Entering Heaven Alive

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*"Ascension (mystical)" redirects here. For a different mystical ascension, see*[*enlightenment (spiritual)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enlightenment_%28spiritual%29)*. For other uses, see*[*ascension (disambiguation)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

**Entering Heaven alive** (called by various [religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) "ascension", "assumption", or "[translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation_%28Mormonism%29)") is a belief held in various religions. Since [death](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death) is the normal end to an individual's life on [Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth) and the beginning of afterlife, entering [Heaven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven) without dying first is considered exceptional and usually a sign of a [deity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deity)'s special recognition of the individual's [piety](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piety).

Christianity

Ascension Rock, inside the [Chapel of the Ascension (Jerusalem)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapel_of_the_Ascension_%28Jerusalem%29), is said to bear the imprint of Jesus' right foot as he left earth and ascended into heaven.

*See also:*[*Ascension of Jesus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_of_Jesus)*,*[*Rapture*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture)*, and*[*Biblical cosmology*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_cosmology)

Unlike the other entries in this article, this paragraph does not, in the view of most Christians, relate to "entering Heaven alive". Jesus is considered by the vast majority of Christians to have died before being resurrected and ascending to heaven. In regard to his mother [Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_%28mother_of_Jesus%29), [Eastern Orthodoxy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodoxy) considers her to have died prior to being assumed (translated) into heaven, while [Roman Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism) gives an ambiguous answer to the issue of her death prior to her assumption, despite her death being "expressly affirmed in the Liturgy of the Church". [Protestantism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism) generally believes that [Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_views_on_Mary) died a natural death like any other human being and was not subsequently assumed into heaven, although the [Anglo-Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Catholic) tradition of [Anglicanism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglicanism) often affirms the assumption.

Most Christians believe [Jesus did initially die](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion_of_Jesus), but was then [resurrected from the dead by God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Jesus), before being [raised bodily to heaven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_of_Christ) to [sit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Session_of_Christ) at the [Right Hand of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_Hand_of_God) with a promise to someday [return to earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Coming). The minority views that Jesus didn't die are known as the [Swoon hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swoon_hypothesis) and [Docetism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Docetism).

Since the adoption of the [Nicene Creed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed) in 325, the [Ascension](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_of_Jesus_Christ) of [Jesus Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ) into heaven, as related in the [New Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament), has been officially taught by all orthodox Christian churches and is celebrated on [Ascension Thursday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_Thursday). In the [Roman Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), the Ascension of the Lord is a [Holy Day of Obligation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Day_of_Obligation). In the [Eastern Orthodox Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) the Ascension is one of twelve [Great Feasts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Feasts).

In the Reformed churches' tradition of [Calvinism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism), belief in the ascension of Christ is included in the [Westminster Confession of Faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith), the [Heidelberg Catechism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heidelberg_Catechism) and the [Second Helvetic Confession](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Helvetic_Confession)."

The "Rapture" is a reference to "being caught up" as found in [1 Thessalonians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Epistle_to_the_Thessalonians) 4:17, when the "dead in Christ" and "we who are alive and remain" will be caught up in the clouds to meet the [Lord](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord).

**Catholicism**

*Main article:*[*Assumption of Mary*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assumption_of_Mary)

The Roman Catholic Church distinguishes between "The Ascension", in which Christ rose to heaven by his own power, and "The Assumption" in which [Mary, mother of Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary%2C_mother_of_Jesus), was raised to heaven by God's power. ([Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_%28ancestor_of_Noah%29) and [Elijah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah) are said in scripture to have been "assumed" [experienced assumption] into heaven.)

On November 1, 1950, [Pope Pius XII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_XII), acting [*ex cathedra*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex_cathedra), issued [*Munificentissimus Deus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munificentissimus_Deus), an authoritative statement of official doctrine of [Roman Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism). In Section 44 the pope stated:

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.

The doctrine is based on [Sacred Tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_Tradition) that [Mary, mother of Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary%2C_mother_of_Jesus), was bodily assumed into heaven. For centuries before that, [the assumption was celebrated in art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assumption_of_the_Virgin_Mary_in_art). The proclamation leaves open whether or not Mary died before assumption into heaven. Some theologians have argued that Mary didn't die, but the dogma itself doesn't say this.

**Eastern Christianity**

Orthodox [icon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icon) of the [Dormition of the Theotokos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dormition_of_the_Theotokos) (1392, [Theophan the Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophan_the_Greek)).

