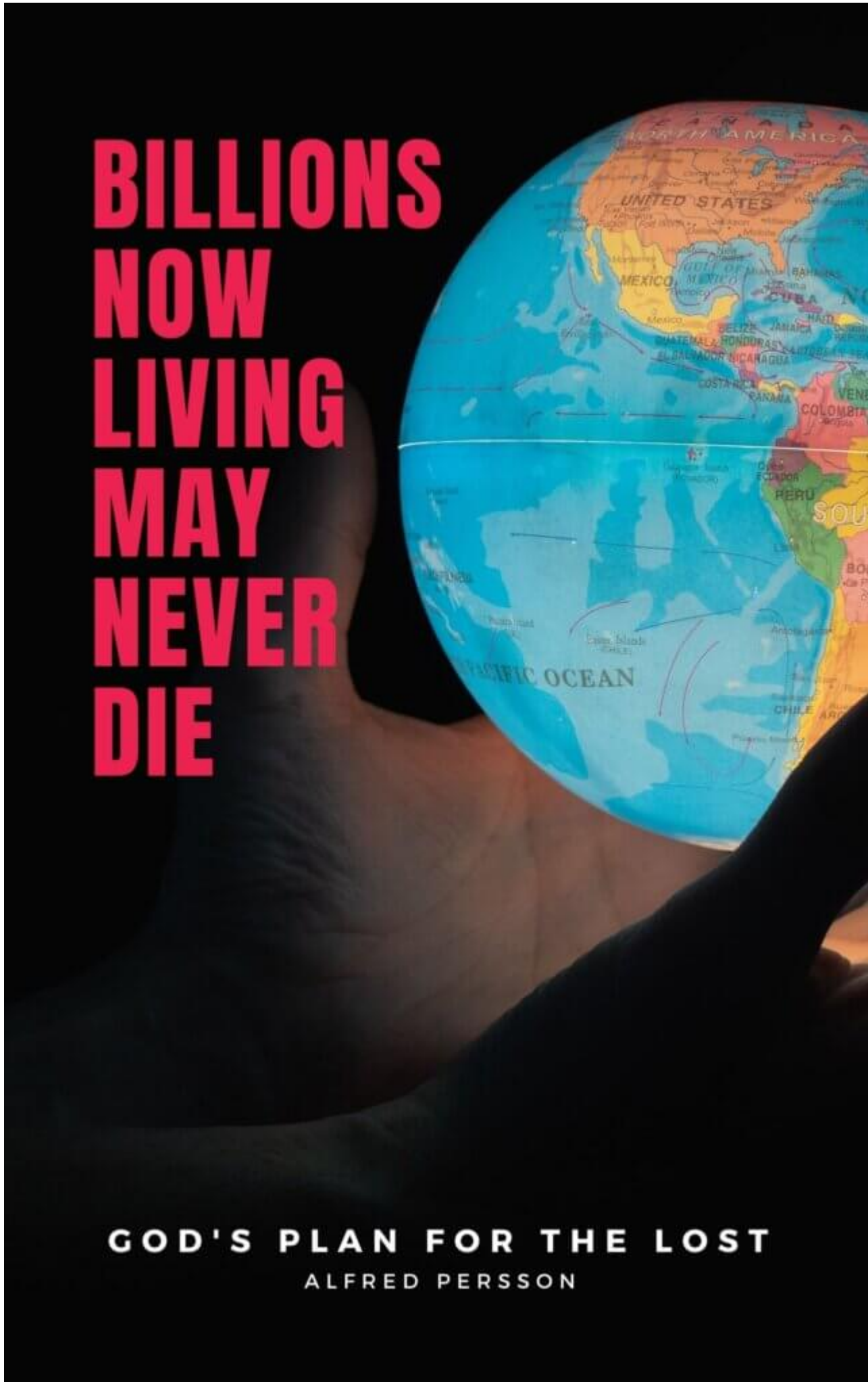


Unlocking the Gates of Immortality: Billions Poised for a Resurrection to Eternity!

