

Correspondence Course Lesson 6

The Reward of the Saved

Will You Go to Heaven?

Millions today believe they will go to heaven when they die. They assume that the righteous men of the Bible went to heaven when they died. But what does the Bible say? Is heaven really the "reward of the saved"?

WHY, if the righteous go to heaven, did Yahshua say: "***And no one has gone up into Heaven, except He having come down out of Heaven, The Son of Man is He who is in Heaven.***"? (*John 3:13*).

If the saved go to heaven when they die, why did Peter say that King David, a man after Yahweh's own heart (*Acts 13:22*), "***he both died and was buried, and his tomb is among us until this day . . . For David did not ascend into Heaven***"? (*Acts 2:29, 34*).

What a paradox! Millions today believe the saved go to heaven, yet righteous David didn't go there! And if the saved go to heaven when they die, what need is there for a resurrection from the dead? Why a resurrection if they have already "gone to their reward"? It's time that these puzzling, yet vitally important, questions were answered.

Clearly, the idea of going to heaven when one dies is not the sole property of mainstream Christianity. Pagans since time immemorial have had similar notions! History records that many of the supposedly Christian ideas concerning heaven have come from the ancient Egyptians. The Book of the Dead, prescribed spells, incantations, prayers, charms and amulets to help the dead man overcome the dangers of the Tuat and to reach Sekhet Aaru and Sekhet Hetep - other names for the Egyptian heaven - to take his place among the subjects of Osiris in the "Land of Everlasting Life" (E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 40-41).

What the Early Congregation Taught

But astounding as it may seem, neither Yahshua nor His apostles taught that the righteous go to heaven! Notice what this secular encyclopedia has to say:

"The dominant view in the early church seems to have been that until the return of the Messiah upon the clouds of heaven to raise the dead, those who had died were asleep, and that they would be suddenly awakened to be given their new bodies, after which they would reign with Him on earth for a thousand years . . ."
(The New International Encyclopedia, first edition, article "Heaven").

The early Congregation clearly did not teach the concept of "going to heaven." Such teachings did not become popular until long after the death of the apostles! History shows that the teachings of Catholic Church fathers Clement of Alexandria, Origen and others gradually turned most Christians from the belief in a literal 1,000-year reign of Messiah on earth.

Notice what happened: Hellenistic philosophy, which had borrowed heavily from ancient Egyptian mythology, began to be taught instead of the teachings of the Bible as the source of doctrine! Prevailing concepts such as the immortality of the soul, an ever-burning hell, purgatory and heaven all came directly out of ancient mythology! The popular church, to become more acceptable to potential pagan converts, adopted and taught these pagan philosophies rather than the plain teachings of the Bible! Today, the idea of heaven being the "reward of the saved" is nearly universal among mainstream Christian churches. What is the truth about heaven? What does your Bible teach about "going to heaven"?

Col 2:8 Watch that there not be one misleading you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Messiah.

"The Promised Land" While addressing Gentile-born converts in Galatia, the apostle Paul was inspired to write: *"Now the promises which were made to Abraham and to his seed . . . And if you are of Messiah, then you are seeds of Abraham, even heirs according to the promise."* (*Galatians 3:16, 29*)

The Believer is now only an "heir." What the believer shall inherit, if "saved"-wherever they shall spend eternity-is a definite, specific PROMISE of Elohim. And that promise was made to Abraham, who is called in this same book of Galatians (written to Gentile converts) the "father" of the faithful (*Galatians 3:7*).

If one is converted, regardless of race, color, nationality or sex; IF one is "Messiah's"; a True Believer; then he is one of Abraham's children, spiritually speaking, and an "heir" of the PROMISE made to Abraham. What he is to inherit, then, is whatever was promised to Abraham!

Precisely what did Yahweh promise Abraham?