*Main article:*[*Dormition of the Mother of God*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dormition_of_the_Mother_of_God)

The [Eastern Orthodox Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) teaches that three other persons were taken bodily into heaven: [Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_%28ancestor_of_Noah%29), [Elijah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah) (Elias) and the [Theotokos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theotokos) (Virgin Mary). Similar to the Western "Assumption" of Mary, the Orthodox celebrate the [Dormition of the Theotokos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dormition_of_the_Theotokos) on August 15. Unlike Western uncertainty about Mary's physical death, the Orthodox teach that Mary died a natural death like any other human being, that she was buried by the [Apostles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostles) (except for [Thomas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_the_Apostle), who was late), and three days later (after Thomas had arrived) was found to be missing from her tomb. The church teaches that the Apostles received a revelation during which the Theotokos appeared to them and told them she had been resurrected by Jesus and taken body and soul into heaven. The Orthodox teach that Mary already enjoys the fullness of heavenly bliss that the other saints will experience only after the [Last Judgment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Judgment).

There is a teaching among the Orthodox that the "[Two Witnesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_Witnesses)" referred to in the [Book of Revelation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation) [11:3-13](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Revelation+11:3%E2%80%9313:3&version=nrsv) are Enoch and Elijah, who will be sent back to earth to preach the Gospel in the time of [apostasy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy), and will be the last Christian [martyrs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyr) before the [Second Coming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Coming). According to Revelation, they will be resurrected and ascend again to heaven.

Hellenistic religion

*Main article:*[*Hellenistic religion*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenistic_religion)

* [Hercules](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hercules) it was believed, following the completion of his [twelve labors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labours_of_Hercules), was raised into [Olympus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Olympus), although in some versions, his mortal half was burned away upon his death, enabling his divine half to ascend and join his godly family.
* [Apollonius of Tyana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollonius_of_Tyana) was said to have been assumed into [Elysium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elysium) by [Philostratus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philostratus).

Hinduism

[Yudhishthira](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yudhishthira) of the [Mahabharata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata) is believed he was the only human to cross the plane between mortals and heaven in his mortal body. But before him, his brother Arjun had been to heaven and lived there for 5 years in his human body. His grand-uncle Bhishma had lived and studied in heaven. His ancestor, Puru had been to heaven. Indeed, many kings, including Nahush were admitted to heaven in their human body.

**Sant Tukaram**

Sant Tukaram was taken to Vaikunta on Garuda Vahan which was witnessed by all the village people.

**Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu disappeared after entering the temple deity room of Lord Jagannath.

**Swami Ramalinga**

[Ramalinga Swamigal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramalinga_Swamigal) (Swami Ramalinga), a great Sage revered by his teaching. Ramalinga supposedly attained the Supreme Body of the Godhead when Divinity itself merged with him. He was reported to have disappeared after deciding to de-materialize his immortal body by his own free will, his body was never found.

**Mirra Alfassa**

[The Mother](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirra_Alfassa) (Mirra Alfassa), the foremost disciple of the [Hindu philosopher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_philosophy) and [guru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guru) [Sri Aurobindo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Aurobindo), attempted the physical transformation of her body in order to become what she felt was the first of a new type of human individual by opening to the [Supramental Truth Consciousness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supermind_%28Integral_thought%29), a new power of spirit that Sri Aurobindo had allegedly discovered. She believed that she could create for herself a new kind of “light body”. However, she died and was cremated.

**Meera Bai**

Meera Bai the devotional poet also disappeared when she entered the inner sanctum of Dwarikadheesh Temple and supposed to be in vaikuntha.

Islam

The Dome of the Rock

*See also:*[*Kitab al-Miraj*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitab_al-Miraj)

Islamic teaching states that [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) ascended into heaven alive at the site of the [Dome of the Rock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome_of_the_Rock). However, this ascent was temporary and he came back to Earth. It is ascribed to the exact descriptions presented in both the Quran and the [Hadith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith).

Islamic texts deny the idea of crucifixion or death attributed to [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_Jesus) by the New Testament. The [Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) states that people (i.e., the Jews and Romans) sought to kill Jesus, but they could not crucify or kill him, although "this was made to appear to them". Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified but instead he was raised up by God unto the heavens. This "raising" is often understood to mean through bodily ascension.

Some Islamic scholars have identified the prophet [Idris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idris_%28prophet%29) to be the same person as [Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_%28ancestor_of_Noah%29) from the Bible. This is because the Quran states that God "raised him to a lofty station", and that has been taken to be a term for ascending, upon which it is concluded that 'Idris' was 'Enoch'.

