

Does the Lake of Fire Symbolize Eternal Torment for all cast into it

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



Does the Lake of Fire Symbolize Eternal Torment for all cast into it? When “Death and Hades” are cast into the lake of fire” they are destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26), but the Devil, Beast and False Prophet receive eternal torment (Rev. 20:10).

These different fates require the symbolism of a consuming fire that cannot be quenched (Isa. 66:24; Mk. 9:44, 46, 48) is not pertinent to the duration of whatever is cast into it; Whatever is cast in can be immediately destroyed or endure for an undetermined period of time. Their lot or destiny, “their part” (3313 μέρος meros, Rev. 21:8) of “eternity” in the lake of fire, is “according to their works” (Rev. 20:12), in proportion to their deeds.

Some would object claiming “Death and Hades” are personified in this context, but as “sea” is also listed as a *place* the dead rise from, that is impossible. In context they are places the dead rise from that God created, therefore Guilty of nothing. Their being tossed into the fire is to symbolize their destruction, never to return. Whereas Satan and crew are guilty of eternal sins, therefore, “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Rev. 20:10 NKJ)

*13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. **And they were judged, each one according to his works.***

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:13-15 NKJ)

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral,

*sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars **shall have their part** (3313 μέρος meros) in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Rev. 21:8 NKJ)*

3313 μέρος meros {mer'-os}

Meaning: 1) a part 1a) a part due or assigned to one 1b) lot, destiny

“The sea...the death and the Hades” (ἡ θάλασσα... ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ᾍδης Rev. 20:13) are different places that “give up” the dead in them. Christ has the keys to Death and Hades (Rev. 1:13) to symbolize His authority to release or lock up prisoners therein. None of the dead are left out.

Notice the wording in Revelation 20:15: “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire”. This is not a hypothetical “first class condition” where something is implied, to argue against it. In context, its a statement of fact. Its prose, John is reporting what he sees. John must have seen some rise whose names WERE written in the book of life (Compare Rom. 11:25-32).

Judgement Day is when some humans rise to life, and others to condemnation:

28 “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

29 “and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Jn. 5:28-29 NKJ)

Those in the grave (Hades) who done good by repenting for sins done in flesh but then living according to God in the Spirit (1 Pet. 4:6) will rise to life, “that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5). Their names are written in the “book of life” and so are not cast into the lake of fire.

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

*28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. **To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.** (Heb. 9:27-28 NKJ)*

Those who committed eternal sins while alive (Mk. 3:28-29) or refused to repent in Hades are judged according to their works. Each has a different ‘lot’ or ‘destiny’ in the lake of fire according to their works.

Different duration of torment also follows from the warning of “eternal torment” for accepting the Mark of the Beast (Rev. 14:9-11). That requires all guilty of works of lesser evil than accepting the Mark must receive “less than eternal torment” or the warning of “eternal torment” is without force. The Judgment for their different works must result in a

different “part” (3313 μέρος meros) or “destiny”, “less evil work” is judged “less torment” in the Lake of Fire.

43 *‘And if thy hand may cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee maimed to enter into the life, than having the two hands, to go away to the gehenna, to the fire – the unquenchable –*
44 *where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched.*
45 *‘And if thy foot may cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into the life lame, than having the two feet to be cast to the gehenna, to the fire – the unquenchable –*
46 *where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched.*
47 *And if thine eye may cause thee to stumble, cast it out; it is better for thee one-eyed to enter into the reign of God, than having two eyes, to be cast to the gehenna of the fire –*
48 *where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched;*
(Mk. 9:43-48 YLT)

The fire is not quenched, the maggot dies not. Each symbol implies a different “destiny” or “part” (3313 μέρος meros, Rev. 21:8) “Fire that cannot be quenched” implies total destruction, “fire continually burning everlasting destruction” (compare Jude 1:7; Mal. 4:3; Isa. 26:14). “Undying worms” implies eternal torment as undying maggots require a body to continue forever. The symbol of an abominable resurrection body reeking of corruption (Isa. 66:24; Dan. 12:2; Gal. 6:8) that continues forever, communicating the wrath of an offended Holy God to the soul or angelic spirit imprisoned within for all eternity.

So “everyone” cast into Gehenna (aka Abyss, Lake of Fire) has a different destiny according to their works (Rev. 20:11-15). All sacrificed in Gehenna either are consumed by unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43, 44, 45, 46, 48) or their worm dies not (Mk. 9:43, 44, 45, 46, 48).

49 *for every one with fire shall be salted, and every sacrifice with salt shall be salted. (Mk. 9:49 YLT)*

Everyone sacrificed in Gehenna is salted with destruction by fire (cp. Jude 1:7); or salted to be preserved as meat is preserved with salt.

The different “part” or “destiny” of those cast into Gehenna is evident by the threat of “eternal torment” for accepting the Mark (Rev. 14:9-11 cp. Mark 3:28-29). That requires “less than eternal torment” must exist or the threat has no force.

[The correct interpretation is clear in the Textus Receptus, the repetition of the symbols[1] aid understanding as each applies to a different category of sin unveiling it, but modern eclectic texts obscure the meaning by its deletions. See “The Revision Revised” (1881) Dr. Dean John Burgon.]

The Revision Revised pdf

The Dean Burgon Society

Likewise, Jesus’ warning against blaspheming the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of lesser evil works implies less duration of torment as never forgiving blasphemy implies eternal torment, the contrast implying “their part” or “destiny” (3313 μέρος meros) has some reference to duration of torment.

31 “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

32 “Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matt. 12:31-32 NKJ)

This is consistent with the destiny of some cast into the Lake of fire being one of destruction after a time of torment, but for others eternal torment without end. God has “punished and destroyed them” “according to their works” (Rev. 20:12-13). All cast into the Lake of fire suffer the “second death”, they “die the death” from which they will not rise:

*They are dead, they will not live; They are deceased, they will not rise. **Therefore You have punished and destroyed (08045 שָׁמַד shamad) them, And made all their memory to perish.** (Isa. 26:14 NKJ)*

08045 שָׁמַד shamad Meaning: 1) to destroy, exterminate, be destroyed, be exterminated -Strong’s Concordance

16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea And a path through the mighty waters,

17 Who brings forth the chariot and horse, The army and the power (**They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick**): (Isa. 43:16-17 NKJ)

*You shall trample the wicked, **For they shall be ashes** under the soles of your feet On the day that I do this,” Says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 4:3 NKJ)*

A thought experiment: Let’s suppose 1). That God’s Mercy is absent; 2). That using God’s gift of Free Will is not a work so not a factor in judgment of reward or punishment. 3). That its possible to reject Christ’s offer of salvation and yet be innocent of evil works.

For example, the Bingo lady who cares nothing about Jesus, only goes to church to play Bingo. Otherwise, the Bingo lady is good person, no evil works. In that situation, when the Bingo lady is cast into the lake of fire (she rejected salvation in Christ), as torment is according to works, she wouldn’t suffer any torment, like Death and Hades her destruction would be immediate and without pain.

When we factor in God’s mercy, Christ’s words have greater application. “Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven”, it implies all not guilty of

eternal sin will not suffer beyond their immediate destruction. The fire consumes totally (Mal. 4:3; Jude 1:7), they are exterminated (Isa. 26:14) extinguished like a wick that no longer burns (Isa. 43:16-17).

28 “Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter;

29 “but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation “– (Mk. 3:28-29 NKJ)

Considering all of the above, it was a “hasty generalization fallacy” to group all the wicked into the same “eternal torment bin”. Only those guilty of eternal sin suffer eternal torment. God’s mercy would limit the torment or even remove it for everyone else. Everyone judged worthy of that punishment will be seasoned with fire that consumes unto destruction or preserved as meat is preserved salt (Mark 9:49) “according to their works” (Rev. 20:13) and not a second longer.

As these Goat survivors of Armageddon are cast into Gehenna “lake of fire” “soul and body” (Mt. 25:41-46; 18:8-9; 5:22; Mk. 9:43-47) just like the Beast and False Prophet (Rev. 19:20), the severity of this judgment implies their denial of aid to Christ’s Brethren occurred during the Great Tribulation of the church and may have crossed the line into near collaboration with the Beast, even if they did not receive the Mark or worship him (Rev. 14:9-11). The Goats have their Final Judgment before the millennial reign of Christ; denied the last opportunity to repent in Hades and rise to life on Judgment Day (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15):

41 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

43 ‘I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

44 “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’

45 “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

46 “And these will go away into everlasting punishment (2851 κόλασις kolasis), but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matt. 25:41-46 NKJ)

This is, however, the only time we meet the phrase “eternal punishment” in Matthew, or indeed in the whole NT. It appears to be synonymous with the “eternal fire” of v. 41 and of 18:8, and cf. the “hell-fire” of 5:22 and 18:9. All these passages raise the question whether this fire is regarded as destroying and thus annihilating those consigned to it, or as a continuing agony of conscious punishment such as is explicitly

attributed to the devil, the beast and the false prophet in the lake of fire in Rev 20:10 (see above on v. 41). In the debate among evangelical theologians on the issue of annihilation as against continuing punishment,⁹⁴ the phrase “eternal punishment” here in Matt 25:46 is commonly cited as a proof-text for the latter position. But this is usually on the assumption that “eternal” is a synonym for “everlasting.” That assumption depends more on modern English usage than on the meaning of *aiōnios*, which we have seen to be related to the concept of the two ages. [2] “Eternal punishment”, so understood, is punishment which relates to the age to come rather than punishment which continues for ever, so that the term does not in itself favor one side or the other in the annihilationist debate. In so far as the metaphor of fire may be pressed, however, it suggests destruction rather than punishment, especially if the imagery of the incineration of rubbish is understood to underlie the idea of hell (see on 5:22); the fire of Gehenna goes on burning not because the rubbish is not destroyed by it, but because more is continually added. The imagery of incineration in relation to the final destiny of the wicked also occurs more explicitly in 13:42: the weeds are destroyed, not kept burning for ever. We have noted also the use of the verb “destroy” in relation to hell in 10:28. These pointers suggest that an annihilationist theology (sometimes described as “conditional immortality”) does more justice to Matthew’s language in general, and if so the sense of “eternal punishment” here will not be “punishment which goes on for ever”⁹⁶ but “punishment which has eternal consequences”, the loss of eternal life through being destroyed by fire.-France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (pp. 966–967). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

Eternally cut off does not require continuance, only a “Second Death” (Rev. 20:14) from which there is no resurrection (return). If the Lake of Fire symbolized eternal torment why did John feel the need to declare the Devil, Beast and False Prophet “will be tormented day and night forever and ever” in it? (Rev. 20:10).

The wicked are punished with “everlasting destruction from the face of the Lord” (2 Thess. 1:9), that is their place before God is destroyed which implies nothing about their continuance elsewhere.

END NOTE

The Fire that Consumes

Fire can symbolize many things, including destruction:

“Therefore her plagues will come in one day– death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. (Rev. 18:8 NKJ)

They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (Rev. 20:9 NKJ)

Fire is used throughout the scripture to imply total destruction EW Fudge wrote a book about it titled “The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment”.

The Lake of Fire symbolizes destruction, “Death and Hades” (places of the dead Rev. 20:13) are cast into the Lake to destroy them, not to torment them. These places can’t be “personified” in this context because they are places the dead rise from, just as they do from “the sea”:

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.
14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (Rev. 20:13-14 NKJ)

Scripture says everyone tossed into the lake receives “their part” which could be translated their “part due” what is assigned to them, their “lot, destiny”

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part (3313 μέρος meros) in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Rev. 21:8 NKJ)

3313 μέρος meros {mer’-os}
Meaning: 1) a part 1a) a part due or assigned to one 1b) lot, destiny 2) one of the constituent parts of a whole 2a) in part, partly, in a measure, to some degree, as respects a part, severally, individually 2b) any particular, in regard to this, in this respect.-Strong’s Concordance

Therefore, everyone cast into the lake receives punishment according to their works.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.
*13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And **they were judged, each one according to his works.** (Rev. 20:12-13 NKJ)*

When the Beast, False Prophet, Satan are cast into the Lake they suffer eternally:

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev. 20:10 NKJ)

If the symbolism meant all tossed into the Lake of Fire receive eternal

torment, then its redundant for John to add “they will be tormented ...forever.”

Details matter. Historically the Catholic church ignored these details, adopting much pagan thought about Hades. Protestants inherited that eisegesis, defending it.

God is just. He punishes according to deeds. What a surprise, the God of Justice displays justice. Go figure.

[1] Rabbinic argument in both Talmud and New Testament often employ symbol in place of premises. It is assumed the reader will realize the implication. For example, when proving the resurrection of the body Jesus cites:

26 “But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’?

27 “He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken.”

28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well... (Mk. 12:26-28 NKJ)

At first read it seems Jesus proved life after death only, not the resurrection of the body. But from the symbol of God being the “God of the living” it is inconsistent the patriarchs remain physically dead, and therefore the resurrection of their bodies must occur because of who God is. Accordingly, the scribe declares Jesus proved the resurrection to the Sadducees “well”.

Example from Talmud:

‘ Whence is the doctrine of the Resurrection derived from the Torah? As it is said, ‘ Ye shall give the Lord’s heave-offering to Aaron the priest’ (Num. xviii. 28).

But did Aaron live for ever to receive the offering? Is it not true that he did not enter the land of Israel? Consequently the text teaches that he is to be restored to life (in the Hereafter) and will receive the heave-offering. Hence the Resurrection is deducible from the Torah’ (Sanh. 90b). – Abraham Cohen, Everyman’s Talmud (Schocken Books, NY, 1995), p 358.

[2]

V 3, p 98 κόλασις G3136κολάζω G3134 (kolazō), punish; κόλασις G3136 (kolasis), punishment.

CL J. Schneider links the original meaning of kolazō with its etymology, i.e. to maim, cut off. “Punishment is designed to cut off what is bad or

disorderly” (TDNT III 814). Both the noun and the vb. were fixed terms in Gk. sacral jurisprudence. In inscriptions there are references to the deity punishing violations of the cultic laws. Plato put forward the view that he who punishes aright does good, and that punishment is a blessing since it frees one from a false frame of soul (Grg. 476a ff.; cf. TDNT III 815).

OT The two terms occur chiefly in non-canonical literature. The vb. *kolazō* is without Heb. equivalent and is found in 1 Esd. 8:24; Wis. 3:4; 11:5, 8, 16; 12:14f., 27; 14:10; 16:1, 9; 18:11, 22; Sir. 23:21; Dan. 6:13 (12); 1 Macc. 7:7; 2 Macc. 6:14; 3 Macc. 3:26; 7:3, 14; 4 Macc. 2:11; 8:6; 18:5. *kolasis* stands for *miḱšôl*, cause of guilt, offense, in Ezek. 14:3, 4, 7; 18:30; 44:12. It is used in connexion with the vb. *kālam* in the niph., be put to shame, in Ezek. 43:11. It has no Heb. equivalent in Wis. 11:13; 16:2, 24; 19:4; Jer. 18:20; 2 Macc. 4:38; 3 Macc. 1:3; 4 Macc. 8:9; 13:7.

Philo distinguished between the beneficent power of God with which he made the world and which is called God, and the judicial power in virtue of which he rules what is created and which is called Lord (Rer. Div. Her. 166; cf. TDNT III 815 for further references). God’s mercy is older than punishment (Deus. Imm. 76) and God prefers to forgive rather than to punish (Spec. Leg. 2, 196). Punishment is for those who will not listen to reason (Agric. 40). Both Josephus (e.g. Ant. 1, 60) and Philo speak of *kolasis* as divine retribution. For other instances in non-biblical literature see Arndt, 440. The idea of eternal punishment *kolasis aiōnios* is found in Test.Reub. 5:5.

