

God so loved the World even John Calvin can be saved if he believes

written by Alfred Persson | November 10, 2024



“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (Jn. 3:16 NKJ)

The opportunity to be saved by Jesus is universally offered to “whosoever

believes”, but against this Calvin argued “world” refers to all groups of people and the elect among them are the only ones who will believe and be saved.

Conclusion: Calvinists are wrong because:

1. Limiting *kosmos* to the elect contradicts the plain and repeated use of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19, which clearly indicates an inclusive, universal scope.
2. The phrase “whoever believes” in John 3:16 supports an open invitation to all humanity, not just the elect.
3. 1 John 2:2 explicitly states that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the entire world (*holos kosmos*), which cannot be limited to the elect without ignoring the clear textual emphasis on universality.
4. The context of condemnation and salvation described in John 3:18-19 applies universally, implying that the *kosmos* receiving the light includes all people, even those who reject it.
5. Christ’s universal proclamation to the living and the dead (1 Peter 3:18-22, Ephesians 4:9-10) further supports that His mission and the reach of His light are not restricted to an exclusive group but extend to all humanity.

Final Conclusion: The Calvinist interpretation that limits *kosmos* in these passages to only the elect fails to align with the clear, repeated, and contextually consistent use of the term in Scripture. The natural reading of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2 supports a universal understanding that includes all of humanity, affirming that Christ’s atoning work and the offer of salvation are genuinely extended to all.

Notes:

The Meaning of *Kosmos* in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2

Premise 1: In John 3:16, *kosmos* (world) is used to convey that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Premise 2: In John 3:17, the purpose of sending Jesus is stated: “God did not send His Son into the world (*kosmos*) to condemn the world (*kosmos*), but that the world (*kosmos*) through Him might be saved.” The repetition of *kosmos* indicates a consistent meaning throughout the passage.

Premise 3: John 3:18 states, “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.” This implies that the opportunity for belief and condemnation applies universally within the *kosmos*.

Premise 4: John 3:19 reinforces the universal application by stating,

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world (*kosmos*), and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” The phrase “light has come into the world” confirms that Christ’s light reaches the entirety of the *kosmos*.

Premise 5: The repeated use of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19 suggests that the author is emphasizing a comprehensive meaning, analogous to metaphors like “the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:12) or “east, west, north, and south” (Luke 13:29), which are used to indicate the entire world.

Premise 6: In 1 John 2:2, it is stated, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole (*holos*) world (*kosmos*).” The addition of *holos* underscores that Christ’s atoning work applies to all of humanity and not only a specific group (e.g., the elect).

Premise 7: The idea that Christ’s light shines universally is further supported by 1 Peter 3:18-22 and 4:5-6, where it is implied that the gospel is proclaimed to all, including the dead. Ephesians 4:9-10 also supports this by stating that Christ descended to the “lower parts of the earth” to ensure no realm of human existence was left out.

Premise 8: If *kosmos* were meant to refer only to the elect, the repeated emphasis on universal terminology in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2 would be misleading. The use of “whoever believes” in John 3:16 reinforces the open nature of the invitation.

Conclusion: The consistent use of *kosmos* throughout these passages, along with the additional support from metaphors and theological affirmations of universality, indicates that *kosmos* refers to the whole of humanity, not just the elect. Therefore, the distinction between “ours [the elect]” and “the whole *kosmos* of humanity” is unsustainable in this context. Christ is the propitiation for the entire world, providing the opportunity for salvation to all who choose to believe.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God

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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.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:28-31 NKJ)

Premises:

1. **Omniscience of God:** God possesses complete and infinite knowledge of all possible realities and outcomes, encompassing every potential state of existence (“fallen” and “unfallen” realms).
2. **Distinct Act of Foreknowledge:** While omniscience is God’s all-encompassing knowledge, *foreknowledge* is a specific application or aspect of His omniscience. In this act of foreknowledge, God

identifies and recognizes those individuals who would willingly respond to His love and maintain a faithful relationship with Him upon “awakening” into existence in an unfallen state.

3. **Recognition of the Loving in the Unfallen Realm:** God, in His foreknowledge, perceived which individuals would choose to love and remain committed to Him when they came into existence without the influence of a fallen nature.
4. **Election Based on Foreknowledge:** God, having foreknown these individuals as loving Him in the unfallen realm, then *elected* this select group to be predestined for a specific purpose. This purpose is to be conformed to the image of His Son, thus initiating their eventual justification and glorification.
5. **Predestination Without Reprobation:** God’s act of predestining those He foreknew does not imply reprobation for others. Those not foreknown as loving Him are simply not part of this predestination process, highlighting the absence of any active decision to reprobate them.
6. **Sequential Process of Salvation:** Those whom God foreknew and elected are subsequently predestined to be conformed to Christ’s image, called by God, justified through faith, and ultimately glorified in His presence.

Logical Conclusion:

- **Foreknowledge and Predestination as Related but Separate Acts:** God’s omniscience is a broad, comprehensive state, while His foreknowledge is a focused, deliberate recognition within omniscience, aimed at identifying those who would love Him. In a subsequent and distinct act, God predestines these individuals to follow a path that includes being called, justified, and glorified, ensuring their full salvation.
- **Exclusion of Reprobation:** The passage and the logic behind these premises imply that those not foreknown as loving God are absent from the predestination process. This underscores that reprobation is not part of the divine action described in Romans 8:28-30.

Summary:

God’s omniscience allowed Him to know all possible realities, including who would willingly return His love when they awoke into existence in an unfallen state. This knowledge formed the basis for His act of foreknowledge, wherein He selected those individuals who loved Him and predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son, ensuring their salvation journey through calling, justification, and glorification. The absence of those not foreknown indicates that God’s predestination does not include or imply reprobation.

