

You Still Exist After Death

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Chances are you would agree that when a person dies they still exist. However, I have noticed that when some Christians discuss things with others, especially with those whom might be termed as belonging to a cult, and the topic of death is mentioned, they fall short of what the Holy Scriptures reveal about life on the other side. This deficit sometimes enters into a discussion regarding the deity of Christ and His death upon the cross. Before we address that specific point, let us take a brief look at death as mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

First, it must be said that the Holy Bible indicates there are two types of death. There is the first death where the body ceases to function and the spirit of a person leaves it. As it will be shown, the person who physically died still exists. From the Biblical standpoint physical death may be viewed as a transition from one state of existence to another, from the physical-spiritual realm to the completely spiritual realm. The Holy Bible also speaks of the “second death,” a term for eternal damnation, seen in Revelation 2:11, 20:6 and 14, and 21:8.

If you think that having two deaths is strange, there is a parallel in the medical realm: clinical death and biological death. The former is generally described as when a person quits breathing and their heart stops, and the latter when irreversible permanent cellular damage occurs predominately affecting a vital organ such as the brain or heart.

There Are No Verses To Prove Nonexistence

With that said, let us now turn our attention to what happens when someone dies. Many of the cults will point to Holy Scriptures that seem to indicate neither the body, nor soul, nor spirit of a person exists after death with some stating that God will recall the non-existing people for the time of judgment. Of course, God is very capable of doing that but, even so, what are the verses that seem to indicate non-existence of a person after death?

There are a number of them and there are two facts good to know about them: 1.) Most, if not all, occur in the poetical books and portions of poetry in the Holy Bible; 2.) Verses and passages that indicate existence after death outnumber the others.

We have already discussed poetical writings in the Holy Bible in another article {1}. It was pointed out that all poetical passages must be considered in the context of the entirety of God’s written Word. Briefly, for example we mentioned the psalmist of Psalm 139 speaking against Babylon who says by the Holy Spirit in verse 9, “Happy shall he be, that takes and dashes your little ones against the stones.” The balance of the Holy Bible points out that was the personal sentiment of the psalmist (permitted by the Holy Spirit to enter Holy Scripture) and it is now overruled by the finished work of Christ in the current age of the Church.

So, as I present three verses that seem to state non-existence after death, bear in mind that

other Holy Scripture, which will be given later, will definitely show there is existence after death. And, the Holy Bible is not contradicting itself because poetry needs to be handled as indicated and other points of hermeneutics should be factored in.

Job 7:9 As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away: so he that goes down to the grave shall come up no more.

Psalm 39:13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

Psalm 104:35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless YHVH, O my soul. Praise YHVH.

“No more” was the best phrase I could think of that would insinuate annihilation, complete removal from existence. If anyone knows of a better one, or a better set of verses, please let me know, but read through this section first. I have spent hours looking for verses that would at least come close to speak of annihilation and those are the only three I could find. But we will now see why they do not speak of complete annihilation.

Job 7:9 does not show complete annihilation because of the evidence found in its context. Job 7:1 shows the context deals with life on earth. Job’s comments show that once he dies he is no more a part of life on earth. There is nothing about ceasing to exist and, in fact, later in Job 19:25 he speaks of seeing His redeemer and in verses 26 and 27 says, “And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

Psalm 39:13 is almost the same situation as Job 7:9 since we see that David speaks by the Spirit about life on earth in verses 4 to 6. However, we really know that David still exists because Ezekiel 37:24-25 shows his future ministry as king and prince.

Psalm 104:35 is a Hebrew poetical couplet -- really two couplets in one verse. The second couplet is “Bless YHVH, O my soul. Praise YHVH.” Both of those short sentences have the same concept. For the first couplet “sinners consumed out of the earth” is the same as “let the wicked be no more,” meaning, be no more on earth.

Other verses I found were along the lines of the following two:

Isaiah 38:18 For the grave cannot praise You, death can not celebrate You: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

Psalm 6:5 For in death there is no remembrance of You: in the grave who shall give You thanks?