Gen 12:2 *And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing.*

Gen 12:3 *And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.*

Gen 12:5 *And Abram took his wife Sarai, and his brother's son, Lot, and all their substance that they had gained, and the persons they had gotten in Haran. And they went out to go into the land of Canaan. And they came into the land of Canaan.*

Gen 12:6 *And Abram passed through the land as far as the place of Shechem, to the Oak of Alon- Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.*

Gen 12:7 *And YAHWEH appeared to Abram and said, I will give this set apart land to your seed. And he built an altar there to YAHWEH, who appeared to him.*

Psa 105:7 *He is YAHWEH our Elohim; His judgments are in all the earth;*

Psa 105:8 *He has remembered His covenant forever; the Word He commanded to a thousand generations;*

Psa 105:9 *which He cut with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac;*

Psa 105:10 *and He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for a perpetual covenant;*

Psa 105:11 *saying, to you I will give the land of Canaan, the portion of your inheritance;*

Deut 34:1 *And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And YAHWEH caused him to see all the land; Gilead to Dan;*

Deut 34:2 *and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah to the sea beyond;*

Deut 34:3 *and the Negev, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, to Zoar.*

Deut 34:4 *And YAHWEH said to him, this is the land which I have sworn to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, I will give it to your seed.*

COMMENT: "Seed" means offspring. So the promise to Abraham and his offspring; his descendants; was the LAND OF ISRAEL which was previously called Canaan! What are the boundaries of this land?

Gen 15:18 *In that day YAHWEH cut a covenant with Abram, saying, I have given this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,*

COMMENT: The land of Canaan, much of which is occupied by the State of Israel today, was promised to Abraham and his descendants. That's why it's called "the Promised Land"! Notice that it is a region on this earth, not up in heaven!

How long did Yahweh promise Abraham that he and his seed would possess the land?

Gen 13:15 For all the land which you see I will give to you, and to your seed always.

COMMENT: Since the inheritance is to be an ETERNAL inheritance, it must also include EVERLASTING LIFE! Not one word about heaven! Through Abraham, all true Believers, as his spiritual descendants, are promised the earth!

Rev 5:10 and made them kings and priests to our Elohim; and they shall reign on the earth.

Was the same promise Yahweh made to Abraham also made to his son, Isaac?

Gen 26:1 And a famine was in the land besides the famine in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, to Gerar.

Gen 26:2 And YAHWEH appeared to him and said, Do not go down into Egypt; but dwell in the land which I shall say to you.

Gen 26:3 Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed I will give all these lands. And I will cause to rise My oath which I swore to your father Abraham.

Gen 26:4 And I will increase your seed like the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves in your Seed,

Gen 26:5 because Abraham listened to My voice and heeded My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Torah.

And was the same promise made to Jacob, Isaac's son? And to Jacob's children-the Israelites?

Gen 35:9 And Elohim appeared to Jacob again when he came out of Padan-Aram, and He blessed him.

Gen 35:10 And Elohim said to him, Your name is Jacob; your name will not anymore be called Jacob, but Israel will be your name. And He called his name Israel.

Gen 35:11 And Elohim said to him, I am El Shaddai (Almighty); be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall be from you. And kings shall go forth from your loins.

Gen 35:12 And the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, I will give it to you; and after you I will give the land to your seed.

Rom 9:4 who are Israelites, to who belongs the sonship and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Torah, and the service, and the promises;

COMMENT: Jacob, whose name Yahweh changed to "Israel," had 12 sons. Each son gave rise to one of the 12 tribes of Israel, known collectively as the "Children of Israel," or Israelites. These 12 sons of Jacob became the nation of Israel, in which the covenant promises of Yahweh were transferred to according to the covenant that Yahweh made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Obedience BEFORE Inheritance

How did Yahweh further test Abraham?

Gen 22:1 And it happened after these things, the Elohim testing Abraham, said to him, Abraham! And he said, Behold I am here.

Gen 22:2 And He said, Now take your son, Isaac, your only one whom you love, and go into the land of Moriyah. And there offer him for a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will say to you.

