

AFTERLIFE
Job 14:14, 1 Samuel 28:15
By Raymond White

Let's accept this obvious truth: Afterlife is really what we want, what religion is all about. That there is an afterlife, and that it be favorable, is the fondest hope of everyone. Without an afterlife, everything, including our notions of God, seem pointless.

Christians take afterlife for granted because it's all over the New Testament. The same, however, cannot be said for the Old Testament. Oh, afterlife is there, in the Old Testament, but it is more often a question than an answer. And the few stories in the Old Testament of actual contact with the other side are strange, not the sort of things that square easily with Christian theology.

But as sparse as afterlife verses are in the Old Testament, they do make a reasonable case for Jewish hope in an afterlife.

[1] FIRST THREE CONTACTS

In the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), the first three contacts with the other world are Enoch's walk with God, Samuel's return at the request of a witch, and Elijah's flight to heaven.

Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

1 Samuel 28:15 And Samuel [that is, the dead Samuel] said to Saul, Why hast thou disquited me, to bring me up?

2 Kings 2:11 It came to pass, as they [Elijah and Elisha] still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Of these three, only one is the spirit of an actual dead man, Samuel. The other two, we're not so sure. But all hint of an afterlife.

These three stories are not cohesive, they are dissimilar enough that we actually believe them because they are certainly not contrived. If they were contrived, they'd make more sense as fiction does. These stories are disconnected events with no explanation. There is no promise of an afterlife but just a scant glimpse of it.

Enoch: That God took Enoch says much and says little. God took him to where? To heaven? I suppose. But from our perspective today, heaven is everywhere in the universe that isn't earth, and that makes heaven a very big place. Maybe to another dimension? Could be. I don't know. Then too, does "took Enoch" mean that Enoch is dead or alive? It's all very vague.

But despite the vagueness, this story does settle for us one important thing: a man gained access to God and to his dwelling, wherever and whatever that is. That alone is critical to everything.

Samuel: That he was alive after he died, certainly connotes afterlife. But we must reluctantly ask ourselves, was the witch lying? She could have been because no one saw or heard Samuel except the witch — she was a medium giving Samuel’s message to Saul.

But we do not believe that she was lying because Samuel’s prophecy came true; that is, Saul really did die the very next day. If the prophecy was the witch’s lucky guess, then it was very lucky.

So, accepting that the witch and Saul really did have a conversation with the dead Samuel, the next question is, how does all this square with Christian theology; and, for that matter, Jewish theology; and, for that matter, witchcraft?

This verse is annoying because if we use it as early evidence of an afterlife then we must also admit that it is evidence that witchcraft works. The spirits of departed people really are conjured up. This is necromancy which God specifically prohibits.

And that leads to other questions. Why does necromancy anger God when it clearly works? Perhaps *because* it works — God doesn’t want us talking to dead people. But why not? The Bible doesn’t say. Maybe because we can’t tell the difference between angels, spirits, and devils. But this witch sure knew Samuel. And why did Samuel respond, apparently unwilling, to this witch’s call? Do witches have that much power over the dead? And just what is a “familiar spirit”?

In any case, that this witch conjured up Samuel answers the really important question: *is* there an afterlife? And the answer is yes. What other questions this conjuring conjures up is beside the point.

Elijah: When Elijah flew to heaven on a fiery chariot, we note that Elijah seems to not have died. Therefore it is not conclusive evidence for afterlife. Or maybe Elijah *did* die, and it wasn’t his trip to heaven that was exceptional but Elisha’s witnessing it. Maybe this is how we all go, and this one time, someone, Elisha, witnessed it

In any case, it appears that the Jewish notion of life after death was a work in progress. The Hebrew scriptures hint that there is life after death, but the details are fuzzy, I mean, *really* fuzzy. It was not until Christ came that the notion of life after death came into clear focus, and even then, there was and is a great deal of mystery.

But what would you expect? Simplicity? Nothing that’s true is simple, only fiction is simple, and that only because we demand it. Fiction is accommodating, reality is not. Life is complicated. Why shouldn’t afterlife be even more complicated?

[2] AFTERLIFE VERSES: OLD TESTAMENT

We’ll now consider what the Hebrews thought about afterlife.

1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD kills and makes alive, He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

God not only kills us but he makes alive again. This certainly promises an afterlife.