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



As a Christian apologist, my purpose is to defend the truth of the Bible. In this article we will delve into specific passages of the Bible that, upon careful examination, present an alternative perspective on

postmortem opportunity. By analyzing these verses in their historical and cultural context, to gain fresh insights that will glorify our God.

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 the Holy Spirit uses to open the door to a mass of evidence for everything Jesus or His apostles taught. All is explicitly or implicitly in the Old Testament (Mt. 22:40).

*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. 22:37-40 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.

When God's Plan is fully known, all Creation will praise God:

*3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; **just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.***

*4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: **for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*** (Rev. 15:3-4 KJV)

33 O 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 hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Rom. 11:33-36 KJV)

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Rom. 8:28 KJV)

[Attention Readers: Scripture will "pop up" when mouse pointer hovers

over a reference. Click to see more context.]

The Magnitude of Grace: Grasping the Extent of God’s Offer of Redemption:

- 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)

John 3:16-18 delivers a powerful message of love and redemption: ‘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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 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.’

In these verses, the Greek term κόσμος (kosmos) appears four times, representing ‘the world.’ This context highlights a strong contrast between the heavenly origin of God’s Son and the *kosmos* of humanity, which He was sent to redeem.

The term κόσμος signifies the entirety of creation, including every person born into it. By extension, God’s love reaches out to every corner of the *kosmos*, offering salvation to all who believe in Him. This vast scope implies that God’s redemptive love is not limited by time, place, or circumstance. Therefore, the *kosmos* could not possibly exclude those born before Christ or those who did not hear the Gospel of Christ after the 1st century.

God sent His Son to save the entire *kosmos* (Jn. 1:9, 29; 4:42; Rm. 5:10; 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:19) encompassing all of humanity whether living or dead (Jn. 5:24-25, 28-29; Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Pt. 4:6). This universal aspect of God’s plan is clearly taught in the following Scriptures (Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:24-26; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:9-10; 8:32).

[#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.

“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 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)

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.”

First, let’s clarify the context because it will identify whether Christ proclaimed doom to spirits who would have known that already, or victory over evil. The overarching theme is victory, from Christ’s crucifixion to His glorious ascension into heaven. The Conquering King “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.” ” Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them” (Col. 2:15 NKJ). How better to plunder Satan than seize captives, taking “captivity captive” (ἡχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν) and triumphantly giving gifts of life to men and the Church? (Eph. 4:8-10)

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).

“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 Pt. 4:3-6 NKJ)

The passage from 1 Peter 4:3-6 poses the question: what becomes of those who, while alive, refused the gospel, ridiculed Christians, and continued in their life of excessive indulgence? Is there still an opportunity for them to turn their hearts towards God? In a powerful testament of God’s grace, the Apostle Peter confirms that there is indeed hope, even for those who rejected the gospel during their earthly lives. Context implies ignorance of the “account to Him” they must give led to their disbelief, hence the gospel is “preached also” when they are dead and no longer ignorant of the consequences of rejection (Compare Lev. 5:18; Ezek.

45:20; Matt. 12:30-32; Ac. 17:20).

Analyzing this passage, we see that Peter is addressing a community of believers who have abandoned their past lifestyles of sin, behaviors that were common among the Gentiles. They had previously partaken in “lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pt. 4:3). This radical change of lifestyle, naturally, perplexes their contemporaries, who view these changes as strange and speak ill of believers.

Peter assures these believers that the very people who deride them for their choices will ultimately answer to God, “who is ready to judge the living and the dead” (1 Pt. 4:5). He provides a comforting and groundbreaking revelation that even those who have died after rejecting the gospel will receive the message of Christ. This presents a picture of God’s Divine mercy, emphasizing His desire for all to be saved.

“The gospel was preached also to those who are dead,” Peter writes (1 Pt. 4:6). This is a profound theological assertion. Even though they faced human judgment in the flesh and died without accepting the gospel, God’s intention is that they might “live according to God in the spirit.” It implies an opportunity for posthumous redemption, one that affirms God’s enduring commitment to extending His love and grace to all of humanity.