COMMENT: The proper translation of the word tempt here is "test." Elohim tempts no man to sin (**Jacob 1:13**). When the King James translation of the Bible was made in 1611, the word tempt meant to try, or to test. That is why the translators used the word "tempt" in **Genesis 22:1**.

Did Abraham, in facing this test, stop to reason it out, make excuse, or rebel? Or did he faithfully OBEY Yahweh; even rising early in the morning to obey His command?

Gen 22:3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and he took two of his youths with him, and his son Isaac. And he split wood for a burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place which Elohim had said to him.

Did Yahweh allow Abraham to kill his only son?

Gen 22:10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

Gen 22:11 And the Messenger of YAHWEH called to him from the heavens and said, Abraham! Abraham! And he said, Behold I am here.

Gen 22:12 And He said, Do not lay your hand on the boy, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear Elohim, and you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me.

COMMENT: Yahweh did not really want Isaac's life; He merely wanted to see if Abraham was WILLING to obey Him in faith no matter what the cost! Does Yahweh want sacrifices on the altar or does he want living sacrifices?

Rom 12:1 Therefore, brethren, I call on you through the compassions of Elohim to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to Elohim, which is your reasonable service.

Psa 51:17 The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O Elohim, You will not despise.

Note in verse 12 the words: "now I know that you fear Elohim." Because Abraham was faithfully obedient to Elohim (**Hebrews 11:17**), the Bible refers to him as the "father" of all who live by faith (**Romans 4:11**; **Galatians 3:7**). After Abraham obeyed; had been put to the severest test and found absolutely faithful; were there any other conditions to Yahweh's promise?

Gen 22:15 And the Messenger of YAHWEH called to Abraham out of the heavens a second time.

Gen 22:16 And He said, I have sworn by Myself, declares YAHWEH, that on account of this thing you have done, and have not withheld your son, your only son,

Gen 22:17 that blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the lip of the sea. And your Seed shall possess the gate of His enemies.

Gen 22:18 And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have listened to My voice.

COMMENT: Note the words, "on account of this thing you HAVE DONE," in verse 16; and the words, "because you have LISTENED TO MY VOICE," in verse 18. The promise was now unconditional! What other scripture shows us that this promise is ABSOLUTELY SURE? **Genesis 26:5**.

Let's notice how people of all nations are eligible to eventually become heirs to the same promises made to righteous Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob.

Did Elohim promise Abraham that all nations of the earth would be blessed through his "seed"?

Gen 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.

Gen 22:18 And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have listened to My voice.

According to Yahweh, who is considered a seed of Abraham?

Gal 3:16 Now the promises which were made to Abraham and to his seed as a covenant. He did not say, "To your descendants," as many but, "To your descendant", as one, that is Messiah.

Gal 3:26 for you are all sons of YAHWEH through faith in Messiah Yahshua.

Gal 3:27 For as many as were baptized into Messiah, you put on Messiah.

Gal 3:28 There cannot be Jew nor Aramean, there is no slave nor freeman, there is no male and female; for you are all one (echad), united in Messiah Yahshua.

Gal 3:29 And if you are of Messiah, then you are seeds of Abraham, even heirs according to the promise.

COMMENT: The word "seed" in **Genesis 22:18** refers specifically to one Seed-Messiah; rather than to Abraham's

multiple "seed" or offspring mentioned in **Genesis 13:16; 17:8**. When a believer come to faith in Yahshua and is baptize in His name, He is grafted into the one tree of Israel and becomes a child of Yahweh and a literal seed of Abraham, and an heir according to the promises given to Abraham.

Does Yahshua's genealogy in **Luke 3:23-34** prove that Yahshua was a direct descendant; a "seed"; of Abraham?