The Mystery of Lawlessness Identified

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The Mystery of Lawlessness: An Analytical Examination

The term “mystery of lawlessness,” as presented in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, has been a subject of extensive theological analysis. To comprehend its essence, we can deconstruct the concept through a series of premises leading to a logical conclusion, incorporating relevant scriptural texts.

Premise 1: Definition of ‘Mystery’ in Biblical Context

In biblical literature, the term “mystery” (Greek: *mysterion*) refers to divine truths that were once concealed but have now been revealed to believers. These are not mysteries in the modern sense of unsolvable puzzles but are sacred secrets disclosed by God. For instance, Ephesians 3:4-5 states:

“... the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men...has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.”

Premise 2: Understanding ‘Lawlessness’

“Lawlessness” denotes a state of rebellion against God’s established order and commandments. It embodies actions and ideologies that oppose divine law, leading to moral and spiritual chaos. 1 John 3:4 elucidates:

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

Premise 3: The ‘Mystery of Lawlessness’ is Already at Work

Paul asserts that this mystery was already active during his time, indicating an ongoing, covert operation of lawlessness within the world. This suggests a hidden force influencing individuals and societies towards rebellion against God. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 affirms:

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.”

Premise 4: Deceiving Spirits are agents of the ‘Mystery of Lawlessness’:

The “spirit...word...letter” shaking the minds of the Thessalonians with the false claim “the day of Christ had come” (2 Thessalonians 2:2) was the “mystery of lawlessness” already at work.

“Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word

or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.”

Premise 5: The identity of the “Restrainer” is the Holy Spirit

The “Restrainer” was therefore known to the Thessalonians to be the Holy Spirit as it was He who was restraining the lies about the Day of Christ directly and through Paul’s correction (2 Thessalonians 2:1-6):

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. (2 Thess. 2:1-6 NKJ)

Premise 6: Satan as the Principal Agent

Scriptural references identify Satan as the primary force behind this lawlessness. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the coming of the lawless one is described as being “according to the working of Satan,” highlighting his role in orchestrating this rebellion. The verse states:

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.”

Premise 7: Manifestation Through Deception and False Teachings

The mystery manifests through deceptive practices, including false teachings and misleading doctrines. 1 Timothy 4:1 warns of individuals following “deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,” illustrating the propagation of lawlessness through spiritual deception:

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”

Additionally, 2 Corinthians 11:14 cautions:

“And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”

Premise 8: Deceiving spirits are the “deluding influence” God sends

God sent the “strong deluding influence” when the Holy Spirit stopped

restraining the ‘mystery of lawlessness’ from inspiring “strong delusion” among those who perish.

⁷ *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

⁸ *Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;*

⁹ *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*

¹⁰ *and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

¹¹ *For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,*

¹² *in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. (2 Thess. 2:7-12 NAS)*

Conclusion: The ‘Mystery of Lawlessness’ as a Supernatural Campaign

Synthesizing these premises, the “mystery of lawlessness” can be understood as a divinely revealed truth about an ongoing, covert operation of rebellion against God’s order, orchestrated by Satan. It operates through “deceiving spirits” promulgating heresy and apostasy. “Unrighteous deception” and false teachings, subtly influencing humanity towards lawlessness, that will be completely unrestrained in its ultimate revelation in the End Time culminating in belief in the Antichrist after the Church as ‘fallen away’ from its belief in Holy Scripture:

¹ *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,*

² *not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*

³ *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

⁴ *who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thess. 2:1-4 NKJ)*

Sherlock Holmes Unveils the mystery of the Fall of Satan

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Satan, once a high-ranking and powerful angel, led a rebellion against God and now commands the demonic forces in their opposition to divine purposes. Scripture identifies him with various titles: “Satan” (meaning “adversary”), “the devil,” “the serpent,” “the great dragon,” “the prince of the power of the air,” “the god of this age,” “the evil one,” “the prince of demons,” “the accuser,” and “the tempter” (e.g., Eph 2:2; Rev 12:9; Matt 4:1; Gen 3:1; 2 Cor 4:4).

Although Genesis does not explicitly name Satan as the serpent that tempted Eve, later scriptures, such as Revelation 12:9, confirm this identity. Satan’s initial rebellion, driven by pride in his own beauty and a corrupted wisdom, led him to seek worship for himself (Ez 28:14-17; Isa 14:13-15). As the “anointed cherub,” Satan held a unique and exalted position among the heavenly beings, acting as a canopy over God’s throne. His power exceeded even that of the Archangel Michael (Dan 10:13; Jude 1:9).

Satan’s fall stemmed from an inward discovery of iniquity, prompting him

to challenge God's very criteria for divine rule. This rebellion was not just an act of pride but a philosophical assault on God's nature. He reasoned that God's belief in the capacity of intelligent beings to reciprocate true, unselfish love was a fundamental error. This conclusion, influenced by Satan's own confirmation bias, led him to propagate the idea that all devotion to God must be rooted in selfish motives. With this argument, he convinced a third of the angels to join his rebellion (Rev 12:4), spreading his deception through subtle persuasion (Ez 28:5).

The story of Job exemplifies Satan's claim. Satan's challenge before the heavenly court was that Job's faithfulness stemmed only from God's protection and blessings. When permitted to test Job (Job 1:6-12), Satan sought to prove that human devotion was inherently selfish. Yet, despite Job's suffering, he did not curse God, disproving Satan's assertion.

However, this defeat did not change the conviction held by Satan and the fallen angels. They believed that sentient beings ultimately served God out of self-interest. The true and irrefutable evidence came with the incarnation of Christ. Jesus demonstrated genuine, self-sacrificing love by relinquishing the privileges of divine status, becoming a servant, and willingly dying on the cross (Phil 2:4-11). This act, motivated solely by love for the Father and humanity, proved that unselfish love was not only possible but real.

