

The
promise of
resurrection
and eternal
life

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Most people who profess to follow Jesus Christ believe that they have an 'immortal soul' that goes to heaven when they die. Millions of others of all kinds of faiths also believe in some sort of life after death.

First, the predicament we are in without Jesus Christ

The Bible tells us that we human beings are a sin-cursed race. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were told, *"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."* [Gen 3:19 NKJV]

We have inherited this sin-cursed nature, as the Apostle Paul writes, *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned."* [Rom 5:12 NKJV]

What happens when we die?

The Bible doesn't mention 'immortal souls' or teach that we go to 'heaven' when we die. What hope is there then for any of us?

William Tyndale, who translated the scriptures into English in the 16th Century, said, "In putting departed souls in heaven, hell, and purgatory, you destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. The true faith putteth the resurrection, which we be warned to look for every hour." Tyndale gave his life so that we could read the Bible, in English, for ourselves, rather than be drowned in dogma.

The Apostle Paul, when on trial before the Jewish Council, said to his accusers, *"I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead"*. [Acts 23:6 NIV]

The Bible teaches that at death a person is totally unconscious: Ecclesiastes 9:5 *"For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have*

no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished;¹⁰Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom. [NIV]

And the Psalmist writes about what happens at death: *'When his breath departs he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.'* [Psalm 146.4 ESV]

The Resurrection

The Bible does not leave us without hope for it emphasises that the reward of the righteous will be bodily resurrection at the coming of Christ [*Daniel 12.2; John 5.28,29; 1 Thessalonians 4.16*]. The resurrection of the dead will be the first thing Christ does on his return and this will be followed by the judgement. Christ encourages us with the expectation that the recompense for faithful living will take place *'at the resurrection of the just'* [Luke 14.14]. At that time Christ *'shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body'* [Philippians 3.21]. There is ample evidence in the Bible that the reward of the righteous will be in bodily form.

Abraham, the father of the Jewish people was promised that he, personally, would inherit the land of Canaan forever [Genesis 13.15]. Job clearly expressed his hope in these words: *'For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,'* [Job 19. 25-27 ESV]. The prophet Isaiah's hope was identical: *'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise'* [Isaiah 26.19 KJV].

The Bible teaches very clearly that there will be a Day of Resurrection and Judgement at some time in the future. Paul writes *"...the Lord Jesus Christ ... will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."* [2 Tim.4:1 NKJV]

For this Judgement to take place it means that all accountable people, even those long dead, will be raised and brought before Jesus. *"...there will be a*

resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." [Acts 24:15 NKJV]

Now those, who do believe and put their trust in God, and the saving name of Jesus Christ, understand his commandments and live a life following Him, can enjoy a great hope in the future. Jesus said *"This is the will of the Father who has sent me ... that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."* [John 6:39,40 NKJV]

Yes, Jesus Christ is coming back to the Earth **soon**, to Judge the world in righteousness, *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according to his work."* [Rev 22:12 NKJV]

For those who have taken on the Name of Jesus and tried to follow him there need be no fear, but for those who have known of Jesus and not followed in his ways, and not repented of wrongdoing and sought forgiveness there is a fearful time of judgement coming. *"The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."* [John 5:28,29 NKJV]

The Psalmist also speaks of those who do not believe and says their plight is: *"Man who is in honour, yet does not understand, is like the beasts that perish."* [Psalm 49:20 NKJV]

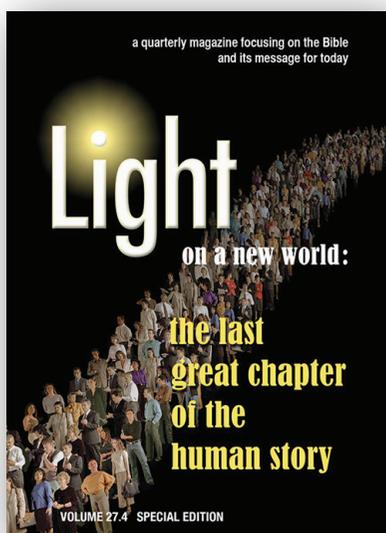
We urge you to take on the name of Jesus in Baptism to gain Eternal Life. *"He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded."* [Prov 13:13 NKJV]

What will Eternal Life be like

This Eternal life will be enjoyed on this earth, not in the world as man has ruined it, but in a world that God will make new, as it was when he first created it, in peace and perfect harmony, no more death, illness, disabilities, frailty, anxiety, crime, panic or viruses. There are many word pictures in the Bible, particularly in the Psalms and the Prophets—you can get a flavour of what it will be like by

reading some of these. Read Isaiah chapter 2vs 1-5 as a cameo and then all of chapter 35, chapter 66vs 17-25 and all of chapter 11. Psalms 72 and 22:25-31 speaks of how people will live and in Zephaniah 3:9 there will be one language.

You can also read about how God wants everyone to have an opportunity to have a part in this Kingdom in [“The last great chapter of the human story”](#)



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For further reading start with the Bible – you can get further helps to reading it and understanding it from the above website and the following websites:

Light Magazine www.lightmagazine.org and www.dawnncp.co.uk