Luk 3:33 *the son of Amminadab, the son of Aram, the son of Hezron, the son of Pharez, the son of Judah,*
Luk 3:34 *the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,*

Did He clearly spring from the tribe of Judah, one of the sons of Jacob or Israel? **Verses 33-34**. Also notice **Hebrews 7:14**. Luke records Yahshua's genealogy through His mother, Mariam. Joseph, mentioned in **Luke 3:23**, was actually the son-in-law of Heli, the father of Mariam. And so, Luke shows that Mariam was directly descended from Abraham (**verse 34**).

How does one who is not a descendant of Abraham by birth become an "heir" to the promises made to him?

Gal 3:27 *For as many as were baptized into Messiah, you put on Messiah.*

Gal 3:28 *There cannot be Jew nor Aramean, there is no slave nor freeman, there is no male and female; for you are all one (echad) united in Messiah Yahshua.*

Gal 3:29 *And if you are of Messiah, then you are seeds of Abraham, even heirs according to the promise.*

Rom 9:6 *Not, however, that the word of YAHWEH hath actually failed; for all those who belong to Israel are not Israelites.*

Rom 9:7 *nor because they are Abraham's seed are all children, but "In Isaac shall your Seed be called." (Gen. 21:12)*

Rom 9:8 *That is: Not the children of flesh are children of YAHWEH, but the children of the promise are counted for as descendants.*

COMMENT: All people who have not descended from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob (Israel) are called "Gentiles" in the Bible. Paul showed the Gentile-born Galatians that the only way they could become heirs to the promises made to Abraham was by becoming children ("seed") of Abraham THROUGH being baptized into Messiah and becoming a spiritual seed of His!

We read in **Galatians 3:7**, "*You must therefore know that those who trust in faith, are the children of Abraham.*" If you are a true believer, regardless of race or nationality, Abraham is your "father" in the faith, and you will inherit whatever Yahweh promised to him. How clear! And so ALL true believers are heirs along with Abraham and will inherit; 1) ETERNAL LIFE and 2) THE ENTIRE EARTH. "Heaven" was NOT included in the promises Yahweh made to Abraham! But when will Abraham and his "children" receive their inheritance? When will they receive the promises?

Promises YET to Be Fulfilled

Has Abraham yet received the inheritance Yahweh promised to him?

Acts 7:2 *And he said, Men, brothers, and fathers, listen! The Elohim of glory appeared to our father Abraham, being in Beth-Nahrain (The Land of the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates) before he lived in Haran,*

Acts 7:3 *and said to him, "Go out from your land and from your kinsmen," "and come into a land which I will show to you."*

Acts 7:4 *Then going out from the land of the Chaldeans, he lived in Haran. And after his father died, Elohim moved him from there into this land in which you now live.*

Acts 7:5 *And He did not give him an inheritance in it, not even a foot step, yet He promised that He would give it to him as an heirloom to him and to his seed while he had no son.*

Heb 11:8 *Having been called out by faith, Abraham obeyed to go forth to a place which he was going*

to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not understanding where he went.

Heb 11:9 *By faith he resided as a foreigner in a land of promise, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the joint-heirs of the same promise;*

Heb 11:10 *for he looked forward to a city having the foundations of which the builder and maker is YAHWEH.*

Heb 11:13 *These all died by way of faith, not having received the promises, but seeing them from afar, and being persuaded, and having embraced and confessed that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

Heb 11:39 *And having obtained witness through the faith, these all did not obtain the promise:*

Heb 11:40 *YAHWEH having foreseen something better concerning us, that they should not be perfected without us.*

COMMENT: These inspired words plainly state that Abraham has not yet received the promised inheritance—even though Yahweh's promises were made unconditional because of his obedience. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were merely sojourners; that is, temporary inhabitants, visitors in the land Yahweh had promised to them?

Was Abraham still dead during the time of Yahshua and the apostles?

John 8:52 *Then the Jews said to Him, now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets, and You say, If anyone keeps My Word, he will not taste of death forever!*

Did David, an heir of Abraham and one of Yahweh's prophets, inherit the promises; or is he still dead in his grave?