The Father also displayed unselfish love by giving His only Son, the "apple of His eye," so that humanity might have eternal life (Jn 3:16). Thus, the combined testimony of the Father and the Son conclusively established the existence of true, unselfish love. According to Deuteronomy 19:15, "By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established," and in this case, the divine witness was undeniable.

The incarnation of Christ had profound implications for Satan and his fallen angels. They could no longer claim that unselfish love was a myth. The very declaration, "Jesus Christ came in the flesh," chokes demonic forces, as they are overwhelmed by the reality of their defeat and the terror of God's truth (1 Jn 4:2-3).

In the end, Satan's gamble—that God would disqualify Himself by erring in creating beings capable of mutual, true love—proved catastrophic. The proof of God's love and the sacrifice of Christ stand as the ultimate testament, silencing all opposition and establishing the foundation of divine justice and truth.

Sherlock Holmes unravels the mystery of the Antichrist

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- ¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea.
- And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns,
- and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

- ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*,
- and his mouth like the mouth of a lion...

- ⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies,
- and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. (Rev. 13:1-5 NKJ)

Sherlock Holmes sat in his Baker Street armchair, fingers steepled, eyes fixed intently on the flickering flame of the fireplace. The rhythmic tick of the clock and the distant clatter of hooves on cobblestones created a soothing backdrop as he contemplated a most curious theological puzzle that had captured his interest: the apparent contradiction of the “false Christ” who, as foretold, would deny the Father and the Son.

Dr. Watson, ever curious and keen to see Holmes’ agile mind at work, sat opposite, observing the detective’s contemplative silence. Finally, Holmes spoke, his voice low and measured.

“Watson, have you ever pondered how a being so antithetical to the essence of Christ could masquerade convincingly as the savior of mankind?”

Watson blinked, caught off guard. “The Antichrist, you mean? I must admit, Holmes, it’s a riddle theologians have long debated. A figure who denies the Father and Son, yet presents himself as Christ—it seems a contradiction.”

Holmes leaned forward, the fire casting shadows across the sharp angles of his face. “Precisely. The mind finds itself entangled in the very threads of this duality. I have traced the common solutions, yet they all fall short when subjected to rigorous scrutiny. Some speak of the

Antichrist as mere metaphor, a symbol of ideological opposition, while others insist he is a literal being of deception. But none capture the entirety of the tale.”

He paused, letting the tension hang in the air before continuing. “Consider this, Watson: the solution is not in choosing between these interpretations but in understanding them as a sequence. The Antichrist does not only pose as a Christ-like figure; he begins as one.”

Watson’s brow furrowed. “Begins as one? How so?”

Holmes’s eyes shone with the glint of deduction. “Picture, if you will, a figure who emerges amidst chaos, speaking the language of peace and unity, upholding doctrine with a subtle twist—permitting sin under the guise of progress and understanding. For the first 3.5 years, he upholds the façade, appearing almost orthodox. But there is a turning point, Watson. A point at which he reveals his true nature as the ‘Son of Destruction,’ the prophesied seed of Satan.”

“The moment of revelation,” Watson muttered, piecing it together.

“Exactly,” Holmes said, his voice tinged with satisfaction. “It is then that the second mouth of the Beast comes into play—the blasphemous one. The first, lion-like mouth spoke with authority and allure, drawing the masses with its charisma. But when the time is ripe, the second mouth unleashes blasphemies against the heavens.”

Holmes’s gaze drifted to the small library behind Watson, where a worn Bible sat atop a pile of tomes. “In *Daniel 9:27*, we see the ‘prince’ who makes a covenant for one week but breaks it halfway through. The initial 3.5 years represent the period of deceptive compliance, a mask of benevolence and faith. Only then does the true face appear—destroying, desecrating, and declaring war on the very doctrines he once seemed to uphold.”

Watson leaned back, the realization dawning on him. “That explains why scholars have struggled to reconcile the contradiction. The Antichrist’s phases—first the ‘false Christ’ who seduces and the latter phase, the ‘Son of Destruction’—align perfectly with scripture and prophecy.”

Holmes allowed a rare smile to tug at the corner of his lips. “Indeed, Watson. That is why the Beast rising from the sea has two mouths. One that speaks like a lion, commanding attention and respect; the other that blasphemes, declaring open rebellion against the divine.”

The room fell silent again, the fire crackling as if in approval of Holmes’s deduction. The detective’s piercing eyes softened for a moment, reflecting the flame’s glow. “It is in understanding the subtleties, Watson, that we unravel the most confounding mysteries. Even those that reach beyond the veil of mere earthly concerns.”

Watson nodded, admiration gleaming in his eyes. “As always, Holmes, you

make the unfathomable seem almost elementary.”

Sherlock Holmes Deciphers Biblical Prophecy Revelation 13:1-3

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Ah, Watson, let us approach this puzzle with the same keen eye with which we might unravel a case of grand conspiracy and layered intrigue. Picture, if you will, the grand narrative spun by the Apostle John in Revelation 13:1-3, laden with symbols that draw heavily from Daniel’s visions. The passage begins with John standing upon the sands of the sea,

evoking Daniel's vision by the "great sea" where beasts emerged one by one. Yet, John's perspective is unique, a panoramic view from the end times where the culmination of these beasts—their shared legacy—manifests as a singular, composite entity.

Let us first dissect the symbolism of these beasts as kingdoms, as Daniel himself interpreted. In his vision, the succession began with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, followed by the Medo-Persian Empire, then the Grecian Empire with its four-headed beast, and finally the formidable Roman Empire. John's account, however, casts a wider net, encompassing all empires that influenced Israel, starting from ancient Babylon and tracing through to the "one is" of his own day—the Roman Empire. Notably, John also includes Britain, whose fleeting dominion over Palestine secured its place as the seventh head. The British Empire's contribution, symbolized by its brief mandate and the pivotal Balfour Declaration, paved the way for modern Israel's existence, lending profound significance to its role.