NT Both words occur only twice each in the NT. The vb. is found in Acts 4:21 of the Jewish leaders’ treatment of Peter and John: “And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people; for all men praised God for what had happened.” It is used of divine chastisement in 2 Pet. 2:9: “then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.”

The noun occurs in 1 Jn. 4:18: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love.” Schneider takes this to mean that “the man who lives in fear (before God) is already punished by this fear. His fear is his punishment” (TDNT III 817). He notes, however, that most commentators do not take it in this way. Rather, the meaning would seem to be that continued existence in fear is a sign of an inadequate relationship with God which is meant to exist on the plane of love. The love in question is both God’s love for us and ours for him and the brethren (cf. v. 19 with 2:9ff.; 3:11–18; 4:7–12). When men live on that level, they have “confidence for the day of judgment” (v. 17).

Matt. 25:46 raises the question of eternal punishment. At the end of the parable of the sheep and the goats the Lord separates the blessed, who manifested their righteousness in practical love, from the cursed who failed to do so, not recognizing the incognito presence of Christ in the

needy brethren. “Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels....’ And they will go away into eternal punishment [eis kolasin aiōnion], but the righteous into eternal life [eis zoēn aiōnion]” (Matt. 25:41, 46). The passage has often been cited in support of the doctrine of endless torment. But it may be questioned whether it implies more than the finality of judgment. The term eternal has both qualitative and quantitative overtones (→ Time, art. ἐλαιών). Jesus did not teach, like Plato and others, that the → soul was intrinsically immortal and that it would necessarily go on after death. References to the eternal → fire (Matt. 18:8; cf. Mk. 9:43–48; Jude 7) are necessarily figurative.

In attempting to determine the meaning of such passages, attention needs to be paid to semantics and the philosophical analysis of the structure and function of language. The words “life” and “judgment” are what I. T. Ramsey called models which describe something in familiar terms which is, in fact, not capable of being described in a purely literal way. For although eternal life can be entered into now, its future character lies hidden beyond this life. The word “eternal” is what Ramsey termed a qualifier which serves as a directive to understand the model in a special way (Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases, 1957, 61 f.; cf. also Freedom and Immortality, 1960, 91–148). The qualifier is not simply a literal description of the noun but a reminder that it is being used in a non-literal sense (cf. such phrases as “heavenly Father”, “infinite love”). Similarly the phrase “eternal sin” (Mk. 3:29) does not mean an endless sin but one which has dimensions and ramifications beyond the present life.

Eternal → judgment is referred to in Heb. 6:2 and 2 Thess. 1:9. This, like the idea of eternal fire, does not necessarily imply that those concerned go on being judged or continue to be consumed. If the metaphor of fire is to be pressed at all, it would imply that the fire of righteousness continues to burn, but that what is consumed once is consumed for good (cf. also Paul’s observation about works being consumed by fire, 1 Cor. 3:15)-Brown, C. (1986). κοῤῥασις. In L. Coenen, E. Beyreuther, & H. Bietenhard (Eds.), New international dictionary of New Testament theology (Vol. 3, pp. 98–99). Zondervan Publishing House.

Lazarus and the Rich Man

God’s Plan for the Lost

Preaching to the Dead (Postmortem evangelism)

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“Implication” is the interpretive key unlocking the Holy Scriptures so you see what Christ and His Apostles saw

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



“Implication” is the interpretive key opening the door to a mass of evidence for postmortem opportunity for salvation.

36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

37 Jesus said to him, “`You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

38 *"This is the first and great commandment.*

39 *"And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

40 ***"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."** (Matt. 22:36-40 NKJ)*

In Jesus' day Rabbinic argument often pivoted upon an implied premise: Jesus asked the Pharisees "if David calls Christ 'my Lord' how can he be David's son? (Mt 22:41-45); " I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" proves Sadducees twice wrong, not only about the afterlife but the resurrection of the body for daily God is reminded He promised they and their offspring would inhabit the land physically forever (Gen. 17:7-8; 26:3; 28:13). James quotes Amos 9:11-12 to prove Gentiles were always participants in God's salvation (Acts. 15:15-18); Paul argues "This, 'He ascended'— what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?'" (Eph. 4:9).

18 *You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there.*

19 *Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah*

20 *Our God is the God of salvation; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. (Ps. 68:18-20 NKJ)*

Today scholars believe Paul's application is "contextually problematic." Not to the School of Hillel where Paul learned exegesis at the feet of Gamaliel (Ac. 22:1-3). Both the translators of the Greek Septuagint and Aramaic Targums of this verse parallel Paul's Holy Spirit-inspired application. They conclude similar premises from the implication of David's prophecy.

The prophet David speaks of Christ's descent into hell and preaching to the formerly disobedient "spirits in prison" (1 Pt. 3:18-22) who gladly give gifts for being shown the LORD could dwell among them. Like the Church, they responded to Christ's preaching "with the answer of a good conscience towards God". That is the "like figure" Peter saw in Baptism, not referring to water at all. Having believed Christ's preaching the formerly dead were raised to a newness of life (Rom. 6:4. Col. 2:12. Eph. 2:3-7) "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pt. 3:21-22). Upon learning Christ is the only way to Salvation; the formerly rebellious become God's gift to the church of apostles prophets evangelists pastors teachers "for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:7-16). Without postmortem opportunity, none of these connections can be made.

Postmortem Opportunity does not exist for those who deliberately and in full knowledge reject the gospel of Christ (Heb. 6:4-8). Ignorance of God

is the only ground for divine mercy. Christ made this clear: “He who is not with me is against me”, which implies Christ’s identity is fully known. However, if “anyone speaks a word against the Son of Man” (incarnation veiling Jesus’ identity) “it will be forgiven” “in the age to come” (Mt. 12:30, 32) for he spoke in ignorance of God.

Explanation of how postmortem opportunity fits into the larger Christian theology of salvation.

This theory of Universal Opportunity is Exclusive to Christ: “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6 NKJ). “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 NKJ). It does not require temporal or geographical luck, everyone from Adam and Eve hears the gospel of Christ preached when their appointed deaths occur. Then is the “Judgment/trial” if Christ’s sacrifice “to bear the sins of many” includes them. To finite creatures living in spacetime this “is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible” (Mk. 10:27 NKJ).

<https://endtimenews.net/does-the-bible-teach-a-second-chance/>

Does the Bible teach there is a Second Chance to be saved by Jesus?

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



Postmortem Opportunity in Biblical Perspective: A New Argument Universal Opportunity for Salvation in Jesus Spans Life and the Afterlife

The Fate of those who die unevangelized has been debated ever since the Apostles departed to be with Christ. Did God create knowing the opportunity for salvation would exist only for those born in the right time and place? As Christ alone is the Way to Salvation, what is the fate of all born before that time, or in places where Christ remained unknown for centuries? Where and when is their opportunity for salvation in Jesus?

Until now, four different theories have been proposed to answer this question: *Restrictivism* which denies universal opportunity exists; *Universal Opportunity* exists despite appearances, no one dies without a special revelation of Christ; *Inclusivism* where opportunity exists apart from faith in Christ; *Universalism* where all are ultimately reconciled to God in Jesus, opportunity unnecessary.

Universal Opportunity Exclusive to Christ is preached in this life and the Afterlife

This essay argues universal opportunity for salvation in Jesus Christ spans both life and the afterlife, via the timeless sacrifice of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8) who was “offered once” “at the end of the ages” (Heb. 9:26) so the gospel is preached “also” to them who are dead (1 Pt. 4:6) and during their judgment (Heb. 9:27) “according to men in the flesh” the opportunity to be saved in Jesus is offered “to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28). Those who grasp the opportunity to be saved then “live according to God in the Spirit” protected from all torment (1 Pt. 4:6 cp. 1 Pt. 3:18-22). About them, it is written: “To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Heb. 9:28 NKJ) during the resurrection gathering/rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:5, 15:51-54; Rev. 14:12-16; 7:9, 14).

“Implication” is the interpretive key opening the door to a mass of evidence for postmortem opportunity (Mt. 22:40). In Jesus’ day Rabbinic argument often pivoted upon an implied premise: Jesus asked the Pharisees “if David calls Christ ‘my Lord’ how can he be David’s son? (Mt 22:41-45); ” I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” proves Sadducees twice wrong, not only about the afterlife but the resurrection of the body for daily God is reminded He promised they and their offspring would inhabit the land physically forever (Gen. 17:7-8; 26:3; 28:13). James quotes Amos 9:11-12 to prove Gentiles were always participants in God’s salvation (Acts. 15:15-18); Paul argues “This, ‘He ascended’— what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?’” (Eph. 4:9).

18 You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there.

19 Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah

20 Our God is the God of salvation; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. (Ps. 68:18-20 NKJ)

Today scholars believe Paul’s application is “contextually problematic.” Not to the School of Hillel where Paul learned exegesis at the feet of Gamaliel (Ac. 22:1-3). Both the translators of the Greek Septuagint and Aramaic Targums of this verse parallel Paul’s Holy Spirit-inspired application. They conclude similar premises from the implication of David’s prophecy.

The prophet David speaks of Christ’s descent into hell and preaching to the formerly disobedient “spirits in prison” (1 Pt. 3:18-22) who gladly give gifts for being shown the LORD could dwell among them. Like the Church, they responded to Christ’s preaching “with the answer of a good conscience towards God”. That is the “like figure” Peter saw in Baptism, not referring to water at all. Having believed Christ’s preaching the formerly dead were raised to a newness of life (Rom. 6:4. Col. 2:12. Eph.

2:3-7) “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pt. 3:21-22). Upon learning Christ is the only way to Salvation; the formerly rebellious become God’s gift to the church of apostles prophets evangelists pastors teachers “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Eph. 4:7-16). Without postmortem opportunity, none of these connections can be made.

Postmortem Opportunity does not exist for those who deliberately and in full knowledge reject the gospel of Christ (Heb. 6:4-8). Ignorance of God is the only ground for divine mercy. Christ made this clear: “He who is not with me is against me”, which implies Christ’s identity is fully known. However, if “anyone speaks a word against the Son of Man” (incarnation veiling Jesus’ identity) “it will be forgiven” “in the age to come” (Mt. 12:30, 32) for he spoke in ignorance of God.

Explanation of how postmortem opportunity fits into the larger Christian theology of salvation.

This theory of Universal Opportunity is Exclusive to Christ: “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6 NKJ). “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 NKJ). It does not require temporal or geographical luck, everyone from Adam and Eve hears the gospel of Christ preached when their appointed deaths occur. Then is the “Judgment/trial” if Christ’s sacrifice “to bear the sins of many” includes them. To finite creatures living in spacetime this “is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible” (Mk. 10:27 NKJ).

“And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’”-Jesus Christ (Lk. 5:39-6:1 NKJ)

Some say we have only one life on earth to make our decision for or against God, that a “postmortem opportunity” to repent and be saved doesn’t exist. Two main texts are cited for this view: Hebrews 9:27 “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” which suggests the judgment concerns acts performed while alive; and the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), which seems to rule out a “postmortem opportunity” when the Rich Man is told “between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.” (Lk. 16:26 NKJ).

The scriptures cited against the “postmortem opportunity” have been taken out of context:

For example, the Rich Man is in Hades, which in the context of the New Testament is a temporary residence. Hades will be emptied out on Judgment Day (Rev. 20:13), it then “dies the second death” which symbolically means it will never return (Rev. 20:14). *As the Rich Man is raised up out of Hades with everyone else (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:13), the “great gulf” is not an impassible barrier “to the resurrection of life, and ...the*

resurrection of condemnation.” (Jn. 5:29 NKJ)

As for Hebrews 9:27, Christ said Christians “shall not come into judgment (2920 κρίσις krisis), but has passed from death into life” (Jn. 5:24 NKJ) [2]. ***That means the “judgment” (2920 κρίσις krisis) in Hebrews 9:27 is deciding what happens to non-Christians after they die, not Christians who have been saved by grace (Eph. 2:5-10).***

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and **shall not come into judgment (2920 κρίσις krisis)**, but has passed from death into life. (Jn. 5:24 NKJ)*

Therefore, the “judgment” in Hebrews 9:27 is “the postmortem opportunity for salvation”, because after this judgment Christ will appear: *“To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time...for salvation.”* (Heb. 9:28 NKJ).

*27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (2920 κρίσις krisis),
28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. **To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.** (Heb. 9:27-28 NKJ)*

That fits the meaning of the Greek *krisis*, it denotes a “trial, contest, selection” where an “opinion or decision” is given one way or the other.-*Strong’s Concordance.*

Some claim the Judgment in Hebrews 9:27 is the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. However, the following incompatibilities make that impossible:

- 1.) Christ’s “second appearance” is His Second coming, well before the Judgment of all the earth in Revelation 20:11-15.
- 2.) The Great White Throne Judgement judges sin, therefore Jesus’ appearance there cannot be “apart from sin”.
- 3.) Christ appears a second time to rapture/raise all the dead in Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:5, 15:51-54; Rev. 14:12-16; 7:9, 14).
- 4.) The only judgment Christians face evaluates their service to Christ (2 Cor. 5:10; John 5:24-25).
- 5.) If no judgment occurs after men “die once”, how is it anyone ends up in hell? Shouldn’t everyone be in the same place?
- 6.) If Christians are among those being judged then they must wait for Christ’s second appearance, “for salvation”. That contradicts Christians are saved “to the uttermost” when they believed, by grace through faith in His Name(John 3:15-16, 36; 5:24-25; 20:31; Eph. 2:5-8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 7:25.)

These incompatible properties prove beyond all reasonable doubt the judgment in Hebrews 9:27 cannot be the Great White Throne Judgment in

Revelation 10:11-15. Everything is different about them.

Christians must be excluded because they were saved by grace through faith in Jesus while alive, and do not come under a *krisis* judgment, whether immediately after death or sometime in the future at the Great White Throne Judgment (John 5:24-25).

The exclusion of believing Christians implies what is judged is belief or non-belief in Christ, that alone exempted Christians from judgment. The “Judgment” in Hebrews 9:27 is a “*krisis* trial” to decide whether someone will become one of “the many” “believers” Christ died for. Christ “was offered once” “at the end of the ages” (Heb. 9:26) so all who died without Christ, including the generations who lived and died ” since “the foundation of the world”, would be eligible for His sacrifice for sin. As John put it, Christ is the sacrificial “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8) so all born into it are covered by His Sacrifice. Christ was offered once “at the end of the ages...to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself...to bear the sins of many”. [Having chosen life in Christ] they now “eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time...for salvation (Heb. 9:26, 28 NKJ).

Read it for yourself. When Paul says He “would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world” he is saying Christ’s sacrifice applies from that time, therefore it screams “postmortem opportunity for those who never heard while alive. This is a judgment of all who died without Christ. After judgment, some of them eagerly wait for Christ’s salvation.

24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—

26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (2920 κρίσις krisis),

28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Heb. 9:24-28 NKJ)

How can we be certain this trial is not a judgment whether one died a Christian? **Christ our Teacher (Mt. 23:10) said Christians have passed from death into life when they believed (John 5:24).** So did the apostles, Christians are saved by grace when they believe (Ac. 15:11; Eph. 2:5, 8), not by a *krisis* judgment after they die. Moreover, as the dead since the foundation of the world undergo the same “judgment”, if dying a non-Christian condemned them for what is not their fault, the trial would be a sick parody of justice. That cannot be.

Others claim it is a judgment or “completion” of their salvation by a “cleansing” of sin in the believer. They point to “purification” (Heb. 9:22) and interpret that is how Christ “put away sin” (Heb. 9:26). However, they misunderstand the analogy. Just as blood cleanses vessels to permit they appear in God’s presence in the Temple (Heb. 9:21-23), so Christ’s blood cleanses from sin so the “many” can appear in God’s presence. Hebrews 9:28 makes this clear; Christ will appear “a second time apart from sin, for salvation (4991 σωτηρία soteria). ” *The dead eagerly wait for their salvation at Christ’s second coming, not their cleansing.* As Christians are saved to the uttermost in this life (Heb. 7:25), they aren’t among these dead in hell.