Acts 2:29 *Men, brothers, let me speak boldly with you to say to you as to the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is among us until this day.*

COMMENT: We read in the New Testament that Abraham and all the patriarchs have **NOT YET** received the promised inheritance! They, and all who have become Abraham's children through Yahshua, are now only HEIRS of the promises. They have not yet become inheritors! The BIG question that still remains is: When will they receive the promised inheritance?

To Inherit the "Kingdom of Yahweh"

Matthew uses the term "Kingdom of Heaven" to express exactly the same idea that Mark, Luke and John express as "Kingdom of Yahweh." Mathew was written to the Jews of his time and many of them due to the false religious spirit of the Pharisees did not pronounce Yahweh's name at that time and used the term "Kingdom of Heaven" instead. But the expression "*Kingdom of Heaven*" does not mean a kingdom in heaven. But it does mean a kingdom owned and ruled by Yahweh, whose throne and dwelling place is in heaven.

What did Yahshua say the "meek" shall inherit?

Mat 5:5 *Blessed are the meek! For they shall inherit the earth*

COMMENT: The "meek," in other words, humble believers shall inherit the EARTH for an everlasting possession, and shall enter the "Kingdom of Heaven," which will be on earth! As we learned in a previous lesson, the Kingdom of Yahweh, which Messiah will establish on earth at His return, is the divine Family of Yahweh.

To enter into or "inherit" the divine Kingdom of Yahweh is a destiny of such marvelous glory that the human mind cannot really grasp it! We mortals have no concept of what is really in store for those who obey Yahweh. The full extent of the inheritance Yahweh has promised true believers cannot be even remotely imagined by the natural mind of man but Yahweh does reveal it to us "by His Spirit".

What does *Matthew 6:10* tell us about Yahweh's Kingdom?

Mat 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as it is in Heaven, also on the earth.

COMMENT: Believers today are to pray earnestly: "THY KINGDOM COME!" The word "come" implies it will come to earth. Yahshua did not tell us to pray: "Let us GO to heaven!" Obviously Yahweh's Kingdom has NOT come to the earth yet. When will the righteous inherit the Kingdom of Yahweh?

Mat 25:31 But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy cherubs with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

Mat 25:32 And before Him shall be gathered all the nations; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Mat 25:33 And indeed He will set the sheep off His right, but the goats off the left hand.

Mat 25:34 Then the King will say to those on His right, Come, the blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

COMMENT: Clearly, it is WHEN Yahshua RETURNS that Abraham and his children through Yahshua will become inheritors of the promises! But let's notice what else will happen at Messiah's coming and the importance of the Resurrection.

1st Cor 15:51 Behold, I speak a mystery to you: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed.

1st Cor 15:52 In a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet; for a trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.

1st Cor 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

COMMENT: Notice that the trumpet sounds at the SECOND COMING of Messiah! *1st Thessalonians 4:16-17*. This is also when Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and other faithful servants of Yahweh will inherit the promises.

At the Second Coming of Yahshua all the dead in Messiah will be raised with new SPIRIT BODIES. Those believers who are still alive at His return will be instantly changed into the same kind of SPIRIT BODIES; bodies that will then be in the Kingdom or Family of Yahweh. Our present flesh is corruptible, subject to death and decay. But the spirit bodies that we, if we are true believers, shall receive will be ETERNALLY NEW; immortal, incorruptible, never subject to death or decay! Also notice that the dead are mentioned as sleeping until this resurrection, not up in heaven. (*1st Corinthians 15:51*)

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Yahshua died and rose again, even so YAHWEH will also bring with Him all those who have fallen asleep through Yahshua.

1Th 4:15 For we say this to you in the Word of YAHWEH, that we the living who remain to the coming of our Master will not at all go before those who have fallen asleep.

1Th 4:16 Because the Master Himself shall come down from Heaven with a commanding shout of an archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of YAHWEH. And the dead in Messiah will rise again first.

