God concerning what happens after death.

What does the God of Israel say to us about Heaven? King David of Israel wrote in Psalm 16:8-9, 11, *"I have set the LORD always before me...Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope...Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasure for evermore."* King David had gladness, rejoicing, and the assurance of resurrection after death and life in Heaven.

In the Jewish Bible book of Job, chapter 19, verses 25-27, *"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..."* Job knew that after death he would be resurrected from the grave and see God. The Bible speaks of our being redeemed, or forgiven of our sins, when we trust God's plan.

When people come to God in prayer and ask Him to cleanse them of all sin, because Messiah Jesus died and was resurrected to provide the blood of atonement for us to be forgiven, then God forgives us, and we know we are going to Heaven when we die. Psalm 11:4, *"The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold...the children of men."* Heaven is a real place. In Psalm 23:4, 6, we read, *"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [God] art with me...and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."* For the Bible-believer, there is no fear in death, for it is the doorway to eternity with God forever in Heaven.

Assurance of Heaven, for those who trust God's plan for their lives, is given again in I Peter 1:3-4, *"...God...which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Messiah from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."* What a great promise this is of Heaven that is reserved for us and will never fade away! It is eternal.

What happens to people who do not accept God's way for them to be forgiven of their sins? God tells us in the Bible book of Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 15, "*And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" God says He will deliver us from the fear and bondage of death. Possessions, money, position in life or one's philosophy of living will mean nothing when a person is diagnosed by the doctor that the cancer is terminal, or the accident has been so severe that there is nothing they can do to save the life. Then, what do people say? How do they face death?

The God of eternity provided for us, so that we can face life and death with peace and security. We can, beyond any doubt, be certain of going to Heaven when we die. To possess this wonderful peace, we must know what God has recorded for us in the Bible. Then we need to trust God's plan for our life.

What happens in the lives of people who do not accept God's plan for their lives. We read in the Jewish Bible in Isaiah chapter 33, verse 14, "*The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites, Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*" The Jewish man of God, Isaiah, warned people of the suffering that would come to sinners after death. Notice the word "*dwell*" which means to reside or live in. People who die with unforgiven sin in their lives, after death, will be living in this place of suffering that will be "*everlasting*" or forever. An explanation of what this means is given in the Bible book of Luke, chapter 16, verses 19-31.

Two men died. One man was a Bible-believer who trusted God's plan for his life. We know this because of what happened to him after death. The other was not a Bible-believer; he had spent his life in the accumulation of riches and made no provision for his life after death. At death, it is said of the Bible believer whose name was Lazarus that he..."*was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom...he is comforted.*"

Of the other man it is said he..."*also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame...Abraham said... between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from hence. Then he said, I pray thee...send him to my father's house; For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets [the Bible – God's Word]; let them hear them. He said...if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he [Abraham] said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*"

The man who died with unforgiven sin in his life went to a place of suffering from which there was no escape. In this suffering he had all of his senses, for he could see, touch, feel, understand, and remember. He was also told that even if one was raised from the dead and went to tell his family back on earth what the Bible teaches about how to be forgiven of sin, his family would not believe. God tells us that we are to believe what He has told us in the Bible. These verses in Luke make clear what we are told in Isaiah 33:14 in the Jewish Bible. If our sins are not forgiven by Almighty God, they will never be forgiven.

We all, Jews and Gentiles, must seek God's plan for us to be forgiven of our sins before it is too late. Another fact is very clear in God's Word. In Ecclesiastes, chapter 7 and verse 20 we read, "*For there is not a just man [or woman] upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*" There are many "good" people, but all have sinned. In Ezekiel 33:12-13, God warned everyone, "*...The righteousness [good deeds] of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression... neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.*" A person's "good deeds" will not cover sin; good deeds do not take away sin.

Through the Law given by God through Moses, sin was forgiven by having the blood of atonement on Yom Kippur and daily through the year, see Leviticus 5:5-10; 16 and 17:11. Leviticus 5:10, "*...and the (Jewish) priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.*" God through the Jewish prophets then foretold that He would send Messiah to earth to provide the blood of atonement for all people who would trust in Him.

In the Bible in Isaiah, chapter 53 we find verses of Scripture telling us how we can have the blood of atonement today. We read: (6) "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*" (8) "*...He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of my people was he stricken.*" (10) "*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; ...when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*" (12) "*...he hath poured out his soul unto death...and he bare the sin of many...*" This was written 700 years BC. It is a clear picture of what the Messiah would do when God would send Him to earth to die to provide the blood of atonement for you and me. Jesus, our Jewish Messiah, fulfilled these prophecies by His death and resurrection.

In I Peter 1:3-4, God has given us "*...a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Messiah from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*" You can have a place reserved in Heaven after you die. Put your trust in God and in Messiah Jesus as your sin-bearer. Ask God to forgive your sins on the basis of the blood of atonement that Messiah Jesus provided for you. You will no longer fear death, for death for believers is the doorway to peace and joy in Heaven for eternity.