

PASSAGES CONCERNING LIFE AFTER PHYSICAL OR EARTHLY DEATH without the terms "eternal," "everlasting," "always," and "forever" in them:

Since we've come into the preterist view of prophecy that has changed our view so radically in relation to biblical eschatology, most passages that we formerly believed referred to our existence in a spiritual condition or habitation outside our sphere of physical experience are now believed to refer to our existence while still biologically alive on Earth; for one example, that very picturesque passage in Revelation 21 that we previously thought was of some spiritual realm called "heaven" actually depicts our covenantal relationship with our Creator through the finished work of His Son, Jesus Christ. (There's also of course the many resurrection passages like 1 Cor. 15 & 2 Cor. 5.) So...

Due to that and the fact that the terms "eternal," "everlasting," "always," and "forever" (dependent upon their contexts) are so flexible and thus debatable in their meanings, I wanted to locate as many passages as I could which indicate to us that the Bible does still reveal an actual existence for Christians after they die on Earth. And I think the following passages (and likely more that I may come across in time) support this idea:

In my study of First John 3:2-3 I came across a reference to a statement by King David in **Psalms 17:15** which appears to patently support life-after-physical-death: To God David said, "I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness." See...

As we know, David lived hundreds of years before the fulfillment of all prophecy and therefore the consummation of God's creation of what Peter called "the new heavens and new earth [H&E] in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13).

This New H&E was to be (and now is after the events of AD 70 that fulfilled all prophecy, Luke 21:22) the most holy place [MHP] of God's presence (generally known as "heaven") that High Priest Jesus brought back with Him to incorporate within it all God's people *since ages past*, thereby conferring / imputing / accrediting to them His righteousness. So...

When David wrote of seeing God's face in righteousness and awaking in His likeness, He was referring to a time way off in his future when he'd resurrect to an existence with Yahweh in the New H&E (which, btw, would be better described as a state instead of a place of existence).

This perfectly leads us to the next Old Testament passage:

In **Daniel 12**, a chapter we consult probably more than any other Old Testament passage when we're studying biblical eschatology, God, after revealing information about a future resurrection to transpire around the time of the events of the AD 70 demise of Judaism, told his favored Prophet Daniel in **verse 13** that he, like King David, would arise to his inheritance in that prophesied resurrection.

God's precise words in the NKJV were: "Go your way until the end, for you shall rest and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

Especially within the confines of this chapter, if this statement by God Himself to Daniel wasn't meant to indicate that Daniel would awake to live with David in the New H&E, then I seriously have no idea what He meant. Now with David / Daniel in mind like this, I must jump past some New Testament passages and consult Hebrews; then we'll backtrack.

In **Hebrews 11**, the chapter I call "Faith's Hall of Fame," there are some verses which perfectly coincide with what we've been discussing relative to these Old Covenant saints. Let's check out **verses 13 & 15-16**. Speaking of worthies like Abel, Enoch, and Noah, it says that "these all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ... [So] now they desire a better, heavenly country, which is why God isn't ashamed to be their God and has prepared a city for them"; in fact, **verse 10** specifically says of Abraham that "he waited for the city ... whose builder and maker is God." So...

There were those who lived/died long before Jesus and His accomplished work who had some notion concerning a life after their biological deaths, a life in a city/country/homeland with their God; in other places in *Hebrews* the concept of a New H&E are found and clearly employed in relation to this city/country/homeland: In the very next chapter, chapter 12 e.g., we read this: "You have come to Mt Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; ... [you have come] to God ... [and] the spirits of just men made perfect" (vv. 22-23); and then in 13:14 it reads, "Here we have no continuing city, so we seek the one about to come." Now...

The question is: How would all that happen for these long-dead saints? Well, right back there in **Hebrews 11** we read how in **verse 35**, for there Paul wrote of the "better resurrection" which, per verse 40, would (and did) transpire simultaneously with the time when the living saints were made perfect in Christ at His return with His righteousness to credit to all His people. This then perfectly leads into another New Testament passage:

Just a few years before the promised/prophesied resurrection of Daniel 12:2 & 7 occurred, Paul, in **First Corinthians 15:16-18** when speaking about the Old Covenant worthies *of whom some in Corinth were denying the possibility of life after death*, said that "If those dead ones don't rise, then Christ also isn't risen [because He's one of them]; and if Christ isn't risen, then your faith is vain, and you're still in your sins. Besides that, even those who have fallen asleep in ['UNrisen'] Christ have perished." OK, now...