1Th 4:17 Then we who remain alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet with our Master in the air. And so we will always be with our Master.

Without a resurrection, the dead would never live again (*1st Corinthians 15:16, 18*). Therefore, the resurrection of the dead is central to Yahweh's plan. And unless Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all deceased believers are RESURRECTED from the dead at Messiah's coming, they cannot inherit the promises!

1st Cor 15:13 But if there is not a resurrection of the dead, neither has Messiah been raised.

1st Cor 15:14 But if Messiah has not been raised, then our proclamation is worthless, and your faith is also worthless.

1st Cor 15:15 And also we are found to be false witnesses of Elohim, because we witnessed as

to Elohim that He raised Messiah, whom He did not raise, if the dead ones are not raised.
1st Cor 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, Messiah has not been raised.
1st Cor 15:17 But if Messiah has not been raised, your faith is foolish; you are still in your sins

Did Messiah Leave a Will, or Testament?

Heb 9:15 And for this reason he became the Mediator of the New Covenant, that He might by his death be redemption, to them who had transgressed the first covenant; so that they, who are called to the eternal inheritance, might receive the promise.
Heb 9:16 For where there is a testament, it shows the death of him who made it.
Heb 9:17 For a covenant is affirmed over those dead, since it never has force when he who has made it is living.

COMMENT: A testament is a will. What kind of inheritance will the heirs of this will, or testament, receive “*Same verse*”? When a person makes a will, must he die before it comes into force? ***Verses 16-17.*** Yahshua left a will; a testament. And through His Word, He teaches us what we must do to become co-heirs with Him of the promise of eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of Yahweh. But a testament, or will, is of no effect until the one making it dies. So Yahshua died that we may inherit the promises through Him. But He lives today at the Father's right hand, ready to intercede for us (***Hebrews 7:25***), to help us, and to give us strength so we can overcome sin and inherit the glorious promises of Yahweh at the resurrection!

Has Anyone Gone to Heaven?

There is absolutely NO scripture in all the Bible that says believers go to heaven when they die! Yet most people seem to be oblivious to the plain teaching of the Word of Yahweh. They have taken for granted, without question, the false idea of "going to heaven!" Let's notice a few more scriptures that have been either overlooked or misinterpreted by those who believe this false doctrine.

Notice again Yahshua's words in verse ***John 14:3: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, that where I am you may be also."*** When Yahshua returns to the earth as "King of Kings," He will tell the saints: "Come, ye blessed . . . inherit the kingdom PREPARED FOR YOU" (***Matthew 25:34***). And the Scriptures declare that they will rule all nations here on earth, having POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY in Yahweh's Kingdom! (***Revelation 5:10***)

Does the Bible dogmatically state that NO ONE, except Yahshua Himself, has ever ascended up into heaven?

John 3:13 And no one has gone up into Heaven, except He having come down out of Heaven, The Son of Man is He who is in Heaven.

COMMENT: Could anything be clearer? Some may point out ***Revelation 5:3*** as an exception. This verse reads: ***"And no man in heaven. . . was able to open the book."*** However, the expression "no man" in the King James Version is an improper translation of the original Greek. The Revised Standard Version, the New King James, Moffatt's translation, the New English Bible and the New International Version all properly translate the same expression as "*no one.*"

But how about Elijah the prophet, did he not get taken to heaven?

2Ki 2:1 And it happened, when YAHWEH was to cause Elijah to go up to the skies in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha went from Gilgal.
2Ki 2:9 And it happened, when they were crossing, Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you. And Elisha said, Then let there now be a double mouth of your spirit on me.
2Ki 2:10 And he said, You have asked a hard thing. If you shall see me taken from you, it shall be so to you. And if not, it shall not be.
2Ki 2:11 And it happened, as they were going on and speaking, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire came. And they separated between them both, and Elijah went up in a whirlwind to the skies.