Judaism

In the Hebrew bible the word for "heavens" is [*shamayim*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven_in_Judaism). This is plural - it means "heavens", not "heaven" - but seems nevertheless to have a singular meaning: i.e., the older parts of the bible speak of "heavens" in the plural but evidence for a belief in more than one heaven from the bible is lacking. Shamayim also meant "sky", the atmosphere, as it does in modern English. The blue dome of the sky was called the [*raqia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firmament), and was believed to be a solid shield between the atmosphere and the true heaven where God lived. Heaven was the realm of God, earth of mankind, and the [underworld](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underworld) was for the dead, and travel between them was generally impossible, although God and his messengers frequently appear on earth and the dead can be summoned up from the underworld as the [Witch of Endor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witch_of_Endor) summons the shade of Samuel.

There are two possible exceptions to this general rule that humans could not go to heaven, Enoch and Elijah, but neither is clear. The Book of Genesis mentions [Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_%28ancestor_of_Noah%29) as one who "was no more" because "God took him", but it does not explicitly say whether he was alive or dead, and it does not say where God took him. The Book of Kings describes the prophet [Elijah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah) being taken towards "shamayim" in a whirlwind, but the word can mean both heaven as the abode of God, or the sky (as the word "heavens" does in modern English), and so again the text is ambiguous.

According to the post-biblical [Jewish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish) [Midrash](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midrash), eight people went to heaven (also referred to as the [Garden of Eden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden_of_Eden) and [Paradise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradise)) alive:

* [Elijah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah) ([Kings II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) Chapter 2, Verse 11)
* [Serach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serach), the daughter of [Asher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asher) - one of the sons of [Jacob](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob) ([Midrash](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midrash) [Yalkut Shimoni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yalkut_Shimoni) (Yechezkel 367))
* [Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_%28ancestor_of_Noah%29) ([Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis) 5:22-24)
* [Eliezer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliezer#Eliezer_of_Damascus), the servant of [Abraham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham)
* [Hiram, king of Tyre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Hiram_I)
* [Ebed-Melech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebed-Melech), the Ethiopian
* Jaabez, the son of [Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judah_the_Prince)
* [Bithiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bithiah), the daughter of Pharaoh

Zoroastrianism

It is believed in [Zoroastrianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoroastrianism) that the [Peshotanu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peshotanu) was taken up into Heaven alive and will someday return as the Zoroastrian [messiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saoshyant).

Ascended Master Teachings

[Francis Bacon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Bacon) is believed to have undergone a physical Ascension without experiencing death (he then became the deity [St. Germain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Count_of_St._Germain)) by members of various [Ascended Master Teachings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascended_Master_Teachings), a group of [New Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age)religions based on [Theosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theosophy). They also believe numerous others have undergone Ascension; they are called the [Ascended Masters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascended_master) and are worshipped in this group of religions. The leaders of these religions claim to be able to receive [channeled messages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channeling_%28mediumistic%29) from the Ascended Masters, which they then relay to their followers.

Fictional portrayals

* In [C. S. Lewis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis)'s [*That Hideous Strength*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/That_Hideous_Strength), those who ascended to heaven alive included [Melchizedek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melchizedek), [Frederick Barbarossa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Barbarossa), [King Arthur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Arthur) and [Elwin Ransom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elwin_Ransom).
* In C. S. Lewis's [*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Voyage_of_the_Dawn_Treader), [Reepicheep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reepicheep) the Mouse is permitted to travel into [Aslan's Country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aslan%27s_Country) while alive. He is next seen in [*The Last Battle*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Battle) where he is the first to greet the protagonists when they arrive at Aslan's Country.
* In [J. R. R. Tolkien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien)'s [Middle-earth legendarium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth_legendarium), Elves who grow weary of life in [Middle-earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth) may sail west to the [Undying Lands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Undying_Lands). A few mortals also follow this route, including [Eärendil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E%C3%A4rendil), the [Ring-bearers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring-bearers) [Bilbo Baggins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilbo_Baggins), [Frodo Baggins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frodo_Baggins), and [Sam Gamgee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Gamgee), and the Dwarf [Gimli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gimli_%28Middle-earth%29).
* In the [fictional universe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional_universe) of the [*Stargate*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stargate) franchise, the [Ancients](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_%28Stargate%29), have learned how to "ascend" from the physical plane and have [moved on to a higher plane of existence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_%28Stargate%29).
* In [Gabriel García Márquez](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel_Garc%C3%ADa_M%C3%A1rquez)'s [*One Hundred Years of Solitude*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Hundred_Years_of_Solitude), Remedios the Beauty, said to be the most beautiful woman ever seen in Macondo, who unintentionally causes the deaths of several men who love or lust over her. She appears to most of the town as naively innocent, and some come to think that she is mentally retarded. However, Colonel Aureliano Buendía believes she has inherited great lucidity: "It is as if she's come back from twenty years of war", he said. She rejects clothing and beauty. Too beautiful and, arguably, too wise for the world, Remedios ascends into the sky one afternoon in the 4pm sun, while folding Fernanda's white sheet.