Backtracking to **Matthew**, in **22:31-32** we find a well-known statement by Jesus when He said to some ignorant leaders of the Jews, "Concerning the resurrection of the dead ones, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." So were Abraham, Isaac, and Israel dead physically? Of course they were. Were these faithful ones living to God. Yes they were, for they were those who were not dead-dead, but merely asleep, waiting the fulfillment of their inheritance just as Daniel was.

When I asked fellow believers to help me come up with passages for this study, our next one came up more than any other. In **John 11:25**, when Jesus had arrived at the tomb of Lazarus, He made this glorious declaration: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." Wow! ☺ Let's read that in a few other well-known versions and interlinears. (Since nearly all are the same on the I-am-the-resurrection-and-life part, I'll just quote the last part of the verse. And I won't identify off all 15 version names; just see if you can catch the subtle differences and thus feel the weight here.)

Modern KJV and ASV: "*he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live.*"
J.W. Etheridge Translation: "*he who believes in Me, although he will die, shall live.*"
William B. Godbey NT: "*the one believing on Me, though he may die, shall live.*"
L. Ambrose Sawyer NT: "*he who believes in Me, even if he has died, shall live.*"
Literal Translation Version: "*the one believing in Me, though he die, he shall live.*"
Young's Literal Translation: "*he who is believing in Me, even if he may die, shall live.*"
Analytical Literal Translation: "*the one believing in Me, even if he dies, he will live.*"
Kingdom Interlinear: "*the one believing in Me, even if he should die, he will live.*"
ExeGeses Companion Bible: "*whoever trusts in Me, though he dies, he still lives.*"
R.F. Weymouth's NT: "*he who believes in Me, even if he has died, he shall live.*"
James Moffatt & E.J. Goodspeed NTs: "*he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.*"
Bible In Basic English: "*he who has faith in Me will have life even if he is dead.*"
C.B. Williams NT: "*whoever continues to believe in Me will live right on even though he dies.*"

If by this statement Jesus wasn't saying that there's life after physical/earthly death for those who have placed their trust in Him, then whatever He meant utterly eludes me; He's the resurrection and the source of "endless life" (cf. Heb. 7:6), so to be "in Him" is to have life without end (cf. **John 8:51**).

The next passage is in **Romans 6**; let's read **verses 4-5 & 8-11**: "We were buried with Christ through baptism into death, that just as He was raised from the dead by Father's glory even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. ... Now since we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that He, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him, for the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God."

Now let's emphasize **verse 8**: "*Since we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.*" When Paul wrote that, Jesus had obviously died physically ... but, because He resurrected and ascended as High Priest to the Father, He was also *alive* when this was composed; so Paul made it as plain as day that those who had given themselves to the Lord in baptism would live with Him in His ethereal state of existence (cf. **John 14:19**). Again...

If that isn't what Paul was saying was their destiny in Christ, then I have no idea what he was talking about. Later...

In **Romans 8:38-39** Paul wrote that "neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things about to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." To put it succinctly for our purposes in this study, he proclaimed that even death could not separate believers from their Lord. Especially since he referred to created/physical/earthly things, what else could he have meant except that biological death need no longer to be looked upon as a separation from endless life with God?

Earlier about John 11:25 I said that it was the most mentioned passage in relation to the question of life after death, but this next one was the second most mentioned passage: In **Philippians 1** we find the Apostle Paul in a happy/sad mood while writing, for he said in **verses 21-23**, "To live is Christ and to die is gain, for if I live on in the flesh it will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell [meaning if he should avoid the more dangerous situations or not, like going to Jerusalem, Acts 21:13 & context]. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better." Once more: If Paul wasn't by inspiration of the Holy Spirit referring to the ideology of life after physical death, then I'm at a total loss in reference to his meaning here. Lastly...

The book of Revelation wouldn't be left out of this list, of course. ☺ **Revelation 14:13** seems to be a pretty good passage to not only include in this list but even to top it off: "'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"

I concede that there's quite a bit of disagreement and lack of satisfactory understanding of this passage among preterist folks, but, after much consideration, at this time I still personally see this statement as a reference to the physical death of Christians. And...

If I'm correct, then, yes, this verse is indeed a great one with which to conclude our consideration of passages found so far which suggest/support continued life for the saints after biological/earthly death.