The context implies what is being decided about the dead: It is written: “He...appeared...once at the end of the ages...to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” so He would not “have...to suffer often since the foundation of the world” (Heb. 9:24-26). *Therefore, the Judgment is whether Christ’s sacrifice applies to the one being judged, whether he is one of the “many” saved by it.* As belief or non-belief in Christ are the only grounds for salvation or condemnation (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; John 3:16-18; 5:24; 14:6; 20:31; Acts 4:11-12; Rom. 10:9; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 Peter 2:6-8; 1 John 5:11-12), it follows belief or non-belief in the gospel of Christ decides the outcome of this Trial. Therefore, regardless of when someone died, the Gospel is preached to them so they be judged according to men in the flesh, but choose to live according to God in the spirit (1 Pt. 4:6). [3]

That is “the trial”, those who believe Jesus is “the Christ the Son of God” are saved, live according to God in the spirit and eagerly wait for Christ’s second coming, for salvation, the resurrection to life. Having heard and obeyed Christ’s voice while in the grave they done good (John 5:28-29).

A Thought Experiment: Imagine the Elect aren’t the only ones saved. What shall we say then?

Paul names two Groups that will be saved: The ELECT and Israel.

Israel was blinded at first but “have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not!”

Therefore, both Elect and Non-Elect (their fullness) will be saved.

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

8 Just as it is written: “God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.”

9 And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.”

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come

to the Gentiles.

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, **how much more their fullness!** (Rom. 11:7-12 NKJ)

God is not partial (Rom. 2:11-16; 11:12), what He did for non-Elect Israel He will extend to the Gentiles. ALL unsaved humanity goes through the same trial, from Adam and Eve forward. Therefore, all who repent and believe in Jesus during their trial have Jesus as the propitiation for their sins just as the scripture promises: **“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world [1]”** (1 Jn. 2:2). [4]

Jesus confirmed the dead will have a chance to obey His voice while still in the grave:

21 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

22 *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*

23 *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

25 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice (ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς) of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

26 *For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*

27 *And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

28 *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice (ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς),*

29 *And shall come forth; they that have done (ποιήσαντες aorist participle) good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done (πράξαντες aorist participle) evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (Jn. 5:21-29 KJV)*

In John 5:21-29, Jesus elucidates a profound spiritual truth about life, death, and resurrection, presenting a compelling case for postmortem opportunity for salvation. This passage teaches that obedience to Jesus' voice, even in death, holds the promise of eternal life.

Jesus begins by asserting His divine authority, paralleling the power of the Father: “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he will” (John 5:21). The Father has placed all judgment in the hands of the Son, requiring that all should honor the Son as they honor the Father (John 5:22-23). This divine responsibility

bestowed upon Jesus underscores His divinity and authority.

The argument gains momentum as Jesus reveals that the time is already upon us when the dead will hear His voice: “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:25). This statement does not discriminate between the physically alive or dead; all will have the chance to listen and obey, promising an opportunity for eternal life even after physical death.

Judgment pivots on the Dead’s response to Christ’s voice: They “having done” (ποιήσαντες 4160 ποιέω poieo) good (obeying the voice) rise unto the resurrection of life, and they that “having accomplished” (πράξαντες 4238 πράσσω prasso) evil (not obeying the voice) rise unto a resurrection of damnation.

The aorist participles in John 5:29 are often translated as “have done,” suggesting actions completed in the past. But context proves that is inaccurate as it narrows the scope of Jesus’ proclamation excluding His audience whose time to respond to His voice “now is.”

Many commentators minimize the subsequent (following) use of the aorist participle. Even such scholars as Robertson and Moulton, who recognize that the participle is not time-bound, resist this category of usage. But there are a number of examples in biblical and extra-biblical Greek where an aorist participle is used to refer to an action occurring after the action of the main verb. In virtually all of these examples, the aorist participle is placed after the main verb in syntactical order.- Porter, S. E. (1999). Idioms of the Greek New Testament (p. 189). JSOT.

Thus, these verses elucidate Jesus’ profound promise of life and warning of judgment. It upholds the potential for salvation beyond the grave and underscores the importance of obeying the divine voice. God’s enduring love for humanity shines through, offering hope and redemption even after death, affirming that it is never too late to respond to God’s call.

What about Jesus’ parable?

To begin with, it’s more than a parable. The key difference Commentaries cite is the appearance of the personal name of Lazarus’. Rather than a parable, it seems like an “Old Testament prophetic warning” (2 Sam. 12:1-7) the mocking Pharisees would end up in Hades. Christ would send the risen Lazarus and the Pharisees (Luke 16:14) will not listen to Lazarus (John 12:9-11) just as they don’t heed Moses and the prophets and their testimony about Christ’s authority, especially over their riches (Luke 16:29-31). Contrary to their tradition Abraham would prevent a circumcised Israelite descending into Torment, its people like Lazarus they despise who are saved and while they end up in Hades. As it can’t be classified a “parable”, the symbolism should be taken as genuine revelation about the Afterlife.

A “postmortem opportunity” doesn’t require crossing over from hell to heaven. Rather, the repentant spirit is saved in the “Day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5) when the Death and Hell are emptied out and those who “done good” upon obediently hearing Christ’s voice (1 Peter 4:6) rise to a resurrection of life (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:13-14). But we must factor in Christ has the keys to Death and Hades (Rev. 1:18) and the “day of our lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5) could be His second coming when He gathers/raptures/resurrects the church.

[Throughout this site I said the repentant dead in Hades rise during the Great White Throne Judgment when Hades is emptied out (Rev. 20:11-15). However, I now favor they rise after Christ sends out His angels to gather all the wicked and cast them into the furnace of fire (Mt. 13:41-43; Dan. 12:2-3) at His second appearing. I resisted the prompting of the Holy Spirit because of unwarranted weight given to Revelation 20:13, which actually begs the question completely. Not so Hebrews 9:28 , it identifies when Christ’s salvation comes with precision—at His second “appearing” (3700 ὀπτάνομαι optanomai).

Hades as a place of eternal torment is “a self-contradiction” [5]. Hades is emptied on Judgment Day (Rev. 20:13-14) therefore, the Rich Man was only temporarily in Hades and could not be suffering eternal punishment.

Other facts indicate the Rich Man was not irredeemable, that the gifts and calling of God were not revoked in his case (Romans 11:26-32).

1.) Rather than a self-absorbed man who curses both Abraham and God for his plight, the Rich Man shows selfless concern for his family (Luke 16:27).

2.) Abraham affectionately calls the Rich Man “son” (Luke 16:25). It is impossible Abraham would speak affectionately if the Rich Man were an irredeemable enemy of God: “Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate you? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?” (Psalm 139:21).

3.) Abraham and others wanted to comfort the Rich Man, but an impassible chasm prevented them (Luke 16:26). It is impossible the redeemed would rebelliously want to subvert God’s punishment of the wicked (Rev. 15:3-4). Therefore, the scene does not depict God’s punishment.

4.) When the Rich Man cried “I am tormented (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao) in this flame (5395 φλόξ phlox)”, the symbolism implies a process commentators miss. The Rich Man is in “sorrow” (cp. Acts 20:38 3600 ὀδυνάω odunao) for his sins, for the first time he is 100% aware how badly he missed the mark of God’s perfection. The tormenting flame that brings truth to the surface, symbolizes God’s inspection. God is revealed in the “flame” (Ex. 3:2; Judges 13:20; Isa. 66:15 LXX; Acts 7:30; 2 Thess. 1:8). His “eyes like a flame of fire” are bringing every dark secret and sin to the light, all self-delusion is purged. Just as it is written: The Lord has washed away the filth... and purged the blood of Jerusalem...by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning” (Isa. 4:4 NKJ).

Christ's prophecy to the Pharisees revealed even the children of Abraham(Matthew 3:9-10) like the Rich Man, if they die enemies of the gospel rejecting His authority, they will be chastised in Hades contrary to their belief Abraham would not permit an Israelite enter Hades: "In the world to come Abraham sits at the gate of Gehenna, permitting none to enter who bears the seal of the covenant" (Genesis Rabbah xlviii). Paul touches on this subject declaring "the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable". All Israel will be saved even if they must suffer the torments of hell first (Romans 11:26-33).

Those who have not committed eternal sins will be purged of all that subverts their ability to make the free will confession Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and have life in His Name (John 20:28-31). All addiction to sin and self-delusion is burned away by the torment (931 βάσανος basano) of God's inspection, revealing the truth of the individual, who he really is. Once liberated and fully able to make a free will choice the gospel of Christ is preached, for belief or non-belief in Christ are the only grounds for judgment (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; John 3:16-18; 5:24; 14:6; 20:31; Acts 4:11-12;1 Peter 2:6-8). Therefore, only after a definite and formal presentment of the Gospel of Christ is made to a soul fully capable of making an informed and free judgment will God judge the conscious and deliberate acceptance or rejection of Christ.

Other New Testament texts showing a postmortem opportunity for salvation exists in the Afterlife.

Sins done in ignorance of who Jesus is may be forgiven in the 'age to come', requiring the existence of a "postmortem opportunity" (Matthew 12:31-32).

30 *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*

31 *"Therefore I say to you, **every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven (ἁφεθήσεται)** men , but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven (ἁφεθήσεται) men.*

32 *"Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven (ἁφεθήσεται) him ; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven (ἁφεθήσεται) him, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matt. 12:30-32 NKJ)*

Understandably men might oppose the "Son of Man" because they do not appreciate Jesus is "God incarnate" and they are guilty of opposing God. But for those who do know God is working in Jesus either you are with Him or against God. There is no forgiveness for opposing the obvious work of God. Therefore, blaspheming the Holy Spirit doing the obvious work of God will not be forgiven , either in this age or the age to come.

"Will be forgiven" (ἁφεθήσεται)". Although some render "The future passive indicative of ἀφίημι ...'to be forgiven' ...'to be pardoned' ...as

indicating a possibility: ‘can be forgiven’ [CEV, NCV, NLT, REB, TEV], ‘may be forgiven’ [Abernathy, D. (2013). An Exegetical Summary of Matthew 1–16 (p. 444). SIL International]– its last appearance in this context rules that out. One is for or against Jesus/God, no forgiveness for those who know they are against God.

Sins done ignorantly against God “will be forgiven” in the “age to come”. That requires the existence of a “postmortem opportunity” for the unsaved.

Some will object, not charging the damned with all their sins wasn’t a postmortem opportunity. Context answers that, why contrast sins done ignorantly with those that are not, if they don’t produce different ends and for that a postmortem opportunity is required.

The sins of the “saved” were forgiven in this age, they do not need a “postmortem opportunity” (Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7).

The apostle Peter reveals the postmortem opportunity when he says the dead have the gospel preached so they can choose to live “according to God in the spirit”:

For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Pet. 4:6 NKJ)

The “postmortem opportunity” is on display when Christ preached to the dead “spirits in prison” after He Himself was put to death.

Some believe ‘Christ proclaimed doom to the damned’. That is impossible, the antitype of baptism, being saved out of the water symbolizes how “we were buried...in death and then raised with Jesus” (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12) when we gave the “answer of a good conscience toward God”. The theme of salvation contradicts completely any idea Christ is preaching damnation. The context implies these “spirits in prison” were among the “captives in His train” (ἡχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν) (Eph. 4:8) when He ascended into heaven:

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

20 who formerly were disobedient (544 ἀπειθέω apeitheo), when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us– baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (1 Pet. 3:18-22)

Human dead are “souls in hades”, not “spirits in prison.” Nor can they be the “sons of God fallen angels” of Noah’s Day (Gen. 6:2, 4) because they remain bound (Jude 1:6). These “spirits” were the hybrid angel-human “men of renown” dead who could not believe (544 ἀπειθέω apeitheo) Noah’s preaching God would forgive the abomination of their hybrid nature. It defiled the image of God in man with that of angels. This is why Christ made a “special trip”, to prove God would forgive and elicit the “answer of a good conscience towards God”. They went with Christ into heaven as part of Christ’s triumph over Satan.

9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be`from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’

11 “As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. (Zech. 9:9-11 NKJ)

[#Y]

” And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life”

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone (εἴ τις) not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15 NKJ)

Postmortem opportunity for salvation on Judgment Day is implied by the opening of “the Book of Life”. That saved people rise on Judgment Day is explicitly stated by the prophet Daniel “some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2); Jesus Christ “to the resurrection of life, and...to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29); and His apostle Peter “there will be a resurrection...both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

There are three books according to the three classes of humans God

foreknew before creation—before the fall corrupted their free will. He saw who were thoroughly righteous, thoroughly wicked, and the “Middling People”.

The “book of the living” (Ps. 69:28) is also called “the Book of Life” (Rev. 20:12, 15). From Rev. 17:8 we know the Book of Life was written from the foundation of the world and that it did not contain the names of the wicked (also Rev. 13:8). That implies the existence of the Book of the Wicked with their names and deeds (Rev. 20:12-13). Because the names of the Elect were chosen by God before the foundation of the world, they cannot be blotted out of the Book of Life (Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4). Therefore, the existence of names that can be blotted out of the Book of Life implies the existence of the “Book of the Middling People” that record their names and deeds in this fallen realm and determine whether their names are blotted out or inscribed in the Book of Life (Ps. 69:28).

Therefore, the symbolism of the books used during the Great White Throne Judgment by Christ reveals Postmortem Opportunity for Salvation. Some of the dead rise to the “resurrection of life”, their names are in the book of life.

Moreover, the wording “And if anyone (εἴ τις) was not found in the Book of Life” implies some were found because “if anyone” cannot be a hypothetical “first-class condition” in an argument. John isn’t arguing a point, he is reporting what he saw.

For example, “if anyone didn’t have a ticket they didn’t get to see the movie” implies some had tickets.

In the days of Christ, the School of Hillel interpreted the Old Testament revealed a merciful God who forgave repentant sinners, even those in Sheol. Paul was a Pharisee (Ac. 22:3; 23:6; 26:4-5) of this school so their teachings are relevant context when interpreting Paul’s eschatology. They believed three classes of People appear on Judgment Day: The Righteous, the Wicked, and the “Middling People”. This construct is evident in John’s vision of Judgment Day where multiple books are opened.”

[I.15 A] Said R. Kruspedai said R. Yohanan, “Three books are opened [by God] on the New Year: one for the thoroughly wicked, one for the thoroughly righteous, and one for middling [people].

[B] “The thoroughly righteous immediately are inscribed and sealed for [continued] life.

[C] “The thoroughly wicked immediately are inscribed and sealed for death.

[D] “Middling [people] are left hanging from New Year until the Day of Atonement.

[E] “If they [are found to have] merit, they are inscribed for life.

[F] “If they [are found] not [to have] merit, they are inscribed for death.”

[G] Said R. Abin, “What is the Scriptural [foundation for this]? [Ps. 69:28 states]: ‘Let them be blotted out of the book of the living. Let them not be inscribed among the righteous.’ ‘Let them be blotted out of the book’-this refers to the book of the thoroughly wicked. ‘[... of the] living’-this refers to the book of the righteous. ‘Let them not be inscribed among the righteous’-this refers to the book of middling [people].”-Neusner, J. (2011). *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* (Vol. 6b, p. 83). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

Rabbi Abin relies on unstated implications: “Let them be blotted out” implies the Book of the Thoroughly Wicked because the action is ongoing, they will never repent. “Book of the Living” lists the names of the Thoroughly Righteous. “Inscribed among the righteous” implies the Book of the Middling People because they chose to be Righteous. Unlike the Thoroughly Righteous, or Wicked, they had a choice.