Now, Watson, observe the enigma of the eighth beast, "one of the seven," yet distinct and standing apart as an "eighth." This final empire is a rebirth of the Grecian-Roman lineage, but with deeper roots in ancient Babylon—the city whose ambitious tower epitomized rebellion against the divine (Genesis 11:1-9). In this revived Roman-Babylonian amalgam, John's beast embodies the culmination of power, ascending from the abyss with dark energy fueled by Satanic influence and the whispered lore of fallen angelic technology (2 Thess. 2:9; Daniel 9:27). The beast's splendor is deceptive, inspiring awe and false worship among the masses as it parades its seemingly invincible might (Revelation 13:3-4).

This mortally wounded head—ancient Babylon itself—"was and is not," submerged under the sands until its resurrection as the capital of this new empire. When it falls once more, by the might of a coalition from the north—Russia, Iran, and Turkey—its destruction marks both judgment and a significant wound to the beast (Jeremiah 50:3, 13, 39-40; 51:29; Revelation 18:2-10). The question of whether this demise unfolds through nuclear fire or some divine cataclysm remains unanswered, yet the symbolism implies a cataclysm of immense scale.

The nuanced interpretations of the "mortal wound" in Revelation 13:3 and the "deadly wound" healed in Revelation 13:12 require careful separation. The first, a fatal blow to Babylon, signals the end of its dominance, while the second, a sword stroke, weakens but does not kill—indicating the empire's survival amid turmoil. These distinct references serve to

illustrate Babylon's cyclical fate: once slain and buried, now resurrected to usher in the end-time rebellion, only to face ultimate destruction under divine judgment (Jeremiah 51:63-64; Isaiah 13:19-22).

Turning our gaze to the ten horns, we recognize them as ten kings who rise with the Assyrian King of the North—Adonikam, the Antichrist, and final ruler of this empire (Daniel 7:7-10, 23-27; 8:9-14; Revelation 17:12-13). With Babylon's fall, the empire reels, plunging the world into a depression described in Revelation 18:11-19. Yet, from the turmoil, Britain and America emerge—embodiments of the beast with two lamb-like horns. Their strength prompts adversaries such as Russia to pause. These nations, Watson, equipped with secretive technologies gleaned from supposed extraterrestrial encounters, represent the pinnacle of deception and power. The notion that advanced crafts could be felled by lightning—a clever fabrication indeed—masks the true origin of such devices: a legacy of Satan's cunning, distributed subtly over decades.

With their technological might, these nations harness the first quantum computing AI, linking the world into a network that enforces the "666 Mark economy," a membership economy under total surveillance and control (Revelation 13:13-17). The leaders of once-Christian nations, now speaking like dragons, support the Antichrist's iron-fisted rule. Economic sanctions, symbolic of cutting off the lifeblood of any nonconforming nation, align with this prophecy, enforcing compliance under the most severe threat.

So, Watson, we see before us a web of interconnected symbols—each head, horn, and wound a clue that pieces together a grand and terrible tapestry. The revived Roman-Babylonian empire, underpinned by Satanic power, rises with the ambition of ancient Babel, only to meet its foretold end under divine retribution.

That is how we solve the mystery of the Beast having seven heads and ten horns that John saw rising up out of the sea in Revelation 13:1-3

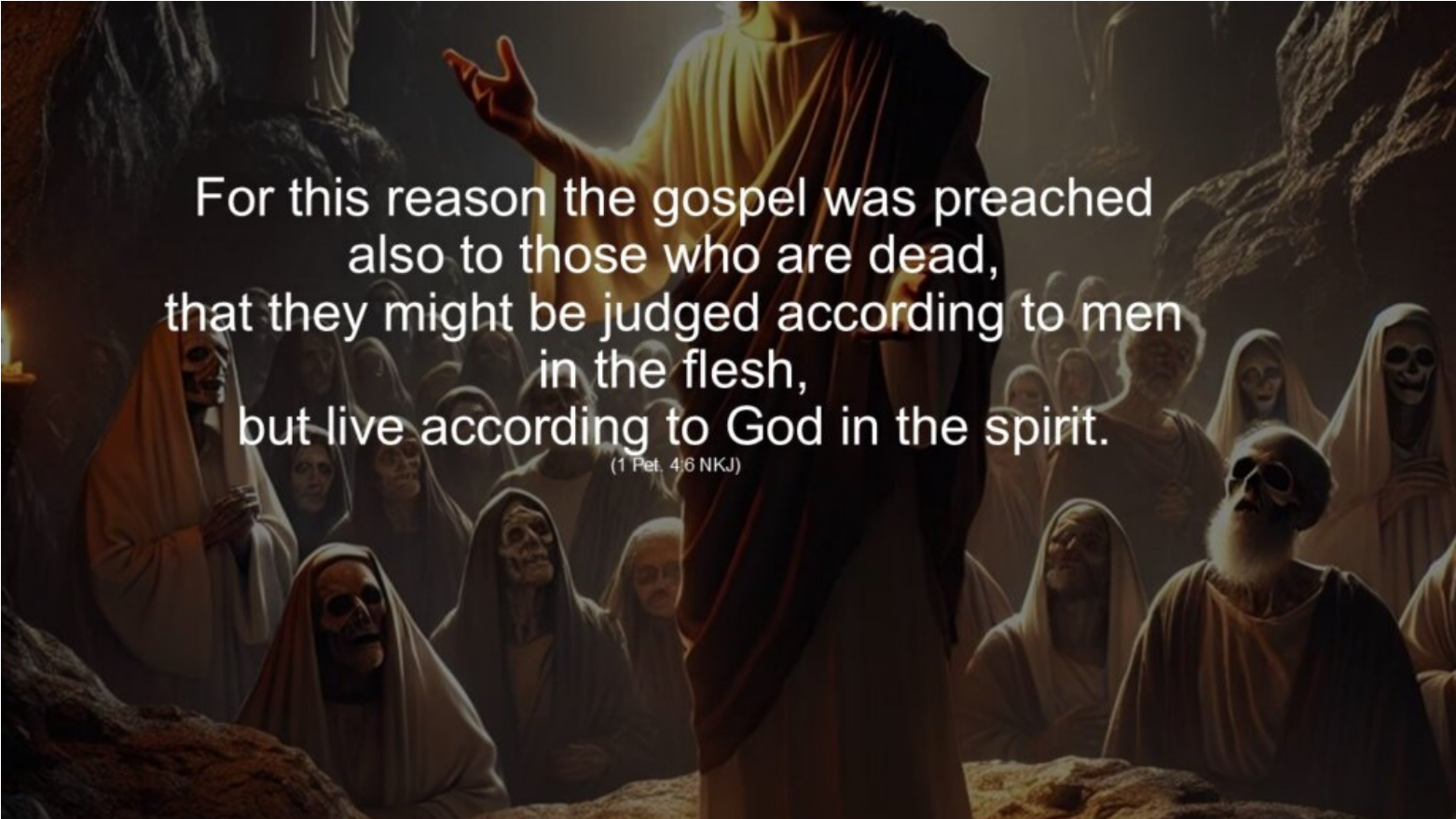
1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