“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)

To delve deeper into Matthew 12:30-32, we need to fully grasp the context in which Jesus made these statements. These verses address the dangers of conscious, informed opposition to the clear work of the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 12:30-32, Jesus communicates an essential and profound truth about forgiveness. The future passive indicative of ἀφίημι, “will be forgiven,” denotes a certainty rather than a mere possibility. This language leaves no room for ambivalence; forgiveness is a definitive act, a divine response to human transgression, to occur in this life and even into the next.

Jesus teaches that “every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men” (Matthew 12:31), indicating an expansive scope of divine forgiveness that extends beyond the present age into the “age to come.” This potential for forgiveness in the subsequent age suggests a possibility for postmortem salvation, a concept supported by the understanding of God as eternally

merciful.

Yet, Jesus adds a caveat: “blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven” (Matthew 12:31). In this context, Jesus refers to a willful, defiant repudiation of God’s manifest work through the Holy Spirit, a conscious rejection of God’s grace that transcends mere ignorance or misunderstanding of Jesus’ divine identity.

The nuanced structure of these verses indicates that sins committed out of a lack of understanding or recognition of Jesus as the divine “Son of Man” may be forgivable even in the subsequent age, pointing to a broader opportunity for salvation (comp. Lev. 4:1-4; 5:17-18; Ezek. 45:20; Lk. 12:47-48; Ac. 17:20; Jas. 4:17). However, it also underscores the profound spiritual danger of informed and deliberate opposition to the clear work of the Holy Spirit, which precludes forgiveness both in this life and the next.

Thus, Matthew 12:30-32 upholds the breadth and depth of God’s mercy while warning against the spiritual peril of obstinate resistance to the Holy Spirit’s work. It signals the potential for forgiveness beyond the grave, thereby underlining God’s enduring love for humanity and His desire for all to attain salvation. However, it also underscores the ultimate importance of recognizing and accepting God’s grace in our lives.

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)

This context teaches obedience to Jesus’ voice even in death, results in eternal life.

The scribes and Pharisees objected to Christ healing on the Sabbath, rejecting His Divine authority to do so. In response Jesus reveals who they are resisting, the very one holding their life in His hand.

Jesus answers their rejection of His authority by revealing His authority over their life was equal to that of His 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, so that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father (John 5:22-23). Because Christ loves His enemies, He warns they are rejecting eternal life: “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).

Postmortem Opportunity is implicit in what Jesus said. He spoke to all the “[spiritually] Dead”, who “now is” in His audience, or in the future would be in the grave.

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.

“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 clear proof post-mortem salvation is possible is seen when Paul
“delivers” a man to “Satan for the destruction of the flesh” which would
certainly result in his death. Paul does this that “his spirit may be
saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:3-5). “May be saved”
because it was still up to him to repent of serious sin.

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.

[#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 *ṭîṭ 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 הַמָּוֶת מִן הַגֵּהֶנָּה 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. 2:1-3:1 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 no connection to reality, the praise is incoherent and potentially insulting.

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 (ζωοποιηθεῖς) 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.

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From here down the file is being edited and hopefully finished before July 31 2023:

Acceptance or rejection of the Gospel of Christ are the ONLY grounds for Judgment (Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Jo. 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 Jo. 5:11-12):

It logically follows from God creating such a big universe (cp. Rm. 1:20) that His plan is for many to inhabit it, not just a few:

*Then He brought him outside and said, “**Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.**” And He said to him, “**So shall your descendants be.**” (Gen. 15:5 NKJ)*

*9 After this I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;***

*10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, **Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.** (Rev. 7:9-10 KJV)*

Some object, “Didn’t Jesus say only a few would be saved?” Yes He did, but it is wrong to take His words out of context to teach a pretext. Only a few of that evil and wicked generation will be saved (Mt. 12:39; 16:4; Lk. 11:29), although they ate and drank in Jesus’ presence and witnessed the miracles He did, they wickedly demanded more. Jesus refused to dance to their tune (Mt. 11:16-30). Only a few of them would be saved compared to everyone not so unreasonable from the four corners of the earth:

23 Then one said to Him, **“Lord, are there few who are saved?”** And He said to them,

24 **“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.**

25 **“When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’**

26 **“then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’**

27 **“But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’**

28 **“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.**

29 **“They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. (Lk. 13:23-29 NKJ)**

Why don't more Christians preach this? Most interpret Christ's parable "the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats" is about them and unbelievers. Christians are "the Sheep", and unbelievers "the Goats". Therefore, "all the nations" must denote the entire human race and the parable is about the Final Judgment. When those premises are correct, only actions done while alive establish eternal destiny. One is either saved or not saved in this life, there is no place for repentance after death. Wherever scripture implies post-mortem evangelization or salvation, it is interpreted otherwise. 1 Peter 3:18-22; 4:6 are good examples of this.

**Therefore, those who deny post-mortem salvation do so because they believe Christ's parable about the Sheep and the Goats forbids it. The following Catholic interpretation (also believed by most Protestants) does rule out post-mortem salvation:**

*§ f 25:31–46 The Last Judgement... Our Lord, speaking here of this second and final judgement, shows no trace of nationalism. The judgement by which the kingdom of the Son is purified before becoming the kingdom of the Father is decided exclusively on religious grounds... Man is fitly judged by the Son of Man and the judgement is universal. The ‘sheep’, for their mild expression and docility, are a suitable image of the faithful followers of Christ the shepherd, Jn 10:3, 4, 27. They are distinguished from the ‘goats’ (cf. Ez 34:17), mistrustful of eye and intractable of conduct, aptly chosen as their wicked counterpart. ...The sentence of the wicked, expressed more briefly than the invitation of the just, is a terrible one. Instead of ‘Come!’, ‘Depart!’; in place of the Kingdom, ‘everlasting fire’.-Jones, A. (1953). The Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St Matthew. In B. Orchard; E. F. Sutcliffe (Eds.), A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture (pp. 897–898). Toronto; New York; Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson.*

**The above interpretation is impossible, consider:.**

31 *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

32 *“All the nations (1484 ἔθνος ethnos) will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.*

33 *“And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. (Matt. 25:31-33 NKJ)*

Did Christ say “all the nations [of the world]” will be judged, or “all the [Christian] nations” will be judged?

For example, Christ says the kingdom will be given to a “nation” (1484 ἔθνος ethnos) meaning Christians: “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation (1484 ἔθνος ethnos) bearing the fruits of it” (Matt. 21:43 NKJ). Peter also used “nation” to refer to Christians in 1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1484 ἔθνος ethnos).” Therefore, “All the Nations” can mean “all the nations [of Christendom]” or more precisely, “all the people” [who heard the Gospel of Christ and were therefore liable for not obeying it.]

That is how some in the early Church interpreted it:

*If, after all this, we cannot suppose that a judgment of non-Christians is here meant, we may even go still further, and say that non-Christians are not included at all, and so we must also reject the view usually adopted, since Chrysostom and Augustine, that what is here exhibited is a judgment of all men, believers and unbelievers alike. For, so far from the mention of the divine ἐκλογή, ver. 34, or the idea of the δίκαιοι, ver. 37, or what Jesus says at ver. 35, or the answer of those assembled before the Judge, vv. 37 and 44, or the entire omission generally of any distinction between belief and unbelief, harmonizing with the notion of a mixed body consisting of Christians and non-Christians, they entirely exclude the latter. We should therefore return to the very old view (Lactantius, Instit. vii. 20; Jerome, Euthymius Zigabenus), which, though it had been neglected in consequence of the prevalent eschatology, was preserved by Grotius, the view, namely, that what **Jesus is here depicting is the judgment of Christians**: περὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν δὲ μόνων ὁ λόγος ἐνταῦθα, Euthymius Zigabenus, who proves this, above all, from vv. 35, 36. All the points previously adduced as arguments against the other explanations combine to favour this view.-Meyer, H. A. W. (1884). *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of Matthew* (W. Stewart, Ed.; P. Christie, Trans.; Vol. 2, pp. 178–179). T&T Clark.*