Scholarship that ignores the Jewish context of the NT is unwise:

Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.” (Matt. 13:52 NKJ)

Various Scriptures where Postmortem Opportunity is explicit or implicit:

Dt. 32:39 [#A]; 1Sam. 2:6 [#B]; 2Sam. 22:5-7 [#C]; Ps. 16:10-11 [#D]; Ps. 30:3-6 [#E]; Ps. 40:1-3 [#F]; Ps. 49:12-15 [#G]; Ps. 56:13 [#H]; Ps. 68:18-20 [#I]; Ps. 69:13-18 [#J]; Ps. 71:19-23 [#K]; Ps. 86:13 [#L]; Ps. 102:18-22 [#M]; Ps. 116:1-9 [#N]; Hos. 13:14 [#O]; Jon. 2:1-10 [#P]; Zec. 9:9-11 [#Q]; Mt. 12:30-32[#R]; John 5:28-29[#S]; Rm. 11:25-36[#T]; 1 Pt. 3:18-22[#U]; 1 Pt. 4:6[#V]; 1 Cor. 5:5[#W]; Eph. 4:8-10[#I]; Heb. 9:27-28[#X]; Rev. 20:11-15[#Y];[#Z]

[#B]

He bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up

6 Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up.

7 Jehovah maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, he also lifteth up.

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill, To make them sit with princes, And inherit the throne of glory: For the pillars of the earth are Jehovah’s, And he hath set the world upon them. (1 Sam. 2:6-8 ASV)

Those who deny postmortem opportunity would argue the text is figurative, applying only to this life. However, the Rabbis of Jesus’ day would disagree. The two major theological schools of Shammai and Hillel cite it to prove postmortem opportunity.

The House of Shammai says: There will be three classes of people on the

Day of Judgment—the completely righteous, the completely wicked, and those in between. The judgment of the completely righteous is immediately written and sealed for the life of the World-to-Come and that of the completely wicked is immediately written and sealed for Gehinnom (hell), as it is said (Daniel 12:2): “And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.” **But those in between shall go down to Gehinnom, and when they tearfully pray they shall come up again, as it is said (Zechariah 13:9): “I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried, and he shall call on My name, and I will answer him.” It was concerning this last class of men that Hannah said (1 Samuel 2:6): “The Lord kills and gives life. He brings down to the grave and brings up again.”**

But the House of Hillel says: When God revealed Himself to Moses and proclaimed before him His glory, He said [He is] “abundant in mercy (hesed)” (Exodus 34:7) – for He inclines the scale of judgment toward the side of mercy. And it was about this third class of men, who are neither completely righteous nor completely wicked, but in between, that David said (Psalm 116:1): “I love the Lord because he hears my voice in prayer”; and regarding them was the whole Psalm written, including (116:6): “I was brought low [through my sins] and He saved me [nonetheless]” (Rosh HaShanah 16b).

Hillel and Shammai did not differ concerning the eternal destinations of the completely righteous and the completely wicked: These would go to heaven and the others to hell. **But they did differ about those in between, the great majority: Shammai said they would go to hell, be purified, pray, and then enter heaven; Hillel said they would pray and go directly to heaven.** What was the basis for Hillel’s position? He interpreted “abundant in mercy” in the Torah’s description of God’s attributes, as meaning “inclining to the side of mercy.” He taught that God always inclines the scale of judgment to the side of mercy, and so will He do on the Day of Judgment. -Buxbaum, Y. (2008). The Life and Teachings of Hillel. Jason Aronson, Inc.

[#A]

I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal

39 See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. (Deut. 32:39-40 KJV)

Those who deny postmortem opportunity argue this is figurative: “These words do not refer to the immortality of the soul, but to the restoration of life of the people of Israel, which God had delivered up to death.”

Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). Commentary on the Old Testament (Vol. 1, p. 1002). Hendrickson.

The Rabbis of Christ’s day disagree, not only did they apply this to the souls of individuals, they also cited it against the Sadducees who claimed ‘no resurrection is taught in the Torah’:

- I.26 A. Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: “I kill and I make alive” (Deut. 32:39).”*
- B. Is it possible to suppose that there is death for one person and life for the other, just as the world is accustomed [now]?*
- C. Scripture says, “I wound and I heal” (Deut. 32:39).*
- D. Just as wounding and healing happen to one person, so death and then resurrection happen to one person.*
- E. From this fact we derive an answer to those who say, “There is no evidence of the resurrection of the dead based on the teachings of the Torah.”-Neusner, J. (2011). The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary (Vol. 16, p. 486). Hendrickson Publishers.*

[#C]

The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of Death confronted me

*5 For the waves of Death compassed me. The floods of Belial assailed me.
6 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of Death confronted me.
7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, yea, I called unto my God; and out of His temple He heard my voice, and my cry did enter into His ears.
(2 Sam. 22:5-7 JPS)*

This is part of David’s song of deliverance, read in Synagogues during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. “Waves of Death” “floods of Belial” “cords of Sheol” “snares of Death” are figurative for various aspects of the “hell” King Saul put David through. Its impossible not to see Postmortem Opportunity is part of David’s belief.

[#D]

You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

*9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.
10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps. 16:9-11 NKJ)*

The prophecy applies to both David and Christ, therefore verses 9-11 apply to David only while only Christ did not “see corruption.” Clearly there is postmortem opportunity to be saved.

29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David,

that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.
30 “Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,
31 “he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. (Acts 2:29-31 NKJ)

[#E]

You have brought up my soul from Sheol

2 O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.
3 O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol (07585 שְׁאוֹל she’owl); you restored me to life (02421 חַיָּה chayah) from among those who go down to the pit (0953 בֹּרַח bowr).
4 Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. (Ps. 30:2-4 ESV)

David writes he experienced postmortem opportunity literally. God brought his soul up from Sheol after he cried for help, and he was “healed”. Restored to life “חַיָּה ... always means to restore to life that which has apparently or really succumbed to death.”-Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). Commentary on the Old Testament (Vol. 5, p. 240). Hendrickson.

Ancient interpreters would not miss the “particularization” in the synonymous parallelism “Sheol” and “pit”. The “pit” is where those without hope go (Is. 38:18; Ez. 26:20; 31:14, 16; 32:18, 24, 29-32; Ps. 28:1 30:4; 88:5; 143:7).

“Said R. Joshua b. Levi, ‘Gehenna has seven names and these are they: Netherworld, destruction, pit, [Slotki:] tumultuous pit, miry clay, shadow of death, and underworld’.”-Erubin 19a, Neusner, J. (2011). The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary (Vol. 3, p. 94). Hendrickson Publishers.

Context also implies this is a literal event. God deals with His prophets differently than the general population. David began to see himself as “invincible” even though it was God who made him secure. God dispelled David’s delusion with a trip to hell:

5 For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
6 As for me, **I said in my prosperity, “I shall never be moved.”**
7 By your favor, O LORD, you made my mountain stand strong; you hid your face; I was dismayed.
8 To you, O LORD, I cry, and to the Lord I plead for mercy:
9 “What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?
10 Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me! O LORD, be my helper!”
11 You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my

*sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,
12 that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O LORD my God,
I will give thanks to you forever! (Ps. 30:5-12 ESV)*

Some object it must be figurative because David argues “what profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit?” However, that is hypothetical. God sent David to hell and it terrified him. He doesn’t want that to happen again, so he argues: “what profit (for You God) if I go to the pit where no one can praise You?”

David’s descent into hell and back may have consumed only seconds of time. Time seems to slow down during extreme trauma, seconds can seem like hours. If this happened while everyone was asleep, causing no disruption in the performance of his duties, its not surprising we don’t read more about it in scripture.

Another reason David’s deliverance likely literal and not figurative, as a prophet of God (Ac. 2:29-30) David was inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak truth. Wording this event literally would cause many to conclude postmortem opportunity exists, and it did. In the Days of our Lord Jesus the two major theological schools of Shammai and Hillel believed Scripture taught postmortem opportunity, and their views were very influential with all the people.

[#F]

He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay

1 I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.

2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.

3 He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD. (Ps. 40:1-3 NKJ)

Postmortem opportunity is taught in this context, that is how the Jews of Christ’s day would have interpreted the metaphor.

The bôr šā’ôn (desolate pit) and ʾtîṭ hayyāwēn (wet clay) both refer poetically to the place of the dead, a place of separation from God (cf. Ps. 30:3; 69:2, etc.). The image, which was characteristic not only within Israel but also among Israel’s neighbors, evokes the image of a body being buried.”-Jacobson, R. A., & Tanner, B. (2014). Book One of the Psalter: Psalms 1–41. In E. J. Young, R. K. Harrison, & R. L. Hubbard Jr. (Eds.), The Book of Psalms (p. 375). William B. Eerdmans Publishing

The two major religious schools of Jesus’ Day taught postmortem opportunity (See [#B] above). They gleaned two additional names for Gehenna from David’s metaphor:

I.19 A. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, “Gehenna has seven names and these are ...
 E. “ ‘tumultuous pit’: ‘He brought me up also out of the tumultuous pit, out of the miry clay’ (Ps. 40:3);
 F. “ ‘miry clay’: ‘He brought me up also out of the tumultuous pit, out of the miry clay’ (Ps. 40:3). .”-Erubin 19a, Neusner, J. (2011). *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* (Vol. 3, p. 94). Hendrickson Publishers.

“He has put a new song in my mouth”

“The phrase “new song” occurs nine times in Scripture... In every instance, the reference is to a song of praise addressed to God, usually because of his salvation of people.

- *Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy (Ps. 33:3).*
- *He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God (Ps. 40:3).*
- *Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth (Ps. 96:1).*
- *Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things (Ps. 98:1).*
- *I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you (Ps. 144:9).*
- *Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints (Ps. 149:1).*
- *Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth (Isa. 42:10).*
- *And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9).*
- *And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth (Rev. 14:3).”-Easley, K. H. (1998). Revelation (Vol. 12, pp. 100–101). Broadman & Holman Publishers.*

Therefore, the Jews of Jesus’ day would have understood the metaphor of deliverance applies to both life and the afterlife.

An interesting possibility. Prophet David by Holy Spirit may have spoken as someone delivered from Sheol after a long patient wait, by Christ (John 5:24-29; 1 Pt. 4:6; Heb. 9:27-28). Jesus is Yahweh the Son and as the Word of God it is He who communicates God, in this case His deliverance. This is a “Messianic Psalm” (Heb. 10:5-9). Dying and rising to life and placed securely on the Rock of Christ singing a new song is reminiscent of the Christian experience symbolized by baptism. That may have inspired John to apply Ps. 40:5 to Christ (John 21:25).

5 O Lord my God, thou hast multiplied thy wonderful works, and in thy thoughts there is none who shall be likened to thee: I declared and spoke of them: they exceeded number.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me: whole-burnt-offering and sacrifice for sin thou didst not require.

7 Then I said, Behold, I come: in the volume of the book it is written concerning me,

8 I desired to do thy will, O my God, and thy law in the midst of mine heart.

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo! I will not refrain my lips; O Lord, thou knowest my righteousness.

10 I have not hid thy truth within my heart, and I have declared thy salvation; I have not hid thy mercy and thy truth from the great congregation. (Ps. 40:5-10 Septuagint, Brenton)

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.’”

8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law),

9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. (Heb. 10:5-9 NKJ)

[#G]

God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol

13 This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve their words. Selah.

14 As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation.

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah. (Ps. 49:13-15 NAU)

Postmortem repentance and salvation from hell is not in this “telescoped prophecy”.

God redeemed David apart from these. Although it is hard to suppose a soul in hell would not be repentant for something, nothing in the context suggests repentance and forgiveness as a factor in David’s redemption. Rather, he is expressing confidence God will redeem him.

Prophet David is describing the fate of those who do not consider their mortality. They act like they will live forever when in fact all die and others will inherit their wealth.

11 Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, Their dwelling places to all generations; They call their lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain; He is like the beasts that perish.

13 This is the way of those who are foolish, And of their posterity who approve their sayings. Selah (Ps. 49:11-13 NKJ)

The prophecy telescopes from death to after Judgment Day. They die, the righteous rule over their wealth, and after being put in hideous “habitations” that Sheol consumes slowly, they pass into nonexistence. Their “habitation” are the abominable corpses reeking of corruption they were raised up in on Judgment Day. Unlike the “Walking Dead” TV show, these cannot walk or see, only weep and gnash teeth in utter darkness.

They died like sheep, unable to prevent it. Death became their shepherd, they do not rise to life and return to the land of the living (Is. 26:14), they are forever dead separated from the living. Shepherded by Death to the Great White Throne of God (Rev. 20:11-15) they will rise in abominable corpses reeking of corruption riddled with worms painfully feasting on the decay (Isa. 66:24; Dan. 12:2; Mk. 9:43-48; Gal. 6:8).

The oppressed upright rule over riches they left behind. “In the morning” is idiom for the way of the upright getting brighter (Prov. 4:18-19).

The prophecy telescopes past judgment to being tossed into the Lake of Fire, “their habitation” consumed by the flames until they become ashes (Mal. 4:3). Without a body souls weaken, become “shades” of their former selves until eventually they pass into nonexistence, all they were and planned eternally forgotten (Is. 26:14). God alone has immortality (1 Tm. 6:16).

But not all pass into nonexistence. Jesus revealed those guilty of eternal sin against children burn forever in unquenchable Gehenna (Lake of) Fire, in bodies whose worms die not. So will all who accept the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:9-11). Having defiled the “image of God in man” for immoral pleasure, its fitting our offended God use their defiled bodies to communicate His Holy Wrath (Isa. 66:24; Mk. 9:43-48; Is. 26:14-19).

43 ‘And if thy hand may cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee maimed to enter into the life, than having the two hands, to go away to the gehenna, to the fire – the unquenchable –

44 where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched.

45 ‘And if thy foot may cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into the life lame, than having the two feet to be cast to the gehenna, to the fire – the unquenchable –

46 where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched.

47 And if thine eye may cause thee to stumble, cast it out; it is better for thee one-eyed to enter into the reign of God, than having two eyes, to be cast to the gehenna of the fire –

48 where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched (Mk. 9:43-48 YLT)

[#H]

For You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, That I may walk before God In the light of the living?
(Ps. 56:13 NKJ)

Repentance and forgiveness or Postmortem opportunity may be in this context.

The Targums are Aramaic translations and paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible created and used within Jewish communities to make the Hebrew scriptures more accessible to the common people who primarily spoke Aramaic. They often include explanatory and interpretive elements with the translation. In Edward Cook’s translation words in italic are not in the Hebrew represent how the Jews understood David’s Psalm.

“For you have delivered my soul from the death *that the sinful die*, indeed, my feet from *stumbling through sin*, so that I will walk before the LORD *in the Garden of Eden to behold the light of the righteous.* ”
(Ps. 56:14 Psalms Targum)

David is happy God delivered his soul from the second death, the death “the sinful die” never to return. That he will be resurrected to walk in land of the living in God’s light.

[#I]

To GOD the Lord belong escapes from death

18 You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there.
19 Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah
20 Our God is the God of salvation; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. (Ps. 68:18-20 NKJ)

Postmortem Opportunity implicitly taught. Paul supplied the interpretive key: “This, ‘He ascended’– what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?’”-(Eph. 4:9) Implied Premises were used in Rabbinic argumentation. Jesus asked the Pharisees “if David calls Christ ‘my Lord’ how can he be David’s son? (Mt 22:41-45) James quotes Amos 9:11-12 to prove Gentiles were always participants in God’s salvation (Acts. 15:15-18).

