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What does the bible say about open heaven

Loss is hard and Covid has added to the heartbreaking tally. These are the days when we need hope. We need signs. The day after Christmas marks nine years since I last kissed my incredible dad and told him I love him. Every day since, I have missed him and happy days together, like the Christmas in this photo before he got sick. If you’re without someone you love deeply, you understand. The missing never fully goes away. And yet, I feel his presence, too, and have seen the mingling of heaven and earth in signs and circumstances, gifts from God and the great Beyond. When my father died, I collapsed in a heap on the pullout sofa at my parents’ house and sob-talked to God. I thanked Him for this dad who made me feel special every day and for an end to his suffering. And I pleaded for a sign that he had made it Home okay. Please, just let me know, I begged. At that exact moment, the chimes outside the window clanged and clanged. It was the only time they made a sound in the 18 days I had been there. I’ve also dreamed dreams of my dad that are as vivid and real as daylight. In one of them, I was lost in a town I didn’t know. I wandered until I saw a rink like the ones where my pro-hockey father spent most of his life. I was drawn to it, walked inside, and stood alone in a dim hall, wondering where to go, what to do, utterly lost. And then, my cell phone rang. “Hi, Trace. It’s dad.” He sounded just like he did when he used to call me. When we talked every day. When he was here. “Dad. It’s you!” I froze in disbelief. I didn’t even want to breathe for fear of doing something that would end this moment. I wanted to ask him where he was, but I already knew. I began to cry. “I love you, dad. I wish you were here. I miss you so much.” I felt like I couldn’t take another step without him. Like I couldn’t do this alone. “Me, too,” he said. “I’m right here.” And I could feel it. His presence. His love. I could feel him with me. And suddenly, I was okay. I had a deep knowing I would find my way. Lost no more. Even when the dream ended a moment later and I woke up still crying, wanting him back so badly and yet knowing he was with me. He still is. Right here. One after the next, signs and dreams continued, blessed reassurances that nothing can completely separate us from one another. Not even death. It doesn’t end the missing of his physical presence, wishing I could ask his advice, but it’s huge comfort in the midst of it. If you’re missing someone, too, I want you to know - even if you haven’t had signs and dreams - that your person is close. I know it’s not the same as before. It’s not a hug. It’s not a conversation. It’s not the things we miss, the things we’re used to and long for again. But the ones we miss so deeply are here in the holy kind of Love that never dies. The kind of Love connects us still. And if you have had these experiences, too, please share them in the comments here. Talk about them. They are encouragement, hope, comfort and peace - things not just intended for ourselves. They are the convergence of the earthly here and the heavenly there. They are a gift that I believe we are meant to share. Balm for others, too. Love lives on. This post comes from the TODAY Parenting Team community, where all members are welcome to post and discuss parenting solutions. Learn more and join us! Because we’re all in this together. Growing up in New Jersey in the late 1960s, Raymond Mills watched Apollo rockets blast into space and dreamed of being an astronaut. Mills went on to work as a satellite engineer for NASA and earned a Ph.D. from Stanford in aeronautical and astronautical engineering. Yet, a voyage to the moon wasn’t in the cards. “My forte was guidance and control,” he says, “getting things to point in the right direction with lots of forces acting on them.” Photo: Dave Moser for Barron’s Mills, 53, still works on guidance systems, in a way, though his strength is now financial and involves trying to pick stocks moving in the right direction. He swapped aeronautics for investing in 1997, when he joined T. Rowe Price as an analyst. Since 2006, he has run the Overseas Stock fund (ticker: TROSK), a \$9.5 billion portfolio of foreign large-company stocks that he has successfully steered aloft. The fund returned an average 6.9% over the past five years, beating 84% of its rivals in the foreign large-blend category, according to Morningstar. Mills looks for industries with favorable trends: financial companies with cheap shares and improving businesses, for example, make up 26% of the portfolio. Falling energy prices encourage consumer spending, which is why 17% of the fund is in consumer-discretionary stocks. Mills also likes companies with consistent growth and “disciplined capital allocation,” meaning management spends cash wisely. Rarely does he come across Goldilocks stocks that are both cheap and growing rapidly. So he builds a kind of matrix that factors in financial measures—such as price/earnings and asset ratios—to find stocks where, on balance, the fundamentals outweigh the valuation. “This is a core fund—not growth or value—it’s all of the