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.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. (Rev.

Did Early Christians believe 1 Peter 4:6 teaches the Gospel is preached also to the Dead?

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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 question of whether early Christian writers interpreted **1 Peter 4:6** as indicating that the gospel was preached to the dead is indeed fascinating and has been a subject of theological and historical debate. **1 Peter 4:6** states:

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.

In the first few centuries of Christianity, interpretations of this passage varied, with some early church writers indeed taking it to mean that the gospel was preached to the dead in some form. Here's an overview of key early Christian interpretations and sources:

1. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215 AD)

- **Clement of Alexandria** is one of the earliest writers to refer to the preaching of the gospel to the dead. He interprets 1 Peter 4:6 as indicating that Christ preached to souls in Hades. In his work *Stromata*, Clement describes how the gospel was preached to all

those who had died prior to Christ's coming, offering them the same opportunity for salvation that was offered to the living.

2. Origen (c. 185–253 AD)

- **Origen**, a prominent early Christian theologian, also believed that Christ descended to the dead to preach to the souls in Hades. In his commentary on 1 Peter and other works, Origen interprets this passage to mean that the gospel was preached to those who had not had the chance to hear it during their earthly lives. He connects this with the broader concept of the "harrowing of hell," where Christ's descent offered salvation to the righteous dead.

3. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130–202 AD)

- **Irenaeus** touches on the concept in his *Against Heresies*. While he does not focus specifically on 1 Peter 4:6, he does affirm the idea that Christ descended to the place of the dead (or Hades) and liberated the righteous souls. Irenaeus views this as part of Christ's mission to bring salvation to all, including those who had died before His incarnation.

4. Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–235 AD)

- In **Hippolytus'** commentary and works, he reflects on the early Christian belief in Christ's descent to the dead, a concept rooted in passages like 1 Peter 4:6 and 1 Peter 3:19, which describes Christ proclaiming to "spirits in prison." Hippolytus emphasizes that this was an act of salvation extended even to those who had already died, a view consistent with the interpretation that the gospel was preached to the dead.

5. Tertullian (c. 155–220 AD)

- **Tertullian**, while somewhat ambiguous, seems to acknowledge in *On the Soul* that Christ's descent involved preaching to souls in Hades. Though Tertullian is more conservative in interpreting the specifics of who could be saved posthumously, he does connect this event with God's justice and mercy in offering salvation universally.

6. Athanasius (c. 296–373 AD)

- **Athanasius** does not provide an extensive commentary on 1 Peter 4:6, but he does affirm in *On the Incarnation* the early church's belief in Christ's descent to Hades. Athanasius argues that Christ's work extended to all realms, including the underworld, which aligns with the view that the gospel's power reached even the dead.

7. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–395 AD)

- **Gregory of Nyssa** was among those who supported the interpretation that the gospel reached the dead. In his *Oratio Catechetica*, he explains how Christ's redemptive work was cosmic and extended to

all, even to those who had died. Gregory sees this as a testament to God's mercy and justice, a view that echoes the interpretation of 1 Peter 4:6.

8. Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397 AD)

- **Ambrose** comments on the idea of Christ's descent in his sermons and writings. He interprets it as an act of salvation for those who had died in righteousness but without knowledge of Christ, thus resonating with 1 Peter 4:6's message of the gospel being preached to the dead.

Summary of Early Interpretations

Most early church fathers interpreted **1 Peter 4:6** as affirming that Christ's salvation work included the realm of the dead. This was often linked with the "harrowing of hell," where Christ descended to Hades and preached to the righteous dead, offering them the opportunity for redemption. This view illustrates early Christianity's broad understanding of God's offering of salvation as Cosmic, extending even to those who had passed away before the revelation of Christ.

Conclusion

Yes, **1 Peter 4:6** was cited by early Christian writers as teaching that the gospel was, in some form, preached to the dead. This interpretation was part of a broader understanding in early Christianity that emphasized the universality of Christ's salvific mission, even extending to those who had died without knowing the gospel.