Comment: In scripture there are three heavens. The first heaven is simply the sky above where the birds fly. The second heaven is where the planets and stars are, and the third heaven is where the throne of Yahweh dwells. Clearly, Elijah was taken not to the throne of Yahweh, where no man has ever gone, but was simply translated through the sky from one place to another.

Had this ever happened before to Elijah?

1Ki 18:11 *And now, you are saying, Go, say to your master, Behold, Elijah.*

1Ki 18:12 *And it shall be, I will go away from you, and the Spirit of YAHWEH will lift you up, where I do not know, and I will come to tell Ahab, and he will not find you, and he will kill me. And your servant has feared YAHWEH from my youth.*

Comment: Apparently, this had happened several times that Yahweh had translated Elijah from one place to another, and this is the reason why this time when Elijah was taken by the chariot of fire, the men asked to look for him, but Elisha knew that Yahweh moved him to another place and had replaced him as the main prophet of Israel. We know for sure that Elijah was still on the earth because after this incident, the king of Israel received a letter from Elijah proving he was still alive on the earth.

2Ch 21:12 *And a writing came to him (Jehoram) from Elijah the prophet, saying, So says YAHWEH, the Elohim of your father David, Because you have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat, and in the ways of Asa the king of Judah,*

Jehoram was the son of Jehoshaphat, and reigned after Jehoshaphat died, so clearly this was after Elijah was translated by the chariot of fire, and clearly shows he was not taken to heaven and the throne of Yahweh, but simply moved to another place on the earth.

Did the Apostle Paul claim that he knew about a man going to the third heaven?

2Co 12:1 *Really, to boast is not profitable to me, for I will come to visions and revelations of YAHWEH.*

2Co 12:2 *I know a man in Messiah fourteen years before—whether in the body, I do not know, or out of the body, I do not know, YAHWEH knows—such a one was caught up to the third Heaven.*

2Co 12:3 *And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know; YAHWEH knows -*

2Co 12:4 *that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words which a man is not permitted to speak.*

Comment: Paul tells us in verse one that this was a vision. A vision is different than a dream in that the person is taken by the spirit of Yahweh and is awake and not dreaming, but is simply seeing something that is not actually there. You can compare this story with the transfiguration of Yahshua with Moses and Elijah, which was also a vision, and also John in the book of Revelation, who was seeing the whole future of Revelation in a vision almost 2,000 years ago, Rev 1:10, Rev 4:1-3. All scripture fits together in perfect harmony if we simply allow scripture to interpret itself.

But what about the "thief on the stake"? Didn't he go to heaven with Yahshua on the very day of His crucifixion?

Luke 23:42 *And he said to Yahshua, Master, remember me when You come in Your kingdom.*

Luke 23:43 *And Yahshua said to him, Truly, today, I say to you, you will be with Me in Paradise.*

COMMENT: First, Yahshua Himself did not go to heaven that day. Instead, He was put in a tomb; in where He remained dead for three days and three nights. Second, notice the context of this verse. The thief had just asked, in verse 42, **"Master, remember me WHEN You come in your kingdom."** The plain fact is that Yahshua did not come into His Kingdom that day, as he was 3 days and 3 nights in the grave. Actually where the misunderstanding comes in this verse is that in the Greek language there were no commas in the Greek when the New Testament was written. So when the translators supplied the commas in the English, they were placed where the translators thought they should be. *(In most instances the punctuation is correct, but in this particular case it is not.)* Yahshua did not say, "Today shall thou

be with Me in paradise," but rather, "I say unto thee today, shalt thou [or you shall] be with Me in paradise." The word "today" stresses the time of His promise, not the time Yahshua would be in paradise.

Yahshua discerned the man's repentant attitude and was able to tell Him that he would eventually live again, with him, in paradise. However, that paradise has not yet come to this earth, and the repentant malefactor is still dead!

What will those who "wait upon Yahweh" inherit? What shall those "blessed of Yahweh" inherit?

Psa 37:9 For evildoers shall be cut off; and the ones waiting on YAHWEH, they shall inherit the land.