Descending into hell and ascending with captives implies they repented, and now dwell with God’s people in heaven. Postmortem opportunity.

The Prophet David is speaking of the Christ, not Moses. He “preached to the spirits in prison...who were formerly disobedient” (1 Peter 3:18-22), the dead had the gospel preached to them and now lived according to God in the Spirit (1 Peter 4:6).

Their response giving gifts to Christ implies they are grateful for learning the way of Salvation so they could dwell with the LORD of salvation, to whom belong escapes from eternal death. That is a figure for baptism, God gracing the church with apostles and prophets, people who have died and risen in Christ and now benefit the church teaching how to escape eternal death.

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."

9 (Now this, "He ascended"— what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ—

16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Eph. 4:7-16 NKJ)

The Jewish translators of the Aramaic Targums and Greek Septuagint also reasoned from implied premises to explain what David was implying:

You ascended to the firmament, [0 prophet Moses]; you captured captives, [you taught the words of Torah], you [gave] gifts to the sons of men, and even the stubborn [who are converted turn in repentance, and the glorious presence of] the LORD God abides [upon them] (Ps. 68:19 PST).

-The Psalms Targum: An English Translation by Edward M. Cook, 2001. Words in [brackets] are in italics to show they are interpretation and not the Hebrew.)

Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for man, yea, for they were rebellious, that thou mightest dwell among them. (Ps. 68:18 Septuagint, Sir Lancelot Brenton, 1851)

[#J]

And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.

*15 Let not the floodwater overflow me, Nor let the deep swallow me up;
And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.
16 Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me
according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.
17 And do not hide Your face from Your servant, For I am in trouble;
Hear me speedily.
18 Draw near to my soul, and redeem it; Deliver me because of my
enemies. (Ps. 69:15-18 NKJ)*

Postmortem opportunity not implied by the figures used, which describe “something that has really taken place” (Keil). An event in this life (Ps. 69:2), not the afterlife.

[#K]

Revive me again...bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

*You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, Shall revive (02421
חַיָּה chayah) me again, And bring me up again from the depths of the
earth. (Ps. 71:20 NKJ)*

Postmortem opportunity twice implied. David trusts God will raise him up from the depths of Sheol “again”, confirming he experienced death and revivification before (Ps. 30:2-4) [#E]. David trusts in the love and mercy of God he will be redeemed and brought “up again from the depths of the earth” (Ps. 30:2-4; 86:13).

[#L]

You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol

*For great is Your mercy toward me, And You have delivered my soul from
the depths of Sheol. (Ps. 86:13 NKJ)*

Postmortem opportunity, deliverance from Sheol literally happened to David. He thanks God often for it. See Ps. 71:20 [#K]

[#M]

To release those appointed to death.

*18 This will be written for the generation to come, That a people yet to
be created may praise the LORD.
19 For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; From heaven the
LORD viewed the earth,
20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner, To release those appointed to
death,
21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, And His praise in Jerusalem,
22 When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve
the LORD. (Ps. 102:18-22 NKJ)*

Postmortem Opportunity. God will “create” in the future a people from “those appointed to death” so in Zion they declare the name of the God of their salvation. The church of the future, from the nations.

[#N]

The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me

*1 I love the LORD, because He has heard My voice and my supplications.
2 Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.
3 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”
5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful.
6 The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.
7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.
8 For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling.
9 I will walk before the LORD In the land of the living. (Ps. 116:1-9 NKJ)*

Postmortem opportunity, repentance and deliverance explicitly stated. David experienced literal death and revivification (Ps. 30:2-4; 71:20; 86:13) [#K]. Although “pains of death” “pangs of Sheol” can refer to earthly troubles nearly causing death (see 2 Sam. 22:5-18 [#C]), in this context it refers to troubles experienced in Sheol. After repentance, God delivered his soul from Death, the realm of eternal death (Ps.49:14; 55:15; 118:18). He will walk before the LORD in the land of the living in His kingdom.

The resurrection of the dead: see Ps 116:9: “I will walk before Yahweh in the lands of the living.” ... “(The Hallel is said) because it mentions the rescue of the souls of the righteous from gehenna; see Ps 116:4: ‘O, Yahweh, save my soul.’-Strack, H. L., & Billerbeck, P. (2022). A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud & Midrash (J. N. Cerone, Ed.; A. Bowden & J. Longarino, Trans.; Vol. 1, p. 969). Lexham Press.

saving, delivery. Pes. 118a מִן הַגֵּהֶנָּה מִן הַמָּוֶת the delivery of the souls of the righteous from Gehenna (ref. to Ps. 116:4).-Jastrow, M. (1903). In A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature and II (Vol. 1, p. 774). Luzac & Co.; G. P. Putnam’s Sons.

[#0]

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes.” (Hos. 13:14 NKJ)

I will deliver them out of the power of Hades, and will redeem them from death: where is thy penalty, O death? O Hades, where is thy sting? comfort is hidden from mine eyes. (Hos. 13:14 LXX)

Postmortem opportunity clearly taught, doubly implied by the context which is so gloomy and the change in tone so abrupt some believe Paul’s application (1 Cor. 15:55) “contextually problematic”. But that was the point, against the strong enemy of death God is victorious, in love He redeems the lost venting His rage at that which separates Him from them. He will show Death no pity.

As Keil points out:

The questions, “Where are thy plagues, O death?” etc., are obviously meant to affirm the conquest or destruction of hell and death...To redeem or ransom from the hand (or power) of hell, i.e., of the under world, the realm of death, is equivalent to depriving hell of its prey, not only by not suffering the living to die, but by bringing back to life those who have fallen victims to hell, i.e., to the region of the dead... The Apostle Paul has therefore very properly quoted these words in 1 Cor. 15:55, in combination with the declaration in Isa. 25:8, “Death is swallowed up in victory,” to confirm the truth, that at the resurrection of the last day, death will be annihilated, and that which is corruptible changed into immortality.-Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). Commentary on the Old Testament (Vol. 10, p. 104). Hendrickson.

Babylonian Talmud Pesahim 87B: R. Eleazar (ca. 270) said, “God exiled Israel to Babylon only because the latter is as deep as Sheol; as it says, ‘From the power of Sheol I will free them; from death I will redeem them ...’ (Hos 13:14).”... ‘From the power of Sheol I will free them ...’ (Hos 13:14; thus, there is a restoration from Sheol); but for its (Harpania’s) illegitimate ones, there will be no restoration.”-Strack, H. L., & Billerbeck, P. (2021). A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud & Midrash (J. N. Cerone, Ed.; J. Longarino, Trans.; Vol. 3, pp. 558–559). Lexham Press.

[#P]

Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.

*1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish’s belly.
2 And he said: “I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. “Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.
3 For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.*

4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'

5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head.

6 I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.

7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.

8 "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."

10 So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. (Jon. 2:1-10 NKJ)

Postmortem Opportunity is the point. As Jonah's soul faints he remembers God implying repentance. God is not like the worthless gods of the nations, mere idols who have eyes to see but see not, ears to hear but hear not and would be of no help at all to Jonah. The LORD of Salvation is in His Holy Temple, ready to impose His will upon even the lowest Sheol.

The entire loses force if God doesn't hear prayers of repentance in Sheol, forgiving trespass and redeeming the lost. The stated reason God is unlike idols is He reacts to prayer in Sheol. If there is connection to reality, the metaphor is incoherent and potentially disrespectful.

Jewish Tradition found another name for Gehenna in Jonah's account:

I.19 A. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, "Gehenna has seven names and these are they: Netherworld, destruction, pit, [Slotki:] tumultuous pit, miry clay, shadow of death, and underworld.

B. " 'Netherworld': 'Out of the belly of the nether world I cried and you heard my voice' (Jonah. 2:2).-Neusner, J. (2011). The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary (Vol. 3, p. 94). Hendrickson Publishers.

[#Q]

Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'

11 "As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set

your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

*12 Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare
That I will restore double to you.*

*13 For I have bent Judah, My bow, Fitted the bow with Ephraim, And
raised up your sons, O Zion, Against your sons, O Greece, And made you
like the sword of a mighty man.”*

*14 Then the LORD will be seen over them, And His arrow will go forth
like lightning. The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And go with
whirlwinds from the south.*

*15 The LORD of hosts will defend them; They shall devour and subdue with
slingstones. They shall drink and roar as if with wine; They shall be
filled with blood like basins, Like the corners of the altar.*

*16 The LORD their God will save them in that day, As the flock of His
people. For they shall be like the jewels of a crown, Lifted like a
banner over His land—*

*17 For how great is its goodness And how great its beauty! Grain shall
make the young men thrive, And new wine the young women. (Zech. 9:9-17
NKJ)*

Post Mortem Opportunity. This is Telescoped Messianic Prophecy of Christ's First and Second Coming. Like the Quentin Tarantino movie "Pulp Fiction", the scene flashes back to the resurrection rapture of all in Christ who eagerly wait his second coming for salvation (Heb. 9:27-28) because of the New Covenant in Christ's Blood. The scene shifts to the prisoners of hope joining God's forces for the Battle of Armageddon, when the sons of Zion will fight the sons of Greece. Adonikam the Antichrist is a Jewish descendent of the Greek Assyrian Antiochus Epiphanes and at mid-week or 3.5 years into his reign, will declare himself to be the literal seed of Satan (Gen. 3:15) "Son of Destruction" (2 Thess. 2:3-4) prophesied to come. He will revel in it. The Beast, False Prophet who united Britain and America to support the Beast, will be cast body and soul into the Lake of Fire. All their army with Satan's Nephilim "mighty ones" will become food for the birds of heaven on the mountains of Israel, Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21).

Perhaps Paul had this prophecy in mind when he declared "The Deliverer will come out of Zion" and because of the blood of His covenant "all Israel will be saved":

*26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer
will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

*28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning
the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.*

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

*30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy
through their disobedience,*

*31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy
shown you they also may obtain mercy.*

32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. (Rom. 11:26-32 NKJ)

[#R]

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men...in the age to come.”

30 “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

31 “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

32 “Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matt. 12:30-32 NKJ)

Commentators miss Jesus’ logic and therefore the implication of postmortem opportunity. Christ is speaking to the Pharisees. They knew God alone could work the miracles the Holy Spirit did through Christ (John 15:22-24). Ignorance didn’t cause their opposition (John 10:24-26; Mk. 15:9). But, if someone speaks against “the Son of Man” (Christ’s identity veiled by human flesh) then every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven because ignorance permits divine mercy (1 Tim.. 1:13; Lev. 5:18; Ez. 45:20; Lk. 12:48). Context requires this forgiveness occurs in “this age and the age to come”.

The same principle explains why blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was NOT forgivable “this age or the age to come.” As teachers of Israel, the Pharisees knew demons cannot make the blind see (John 10:21), cannot feed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes (Lk. 9:12-17), or raise the dead (Dt. 32:39; Mk. 5:41; Lk. 7:14; John 12:9-10). Therefore, they were guilty of eternal sin. It wouldn’t be forgiven, in this age, or the age to come.

Forgiveness of sin in the age to come is Postmortem Opportunity.

[#S]

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men...in the age to come.”

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when **the dead shall hear the voice (ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς) of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.**

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; **so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;**

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are**

in the graves shall hear his voice (ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς),
29 And shall come forth; they that **have done (ποιήσαντες aorist participle)** good (18 ἀγαθός agathos), unto the resurrection of life; and they that **have done (πράξαντες aorist participle)** evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (Jn. 5:21-29 KJV)

The Father gave Jesus' voice His authority, it kills or makes alive those He wants to so all honor the Son even as they honor the Father (John 5:21-23). If the Dead obediently hear Jesus' voice (John 5:24-25), even those in the grave (John 5:28-29) they will rise to the resurrection of life. That is postmortem opportunity plainly stated.

Judgment pivots on the Dead's response to Christ's voice: They "having done" (ποιήσαντες 4160 ποιέω poieo) good (18 ἀγαθός agathos, obeying the voice) rise unto the resurrection of life, and they "having accomplished" (πράξαντες 4238 πράσσω prasso) evil (not obeying the voice) rise unto a resurrection of damnation.

Many commentators minimize the subsequent (following) use of the aorist participle. Even such scholars as Robertson and Moulton, who recognize that the participle is not time-bound, resist this category of usage. But there are a number of examples in biblical and extra-biblical Greek where an aorist participle is used to refer to an action occurring after the action of the main verb. In virtually all of these examples, the aorist participle is placed after the main verb in syntactical order.- Porter, S. E. (1999). Idioms of the Greek New Testament (p. 189). JSOT.

Someone once asked: "How can the dead "do good" (18 ἀγαθός agathos)?" Baptism symbolizes they do it all the time, when we heard Christ's voice we did good by giving "the answer of a good (18 ἀγαθός agathos) conscience towards God" just like the "spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:21; Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 1 Pet. 3:16), and passed from death into life (John 5:24).

[#T]

What will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Postmortem Opportunity is clearly taught in this context. God the Holy Spirit, writing through Paul knew the "partial hardening" of Israel" would continue for centuries "until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in". He knew the "enemies of the gospel" Paul speaks of, would long since have died before Christ the Deliverer came. "What will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:15)

I believe Paul's doxology referencing God's mercy and Judgment (Rom. 11:33-36) shows Paul understood this too.

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded...

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

...

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, **what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?**

...

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, **that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,

31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 “For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”

35 “Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?”

36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:7-36 NKJ)

[#U]

“He went and preached to the spirits in prison”

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive (ζωοποιηθεὶς) by the Spirit,

19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

20 who formerly were disobedient (544 ἀπειθέω apeitheo), when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us— baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and

authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (1 Pet. 3:18-22 NKJ)

What afflictions many and sore hast thou shewed me! yet thou didst turn and quicken (ἐζωοποίησάς) me, and broughtest me again from the depths of the earth. (Ps. 71:20 [70:20] Brenton Septuagint)

The themes of Triumph and Salvation span this context. 1 Peter 3:18-22 describes a Postmortem Salvation Event when Jesus “descended into the lower parts of the earth” (Eph. 4:8-10) to “proclaim (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) liberty to the captives” and the “acceptable year of the LORD (Lk. 4:18-19) to the “spirits in prison.”

As this scene unfolded neither Noah, the eight souls with him or the Flood came to Peter’s mind, he saw the Antitype of Baptism. Both the Church and “spirits in prison” responded to Christ’s preaching with the “answer of a good conscience towards God”. “Buried with Christ they now rose with Christ to a newness of life” (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:4-7; Col. 2:12-14).

Christ was put to death in the flesh and his human soul went to Sheol (Ps. 16:10; Ac. 2:27), it did not die with the body. God the Holy Spirit gave it life (Job 33:4; Jn. 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6), reviving it (Ps. 70:20 Septuagint) as part of the process of being the “firstborn from the dead” (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5). In the sphere of the Spirit Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison.

The prophet David speaks of Christ’s descent into hell and preaching to the formerly disobedient “spirits in prison” (1 Pt. 3:18-22) who gladly give gifts for being shown the LORD could dwell among them. Like the Church, they responded to Christ’s preaching “with the answer of a good conscience towards God”. That is the “like figure” Peter saw in Baptism, not referring to water at all. Having believed Christ’s preaching the formerly disobedient were raised to a newness of life (Rom. 6:4. Col. 2:12. Eph. 2:3-7) “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pt. 3:21-22). Upon learning Christ is the only way to Salvation; the formerly rebellious humans in like figure become God’s gift to the church of apostles prophets evangelists pastors teachers “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Eph. 4:7-16).

This is postmortem opportunity for the “spirits in prison” plainly stated.

[#V]

For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead

3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles— when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with

them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Pet. 4:3-6 NKJ)

Postmortem opportunity plainly stated.