Job 3:11 Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

What could “give up the ghost” possibly mean other than the body giving up the departing spirit at death?

Job 3:17 *and there the weary be at rest. :18 There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. :19 The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. :20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul. :22 and are glad when they can find the grave.*

Job may be declaring that there is an afterlife or maybe not. Maybe he is just saying that the dead are glad to be dead and escape their troubles. That would make sense to Job in his situation.

Job 6:8 *...I long for :9 God to destroy me :10 Then should I yet have comfort.*

Job is saying that he'd be more comfortable dead. But how literal is this? Does he really mean that his dead soul will be comfortable dead or is it just poetic forethought?

Job 14:13 *Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! :14 If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*

Let me be dead to avoid the bad stuff. But then when the bad stuff has past, I'd like to live again. Job is asking God is there an afterlife. Job believes there is, “until thy wrath be past.” In other words, hide me in death, then bring me back.

Job 15:22 [the wicked] *believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.*

This is a backhanded affirmation of afterlife. It is the wicked who do not believe in afterlife, that is why they are always afraid of death. This implies that the righteous believe in afterlife. But this is Eliphaz speaking, not Job and not God. So, what does Eliphaz know?

Job 34:14 *...if he [God] gather unto himself his [man's] spirit and his breath :15 All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.*

This is an interesting twist. Man here is just a body that turns to dust and is only alive because God's spirit (not man's spirit) is in him. And when God takes that spirit back, the man dies. But doesn't that actually affirm an afterlife? If what man really is, is God's breath, then if that survives, doesn't man survive? So this verse, while attempting to humiliate us with our mortality, actually establishes our immortality.

Psalms 16:10 *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.*

God will not leave David in sheol (hades). Is he talking about deliverance from death (resurrection) or from hell (salvation)? Either way, this is a promise of an afterlife.

***Psalms 17:15** As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

He must mean awake from death.

***Psalms 30:12** ...I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*

Is this “forever” just an exaggeration or a genuine expectation of an afterlife? He can’t thank God forever if he isn’t alive forever.

***Psalms 37:18** The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.*

***Psalms 37:28** For the LORD...forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.*

Can we take this literally, that saints live forever?

***Psalms 94:23** And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.*

After a long list of abuses in the justice system, this chapter concludes by saying, although you won’t get justice from the courts, you will get it from God. This implies an afterlife because clearly, we’re not getting justice from our legal system so it must be that we will get justice in the afterlife.

***Psalms 103:17** But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children.*

How can God’s mercy be on a dead man? It can’t. Only if the dead man lives again can God’s mercy be on him. But maybe it doesn’t mean on the righteous dead per se, maybe posthumously on his children. The verse can’t mean that because it says “and” — the mercy is on the dead man *and* on his children’s children. Hence, the righteous dead must live to receive God’s continuing mercy.

***Proverbs 12:28** In the way of righteousness is life: and in the pathway thereof there is no death.*

I take this verse literally: no death. Extreme? Perhaps. But the text allows it.

***Proverbs 14:32** ...the righteous hath hope in his death.*

Here we have a definite affirmation of an afterlife. How can the dead have hope if they are non-existent?

Proverbs 24:11 *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; :12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?*

If you courageously risk yourself to save another, God notes it and rewards it. Well, how can that be if not in an afterlife? So there must be an afterlife to reward those who die courageously.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 *the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.*

The spirit can't return to God if it has ceased to exist. Further, this argues for a pre-existence: "return" necessarily implies that we had already been with God, and in death, we return to him.

Isaiah 25:8 *He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces...*

How literal is this intended to be? Does Isaiah mean the end of war or the end of death implying resurrection?

Isaiah 26:19 *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*

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This is literal, no room for hyperbole. It means exactly what it says. Resurrection will be as plants springing up following a morning dew.

Isaiah 51:6 *...the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever...*

Even when the earth dies (and it will because nothing lasts forever), I will save you (something does last forever).

Jeremiah 15:9 *...she hath given up the ghost.*

Is this an afterlife verse? Maybe not because it is the city of Jerusalem that is about to die, “give up the ghost.” But maybe so, because the idiom exists at all. For a city to give up its ghost metaphorically, people must first give up their ghosts literally, otherwise the idiom wouldn’t exist, would it?