Context supports this early Christian Interpretation. “Goat-like behavoir” is seen in the Five Virgins foolishly failing to greet the Bridegroom when He came (Mt. 25:1-13) and in the “wicked and lazy



servant” who did nothing for the Kingdom of God (Mt. 25:14-31). After saying these parables, Christ talks about the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats. Isn’t it reasonable He is still talking about those who should have been ready for His arrival? That can’t be said about “all the nations [of the world],” it can only be said about ‘All the nations [liable for having heard the gospel of Christ].’”

Confirming “All the Nations” must refer to “all who failed to be ready for Christ’s return” is the fact this Judgment happens at Christ’s return, not after the 1000-year millennial Kingdom. Also, unlike Judgment Day when the dead are raised from the Sea, Death, and Hades (Rev. 20:11-15) , no resurrection occurs in Matthew 25: 31-46.

Furthermore, the Sheep cannot be Christians because this Judgment occurs while they are seated with Christ and His angels, as Kings and Priests. “These my Brethren (Mt. 25:40; Rm. 8:29) were “gathered” (2 Thess. 2:1) from the earth during Christ’s coming in glory. They reign with Christ as Kings and Priests (Rev. 1:6; 20:4-6; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58; Mat. 24:29-31; Rev. 14:14-16). Because they believed in Christ when physically alive, they do not “come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” (John 5:24). As Christ’s “Brethren” they have authority to judge the unsaved with Christ (Mt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:3; Rev. 20:4), the “firstborn among many brethren” (Rm. 8:29).

Both the Sheep and the Goats know Christ, they call Him LORD. They know Christ’s disciples but had not joined them in the Faith. King Jesus decrees if they received His disciples (Mt. 12:40) they have received Him. Those who helped His brethren during the Great Tribulation would receive their reward (Mt. 10:42; Mk. 9:41), entry into the Kingdom of God.

*31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

*32 “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.*

*33 “And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

*34 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

*35 ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;*

*36 ‘I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’*

*37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?*

*38 ‘When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?*

*39 ‘Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’*

*40 “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you,*

*inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

*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, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. 25:31-46 NKJ)*

The unsaved in Christendom are the theme of this context. The ten virgins know Christ "the bridegroom" but only five reacted in a positive manner. They do not become Christians until the wedding banquet when the door is shut. The unwise Goats are left in the outer darkness, Christ does not know them (Mt. 25:1-13). Same with the Servants of the man on a journey, only those who respond correctly are rewarded upon his return. The wicked Goat servant who clearly didn't know the Master is cast into the outer darkness (Mt. 25:14-30). The theme is carried over to the time of Christ's arrival, in Christendom many did not commit to Christ. These Sheep and Goats are now judged. Those who vicariously received Christ by receiving His brethren are deemed to have received Christ (Mt. 25:40), those who did not He does not know so casts them away. As Peter said, Judgment begins first with the house of God (1 Pt. 4:17). Therefore, "all the nations (1484 ἔθνος ethnos)" gathered before Christ and His angels (Mt. 25:32) are not "all humanity" of the earth, they are "all the people" [who heard the gospel of Christ] preached (Mt. 24:14; 28:19) and so were held liable for how they responded to it.

*1484 ἔθνος ethnos {eth'-nos}*

*Meaning: 1) a multitude (whether of men or of beasts) associated or living together 1a) a company, troop, swarm 2) a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus 2a) the human race 3) a race, nation, people group 4) in the OT, foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans, Gentiles 5) Paul uses the term for Gentile Christians-Strong's Concordance*

That the Sheep are "of the elect" is deducible from Jesus inviting them to enter the Kingdom prepared "for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34). Such things can only be said to the Elect (1588 ἐκλεκτός eklektos Eph. 1:3-12). They had not actualized their salvation in time by

an act of faith (Eph. 2:8).