above,” he says. In building the portfolio, he creates a kind of bell curve with thick tails. In the mid-section are stable, mature large-company stocks such as Nestlé (NSRGY), Novartis (NVS), and AXA (AXAHY). The tails are where Mills is willing to hold a few deep-value or aggressive-growth stocks—investments that may be riskier but don’t reflect his assessment of future earnings and cash flow. T. Rowe’s analysts play a key role, presenting him with their best ideas. For every six ideas they offer, he usually picks one or two. He creates the portfolio himself, cherry-picking 157 stocks and spreading his bets; aside from some cash, no position takes up more than 2.5% of assets. Mills can invest up to 15% in emerging markets, but he generally sticks with developed markets: Currently, 60% of the fund’s assets are in Europe, and 19% in Japan. Emerging markets account for only 4% of assets, and Mills generally prefers to tap their rapid-fire economies through companies domiciled in more-stable regions. Economic growth and stock market performance are not highly correlated, he says. Indeed, Australia and Sweden were two of the strongest stock markets of the 20th century, though neither had the fastest-growing economy. Whatever the stock, Mills wants to see something he thinks the market is missing, whether it’s a new product line, strategy, or industry trend. That type of catalyst is often what gets a stock moving, and Mills aims to identify it before the rest of the market does. “Waiting for a catalyst is a prescription for buying high,” he says, “but I need to have reasonable expectations for one.” A top holding, for example, is German conglomerate Bayer (BAYRY), which he has owned since 2011. The company is a steady earner and recently announced a plan to spin off its plastics unit, which is less profitable, lower growth, and more cyclical than Bayer’s life-sciences divisions, which include health-care and agricultural products. French insurer AXA fits into the value camp. With a P/E around nine, it trades at a discount to many financial stocks. Profits have been hurt by low interest rates, but AXA is addressing that by selling fewer guaranteed-rate policies and more variable life and annuity products. AXA is also cutting costs and growing solidly in emerging markets. “We don’t think the stock will double overnight,” Mills says, but if rates inch up, it should do well, and investors are getting paid a 4.7% yield to wait. AT THE OPPOSITE END of the value spectrum is a stake in Chinese Internet search engine Baidu (BIDU). This is no bargain stock, with a trailing P/E of 38. But it has a Google-like grip on search in China, and Mills thinks the market isn’t fully appreciating Baidu’s growth in the mobile space. Overall, revenue has surged 53% in the past year, and earnings per share are expected to climb 38% next year. While the stock looks pricey, margins are expanding while sales are rising—“a powerful combination,” he says. Like any active manager, Mills doesn’t always beat the market. The fund trailed its benchmark in 2007 and 2008, and it’s in line with the index this year. It tends to trail in markets characterized by indiscriminate waves of buying or selling with less regard for stock fundamentals, he says. “We’re not going to outperform in every environment,” he adds, “and there is an environment where people are throwing money at things.” Still, he’s willing to ride out a rough patch if he likes a company’s long-term outlook. One such stock: Swedish medical-device maker Elekta (EKTAY), down 35% this year (in U.S. dollars). The only big rival for its radiation-therapy equipment is Varian Medical Systems (VAR), and Elekta may have an edge with a new generation of machines that use magnetic-resonance-imaging technology to target tumors more precisely, reducing damage to surrounding tissue. Looking ahead, Mills sees positive and countervailing market forces. While developed-market stocks benefit from monetary stimulus and falling energy prices, there are head winds, including anemic growth in Europe, a recession in Japan, and potential flare-ups over hot spots like Ukraine. Also posing a challenge: The rising dollar reduces foreign-currency returns for U.S. investors. Mills is modestly underweight Europe and Japan, partly reflecting these concerns. But he generally doesn’t dial down regional exposures based on macro effects, preferring to invest wherever he finds the best individual stock opportunities. “Investing involves a lot more art than engineering,” he acknowledges, even with the best guidance and control. DAREN FONDA is a New York-based freelance writer. E-mail: editors@barrons.com 1 Exactly Why Is the Platypus So Weird? Researchers Are Now Much Closer to Finding Out 2 All About Bunnies: 10+ Facts About Rabbits 3 6 Science Podcasts You Should Download Today 4 How Am I Related to My Nephew's Child? 5 Why Can't a Machine Be 100 Percent Efficient? 1 What Is the Lincoln Project — and Why Will It Matter Post-Election? 