Hezekiah speaks in Isaiah 38:18 and David in Psalm 6:5. Both lament about the grave, sheol. Sheol {2} can mean a physical dirt or water grave, but it can also mean a place of punishment after death. The context of both verses we are discussing dictates that the grave is a place of punishment after death. This is also because in both verses both men are aware of their frailties that might pull them down to this punishment. David says by the Spirit in verse 1 of Psalm 6, “O YHVH, rebuke me not in Your anger, neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure.” Hezekiah, speaking after being healed, after being brought back from the brink of physical

death, says by the Spirit in verse 15 (YLT, Young's Literal Translation), "...I go softly all my years for the bitterness of my soul." In other words, God brought Hezekiah to a New Testament principle spoken of by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:16-17, "See then that you walk circumspectly (the Greek here means "exactly, accurately, diligently"), not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." So, knowing full well he will exist after death, Hezekiah decides he is going to walk (conduct his life) circumspectly because he does not want to leave this world and go into the next realm to face punishment. He wanted the favor of YHVH.

There are other verses like Psalm 6:5 and Isaiah 38:18, but none show non-existence. I am at a lost to find any verse that shows non-existence. I actually spent hours to find something, but each and every verse, when context and the principle of Scripture interprets Scripture, along with other hermeneutical principles were considered, pointed to the fact one **does exist** after death. We will soon present a few of the overwhelming abundance of Scriptural proof that one does exist after death.

How Some Attempt To Wiggle Away From The Truth Of Existence After Death

Before we present just a piece of the overwhelming proof that one exists after death it is needful to briefly look at how some work their way around that truth. Most notable on this subject is the Watchtower Society (WTS), better known as Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs). They attempt to avoid the truth of existence after death in mainly two ways: 1.) Confounding what the Holy Scriptures state, and 2.) dismissing passages that do show existence after death as figurative.

Here is one way how they confound what the Holy Bible really says {3}. In one of their booklets, *What Happens to Us When We Die*, the WTS states: "The word 'soul' as used in the Bible refers to a person or an animal or to the life that a person or an animal enjoys." Because of that, they say the soul ceases to exist after death. They state the breath that God placed into Adam returned to God, and so it is for the rest of us. They will claim, therefore, that Adam, as Adam, ceased to exist.

Now, let us look at what soul can fully mean in the Hebrew from James Strong and we will see it can be definitely more than what the WTS makes it out to be:

nephesh (neh'- fesh):

- 1) soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion, passion
- 1a) that which breathes, the breathing substance or being, soul, the inner being of man
- 1b) living being
- 1c) living being (with life in the blood)
- 1d) the man himself, self, person or individual
- 1e) seat of the appetites
- 1f) seat of emotions and passions
- 1g) activity of mind 1g1) dubious
- 1h) activity of the will 1h1) dubious
- 1i) activity of the character 1i1) dubious

Note well it can mean "living being," and "the man himself, self, person or individual." JWs will

still insist one is obliterated at death. They might cite a verse like Joshua 10:39, "And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein." For "all the souls," the YLT has "every person." In other words, they were physically no more, but that does not mean their spiritual aspect was no longer in existence.

The Human Soul Is Immortal

There is clear indication in the Old Testament Scriptures that while soul can speak of an entire person at times it also means a distinct spiritual part of a person either in this life or the life to come. Consider these verses:

Jacob, when dying, prophesied over his sons concerning what would befall them in the last days (see for that phrase Genesis 49:1) speaking of the future tribes of Simeon and Levi (Genesis 49:6), "O my soul, come not into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall."

By the Holy Spirit, David says (Psalm 16:10), "For You will not leave my soul in hell; neither will You permit Your Holy One to see corruption."

The psalmist of Psalm 103 commands his soul, then includes his entire being (Psalm 103:1), "Bless the YHVH, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

The New Testament, of course, concurs that the human soul is a distinct spiritual entity and also speaks of its immortality:

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Revelation 6:9, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here we must look into the Greek word for destroy. Strong points out that *apollumi* (destroy), while it has a number of meanings, is also a metaphor that in reality means "to devote or give over to eternal misery in hell."

So, it is plainly shown that there is an aspect of us called "soul" and that it is, indeed, immortal, and, as you can see, there is no proof of nonexistence after death. A key Old Testament verse that shows existence after death is Ecclesiastes 12:7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The Hebrew word for spirit in this verse is *ruwach*. Strong points out that word does have multiple definitions, one of which can be "disembodied spirit." Wilson {4} also has a number of definitions, and included among them

is "any spirit of ghost." So, we see from those definitions that there is existence after death. Hence, when David was mourning over the lost of his first son with Bathsheba, he says (2 Samuel 12:23), "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." He knew his son still existed.

Solid Proof Of Existence After Death

There is an abundance of proof that one exists after death, including during the period of time before one would be raised from the dead (Daniel 12:2). We will present just a few examples.