Psa 37:22 For His blessed ones inherit the earth; and those cursed by Him shall be cut off.

What shall the "righteous" inherit, and how long shall they dwell there?

Psa 37:29 The righteous shall inherit the land and live on it forever.

Psa 37:34 Wait on YAHWEH and keep His way; and He shall exalt you to inherit the land; you shall see when the wicked are cut off.

COMMENT: Is there anything wrong with having the earth as an eternal inheritance? Would you "settle for" earth? The earth today would be an extremely wonderful place in which to live were it not for sin-rebellion against Yahweh and His spiritual law that if kept would result in peace, happiness and joy! Happiness and joy are not a matter of geographical location. They are a state of mind!

And we will be blessed to help Yahshua to recreate the earth to a peaceful blessed environment just like it was in the Garden of Eden. Think of it, there will be NO SIN among the immortal members of the Kingdom of Yahweh. No liars, no murderers, no thieves or robbers. There'll be no war, no sickness or disease; no hunger or want! What a wonderful inheritance! After examining the scriptures, it becomes crystal clear that the destiny of Yahweh's saints is not strumming on harps up in heaven for all eternity. It is infinitely more glorious and exciting!

But what will the earth be like after the Millennium is over and Yahweh's great Master Plan for mankind is complete; when all the righteous will have been given glorious, immortal, spirit-composed bodies, and all the incorrigible wicked will have been burned to ashes? Will there be a NEW earth and NEW heavens after the present earth's surface is purified by fire?

2nd Pet 3:12 looking for and longing for the coming of the Day of YAHWEH, through which the heavens having been set afire will be dissolved; and burning, the elements will melt?

2nd Pet 3:13 But according to His promise, we look for "new heavens and a new earth," in which righteousness dwells.

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea no longer is. Who will dwell on the new earth?

Rev 21:24 And the nations of the ones saved will walk in its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

Rev 21:25 And its gates may not at all be shut by day, for no night will be there.

Rev 21:26 And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

Rev 21:27 And there shall not enter it any thing that defiles, or he who practices abominations and lies, but only the ones having been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb.

What will be the capital city of the new earth?

Rev 21:2 And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from Elohim, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her Husband.

Rev 21:10 And he carried me in spirit onto a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, holy Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from YAHWEH,

Rev 21:18 And the structure of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like pure glass.

Rev 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; respectively each one of the gates was of one pearl.

COMMENT: How clear, therefore, that although true believers do not go to heaven when they die or when they are resurrected, the "Heavenly Jerusalem" is COMING TO EARTH! Will Yahweh the Father then come and dwell on the earth in person and make the New Jerusalem the location of His very THRONE?

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of YAHWEH is with men! And He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His people, and YAHWEH Himself will be with them as their Elohim.

Will those who enter this city be able to have Yahweh's name on their foreheads?

Rev 22:3 And there will be no blight any more: and the throne of YAHWEH and the Lamb will be in it; and his servants will minister to him.

Rev 22:4 And they will see His face; and His name will be on their foreheads.

COMMENT: The New Jerusalem will descend to this earth and will become Yahweh's headquarters for all eternity! The EARTH is destined to become the center of all activity in the universe!

After studying the Bible as we have with this lesson, the plain truth is that heaven is NOT the "reward of the saved." True believers do NOT go to heaven when they die, or when resurrected. The surprising truth is that heaven is coming to the earth. The earth will become the very headquarters from which the Father will rule His vast creation!

Will you dwell on that new earth? Will you be a part of that glorious world? When Yahshua Messiah returns, He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, **INHERIT THE KINGDOM** prepared for you" (**Matthew 25:34**). May Yahweh help you to be among those who will inherit the Kingdom of Yahweh along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

Points to Remember

- 1) People who die are asleep in the grave waiting the resurrection, not in heaven
- 2) The reward of the saved is to rule with Yahshua on earth not in heaven

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