2 8-Bit Oinkers: These Tech-Savvy Pigs Are Mastering Video Games 3 Racist Phrases to Remove From Your Mental Lexicon 4 Party 411: How to Celebrate a 75th Birthday and What to Call It 5 What Is a List of All Red Meats? While all of the major prophets made prophecies to the Jewish people, they did so during different major struggles and made prophecies concerning different major events. Isaiah made prophecies to the Jews in Judea about Judah and Jerusalem. This occurred between 740 and 680 B.C., during the reigns of four kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah]Jeremiah prophesied to both Jews in Judea and those who were captive, preaching to them about Judah and Nations. This took place between 627 and 585 B.C. and during the reign of four kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoiachaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah.Ezekiel's prophecies were made to the Jews who were captive in Babylon. He spoke to them about the house of Israel in its entirety between 592 and 570 B.C. This was during the time of Judah's King Zedekiah and Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar.Daniel, the final major prophet, made prophecies to both Gentile Kings and the Jews who were captive in Babylon. He discussed Israel and Gentile nations between 605 and 536 B.C., during the time of Judah's kings Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah and the continued Babylonian reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. Since rockets will never be a cheap or efficient way to lift payloads into space, alternative—and highly speculative—technologies are being studied. ALL EXISTING space vehicles, including the most advanced SDI launch systems and the renovated Space Shuttle, rely on a principle more than 800 years old. Whereas aviation has progressed over the centuries from hot-air balloons to propeller- and jet-driven engines, and now stands on the verge of further breakthroughs, spacecraft are all driven by rocketry, embodying techniques that, although refined, date from the invention by the Chinese of powder-propelled fire arrows, in the twelfth century.Although the principle of rocketry—essentially Newton's third law, on action and reaction—is elegant in its simplicity, it sets an upper limit on the efficiency and performance of rocket engines. A rocket can neither derive its motive power from the medium it moves through, like a clipper ship, nor refuel during its journey, like a bomber. The fuel that a rocket-powered-spacecraft requires for the final part of its ascent must be carried throughout the journey. The Space Shuttle is more than 90 percent propellant by weight as it sits on the launch pad; the percentage for vehicles capable of reaching higher orbits or other planets is even greater.Although propellant is not a major factor in the cost of the space program—the four million pounds burned in a typical shuttle mission account for less than two percent of the shuttle's cost—its enormous consumption demonstrates that the physics of rocketry relies on brute force. Aircraft employ the earth's atmosphere, using it for lift and taking advantage of its winds; rockets simply punch through it. Greater efficiency comes from more dangerous propellants or higher burn temperatures, which require highly advanced engines with relatively short working lifetimes.Thousands of engineers and technicians are required to maintain the complex shuttle, an expensive burden that would only increase with an expansion of the shuttle program. And, as the Challenger disaster showed, a rocket, however complex its computerized regulatory systems, is essentially a space capsule sitting atop an enormous bomb, which is merely burned slowly rather than detonated all at once.The exhaust from solid-fuel rockets leads to the formation of acid rain, while some liquid-fuel rockets, like the Space Shuttle, contribute to global warming. Although the warming effected by the shuttle on its current restricted launch schedule is minuscule compared with, say, rain-forest burning in Brazil, an ambitious space program, like the one NASA envisioned in the mid-1960s, might eventually pose significant problems, especially if other nations began similar programs.All these factors have persuaded growing number of scientists that if humanity is going to establish vacuum and zero-gravity industries in space, or build large-scale facilities in orbit, a revolution in the means for lifting payloads into space must be achieved.IN 1960 A SOVIET engineer named Y. N. Artsutanov published an article detailing how emerging technology could produce a previously unconsidered means of lifting objects into orbit. Artsutanov noted that at a distance of 22,400 miles a satellite takes exactly twenty-four hours to circle Earth. But because its "geostationary" orbit corresponds to Earth's own period of rotation, an object orbiting over the Equator at this height would remain fixed over one spot. Artsutanov boldly imagined such a satellite lowering a cable to Earth, where it would be anchored in place. If a counterweight was extruded in the opposite direction, such a system would be dynamically stable, maintaining itself without expenditure of energy. The cable would serve as a "space elevator" climbing into the sky. Artsutanov imagined such a cable system—or "heavenly funicular," as he called it—hauling 12,000 tons of payload a day into orbit. Once the cable system was