The Name 666 Reveals

written by Alfred Persson | November 10, 2024



Abstract

This paper explores the interpretation of "the number of the beast," 666, as presented in the Book of Revelation 13:18, proposing that the name "Adonikam" uniquely aligns with the riddle. By examining the text through the lens of Janus Parallelism, an ancient Hebrew literary technique, the analysis suggests that John's use of 666 was deliberately intended to evoke the only Old Testament name associated with this number: Adonikam. This study critiques the Gematria approach as insufficient due to its broad interpretative range, advocating instead for a textual analysis rooted in scriptural references and Hebrew linguistics. Additionally, it

draws upon the scholarly work of Cyrus Gordon and E. W. Hengstenberg, who argue that the parallelism in Revelation serves to reinforce Adonikam's symbolic alignment with the beast, marking him as a figure of power and blasphemy that challenges divine authority.

Introduction

The biblical text Revelation 13:18 provides one of the most enigmatic clues in religious literature: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." This has led scholars and interpreters alike to speculate on the identity symbolized by the number 666. The hypothesis that the name "Adonikam," a biblical figure associated with 666 in the Old Testament (Ezra 2:13), could be the intended solution is a compelling one that contrasts with traditional interpretations reliant on Gematria. Instead, this study leverages a linguistic framework rooted in ancient Hebrew parallelism, particularly Janus Parallelism, to decode the meaning behind 666.

The Limitations of Gematria in Deciphering 666

Gematria, the practice of assigning numerical values to letters, is often used to derive names from numbers, but it encounters several challenges in this context. While Gematria can yield many names corresponding to 666, it lacks precision and leads to an overabundance of possible answers. This proliferation dilutes the specificity required by the text, as the riddle is intended to yield one definitive name. Furthermore, no scriptural precedent exists for applying Gematria to theological riddles, making its relevance here questionable. As such, this analysis dismisses Gematria in favor of examining the text and its numbers in the context of Hebrew literary structures.

Understanding Janus Parallelism

Janus Parallelism is an ancient Hebrew literary device identified by Cyrus Gordon, in which a single term or phrase possesses dual meanings, linking both preceding and subsequent clauses. This dual perspective, akin to the Roman god Janus who faces two directions, allows the same phrase to serve multiple interpretative purposes. Several examples of Janus Parallelism appear in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Genesis 6:3, Daniel 11:35), enhancing the depth of meaning and connecting disparate ideas through wordplay. In the case of 666, this parallelism appears in the way John invites readers to "count the number of the beast" while evoking the

only biblical figure, Adonikam, directly associated with this number.

By applying Janus Parallelism, the riddle suggests two interpretations of 666: as a numeric identifier for Adonikam’s sons (666 in Ezra 2:13) and as an emblematic reference that points both backward and forward to the name Adonikam, suggesting him as the symbolic “beast.”

Scriptural and Linguistic Evidence Supporting Adonikam

- Scriptural Clues:** Three textual clues in Revelation direct readers to Adonikam:
 - **Calculate the Number:** The act of counting or “calculating” could imply adding 1 to 666, which aligns with the textual discrepancy of Adonikam’s descendants in Ezra and Nehemiah (667 in Nehemiah 7:18).
 - **Number OF a Man:** The phrase suggests ownership, as the 666 sons are directly tied to Adonikam, the “man” associated with the number.
 - **His Number is 666:** This points to a singular figure with a unique association to 666, a characteristic only fulfilled by Adonikam.
- Janus Parallelism in Action:** Interpreting “count the number” as a Janus parallelism, we observe 666 both as a historical reference (backward) to Adonikam’s descendants and as a prophetic symbol (forward) of the beast. The “count” or “calculate” serves as a bridge between Adonikam and the beast, marking Adonikam as a foreshadowed figure of blasphemy and opposition to God.
- Theological Resonance:** The name Adonikam translates to “the Lord arises,” a phrase loaded with significance in Hebrew worship that takes on a sinister edge when applied to the beast. E. W. Hengstenberg argues that Adonikam’s name, associated with vengeance and divine authority, would be appropriated by the beast as an act of blasphemy, positioning himself in opposition to God. Revelation’s description of the beast mirrors Adonikam’s symbolic appropriation of divine titles, presenting himself as a figure of worship and warfare against the saints.

Implications for the Identification of the Beast

If Adonikam indeed symbolizes the beast, the implications are substantial for the interpretation of Revelation. Rather than seeking a future historical figure, the text would be pointing to a theological archetype, a name symbolizing the qualities of rebellion, self-exaltation, and ultimate opposition to God’s authority. Adonikam’s appropriation of the

Lord’s title, paralleled in Revelation’s description of the beast, reinforces the idea that the beast is not merely an individual but a representation of the ultimate blasphemy and counterfeit divinity.