[3] SOUL SLEEPS

It would be disingenuous to quietly ignore those verses that argue the other way — that when you’re dead, you’re dead — and the Old Testament contains many such verses. Jehovah’s Witnesses and a few other Christians rightly use them to argue for their “soul sleeps” or oblivion doctrine.

But in fairness to myself, I am not really so concerned with *when* there is an afterlife, but *that* there is an afterlife. If God wants to take his sweet time getting around to me, that’s fine, as long as he does get around to me. So if the soul sleeps doctrine is true I’d have no trouble with that, but, well, let’s read the verses first, then you come to your own conclusion.

We need to take an honest look at these verses and see what we might learn from them.

Psalms 6:5 For in death there is not remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

The question is, obviously, are we to take this literally or not? While I’m alive, I appeal to God. But when I’m dead, I’m dead — there is no consciousness to appeal to anybody, no surviving cognizance.

Is that true, or is this just poetic overstatement? I guess it depends on how “inerrant” you expect the Bible to be. It is contradictions like this that have convinced me that the Bible is not inerrant at all. That’s not to say that I don’t believe the Bible, I most certainly do believe it, and have bet my eternity on it. But, to make my point, suppose Jesus returned today and the L.A. Times reported it. If confirmed, I’d believe the report in spite of the fact that there is nothing inerrant about L.A. Times. If it reported correctly that the Lord had returned, I would believe it. I just wouldn’t take every word literally. I don’t have to believe the Bible is inerrant to believe what it says about God and Jesus Christ. The divine reporting stands or falls on its own merit, not on inerrant integrity of the Bible authors. Mistakes do not unravel factual accounting.

So, must we consider Psalms’ poetry literal and inerrant?

I do believe that God caused Psalms to be written, and that he inspired its authors to write it. Further, I believe he even gave them the words to convey his message. But does that mean that every sentence is free of literary excess — exaggeration, metaphor, simile, parable, and every other sort of mis-speak — so that we are required to take the divine text so literally that we must believe all sorts of nonsense. To take every word of any book literally plunges us into a depth of lunacy never intended by any author. That’s just as true of Bible authors.

No, I do not believe the Bible is inerrant, but I do believe it is true. For example, this statement of *Psalms 6:5 in death there is no remembrance*, is not an inspired comment on life after death or the lack of it, it is a poetic comment on the urgency of

dealing with man's problems now, in this life. To infer a doctrine of soul sleep from these words, one must ignore everything else that the Bible has to say about the subject, which it says explicitly and for the purpose of convincing us that there is a life after death.

Still, the words are unnerving.

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

A "soul-sleeps" Christian could certainly use this verse to make his argument. When I die, I will *be no more*. When you're dead, you're dead.

The problem with that literal interpretation is that if you take it that literally so that it means there is no cognizance after death, than you must also take it *completely* literally so that it means that there is no cognizance after death *at all, ever!* In other words, no resurrection. The verse says *no more*, and that means *never!*

Now, if you want to believe that, go ahead, be my guest. But then you're not a "soul-sleeps" Christian, you're a "soul-death" Christian and an atheist. Which is fine if that's what you want to be, but at least admit it. As for me, the words, *before I go hence and be no more*, which certainly means "before I die and cease to live" is poetic license, not Jewish theology.

***Psalms 49:6** They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; :7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: :9 That he should still live for ever and not see corruption.*

This is simply saying that money can't buy you immortality. But it invites the question: if money can't, then what can? If nothing, they why pick on money? The inference is that there *is* a way to achieve immortality and it's not money.

***Psalms 49:15** ...and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning [whatever "morning" means] :16 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me.*

The meaning in **:16** is undeniable clear. *From the grave* cannot mean he will extend my life, it must mean afterlife because he defines *power of the grave* with these words *for he shall receive me*.

***Psalms 49:19** ...they shall never see light.*

Again, soul-sleeps people might be tempted to use this verse to claim that death is oblivion. But to argue that way, necessarily admits that there is *no* life after death at all, ever, and certainly no resurrection. After all, it says, *never* see light. You can believe that, or you can believe that this is from the mortal perspective only and that the better faith is to believe **49:16**.

***Psalms 73:24** Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

This sounds like an afterlife verse to me, especially following all the earthly successes of the wicked.