completed, the cost of lifting payloads would be measurable in terms of electricity expended, or about a dollar per pound. Such a structure would be so huge at its base that it would be invulnerable to natural or human assault. An airplane or other manmade object would, however, be demolished if it crashed into the structure.Artsutanov published his speculations in a Communist youth magazine rather than in a scientific journal, and his concept went largely unseen by scientists. In the following fifteen years it was independently reinvented several times, once by a team of oceanographers engaged in lowering long cables to the bottom of the sea. By the late seventies the concept of a space elevator—called variously a skyhook, a beanstalk, an orbital tower, and an anchored satellite—had appeared in science-fiction novels, and was widely disseminated among research scientists, university brainstormers, and advocates for the development of the space industry and permanent orbital habitats. Although NASA engineers have expressed varying degrees of skepticism, a number of scientists now believe that only technical hurdles stand in the way of the construction of a space elevator in the next fifty years, and that a working model, though very expensive to install, would soon render Earth-to-orbit rockets obsolete.The limiting factor for the space elevator is cable strength. In 1960 the strongest existing industrial material was capable of supporting about a 120 mile length of itself hanging in Earth's gravity. Because gravity is slightly reduced 120 miles above Earth, though, a greater length of such a cable could hang suspended. Tapering the cable, so that the center of mass (which would bear the weight of the full extent of the cable) was far thicker, would allow still longer lengths. Materials developed since have strength-to-weight ratios that are closer to those necessary to sustain a heavily tapered cable for the full 22,400 miles. Charles Sheffield, a former president of the American Astronautical Society, believes that a small working model—with a cable perhaps microscopically thin by the time it reached Earth's surface—could be in place within thirty years.Robert L. Forward, formerly of Hughes Research Laboratories and now a consultant and writer, envisions a space cable made of graphite "whisker," which has a higher ratio of tensile strength to density than any substance existing outside laboratory conditions. A whisker is a thin filament of crystal several millimeters long, which can possess exceptional tensile strength. Industrial graphite fiber, used in tennis rackets and fishing rods, has a higher strength for its weight than any metal, but graphite whisker cannot yet be used in greater lengths while maintaining its full strength. However, brand-new materials that use filaments of carbon atoms arranged like a spiral staircase foreshadow greatly increased material strength in coming years.A skyhook made of graphite whisker would need to be at least a hundred times as thick at the center of mass as at the Earthward end, which in Forward's design would measure one millimeter across. This would be strong enough to lift two tons. Its lifting capacity would first be used to hoist more cable into place, allowing it to grow progressively larger and more durable, like a thickening stalactite. Ultimately the skyhook would comprise either a series of independent cables, or a rim of cables forming a hollow structure, inside which electrified tracks could be built.But thousands of tons of highly engineered graphite whisker would have to be put into orbit 22,400 miles above Earth, far higher than any shuttle has gone. Unless builders are willing to consider making thousands of shuttle launches, enough raw material to provide such a tonnage of refined carbon would have to be found in space.One plan involves diverting a small asteroid into high orbit around Earth. Space-industry enthusiasts speak of entrepreneurs venturing out to locate a carbon-rich asteroid the size of a small mountain and nudging it into the desired orbit with controlled nuclear explosions. Forward speculates that "a new breed of wildcatter" might come into being—high-risk companies that would supply orbital engineering projects with millions of tons of nickel-iron or carbon from diverted asteroids. (The history of companies doing business with the government suggests much less romantic prospects, but NASA might contract with some aerospace giant, with the usual guarantees for cost overruns, to provide this service.)VARIANTS OF the skyhook could be built more easily. One design, developed by Hans Moravec, of Carnegie Mellon University, has been called a nonsynchronous skyhook. It is essentially a tether 5,300 miles long, set spinning about its midpoint, which would orbit Earth at a height of 2,600 miles once every three hours. Such a device can be envisioned as two opposite spokes of an imaginary ferris wheel rolling over the surface of the earth.The tether would spin at a rate of one revolution than 22,400 miles. Out of this discussion emerged the first design for a dynamic "beanstalk," which could be built from the ground up but would require a constant expenditure of energy to hold