Evildoers “think it strange (3579 ξενίζω xenizo)”; “are surprised” (CSB); “cannot understand” (REB) why Christians stopped partying with them, so they react with anger speaking evil of them. “For this reason the gospel was preached ALSO to those who are dead”, when such ignorance is impossible: “That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.”

Just as in Matthew 12:30-32 [#R], those who knew not the master’s will are beaten with a few stripes (Lk. 12:48) and having been judged there is opportunity to repent (Heb. 9:27) and “live according to God in the Spirit” while they “eagerly wait for Him” to “appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” (Heb. 9:28).

[#W]

“that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor. 5:3-5 NKJ)

3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

(1 Cor. 5:3-5 NKJ)

Another post-mortem opportunity is where Paul “delivers” a man to “Satan for the destruction of the flesh”, which slowly ends in death. Once stripped of his sinful nature, his repentant soul or “spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:3-5). “May be saved” because it depends on his choice to repent and plead Christ’s sacrifice bear his sins (Heb. 9:29).

It is important to clarify the timeline here. The “day of the Lord Jesus” does not refer to any immediate event following the man’s demise. It pertains to Christ’s Second Coming (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:5, 15:51-54; Rev. 14:12-16; 7:9, 14), which is set in the

indefinite future. A less likely interpretation might associate it with Judgment Day (Rev. 20:11; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1), but that too is a future event.

In either interpretation, salvation occurs well beyond the man’s earthly demise, in the “day of the Lord Jesus,” not in the immediate aftermath of the physical destruction of his flesh. This understanding provides a strong argument that salvation can occur after death, supporting the concept of post-mortem evangelization and salvation.

[#X]

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment

In the book of Hebrews, we learn that God executed this comprehensive salvation plan through His only begotten Son, not within the confines of the earthly Jerusalem Temple, but in the celestial realm of the heavenly temple. Here’s where the distinction becomes significant: unlike the earthly High Priest’s yearly offering for the living, Christ’s sacrifice was once, at the “end of the ages,” to cleanse the sins of all humanity ever since the inception of the world or *kosmos* (Hebrews 9:24-26).

24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;
25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—
26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world (2889 κόσμος kosmos); but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. 9:24-26 NKJ)

From God’s timeless perspective, the metaphorical ‘slaying of the Lamb’ happened simultaneously with the creation of the world. The phrase “slain from the foundation of the world” underscores this pre-temporal nature of Christ’s sacrifice. As soon as God began creating, the Lamb of God, who is responsible for removing the sin of the world, was sacrificed, and the names of those saved were inscribed in the Book of Life (John 1:29, Revelation 13:8).

This assertion is further substantiated by the writer of Hebrews who says all humans inevitably face death and then judgment. However, we read some among them then “eagerly wait” for Christ’s second coming, evidently because He appears for their salvation apart from their sins which had already been dealt with through His sacrifice. (Hebrews 9:27-28):

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,
28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Heb. 9:27-28 NKJ)

This expansive perspective of salvation underpins the all-encompassing nature of God’s love and His intent to extend redemption to the entire *kosmos* so it is not a matter of temporal and geographical luck. God’s merciful acts of sacrifice transcends the boundaries of time, offering salvation to all of humanity, past, present, and future.

[#Y]

” And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life”

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone (εἴ τις) not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15 NKJ)

Postmortem opportunity for salvation on Judgment Day is implied by the opening of “the Book of Life”. That people are saved on Judgment Day is explicitly stated by the prophet Daniel (Dan. 12:2) Jesus Christ (John 5:28-29) and His apostle Peter (Acts 24:15).

There are three books according to the three classes of humans God foreknew before creation—before the fall corrupted their free will. He saw who were thoroughly righteous, thoroughly wicked, and the “Middling People”.

The “book of the living” (Ps. 69:28) is also called “the Book of Life” (Rev. 20:12, 15). From Rev. 17:8 we know the Book of Life was written from the foundation of the world and that it did not contain the names of the wicked (also Rev. 13:8). That implies the existence of the Book of the Wicked with their names and deeds (Rev. 20:12-13). Because the names of the Elect were chosen by God before the foundation of the world, they cannot be blotted out of the Book of Life (Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4). Therefore, the existence of names that can be blotted out of the Book of Life implies the existence of the “Book of the Middling People” that record their names and deeds in this fallen realm and determine if their names will be blotted out or inscribed in the Book of Life (Ps. 69:28).

Therefore, the symbolism of the books used during the Great White Throne Judgment by Christ reveals Postmortem Opportunity for Salvation.

Moreover, the wording “And if anyone (εἴ τις) was not found in the Book of Life” implies some were found because “if anyone” cannot be a hypothetical “first-class condition” in an argument. John isn’t arguing a point, he is reporting what he saw.

In the days of Christ, the School of Hillel interpreted the Old Testament revealed a merciful God who forgave repentant sinners, even those in Sheol. Paul was a Pharisee (Ac. 22:3; 23:6; 26:4-5) of this school so their teachings are relevant context when interpreting Paul’s eschatology. They believed three classes of People appear on Judgment Day: The Righteous, the Wicked, and the “Middling People”. This construct is evident in John’s vision of Judgment Day where multiple books are opened.”

[I.15 A] Said R. Kruspedai said R. Yohanan, “Three books are opened [by God] on the New Year: one for the thoroughly wicked, one for the thoroughly righteous, and one for middling [people].
[B] “The thoroughly righteous immediately are inscribed and sealed for [continued] life.
[C] “The thoroughly wicked immediately are inscribed and sealed for death.
[D] “Middling [people] are left hanging from New Year until the Day of Atonement.
[E] “If they [are found to have] merit, they are inscribed for life.
[F] “If they [are found] not [to have] merit, they are inscribed for death.”
[G] Said R. Abin, “What is the Scriptural [foundation for this]? [Ps. 69:28 states]: ‘Let them be blotted out of the book of the living. Let them not be inscribed among the righteous.’ ‘Let them be blotted out of the book’-this refers to the book of the thoroughly wicked. ‘[... of the] living’-this refers to the book of the righteous. ‘Let them not be inscribed among the righteous’-this refers to the book of middling [people].”-Neusner, J. (2011). The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary (Vol. 6b, p. 83). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

Rabbi Abin relies on unstated implications: “Let them be blotted out” implies the Book of the Thoroughly Wicked because the action is ongoing, they will never repent. “Book of the Living” lists the names of the Thoroughly Righteous. “Inscribed among the righteous” implies the Book of the Middling People because they chose to be Righteous. Unlike the Thoroughly Righteous, or Wicked, they had a choice.

Scholarship that ignores the Jewish context of the NT is unwise:

Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.” (Matt. 13:52 NKJ)

END NOTES

[1]

Only a fool would deceive himself saying, "I'll sin now and be forgiven later."

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. (Gal. 6:7 NKJ cp. 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Jer. 23:19-32)

It is better to believe the gospel of Christ now while alive than take the chance God may deny a postmortem opportunity is needed, since you had sufficient knowledge and opportunity to believe while alive.

No enemy of God or willfully wicked will get a postmortem opportunity. Jesus explained this when He says "he who is not with Me is against Me" (Mt. 12:30). Only those ignorant of God in Christ will be forgiven sins against Him. There is no forgiveness for knowingly opposing God in this age or the age to come (Mt. 12:31-32).

Moreover, only a fool prefers a pointless life of vanity where nothing satisfies, than a life of Joy in fellowship with the Holy Spirit and God the Father and God the Son Jesus Christ.

28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30 NKJ)

This is worth more than life itself.

44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,

46 "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matt. 13:44-46 NKJ)

Nothing I wrote implies Christ was inaccurate when He said the Rich Man was in "torments."

*23 "And being **in torments in Hades**, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. (Lk. 16:23-25 NKJ)

Many who die will be in Hell from that time forward, until after the 1,000-year millennial kingdom of Christ. Not released until the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:7-15).

Do you really want to take that chance?

Remember, Hell is not paradise. That is among the biggest understatement a man has ever made.

[2]

The Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 is a “krisis” Judgment Christians are exempt from. They already passed from death into life and given supernatural resurrection bodies like Christ. They reigned with Him as His Kings and Priests during the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6).

However, they did appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rev. 20:4) to receive or not receive recompense for their deeds, good or worthless:

*10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? **For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.***
11 For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.”
*12 So then **each of us shall give account of himself to God.** (Rom. 14:10-12 NKJ)*

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.
*10 **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.** (2 Cor. 5:9-10 NKJ)*

14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.
15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:14-15 NKJ)

This last has been misunderstood as purgatory for believers. Its *simile*, if anyone’s work is burned because it was worthless they will suffer the loss (of everything in the house), flee it carrying nothing escaping “as a man through fire” escapes emptyhanded.

4 For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.
*5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. **Then each one’s praise will come from God.** (1 Cor. 4:4-5 NKJ)*

[3]

As for the repentant dead, they are in a sleep-like state unaware of the passage of time (John 11:11-14; 1 Thess. 4:13-18); conscious enough to “patiently wait” (553 ἀπεκδέχομαι *apekdechomai*) for Christ (Heb. 9:27-28) and the resurrection to life (John 5:28-29).

Similar wording in 1 Peter 3:18 θανατωθεῖς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” implies the “trial/judgment/torment” in hades ends” when they repent and “live according to God in the Spirit” (ζῶσιν δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι). As their “spirit” is quickened, it is enveloped in the loving embrace of God the Holy Spirit. (Compare ἐν ᾧ καὶ “in which also” 1 Pet. 3:19) indicating He also shielded our LORD from any torments, as all suffering for our sin ended at the cross (John 19:30).

[4]

- 16 “For God so loved the world (2889 κόσμος *kosmos*) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- 17 “For God did not send His Son into the world (2889 κόσμος *kosmos*) to condemn the world (2889 κόσμος *kosmos*), but that the world (2889 κόσμος *kosmos*) through Him might be saved.
- 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:16-18 NKJ)

In John 3:16-18 “world” (2889 κόσμος *kosmos*) appears four times, contrasting the *kosmos* from whence God’s Son came with “the *kosmos* of humanity.” Therefore, it is impossible His Son saved only some in the *kosmos* – excluding all born before Christ came or didn’t hear the Gospel of Christ after the 1st century.

Why? Because that is like saying God sent His Son to save the house, but He didn’t save the basement. The basement is part of the house just like the other rooms.

God sent His Son to save the entire kosmos (Jn. 1:9, 29; 4:42; Rm. 5:10; 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:19) whether living or dead (Jn. 5:24-25, 28-29; Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Pt. 4:6) , all born into it since the world began. (Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:24-26; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:9-10; 8:32)

- 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,
- 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Col. 1:19-20 NKJ)

“Things on earth” are humans, therefore “things in heaven” are humans in heaven waiting for resurrection. Not angels. All the patriarchs etc. in

heaven, were reconciled to God by the blood of Christ.

Everyone saved since the foundation of the world owes their salvation to the blood of Christ. There is no salvation apart from Christ:

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12 NKJ)

[5]

Unlike pagan ideas later assimilated into Christendom, eternal punishment in Scripture involves both body and soul in a place called “Gehenna” (aka, “Lake of Fire”) (Mt. 5:29-30; 10:28; 18:9; Mk. 9:43-48; Rev. 19:20). The event where a “Legion” of demons were imprisoned in unclean swine flesh and compelled to drown in a lake prefigured Judgment Day when “souls” are imprisoned in abominable resurrection bodies and thrust into the Lake of Fire (Lk. 8:30-33).

[6]

And if any (εἴ τις) was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:15 ASV)

James Boyer incorrectly includes Revelation 20:15 εἴ τις (if any) in his “Corpus of First Class Conditions in the NT” discussing its use in discourse:

If the first class condition states or implies the actual truth, then it could not possibly be used by Christ to say, “If [or according to this view, since] I by Beelzebub cast out demons...(Matt 12:27), nor “Since I do not do the deeds of my father...” (John 10:37), nor “Since I have spoken evil...” (John 18:23). Paul could not have written “Since there is no resurrection...” (1 Cor 15:13), nor “Since Christ is not raised...” (1 Cor 15:14). These are not isolated, peculiar examples; they represent 12% of all the first class conditions in the NT. It is simply not true that first conditions indicate the external objective truth or reality of the condition.-First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?”(Grace Theological Journal Vol 2, p.75)

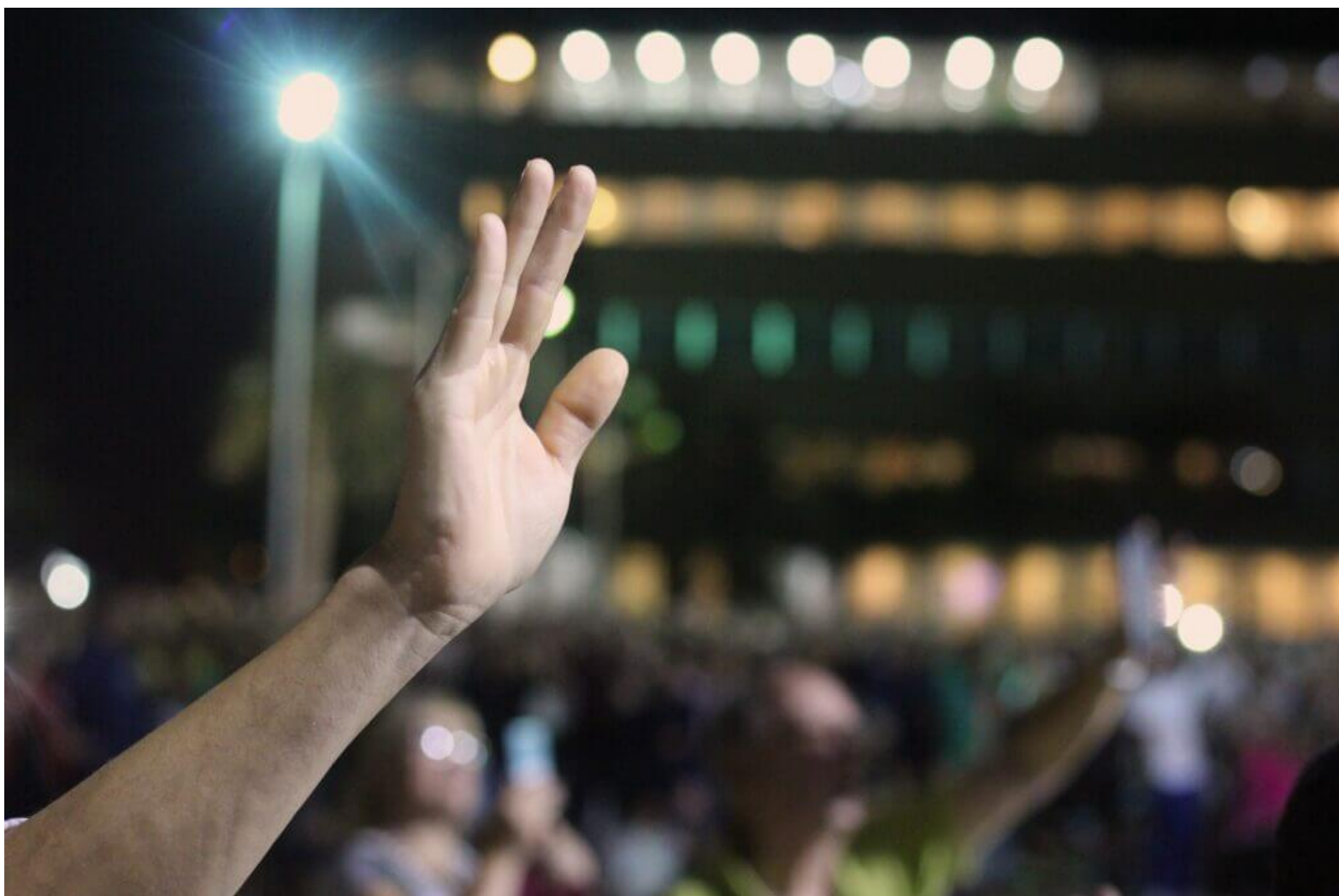
Revelation 20:15 isn’t making a point, John is reporting what he saw as a statement of fact. Therefore, when John notices “if any was not found written in the book of life he was cast into the lake of fire” it implies some raised from Hades were written in the book of life and therefore not cast into the lake of fire. Why express it negatively? No doubt the horror of watching wicked souls imprisoned in contemptible resurrection bodies reeking of corruption and death (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 66:24; Mk. 9:42-48; Mt. 10:28; Gal. 6:8), standing before the throne and then cast into the lake of fire, made a lasting impression, overwhelming everything else.