***Psalms 78:39** For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.*

“And cometh not again” sure sounds like death is final and there is no afterlife. Well, okay, but then you must also believe that we are literally wind and that this is not just a metaphor. That, or accept it for what it is, poetic exaggeration.

***Psalms 88:10** Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. **:11** Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction?:**12** Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*

Are these rhetorical questions with no hope of an afterlife? Or real questions with every hope of an afterlife? We are left to wonder. It is clear (well, it seems clear to me) that the author is struggling with the same age old questions that we struggle with.

***Psalms 104:33** I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.*

Soul-sleeps people could certainly use the verse and claim that “living” is “having my being,” so when I stop “living,” I stop “being” and stop singing praise. The argument to that is that this is the perspective of the living, it is not a statement from God that there is or is not an afterlife.

***Psalms 115:17** The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.*

***Psalms 116:2** ...therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

Why not *longer* than I live? Either because when we’re dead we can’t call on him, or because all the author can guarantee is the length of his life. After that, only God knows.

***Ecclesiastes 6:12** ...who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?*

That is the question. The author is confident of nothing that follows, no expectation of an afterlife. But this is not a “soul sleeps” argument. To argue on this verse that the spirit does not survive death, is to also argue that *nothing* follows death, not even resurrection, and I don’t believe that “soul sleeps” Christians would care to believe that.

The author of Ecclesiastes is a fatalistic pessimist whose faith has been shattered by the harsh realities of life. Does this mean that what he writes is untrue? No, it *is* true — from his perspective as a beaten down mortal. And it is inspired. God is saying: “You morals, this is the best you can come up with?” God put the thought of fatalism into our heads hoping, apparently, that in our frustration we’d reach for something better.

Ecclesiastes 9:6 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

This is *the* soul sleeps verse. The author sees nothing beyond death. So how can a Bible believer accept this as inspired? Easy. The author is inspired to write what he honestly feels. That doesn’t mean that it’s true. It *does* mean that that’s how he honestly feels. In fact, it’s true that that’s how *most* humans feel.

We long to beat death because from the human perspective, death is an awful and pointless result of life. But again, if we are to believe that *the dead know not any thing*, then we must also believe *neither have they any more reward*. If the soul sleeps, it sleeps *permanently*. Once dead, you’re dead forever, there is no waking from soul sleep (can’t have it both ways), there is no future afterlife, there is no resurrection.

All of that fatalism was true, until Jesus came and changed everything we thought we knew about afterlife. Speaking just for myself, I’ll take Jesus.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest

Again, the same argument: If the soul sleeps, then it sleeps forever. You can believe there’s nothing after death at all or you can believe there’s everything after death. Just don’t let your theology fall somewhere in the middle. That would be disingenuous.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

This verse has to mean one of two things: either judgment in this life or judgment in the next. If in this life, that contradicts **9:11** *the race is not to the swift*. And if in the next, well, that’s afterlife.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it

This is definitely an afterlife verse. Whatever that spirit is that returns to God, it is real. This undoes a lot of the cynicism from the rest of the book. It is not the author’s purpose to expose an afterlife to us, he just wants to depress us further with the fact that

we die; that is, our spirits leave. But by doing so, he also gives us a glimpse of afterlife — your spirit does, in fact, return to God, therefore it exists, therefore there is afterlife.

***Ecclesiastes 12:13** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. **:14** For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

Following on such verses as **9:11**, this verse, **12:14**, *must* be a promise of an afterlife, for when will God *bring every work into*

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***Job 15:22** [the wicked] believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.*

judgment? If not in this life, then when? Surely, an afterlife is the only possibility.

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

Same as all the previous soul-sleeps verses. If they are literal, and not just our plight from the human perspective, and our souls really do sleep, then they sleep forever. If that is the case, then what is the point of being a Christian. That's Paul's argument —

***1 Corinthians 15:17** And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. **:18** Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. **:19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

Paul is absolutely right. If you are a soul-sleeps Christian and you hold that belief because of verses in the Old Testament, then to be true to those texts you must also believe that our souls never wake up and are in fact dead forever. And if you believe that, then you must be, as Paul said, "of all men most miserable."

But Jesus ended that despair with his resurrection which is Paul's point.