Conclusion

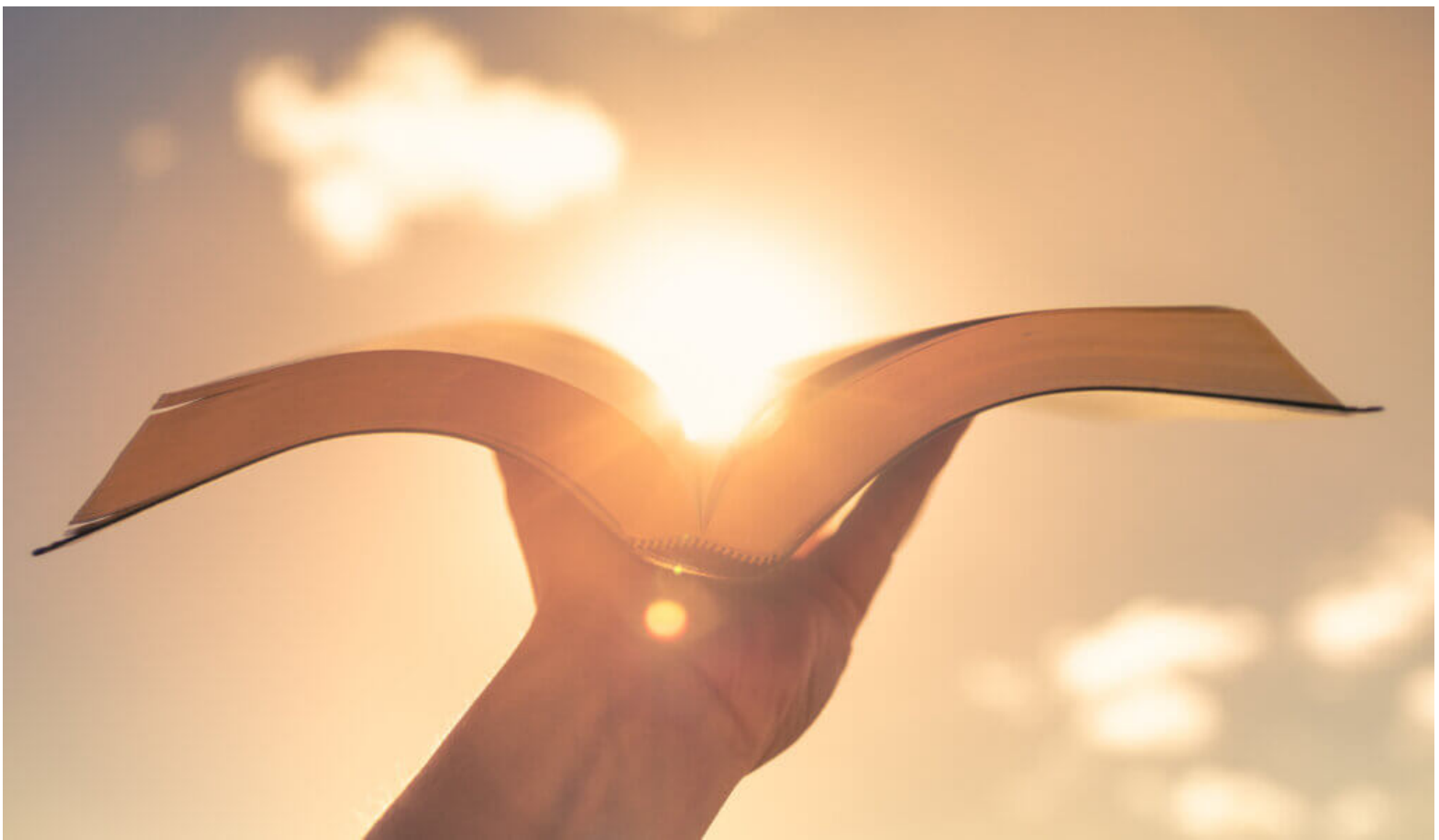
This analysis concludes that Adonikam, and not a future historical figure, may represent the riddle’s intended answer. Using Janus Parallelism, we uncover how Revelation 13:18 draws on the Old Testament’s numerical association with Adonikam’s sons, making the name Adonikam the sole contender for “the number of the beast.” This interpretation is supported by linguistic and theological analysis, underscoring Adonikam’s name as a symbol of blasphemous power. By understanding Adonikam as the beast, readers gain insight into the symbolic nature of 666, as a number that represents not a future dictator, but an ancient archetype of rebellion and self-exaltation.

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It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27 KJV)

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Universal Opportunity for Salvation in Christ: A Theological Examination of Salvation Beyond Temporal and Geographical Boundaries

Abstract

This paper explores the theological question of salvation for those who, due to the limitations of time and place, have not had direct access to the message of Jesus Christ. The inquiry investigates the biblical foundation for the universal opportunity to be saved if one chooses to receive it, examining how Christ's eternal sacrifice offers redemptive opportunity not only for those who encounter the gospel in their earthly lives but also for those who have passed without knowledge of Him. Through an analysis of New Testament scripture, particularly the Epistle to the Hebrews and Peter's writings, this paper contends that salvation in Christ spans both life and the afterlife, extending the promise of salvation universally, including those who lived in ignorance of the gospel. This is not "Universal Salvation", only those who repent and believe in Jesus will be saved.

Introduction

The doctrine of salvation as found exclusively in Jesus Christ raises pertinent questions about the fate of those who, due to historical and geographical factors, never encountered the gospel during their lifetimes. Does salvation extend beyond this temporal constraint, and if so, how? This paper delves into the implications of Christ's sacrifice, His role as High Priest, and the inclusivity of His atonement. By analyzing key biblical texts, this study seeks to clarify whether the gospel's message is, indeed, "Good News" for all humankind, regardless of

the limitations of earthly life.

The Scope of Christ's Sacrifice

The concept of Christ as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) presents an eternal aspect to His sacrifice, suggesting a timeless efficacy. Hebrews 9:26 affirms that Christ's singular sacrifice, “offered once at the end of the ages,” is sufficient to redeem all who have lived since the world's foundation. The Epistle to the Hebrews further articulates that, just as it is appointed for humanity to die once, followed by judgment (Hebrews 9:27), so Christ's death offers universal coverage for sin, applicable to all regardless of temporal constraints.

Post-Mortem Opportunity for Salvation

The Epistle to Peter states that the gospel “was preached also to the dead,” ensuring that all, including those who never heard the gospel in life, would receive an opportunity for redemption (1 Peter 4:6). This post-mortem proclamation allows for Christ's sacrifice to extend universally, where judgment follows death, evaluating whether Christ's atonement applies to individuals' sins. Repentance and an “answer of a good conscience” (1 Peter 3:21) appear to play a significant role in this judgment, as seen in both Peter's and Christ's teachings, where those “in the graves” who hear Christ's voice will rise “unto the resurrection of life” (John 5:24-29).