END

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The extraordinary gifts of revelation were ceasing in Paul's day

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



Can you show from the scriptures where to find the gifts of special revelation ended in the 1st century?-JLB

“Not explicitly” but the extraordinary gifts of revelation were ceasing in Paul's day as can be inferred from 1 Cor. 13:8-13

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:8-13 NKJ)

The question you posed asks: “Can you show from the scriptures where to find the gifts of special revelation ended in the 1st century?” The scriptures may not explicitly state this, but a careful interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 suggests the cessation of the extraordinary gifts of revelation.

In this passage, Apostle Paul speaks of love as a constant, unfailing force, but he foretells that prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will eventually cease or vanish. He describes these revelatory gifts as “partial”, indicating they are temporary and will be replaced when the “perfect” or “complete” comes. This has often been interpreted as a reference to Christ’s return. Paul, along with many early Christians, believed this return could be imminent.

Paul uses the metaphor of childhood and adulthood in verses 11-12 to illustrate this transformation. As he puts it, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” These “partial” gifts of revelation can be seen as the “childish things”, becoming obsolete as we transition into spiritual “adulthood”, a time when we will see God “face to face” and “know just as I am known”.

It’s conceivable that as these gifts began to fade, it might have prompted fears of abandonment by God among the Corinthians. This might explain why Paul starts his letter with words of reassurance, emphasizing God’s faithfulness and the grace given through Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:3-9).

As this transition took place, it led to divisions within the Corinthian church, separating those seeking “signs” from those pursuing “wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:17-24). The majority, seemingly focused on non-charismatic issues, appeared less concerned about the cessation of the gifts (1 Cor. 14:39). Paul’s expectation of the imminent arrival of “the Perfect” or “Complete”, combined with historical records that suggest a gradual disappearance of the extraordinary gifts after the 1st century, lend support to the cessationist view. Furthermore, passages such as Hebrews 2:2-4 refer to the extraordinary gifts as past events, bolstering the notion that the era of special revelation ended sometime after the apostolic age.

While the cessation of these extraordinary gifts isn’t explicitly declared, careful interpretation of the scriptures, in combination with early Christian tradition, strongly supports the cessationist position over continualism.

Are they a demonic manifestation?

Although it is reasonable to conclude demons inspire the wild sensual excesses we see in “Charismania” among the TARES (Mt. 13:24-30; 36-43) in

the church, demons can only deceive true believers, they cannot work signs and wonders through them (Mt. 7:9-11; 1 John 4:4; 5:18).

It could be demonic. It could be satanic; I think it was in Corinth in some cases. It could be that. Ecstatic speech is a part of many pagan religions in Africa, East Africa. Tonga people of Africa, when a demon is exorcised, sing in Zulu, even though they say they don't know the Zulu language. Ecstatic speech is found today among Muslims, Eskimos, Tibetan monks. It's involved in parapsychological occult groups. Did you know that the Mormons – even Joseph Smith himself – advocate speaking in tongues? It could be demonic.

Secondly, it could be learned behavior. You just learn how to do it. If you can go to the Hunter's seminar, they'll jump start you. It could be psychological; it could be a kind of a self-induced hypnosis, a kind of a trance where you just yield up all of your will and you yield up your vocal chords, and you empty out your brain. And the power of suggestion takes over, and you become psychologically induced. And once you've had that experience, you then learn to do it and just do it. Many studies have been done to show that it is psychological.-Pastor John F. MacArthur, Grace Community Church

Does 1 Corinthians 1:7 and 1 Corinthians 13:10 prove Continuance of the Revelatory Gifts

Baptism In The Spirit: The Experience

In the last days, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy

Was the New Testament Church like a modern Pentecostal Church?

What did the apostle John reveal when he said: “It is the last hour”?

The Coming False Christ and His Followers Revealed

Share Bible Insights with other Believers

The “Baptism in the Spirit” or “New Birth” Today Has Continued without change since Pentecost

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



The “Baptism in the Spirit” or “New Birth” is the same today as on the Day of Pentecost

On the day of Pentecost two separate groups received the **Baptism in the Spirit**, numbering 120 (Ac. 1:15; 2:1-4) and 3,000 (Ac. 2:38-41).

The First Group (Ac. 1:15-22; 2:1-4) were followers of Jesus from the days of John the Baptist to His resurrection (Ac. 1:21-22). A sound from heaven like rushing wind filled the house, and tongues of fire sat upon each of their heads and they spoke in languages of Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, and Rome (Acts. 2:8-10).

The Holy Spirit filled (Ac. 2:4) their spirit (Rom. 8:5-16), God breathing into their souls the breath of lives (Gen. 2:7), they became “new creatures” (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) risen in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12), born “from above” (John 3:7-8; 1 Pet. 1:3) .The “washing of regeneration and renewing” (Tit. 3:5) gave birth to their “inner man” (Eph. 3:16; Col. 3:10). They became partakers of divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) passing from death into life (John 5:21, 24-26).

Only their soul was made alive, all of this was Spirit to spirit (Rom. 8:5-16) because our Holy God cannot abide with sin and touches no unclean thing (Rom. 7:18; 8:7-13). The flesh must wait for the resurrection yet future (1 Cor. 15:12, 51-55; Rev. 20:5).

Of these 120 unique followers of Christ only the Twelve Apostles did signs and wonders (Ac. 2:42-43).

When the Second Group received the Holy Spirit (Ac. 2:38-39) there was no sound from heaven like a rushing wind. Tongues of fire did not rest upon their heads. They did not speak foreign languages.

Precisely as the Holy Spirit filled the 120, so did He the 3,000 just as

Peter promised (Ac. 2:38; Rom. 8:5-16). God breathed into their souls the breath of lives (Gen. 2:7), they became “new creatures” (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) risen in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12), born “from above” (John 3:7-8; 1 Pet. 1:3) .The “washing of regeneration and renewing” (Tit. 3:5) gave birth to their “inner man” (Eph. 3:16; Col. 3:10). They became partakers of divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) passing from death into life (John 5:21, 24-26).

Confirming the 3,000 saved that day did not manifest revelatory gifts is the fact these were so uncommon they were deemed a “sign from God” of something new (Acts 10:44-47; 15:7-8). God also employed this sign to confirm salvation is only by public confession Jesus is LORD (Acts 19:1-7; 4:12). That this was a special group of Jews who received the revelatory gifts is evident by it being specially noted these were “Twelve” in number (Acts 19:7), clearly implying they were part of this exclusive group of Jews who would establish the Church (1 Cor. 12:28). “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22)

The “outward physical evidence” the 3,000 were filled with the Holy Spirit was their changed heart and mind towards God and His Truth, and love for His people (Acts. 2:42-47 Compare 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

That the “outward physical evidence” was the SAME for BOTH the 120 and 3,000 organically follows from it being a function of “the One Body of Christ”, “the One Spirit who regenerates”, “the One Faith all belong to”, “the One Baptism common to every believer”. Every believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit of God whether they “feel” Him or not.

Just as the “soul” cannot be “physically felt”, neither can the soul’s regeneration into a new creature be “physically felt”, it happens in the dimension of the spirit senses cannot sense. That is why Scripture is silent about “physical sensations in body or brain” as though any could indicate when the Holy Spirit is working. *They do not exist.*

Because this radical change in the “spirit in the machine” may cause the brain produce electromagnetic pulses or an Adrenaline/Endorphin cocktail causing experiences, some mistake those as caused by the Holy Spirit. But that is like “putting the cart before the horse”.

The regeneration of the human soul into a “new creature” can only be *spiritually discerned* (1 Cor. 2:14) and logically inferred from many lines of evidence in the Holy Scriptures.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-23 NKJ; Eph. 5:8-10; Mt. 7:16-18).

Unless God specially reveal the experience of the new birth nothing will be “felt” as the Holy Spirit communicates to the human spirit Divine Nature, quickening it with eternal life. Then one is “born again”, “born from above” (γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν). What formerly was like “a shade” is now a

“new creature in Christ” born of the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit. This new reality can only be spiritually discerned, the changes in personality and perception are clearly evident. Now they “KNOW” God is their Father! Bible Truth that formerly was obscure is now wonderfully illuminated. The beauty and necessity of Christ’s sacrifice, the Incarnation of God the Son now understood beyond natural understanding.

To prove this conclusion we must see the same evidence of the “New Birth” in the 120 who received special empowerment and the 3,000 saved who did not. Then compare that with what happens today in Christian churches throughout the earth.

Both the 120 and 3000 show “holy fear” at the signs done by the Twelve Apostles, and BOTH manifest the Holy Spirit is in them by their devotion to God’s Truth and His people:

43 Then fear came upon EVERY soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

*44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,
45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.*

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:43-47 NKJ)

The “outward physical evidence” they were baptized in the Spirit was in their changed perception, their love for God, His Truth, and His children. Being baptized in the Spirit, the “washing of regeneration” is the SAME for every born from above believer from the Day of Pentecost until today:

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Eph. 4:4-6 NKJ)

The one Spirit Personally indwells every member of the body of Christ, BUT to “each one” was given “the grace” (ἡ χάρις) to accomplish the work God appointed they do (Eph. 2:10):

But unto each one of us was the grace (ἡ χάρις) given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Eph. 4:7 ASV)

The church receives gifts (Eph. 4:10-13) according to God’s will (Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 12:11), but the One Spirit Personally indwells every member of the church equally so all are “the children of God”.

The 120 unique followers of Christ who received special grace to establish Christianity while the New Testament was still being written, were precisely like the 3000 born from above on that day. Never is it said they were superior in any way, to the 3,000 saved that day. Therefore, every born-again believer in Christ is just as much a child of God, as the apostles and prophets who founded the Church.

Today's "born again experience" is the exactly the same believers experienced on the Day of Pentecost, the time of the maximum manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. All perceive they are changed, loving God, His Truth and His People like never before.

According to Romans 8:5-16 the Holy Spirit bypasses carnal nature and communes directly with the human spirit, bypassing the flesh entirely. Therefore, everything is beyond physical sensory detection. Without special revelation by God, the "new birth" cannot be physically experienced. We can only spiritually discern the reality of our translation from death into life by love for God as our Father (Rom. 8:15-16), God's Truth and God's people (John 13:35; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:22)

As it is "Spirit to spirit" communion, the flesh is bypassed entirely:

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (Rom. 8:16 KJV)

This "bearing witness" isn't to body or brain, it is to the human spirit and so manifests itself as conscience:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:14 KJV)

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, (Rom. 9:1 NKJ)

The realm of the spirit is beyond physical senses (1 Cor. 2:13-14). God speaks to us "face to face" through our conscience (Rom. 9:1) as we read the Word of God the Bible—the "sword of the Spirit" (Heb. 4:12):

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Heb. 4:12-13 NKJ)

27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither

shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (Jn. 10:27-28 NKJ)

Therefore, no born-again Christian is a “second class citizen” because the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were reserved for the Twelve Apostles and founding prophets (Acts 1:1-5; 21-22), and not given to them.

If anyone still feels like a foreigner among His people, a “dry tree”, hear the Word of the LORD:

3 Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely exclude me from his people.” And let no eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree.”

4 For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—

5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever.

6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

8 The Sovereign LORD declares— he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.” (Isa. 56:3-8 NIV)

END NOTE

It is alleged I am a “Cessationist” because I never experienced a Pentecostal Church service. That is not correct. I was baptized in Bethany Christian, a four-square “full gospel” Pentecostal Church. “We can’t throw the Baby out with the Bathwater” is what I often said when everyone could discern a “tongues and prophecy” was “of the flesh” and not “of the Spirit.”

Jesus’ and His Apostles miracles are impeccable, modern “manifestations” are not. The facts show *their miracles have not continued in churches today.*

It is written:

“We ought to obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29 NKJ)

God commands we “test the spirits”

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits, whether they are of God;** because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1*

Jn. 4:1 NKJ)

We are commanded to “test whether the supernatural in church is of God”, and “hold fast what is good” abstaining from every form of evil:

21 Test all things; hold fast what is good.

22 Abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thess. 5:21-22 NKJ)

God commands all “Examine yourselves” to be certain spiritual experiences are “in the faith”:

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. (2 Cor. 13:5 NKJ)

A Personal Testimony of “Testing myself”:

As a Pentecostal I believed the Holy Spirit would respond to questions with “a leading” that was either “yes” or “no”. I believed that 100% for a couple of years.

Over time it became clear I often went in circles accomplishing nothing for Christ. I decided to “test” the “leading”, I walked to the corner and asked “should I turn left or right?” The “leading” indicated “turn right”, but I turned “left”. As I walked I justified turning left was the only correct thing to do, and as I did this the “leading” reassured me “you are correct!”

That’s when I realized it was all experiential self-delusion, a fabrication of my mind. At first I was heartbroken as if I lost a companion.

The despair was soon replaced by a sense of liberation! What a slave I was! How many times did it “lead me to nowhere without the resources even to live!” (comp. Isa. 8:21). As the “brain fog” lifted, my critical thinking skills returned restoring autonomy.

“Oh, what a feeling! Free at last, Free at last! Freedom! Nothing can replace it!”

As I evaluated the “fact pattern” of modern “Pentecostalism” their claim of “continuity with NT Church” became impossible. Whatever is occurring among Pentecostalism today is “something different” than what was in the New Testament Church.

That is why I am a “Cessationist.” In 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 Paul discusses the cessation of the revelatory gifts because they were already ceasing everywhere in the Church, and he had to reassure them God still loved them (1 Cor. 1:4-9). The Reader must factor in the fact Paul believed Christ could return in the 1st century, so the time of their cessation would be seen as “near” to that date. Because “tongues prophecy knowledge” were “partial revelation” it logically follows they would end

as the complete revelation of God appears with Christ’s second coming.

The Bible alone is 100% reliable and true, experiences are subjective and possibly self-deception (Jer. 17:9; 23:26; Jas. 1:26-27).

“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof”-Carl Sagan, “The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark,” Carl Sagan.

Pentecostals have failed to provide extraordinary proof. The burden of proof is on Pentecostals.

The supernatural events in churches today must be authenticated by rigorous investigation and examination of their “fact-pattern” by a team of experts as truly “supernatural”.

Moreover, Lovers of God’s Truth must insist the “fact pattern” is 100% consistent with scriptural data and teaching.

For example, it is impossible the “fallible prophecy” appearing in Pentecostal churches today is the same “word of the Lord” spoken in the Bible because Scripture declares “fallible prophecy” is “the thing which the LORD has not spoken.”

21 *“And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’—*
22 *“when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deut. 18:21-22 NKJ)*

So why haven’t Pentecostal churches authenticated the supernatural in their churches?

Without it, Bible Believers cannot accept their claims as true.

Was the NT Church like a Modern Pentecostal Church?
Paul’s Teaching about Tongues Ceasing implies they were already ceasing
Have we not prophesied in your Name?
Does 1 Corinthians 1:7 and 1 Corinthians 13:10 prove Continuance of the Revelatory Gifts
The Coming False Christ and His Followers Revealed

Calvin’s self-contradiction proves Sherlock Holmes was a much better

Logician

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



Calvin was not a sound logician like Sherlock Holmes, that is evident by the self-contradiction his premises imply.