***1 Corinthians 15:10** But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

So, with that segue, let's turn our attention finally to —

[4] AFTERLIFE: NEW TESTAMENT

The Jews had long wrestled with the notion of afterlife, just as all peoples everywhere do. But the Jews had more confidence in it than anyone else because some of

them had actually seen it: Enoch and Saul and Elisha, and perhaps others, maybe Job, maybe David, maybe Isaiah. That the Jews had brushed up against the veil that separates us from that other world caused them to believe that there really is an afterlife and they said so, often vaguely and often with contradictions. But still, they saw what they saw and documented it.

But for real undeniable conformation, we have to turn to Jesus and the New Testament. When Jesus pierced that veil, he confirmed what the Jews had long suspected. One Jewish prophet, Job, had long before asked the question: “If a man die, shall he live again?” And it was Jesus who answered absolutely, “Yes.”

Now, there are two notions of afterlife. First, afterlife at all. That is, do we, in *any* form — spirit, soul, will, mind, intelligence, energy, whatever — survive death? All the world’s religions answer that question, one way or another, in the affirmative. But second is the singularly Christian notion of resurrection; that is, a bodily survival. And on that score, Jesus trumps everybody. For he not only affirms afterlife, he proves it with his own resurrection and by it demonstrates the very nature of afterlife.

But more importantly, unlike all other religionists who merely say there is an afterlife and offer logical arguments for it, Jesus proves it by going there and coming back. That’s more than information, that’s proof.

And unlike other religious books which give philosophical arguments for afterlife, the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, read, not like a text book teaching truth, but like a newspaper reporting facts. Of course what a reader makes of those facts is another issue, but the facts stand like stone. Which is the point. We can’t alter the facts to fit our understanding, we must instead alter our understand to fit the facts as best we can. And whatever sense we make or don’t make of the facts, the Jews who wrote the book concluded that yes, indeed, there is an afterlife, and told us what it is like, and were so sure of it because of the factual events that happened that they could not possibly conclude anything else but that there is absolutely an afterlife — and more to the point, a resurrected afterlife.

So, here we go. Being as thorough as I can be, here are the critical verses of the New Testament that convince us that there really is an afterlife — and even more wonderfully, a resurrected afterlife.

Matthew 10:28 Fear him who is able to destroy soul and body in hell

Matthew 19:16 what...shall I do that I may have eternal life?

Matthew 19:17 if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments

Matthew 25:46 eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life

Matthew 27:52 many bodies of the saints which slept arose

Matthew 28:5 Fear not ye...:6 He is not here: for he is risen

Matthew 28:20 I am with you always, even unto the end of the world

Mark 16:6 Be not affrighted...Jesus...which was crucified...is risen.

Luke 16:23 In hades he lifted up his eyes being in torment

Luke 20:37 the dead are raised, even Moses showed...

Luke 24:6 He is not here, but is risen.

Luke 24:39 handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones

Luke 24:42 they gave him fish and honeycomb :43 and he did eat

John 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of man

John 3:15 whosoever believeth in him shall have eternal life

John 5:24 he who hears my word and believes has eternal life

John 6:40 everyone who believes...I will raise him up on the last day

John 6:54 ...has eternal life, and I will raise him up at that last day

John 14:2 I go to prepare a place for you

John 17:3 This is eternal life that they may know you

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

John 20:31 these are written that ye may believe...and may have life

Acts 1:9 while they beheld, he was taken up

Romans 6:23 free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

1 Corinthians 15:5 he was seen :6 of about five hundred brethren

2 Corinthians 4:14 shall raise us up also by Jesus

2 Corinthians 5:8 absent from the body to be at home with the Lord

Philippians 1:21 to die is gain. 3:21 change our body to be like his

Titus 1:2 the hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised

1 Peter 3:19 He made proclamation to the Spirits now in prison.

1 John 2:25 This is the promise which he made to us: eternal life

1 John 3:2 when he shall appear, we shall be like him

1 John 5:11 God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son

1 John 5:13 I have written so you may know you have eternal life

Hebrews 9:27 appointed...to die once and after this comes judgment.

Revelation 1:18 I am alive forevermore and have the keys of death

Revelation 6:9 I saw the souls of them that had been slain

Revelation 22:12 I come quickly and my reward is with me

And there you have it, the promise of an afterlife and a very favorable afterlife at that. And not only the assertion, which all religions have, but also the proof. What more could you want?