it in place. Partisans have given it, like other models, a number of colorful names: Charles Sheffield calls it "the Indian rope trick," while Forward favors "the space fountain," noting that it supports itself the way a water fountain sustains a ball bobbing at the top of its column.The heart of the structure would be a hollow tower through which particles were fired upward at hypersonic speeds. These particles would be slowed by electromagnetic drag devices, creating a braking force that exerted an upward lift on the structure. This lift would support the tower in the same way that pressurized air can stiffen and hold up the walls of large ribbed tents. When the particles reached the top of the tower, they would be turned around by an electromagnetic device, fired downward, and accelerated more than gravity accelerates them naturally. In the process they would exert still more upward force, and would reach the ground at nearly the same velocity at which they had left. They would then be diverted by more magnets through an underground tunnel, where electromagnetic accelerators would push them back up to launch velocity and send them on their way again.As long as enough energy was pumped into the system to keep the particles at running speed, the tower could rise to any height. Because the slowing and speeding of particles would be adjusted to counter the forces of gravity, no superstrength building materials would be needed. Although lavish amounts of energy would be required to get the system going, the power gained from braking the particles on their upward journey could be used to accelerate them back downward, which means that the tower would require additional power only to offset losses due to inefficiencies in operating its various motors—just as a pressurized tent will begin to sag only as the air leaks out.If its electromagnetic drivers were to cease operating for any reason, the entire tower would slowly collapse. Forward notes that the space fountain would have to be built "with a good deal of redundancy in it." A prudently designed space fountain would have several energy streams, each with an independent power supply. Each system would suffice to support the tower, and all of them together would sustain the lifting of great loads. Should all systems fail simultaneously, the space fountain would come apart, its top sections going into orbit around Earth and its lower sections burning up in the atmosphere or crashing to the ground in a line stretching a few hundred miles to the east. Thus it would be sited on the western edge of a desert or an ocean.Proponents of dynamic beanstalks see no need to wait for improved graphite material to be developed. Rod Hyde, a scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory who has done considerable work on engineering details for a space fountain, insists, "This is a skyhook that can be built using only engineering development rather than requiring scientific breakthroughs."THESE SYSTEMS sound impressive, but none of them has ever been tested, and some NASA engineers warn of the pitfalls that await any attempt to bring untried technologies into use. Jesco von Puttkamer, a program manager for the shuttle, who has been with NASA for thirty years, sees the space elevator as "a beautiful, idealistic concept that looks great on paper and would work in principle." But, he says, "the practicality of translating it into the real world is insurmountable." Von Puttkamer speaks of the engineer's natural preference for proven technologies, and of the "real-world constraints"—the need for congressional and societal approval and the unpredictable behavior of long, flexible materials under exotic conditions. He allows that "perhaps thirty to sixty, maybe up to a hundred, years from now, a future generation may have the technology to do it," but regards claims for a skyhook we can build now as detracting from NASA's hard-won achievements.In the dozen years since it was popularized, the concept of the space elevator has led to a variety of new ideas, and its value may finally reside in its tendency to provoke such speculation. Emerging technologies and new materials have prompted smaller, less grandiose designs, which will end up competing with one another—and, Von Puttkamer notes, with future generations of rocket launch vehicles.Such devices can easily be dismissed as science-fiction extravaganzas whose realization lies beyond our lifetime, but technology—especially when it has military applications—can develop extremely fast once the engineering principles have been well defined. Many of the young engineers who began working on rocketry immediately before the Second World War imagined that manned space stations would be orbiting Earth during their working lifetimes, though few others foresaw such progress. The U.S. President whose Administration will oversee the first launch system to supersede rocketry in sending cargoes into space may today be serving in some state legislature.In the meantime, an increasing number of scientists as well as space buffs are designing plans for tethers and space elevators. They, at least, are ready to start now.

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