Christ commands the sheep enter the same eternal state of all resurrected believers (1 Cor. 15:51-55) joining those seated with Him to reign as kings and priests while they wait for the “New Heavens and New Earth” (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pt. 3:13) eternal kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. That Kingdom arrives after Christ’s Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 21:1).

So, nothing explicit is said about the rest of humanity that survived Armageddon and the End Time plagues, who weren’t members of Christendom either a “sheep or a goat.” But as the Millennial Kingdom is populated by people who do marry and reproduce, who can choose to become Gog and Magog and rebel again, it seems the Millennial Kingdom exists so the survivors of Armageddon get a “second chance.”

There are three groups in Revelation 20:4-15. The Righteous, the Unrighteous and the Middling People. Christians are the kings and priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:4) having supernatural bodies like Christ’s resurrection body (Mt. 28:6; Mk.16:6; Lk. 24:6-7; 1 Jo. 3:2) and do not marry or bear children (Mt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25). Both the Unrighteous who can die during the Millennial and the Middling people repopulate the earth with billions of people. Those who are saved join Christian kings and priests. The rest remain “spiritually dead” until the Great White Throne Judgment. Just before this judgment, the Unrighteous become Gog and Magog following Satan again, and are consumed by fire (Rev. 20:7-10). The Middling people are the first to stand before the Throne and be judged according to their deeds. If these merit their names being recorded in the book of life, then they changed in a twinkling of an eye and given resurrection bodies like Christ’s. Those whose names are not found in the book of life die the second death.

Then rest of earth’s dead are judged, Death Hades and the Sea give up their dead. They are judged according to whether they repented of evil in Hades and believed in the LORD Jesus Christ, to have their name transposed from the book of the Middling People to the Book of Life:

*[#Y] 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 not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the*

*lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15 NKJ)*

Not only are billions alive at the time of Christ's coming saved and so never die, but all those who died without Christ since the foundation of the earth hear the gospel preached while in the grave, and those who obey it will rise to a resurrection of life during the Great White Throne Judgment that occurs at the End of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. It is called "Judgment Day" not "Sentencing Day" because the dead are JUDGED according to their works up until that time (Rev. 20:12-13), whether they obediently heard obeying the voice of Christ our LORD.

Therefore, Catholic-Protestant *confirmation bias* that refuses to accept scripture that repentance in Hell is possible must be rejected as unsound.

*And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. (Jon. 2:2 KJV)[2]*

*I called on Your name, O LORD, From the lowest pit (0953 בֹּרַח בֹּרַח bowr). (Lam. 3:55 NKJ)*

*1 I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*

*2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit (0953 בֹּרַח בֹּרַח bowr), out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*

*3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.(Ps. 40:1-3 KJV)*

*As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit (0953 בֹּרַח בֹּרַח bowr) wherein is no water. (Zec. 9:11 KJV) Compare Luke 16:24*

Therefore, rather than superimpose the bias all raised from Death and Hades are unsaved wicked who are eternally lost, we can accept the implication of John's negative: " anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire"—it implies SOME WERE found written in the Book of Life and therefore NOT cast into the fire:

*And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:15; Compare John 5:28-29; Dan. 7:10)*

Do You And Family Want Everlasting Life In The Coming Cosmic Paradise?

***16 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.***

*17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world 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)*

Unlike religions that speak of life in heaven or on paradise earth, the true Gospel of Christ promises believers everlasting life in a cosmic paradise too wonderful to imagine:

*7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,*

*8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

*9 But as **it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”***

*10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Cor. 2:7-10 NKJ)*

The Cosmic Paradise is so unlike the present it is called “the New Heavens and New Earth”:

*“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. (Isa. 65:17 NKJ)*

*1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

*2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

*3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

*4 “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

*5 Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”*

*6 And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

*7 “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (Rev. 21:1-7 NKJ)*

**Some fear the New Heavens and New Earth will be oppressive, liberty replaced by ever present rule. That is the opposite of what God has promised:**

*16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

*17 **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.***

*18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory,*

*just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:16-18 NKJ)*

We will have the time of our eternal lives, exploring every aspect of God and His infinite creation, doing our heart's delight:

*Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Ps. 37:4 NKJ)*

*10 I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied.*

*11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

*12 I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives,*

*13 and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor— it is the gift of God.*

*14 I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him. (Eccl. 3:10-14 NKJ)*

Its is clear from Genesis, Adam and Eve had autonomy, God visiting as a friend on occasion looking in:

*And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, (Gen. 3:8 NKJ)*

Confirming the liberty given to His children, God did not want His rule be replaced by an oppressive king:

*6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD.*

*7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. (1 Sam. 8:6-7 NKJ)*

That was their defect, not ours:

*18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

*19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

*20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;*

*21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Rom. 8:18-21 NKJ)*

**What does God tabernacling among men, dwelling with them signify?**



3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, **the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them**, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (Rev. 21:3-7 NKJ)

What does it mean for infinite God to "tabernacle...dwell" with humans? It means "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts. 17:28), "one in Him":

*"that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also **may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. (Jn. 17:21 NKJ)*

God is worshipped in His Temple, but in the New Heavens and New Earth the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple, so we will be in Him:

*But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. (Rev. 21:22 NKJ)*

All Born Again Christians, having been Baptized in the Spirit when they believed, experience daily a "foretaste" of this reality: God the Holy Spirit is in them, gently prompting them through their conscience (Rom. 9:1; 8:14; Heb. 4:12; 2 Thess. 2:13-17) to do what is right in the eyes of God. Not oppressive, He liberates from bondage to sin so we can live according to our conscience, and live life abundantly.

I cannot wait for the Revelation of the Children of God, in perfect liberty with God dwelling in us sharing our joys and discoveries as a loving Father does His Children "the apple of His eye".

*17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

*18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.*

*19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. (Isa. 65:17-19 NKJ)*

*7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,*

8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written: “**Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.**”

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Cor. 2:7-10 NKJ)

END

*Does the Bible teach there is a second chance in the afterlife to be saved by Jesus? (A work in progress)*

- Does The Bible Teach There Is A Second Chance In The Afterlife To Be Saved By Jesus?
- Lazarus and the Rich Man: Can the Rich Man Repent and be Saved?
- The Judgment of the Unsaved Sheep and Goats At Christ’s Return
- Predestination unto Salvation: Was Divine Election Conditional or Unconditional?
- Preaching to the Dead (Postmortem Evangelism)
- Elect Rise From Hell On Judgment Day?
- Does the Lake of Fire symbolize Eternal Torment for all?
- The Origin of Satan and Demons
- The Coming False Christ and His Followers Revealed
- Tell Christians what you believe

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**Homosexuality is no worse than heterosexual fornication, both keep practitioners out of the kingdom of God**

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



*I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." (Isa. 6:5 NKJ)*

Without Christ's sacrifice covering sins, even Isaiah the Prophet shrank back in sheer Terror at the sight of our Holy God. Paul said:

*Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (2 Cor. 5:11 NKJ)*

All sinners have a glorious opportunity for life open to them, if they repent and believe in the Name of our LORD Jesus Christ.

***Homosexuality is no worse than heterosexual fornication, both keep committed practitioners out of the kingdom of God:***

*9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, **nor adulterers**, **nor homosexuals**, **nor sodomites**,  
10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor*

*extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9-10 NKJ)*  
***Hell is the last chance to repent, be purged of the darkness that prevents the God from allowing the sinner into His presence.***

***God cannot change His nature, He is Holy and cannot abide with sin. He is light, darkness cannot dwell with Him; as light destroys darkness so will unredeemed sinners be banished into eternal darkness.***

**If anyone practicing darkness wants to live with God, it is THEY who must change. God cannot and will not.**

God gives everyone in Hell, who did not in full knowledge and will reject Him, the chance to repent and be saved. ***First He liberates them from the power of sin, the fire of God's inspection burns it out of them.*** Then, when all self-delusion about sin is removed, the gospel is preached so they can repent and live according to God in the Spirit:

