

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

On May 1, 2015, we received the following inquiry:

“You talk a lot about the heavenly hope for Christians. But didn’t the Jews believe that they would live forever on earth? Wouldn’t that mean there is an earthly hope for some?”

To the author, thank you for your email. This is a very good question because Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that the Jews did believe that, and that forms the basis for their doctrine of the earthly hope – that millions of people will not be in heaven with the Christ, but will remain behind to live forever on earth, based on the writings of the Hebrew prophets.

But the Hebrew prophets did not promote such a belief. They did write about a time in the future when the earth would be continuously inhabited by righteous people who will experience an abundance of peace and joy, such as *Psalms 46:9; Psalms 67:6; 72:16; Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 35:1, 6, 7; Isaiah 65:21-23*. All of these scriptures can, and will, be fulfilled for mankind in general. However, none of these verses indicate that the **individual** would live on earth forever. See **The Destiny of Man**.

To emphasize this point, there is one verse within the above scriptures that is noticeably absent from most discussions about living forever on earth. Notice this verse:

“No more will there be an infant from that place who lives but a few days, Nor an old man who fails to **live out his days**. For anyone **who dies** at a hundred will be considered a mere boy, And the sinner will be cursed, even though he is a hundred years of age.” – *Isaiah 65:20*

Here, the prophet acknowledges that individuals will have a longer life span, perhaps a few hundred years, but he will eventually “live out his days” and “die.” Also, the fact that one may live over a hundred years, does not mean that he will escape death. So the prophet Isaiah surely did not believe in living forever on earth.

We also have the words of apostle Paul to the Hebrew Christians, showing that the Hebrew patriarchs, and those who came after them, hoped they would be in heaven:

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed in going out into a place he was destined to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, although not knowing where he was going. By faith he resided as an alien in the land of the promise as in a foreign land, and dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the very same promise. **For he was awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which [city] is God.**”
– *Hebrews 11:8-10*

What city is that? Paul continues:

“In faith all these died, although they did not get the [fulfillment of the] promises, but they saw them afar off and welcomed them and publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land. For those who say such things give evidence that they are earnestly seeking a place of their own. And yet, if they had indeed kept remembering that [place] from which they had gone forth, they would have had opportunity to return. **But now they are reaching out for a better [place], that is, one belonging to heaven.** Hence God is not ashamed of them, to be called upon as their God, **for he has made a city ready for them.**”
– *Hebrews 11:13-16*

These scriptures show that even the Jews did not hold the belief of living forever on earth. This doctrine is unique to Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the various offshoots from them. This doctrine arose due to an error in trying to interpret prophecies. See **Proving Ourselves Worthy of the Christ**. In spite of all scriptural evidence to the contrary, and the absurdity of the doctrine as demonstrated in the series, **The Cherished Earthly Hope**, the earthly hope continues to be perpetuated today because of the stubbornness of the Governing Body and their refusal to admit that the organization made a gross error, negatively affecting the eternal prospects of millions!

Hopefully, as our brothers and sisters among Jehovah’s Witnesses begin to read the Bible for themselves, without the interpretations of the Watchtower organization, they will realize the futility of the earthly hope, and begin to fix their minds on the only hope leading to everlasting life – the heavenly hope of spirit adoption that was foreordained for mankind from the founding of the world. (*Ephesians 1:3-5*)

“*Elaia Luchnia*”