Genesis 25:8 (Jewish Publication Society)-- "And Abraham expired, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people." YLT-- "and Abraham expireth, and dieth in a good old age, aged and satisfied, and is gathered unto his people." The Scripture does not say Abraham died and was no more, or destroyed, or not existent. It says he was gathered to his people. This shows there were people existing who had died.

Genesis 35:29-- "And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

Judges 2:10-- "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers."

The message of Huldah the prophetess unto King Josiah in 2 Kings 22:20-- "Behold therefore, I will gather you unto thy fathers, and you shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring upon this place."

Jesus Christ said in Luke 16:22, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom..."

Philippians 1:23 "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

2 Corinthians 5:8-- "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Revelation 7:14-15, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them."

Did God Die?

Charles Wesley wrote the words to the hymn {5} "And Can It Be?" Sometimes I have to wonder what some people think when they hear the section of that hymn that says, "Amazing love How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"

When that is sung, I wonder if they think the universe was just coasting along if "God was out of commission." However, we have already seen from the abundance of the Holy Scripture provided above that one exists after death. Besides, Wesley speaks of Jesus Christ Who died upon the cross, Christ Who is not only all man but also all God {6}.

It is to be remembered that there is one God Who subsists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit {7}. This is, in part, for our salvation for it was the Father Whom we would have to give account for sin (1 John 2:1), it was the Son Who made that appeasement (1 John 2:1-2), and it is the Holy Spirit Who regenerates (Titus 3:5) and sanctifies (2 Thessalonians 2:13) those who are redeemed and therefore regenerated. Part of the appeasement by the Son on our behalf was to die condemned on the cross, actually becoming our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21) and cursed (Galatians 3:13).

That, indeed, is amazing love! God, Who is most holy, through the Son took our flesh upon Himself so that He would live the life that we should live and then take our sin that we should never had committed. Seriously considering 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13 should bring tears to our eyes:

“For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” – 2Co. 5:21

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.’” – Ga. 3:13

The Word of God is clear that man could never reach God and be saved because man is completely sinful. It had to take God to become a man to bring us to Him. That is one reason why Christ called Himself “The Way” (John 14:6). Anyone can now make peace with God by fully surrendering to Him through Jesus Christ, forsaking their sin and their ways and totally accepting His will.

Conclusion

Two things must be underscored from all that has been presented above. First, death, even the second death, is not cessation of existence, but a transition from one state of being to another. Second, when speaking of Jesus Christ to others, one should not “trip over His deity” because of His humanity. While it would be incorrect to say that God transitioned from one state of being to another, it must be affirmed that God through Christ experienced death for all.

Seeing, then, that God so loved each of us that He has provided for all this abundant salvation through Christ, and in the light that each of us will exist after physical death, it would be a very good thing for anyone who has not made Christ to be King in their life to make a full surrender to Him.

Notes:

{1} See <http://sapphirestreams.com/bec/becUHB2.html> , scroll down to “Special Principles” and locate “6. Poetry”.

{2} From an electronic version of Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance by James Strong incorporated in the Online Bible program, and so throughout the article whenever the ancient language is referred to and no other authority is cited.

{3} Happiness - How to Find It, Brooklyn, NY: The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1980, p. 171 (Presented by, Watchman Fellowship, ...watchman.org/articles/jehovahs-

witnesses/jehovahs-witnesses-and-the-immortal-soul/)

{4} Wilson, William: Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies (MacDonald Publishing Company, McLean, VA) p 411

{5} Thomas Campbell composed the beautiful music for the hymn, "And Can It Be?"

{6} Please read, The Deity Of Christ Proved By The Attributes Of God and Eight Passages That Plainly Show The Deity Of Christ, by selecting a link in their respective areas:

The Deity Of Christ Proved By The Attributes Of God
<http://thesureword.sapphirestreams.com/index.htm#DCAG>

Eight Passages That Plainly Show The Deity Of Christ at . . .
<http://thesureword.sapphirestreams.com/index.htm#EPDC>

{7} Please see The Deity And Personal Expression Of The Holy Spirit, by selecting a link at . . .
<http://thesureword.sapphirestreams.com/index.htm#DPEHS> . . .
when it becomes available. We will try to place an active link there as soon as possible.

Find more apologetics information at <http://thesureword.sapphirestreams.com/> , and please visit this ministry's apologetics index at <http://sapphirestreams.com/life/api.html> .

Unless otherwise noted all Holy Scripture is from the 1769 Authorized Version with spelling of some words updated for our time in addition to changing LORD to YHVH as it rightly should be when the text so indicates. An * next to the abbreviation for another translation or version indicates the same for the text presented.

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