Christ's Role as High Priest and the Eternal Redemption

The function of Christ as High Priest, described extensively in Hebrews, contrasts with the earthly priesthood of the Old Covenant. While the former covenant required repeated sacrifices for atonement, Christ's sacrifice was “once for all” (Hebrews 9:12) and achieved eternal redemption. This final sacrifice ensures salvation is not temporally or geographically bound, transcending the constraints of the Old Covenant and extending universally, including those who, though unaware of the gospel in life, receive it posthumously.

Immediate Judgment and Salvation

A common theological interpretation holds that individuals face a “particular judgment” immediately upon death, determining their spiritual fate. R.C.H. Lenski and other theologians highlight that this judgment does not solely pertain to a future eschatological event but occurs individually at death, a viewpoint that suggests no delay in divine verdict (Lenski, 1938). Those who die “in Christ” pass directly into the presence of God, “not coming under the judgment” of condemnation (John 5:24), while the unsaved await judgment following death, allowing Christ's redemptive act to reach even beyond the grave.

A Chronological Reading of Judgment in Hebrews

The sequential reading in Hebrews, from Christ's role in the heavenly

sanctuary to the “appointment” of death followed by judgment (Hebrews 9:24-28), supports an interpretation of judgment that is immediate upon death rather than at a distant end-time event. This interpretation affirms that the judgment in question here is not eschatological finality but a redemptive judgment assessing eligibility for Christ’s salvation.

Universal Redemption Beyond Earthly Life

The New Covenant, according to Hebrews 8:12 and 9:14-15, is characterized by its universality, transcending the temporal limitations of the Old Covenant. While the sacrifices under the Old Covenant provided limited, repetitive atonement for sin, Christ’s atonement, through the “eternal Spirit,” applies universally, offering redemptive opportunity to all, even those unaware of His message in life. The New Covenant thus inaugurates a broader scope for salvation, aligning with the concept of post-mortem evangelism found in 1 Peter 4:5-6.

Conclusion

The theology of Christ’s atonement, as presented in the New Testament, suggests a redemptive opportunity that is not bound by the temporal and geographical limitations of earthly life. Through a nuanced interpretation of Hebrews and Peter’s writings, this study posits that the gospel of Christ indeed extends posthumously, providing a “universal opportunity for salvation” through the eternal efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice. This reading offers a hopeful vision of the gospel’s reach, affirming that the salvific work of Christ transcends time and space, making the gospel truly “Good News” for all humankind.

The Gates of Hell could not stop Jesus from preaching eternal life

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Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice (Jn. 5:28 NKJ)

I'm not a story teller, but this is a great story. So I had ChatGPT write it. Its great, better than I can do:

Imagine the scene: Jesus, the Messiah, stands before the scribes and Pharisees, who are plotting His death. They believe that if they can just silence His voice—if they can put Him to death—they will stop His message, prevent Him from gaining followers, and protect their own influence. Yet Jesus speaks with confidence and authority, declaring something that must have left His enemies stunned. He tells them not to marvel, for the day is coming when even those in their graves will hear His voice.

Jesus knew they were seeking to kill Him because He healed on the Sabbath and called God His Father, making Himself equal with God (John 5:16-18). But in response, He didn't back down. Instead, He boldly proclaimed His divine authority: *"As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will"* (John 5:21).*** Jesus was not only

claiming the power to heal the sick and raise the dead—He was claiming something far greater. He was declaring that even after death, His voice would not be silenced.

This is where the heart of Christ's "boast" comes to light. The Pharisees could plot, and they could carry out their plans to crucify Him. They could stop His earthly ministry, but they could not stop His mission. Even after His death, Jesus would continue to preach, not to the living, but to the dead. This is what He foretold when He said, **"Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice"* (John 5:28).*

The message of eternal life was unstoppable. Even after Jesus was laid in the tomb, His voice would be heard by those who had already passed from this life. Scripture reveals that during the three days He was in the grave, He descended into the depths, to the "spirits in prison," and preached to them (1 Peter 3:19). These were the dead who had never had the chance to hear His message of salvation during their earthly lives. Yet, through His death and resurrection, Jesus was extending the reach of His gospel beyond the boundaries of the living.

The apostle Peter confirms this when he writes, **"For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might live according to God in the spirit"* (1 Peter 4:6).* Even in death, the message of life persisted, reaching the souls in the grave, offering them a chance to hear and believe.

This fulfills Jesus' promise that His authority was not confined to the living alone. He had the power to give life to whomever He willed—those who were physically alive and those who were already dead. The Pharisees thought that death would be the end of Him, but in fact, His mission would only intensify. As Ephesians says, **"He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things"* (Ephesians 4:9-10).* Christ's descent into the grave was not a defeat—it was part of His victory over death itself.

Jesus' declaration that all in the graves would hear His voice speaks to the grand scope of His redemptive work. As the Father has life in Himself, He gave the Son the power to bring life, even from the depths of the grave. This is not merely about the final judgment, as some commentators suggest. It is about the work Christ accomplished in the grave during the three days of His death, preaching life even to the dead.

The boast of Christ is clear: Death could not silence Him. The Pharisees could not prevent Him from fulfilling His mission. Even when they thought they had won by crucifying Him, Jesus would go on to preach to the dead, making them alive by His word. His victory over death was absolute, and the gates of hell would never prevail against Him.

Christ's voice continues to call out, even beyond the grave, offering

life to all who will hear Him. His message of eternal life is one that death cannot stop. As Jesus proclaimed in John 5, **“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, but has passed from death into life”* (John 5:24).*

This promise of life is offered to all—both the living and the dead—because Christ’s power and authority know no limits.

This is the good news that Christians hold onto: The power of Jesus’ voice, the life He offers, extends beyond this life and into eternity. Death could not hold Him, and it cannot hold those who believe in Him. He is the resurrection and the life, and His voice will be heard by all, even those in the graves, as He leads His people from death to life everlasting.