For example, Peter says:

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification

of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1 Pet. 1:1 KJV)

Calvin's self-contradiction:

After first admitting "elect according to the foreknowledge of God" means "God knew before the world was created whom he had elected for salvation". Calvin then smears as "sophist" and mere imagination the idea God elected according to His knowledge of the person He knew!!!

"However, he at the same time reminds us whence that election flows, by which we are separated for salvation, that we may not perish with the world; for he says, according to the foreknowledge of God. This is the fountain and the first cause: God knew before the world was created whom he had elected for salvation.

But we ought wisely to consider what this precognition or foreknowledge is. For the sophists, in order to obscure the grace of God, imagine that the merits of each are foreseen by God, and that thus the reprobate are distinguished from the elect, as every one proves himself worthy of this or that lot. But Scripture everywhere sets the counsel of God, on which is founded our salvation, in opposition to our merits. Hence, when Peter calls them elect according to the precognition of God, he intimates that the cause of it depends on nothing else but on God alone, for he of his own free will has chosen us. Then the foreknowledge of God excludes every worthiness on the part of man. We have treated this subject more at large in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and in other places."-Calvin, J., Translated by Owen, J. (2010). Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles (pp. 24–25). Logos Bible Software.

Sherlock might ask Calvin: *"Can God really ignore what He knows when He elects?" Would not ignoring what one knows during the selection process be a sign of feeble-mindedness, or insanity? Can you produce examples of human creators who ignore what they know when creating or choosing materials?*

Sherlock Holmes would have concluded from Peter's "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" and Paul's "Election is not according to anything we are or do now" that TWO versions of the Elect must be in existence:

One exists only in God's Foreknowledge, the other exists today in this fallen realm.

Then, God could elect according to His knowing the "unfallen version" of us before He creation, and not according to what we are now in this fallen world.

Scripture implies what God foreknew:

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

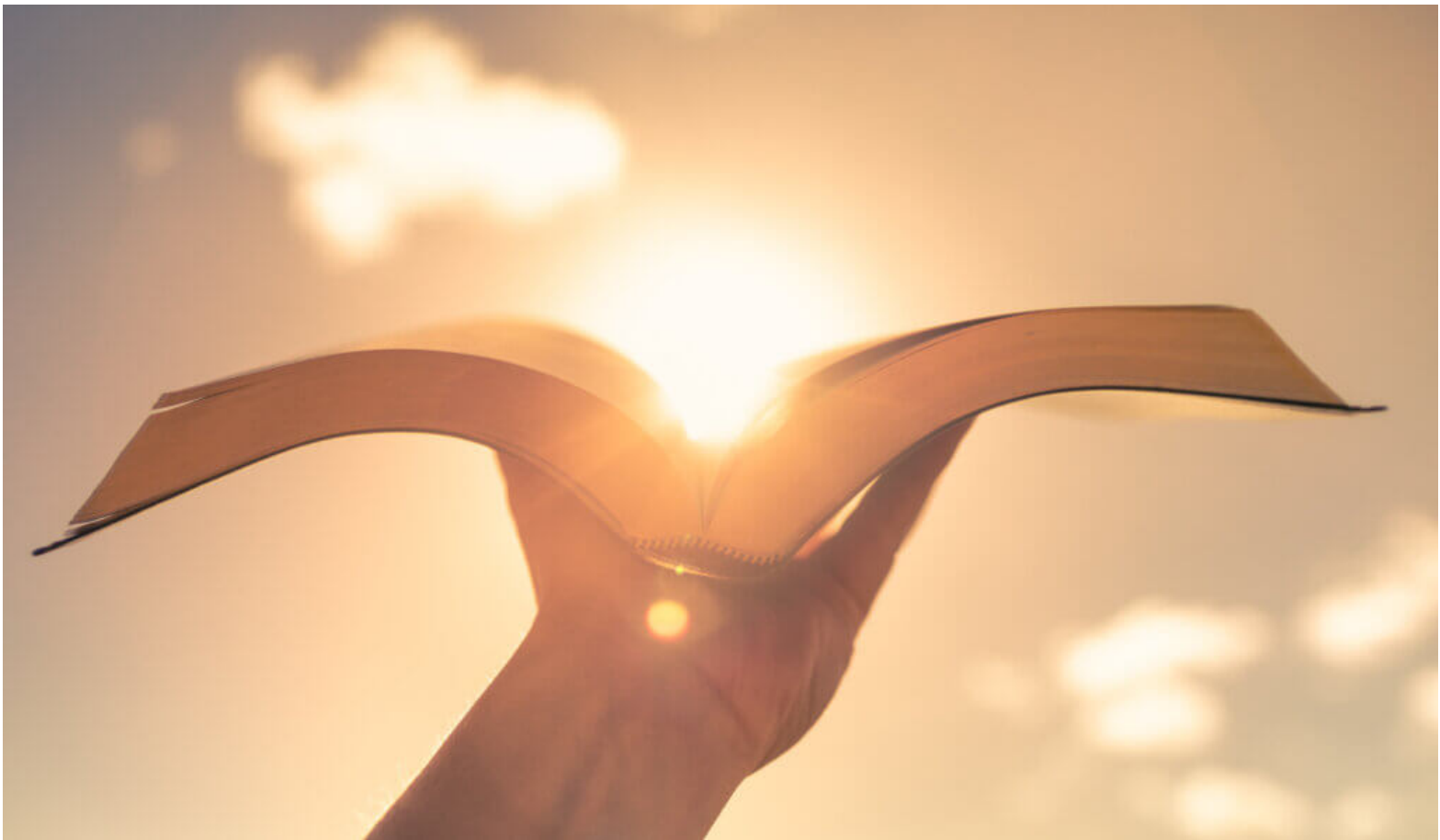
29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:28-29 NKJ)

In God’s Omniscience, He knows all who would come into existence by His creation. Like “highlighted text” that makes one see some words “before the others”, God “foreknows those who loved Him after He loved them first”, loving them even more. As for those who did not, God ignored them. That is why nothing is said about the Reprobate in Romans 8:28ff. They are irrelevant.

- Predestination unto Salvation: Was Divine Election Conditional or Unconditional or Both?
- God’s Plan for the Lost
- Jesus Preached to the Dead
- Elect Rise From Hell On Judgment Day?
- Lazarus and the Rich Man: Can the Rich Man Repent and be Saved?
- What did the apostle John reveal when he said: “It is the last hour”?
- The Coming False Christ and His Followers Revealed

The Majority Text: Divine Preservation and Christian Reason

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



Many believers have been deceived; they have been made to question if Christ’s words are accurate:

“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (Matt. 5:18 NKJ)

Literal Jots and titles have no meaning to fulfill.

“Jot” and “tittle” symbolize “the smallest meaning”: “Not the smallest meaning in scripture will pass until its fulfilled.”

Christ never promised copyists wouldn’t make errors in copying, that diacritical marks would never change. Or that synonyms wouldn’t be used, or some words misspelled, left out or added, or other minor changes in word order.

He promised none of these “errors of transmission” would change even the smallest meaning and prevent its fulfillment.

AND beyond any reasonable doubt, that is precisely what the Majority Text proves happened. Nothing has changed, we have the same bible of the apostles, its in the Majority Text.

None of this implies there is no value to newer translations. I like the NIV and sometimes its use of “dynamic equivalence” explains obscure idiom.

One NIV translation I really like is Isaiah 56:3-7.

Its like a prophetic “word of the LORD” to all born again believers, who love the LORD and carry His cross daily, but made to feel like a foreigner in God’s House—“a dry tree” because they manifest only the miracle of a changed heart and spirit 100% given to Jesus, and not tongues signs or wonders.

3 Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely exclude me from his people.” And let no eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree.”

4 For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—

5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever.

6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

(Isa. 56:3-7 NIV)

Revelation 13:1 “I stood” versus “He stood”

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

Christians are told scholars establish the “original text” through careful analysis, picking the best variant that conforms to their idea of what the original said. However, that is unsound being *circular*. They produce a text in their own preconceived image and believe its the truth!

They assume where John “stood” or whether he “stood” at all is “wholly immaterial; where the dragon stood is material”. Of course the variant conforming to their presupposition is the one they prefer: “he [the Dragon] stood”, not “I [John] stood”. Dr. Bruce Metzger opines “The latter reading appears to have arisen when copyists accommodated ἐστᾶθην to the first person of the following εἶδον.”-Metzger, B. M., United Bible Societies. (1994). A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a companion volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th rev. ed.) (p. 673). United Bible Societies.

Consider the stupidity of having John and the Dragon as tourists calmly gazing out to the sea. Weren’t we just told “the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17 NKJ). Wow! That was a short war!

If we let the blind Scholars rewrite our scriptures, what does that say about us? Let the shiny dragon capture their attention.

We must interpret the phrase “I stood upon the sand of the sea” as allusion to Daniel 7:4-8:27 where the “interpretive keys to the symbolism of beasts and horns are found.

The monster having seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 13:1-5) is the last global government to rise in the seven-year end time “week” before the coming Kingdom of God. In the book of Daniel this is the fourth and last government beast to rise (Dan. 7:7). Because it is a Grecian version of the old Byzantine Roman Empire (before the split) it has 7 heads (count the heads Dan. 7:2-7) in a leopard body. The head that died and was revived is Ancient Babylon, its first head. So this entire beast is in effect the Eighth king “out of seven” (Rev. 17:7-10). The Beast is both Empire and Emperor just as in Daniel 7:17.

John saw two phases of this revived Grecian Roman Babylonian Empire Beast. It rises from a sea of spiritism (Job 38:16-17; Isa. 27:1; Ps. 74:13; Dan. 7:2 compare Rev. 21:1) when Satan and his fallen angels appear on earth (Rev. 12:7-9) insisting they can only work through global government to deliver global peace and safety (1 Thess. 5:3).

They install the False Christ Rider on the White Horse as its first “Chancellor”, “the mouth of a lion” (Rev. 13:2). The second phase begins at mid week, after 3.5 years when Adonikam the false Christ breaks the covenant he made with the world’s religions and reveals he actually is the Seed of Satan “Son of Destruction” (Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:5). He now denies the Father and Son and blasphemes Yahweh God, both His dwelling and His angels:

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. (Rev. 13:5-10 NKJV)

The Majority Text: Divine Preservation and Christian Reason
The Grecian-Roman Empire with Seven Heads and Ten Horns

Has Cessationist Apologetics failed because of Cognitive Dissonance?

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



Fallible Prophecy is a good example. Cessationists see the presence of false prophecy in the church today as proof Modern Prophecy is not a continuation of the first century.

We are shocked when our charismatic brothers and sisters don't agree.

Unknown to us, its very traumatic to admit one is wrong, its like rejecting everything good one thinks about themself, so most will fight tooth and nail not to do that.

This video explains that. You can begin at Frame 1:09 and not miss anything:

My apologetics once focused on Jehovah Witness, so when the video mentions "the apocalyptic cult" I immediately recalled what happened various times among the JWs from 1914-1918, **as they modified their prediction when Armageddon and the end of the world would occur.**

See Christian apologetic sites for all the dates Armageddon was supposed to happen.

Surprisingly few JWs lost faith even as the date for Armageddon repeatedly gets pushed forward.

JWs are a model of Cognitive Dissonance.

Does 1 Corinthians 1:7 and 1 Corinthians 13:10 prove Continuance of the Revelatory Gifts

Baptism In The Spirit: The Experience

What did the apostle John reveal when he said: "It is the last hour"?

Are the Elect the only ones saved?

written by Alfred Persson | August 30, 2023



11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),
12 it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.”
13 As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”
14 What shall we say then? **Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!** (Rom. 9:11-14 NKJ)

A Thought Experiment: Imagine the Elect aren’t the only ones saved. What shall we say then?

Paul names two Groups that will be saved: The ELECT and Israel.

Israel was blinded at first but “have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not!”

Therefore, both Elect and Non-Elect (their fullness) will be saved.

*7 What then? **Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it**, and the rest were blinded.*

8 Just as it is written: “God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.”

9 And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.”

*11 **I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not!** But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.*

*12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, **how much more their fullness (4138 πλήρωμα pleroma)!** (Rom. 11:7-12 NKJ)*

4138 πλήρωμα pleroma

Meaning: 1) that which is (has been) filled.-Strong’s

Compare:

*Now if their stumbling brings riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their **full number bring!** (Rom. 11:12 CSB)*

Where and When was their “fullness” achieved?

In hell. They were blinded, didn’t obtain salvation. They died “enemies of the gospel” so they went to hell and in hell they repented and believed in Christ:

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

*28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but **concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.***

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,

31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:26-33 NKJ)

Paul began distinguishing Israel (who was blinded and did not obtain salvation) from “the Elect” (who weren’t blinded and did obtain salvation) Rom. 11:7. Therefore, “election for the sake of the fathers” (Rom. 11:28) is an “election” of the Nation of Israel granted for the sake of the fathers. Israel as a nation was Elect, not individually as in Romans 11:7.

Its a different kind of election, not equivocation.

There certainly is no unrighteousness with God when He Elects individuals unto salvation whoever He chooses to have mercy upon, *because He did not thereby Reprobate unto damnation those He did not elect.*

Do other scriptures imply its not just the Elect that can be saved? Yes, in the symbolism of the book of life:

The names of the Elect are in the Book of Life (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8) but other names written in this Book cannot be of the “Elect” because those names can be blotted out (Rev. 3:5; Exod. 32:32; Ps. 69:28) or written in (Ps. 69:28; 87:6; Mal. 3:16).

Blotted Out:

*“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and **I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life;** but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Rev. 3:5 NKJ)*

32 *“Yet now, if You will forgive their sin— but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.”*

33 *And the LORD said to Moses, “**Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.** (Exod. 32:32-33 NKJ)*

*Let them be **blotted out of the book of the living,** And not be written with the righteous. (Ps. 69:28 NKJ)*

Written In:

*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not **be written with the righteous.** (Ps. 69:28 NKJ)*

***The LORD will record, When He registers the peoples:** “This one was born there.” Selah (Ps. 87:6 NKJ)*

Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD

listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. (Mal. 3:16 NKJ)

As God did not arbitrarily exclude people from the Book of Life when He wrote the names of the Elect in, others beside the Elect can be saved. Therefore, all the scriptures inviting everyone to believe, to choose life, aren't a charade. They are genuine offers for life.

Moreover, everyone assumes Esau is unsaved. He clearly wasn't one of God's Elect. *But is he unsaved eternally?*

Although the writer of Hebrews describes him as a Godless profane person who sold his birth right for a meal (Heb. 12:16), he also notes Esau and Jacob both were blessed "concerning things to come":

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. (Heb. 11:20 NKJ)

It doesn't appear from this "concerning things to come" Esau is eternally damned. Just the opposite.

Although the sins of the descendants of Esau led to their destruction, God enriched Esau's first descendants and destroyed the Horites from before them just as He did for Israel:

The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.) (Deut. 2:12 NKJ)

3 `Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.

4 `To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. (Jos. 24:3-4 NKJ)

Although Paul focuses on God's right to do with His creation as He wills, that wouldn't exhaust all the reasons why "there is no unrighteousness with God". *When it comes to salvation, God isn't partial:*

4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds":

7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey
unrighteousness— indignation and wrath,
9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the
Jew first and also of the Greek;
10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to
the Jew first and also to the Greek.
11 For there is no partiality with God.
12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law,
and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law
13 (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the
doers of the law will be justified;
14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things
in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,
15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their
conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts
accusing or else excusing them)
16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ,
according to my gospel. (Rom. 2:4-16 NKJ)