*When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning,  
5 then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering.  
6 And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. (Isa. 4:4-5:1 NKJ)*

**God wants everyone to be saved and goes the extra mile trying to make that happen.**

But He will not violate free will. If a sinner rejects the gospel in full knowledge and will, there is no "second chance." They had their chance. But all who repent of things God simply cannot allow into His presence, can be saved in the name of Jesus, the only name whereby salvation is possible:

*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)*

Go here for more:

<https://endtimenews.net/is-the-rich-man-and-lazarus-story-about-hell-prophecy-parable-or-both/>

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# Billy Graham, John Ankerberg, Ron Rhodes claim 2 Cor. 6:2 limit the time of salvation to this life

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



*Nowhere does the Bible teach that we will have a second chance to receive Christ and be saved after we die. This is one reason why the Bible says, "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). I pray that you will take this warning very seriously.-Billy Graham*

Over 20 verses implicitly or explicitly refer to a literal or figurative "second chance": 1.) All who obey Christ's voice in the grave rise to life: "All who are in the graves will hear His voice "and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life" (John 5:28-29); 2.) All passing the Judgment after death eagerly wait for salvation: " It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...those who



eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation". (Heb. 9:27-28); 3.) Departed Spirits in prison give the answer of a good conscience to Christ's preaching: "He went and preached to the spirits in prison...an antitype... now saves us— baptism...the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 3:19-21); 4.) Gospel also preached to the dead so they could live according to God in the Spirit: "For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might...live according to God in the spirit (1 Pet. 4:6 NKJ)." See also Dt. 32:39; 1Sam. 2:6; 2Sam. 22:5-7; Ps. 16:10-11; Ps. 30:3-6; Ps. 40:1-3; Ps. 49:12-15; Ps. 56:13; Ps. 68:18-20; Ps. 69:13-18; Ps. 71:19-23; Ps. 86:13; Ps. 102:18-22; Ps. 116:1-9; Hos. 13:14; Jon. 2:1-10; Zec. 9:9-11; Mt. 12:30-3; Rm. 11:25-3; 1 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 4:8-10; Rev. 20:12:

Paul wasn't limiting "the time of God's favor" or "day of salvation" to those living in the 1st century Corinthian Church, he was pleading the Corinthians reject the false gospel of the Judaizers (2 Cor. 3:12-16; Gal. 3:1-6) who were adding Mosaic Law to the Gospel , rendering faith "vain" (2756 κενός kenos empty) of effect. "Now" was a good time for them to repent (2 Cor. 5:20-21; 6:1-2).

The "time of God's Favor" is always "now", unlimited by time or place. All repenting in Isaiah's Day whom Paul quoted (Isa. 49:8), or today would find God favorable to their appeal. It follows the opportunity is also not limited by place, whether one is alive in Corinth, or departed in Hades...If they repent, that too is in the "now", an "acceptable time" to God.

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# Christ preached to the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3:18-22)

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024





*18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι) :*

*19 By which also (ἐν ᾧ καὶ) he went and preached (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) unto the spirits in prison;*

*20 Which sometime were disobedient (544 ἀπειθέω apeitheo), when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*

*21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*

*22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. (1 Pet. 3:18-4:1 KJV)*

Many claim the word “preach” means “proclaim doom”. Why Christ would go to a prison in hades and proclaim doom to spirits who surely would have figured that out, is never explained.

Its also inconsistent with Christ's mission:

The same precise word for preach (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) is also used in these two verses:

*18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
19 To proclaim (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) the acceptable year of the LORD."  
(Lk. 4:18-19 NKJ)*

Wouldn't proclaiming (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) liberty to the captives be more consistent with Christ's mission than proclaiming doom?

***Did Jesus proclaim doom to us?***

When physically alive as the Ark was being prepared, the "spirits in prison" disobeyed Noah's preaching:

*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. (1 Pet. 3:20 NKJ)*

*544 ἀπειθέω apeitheo {ap-i-theh'-o}  
Meaning: 1) not to allow one's self to be persuaded 1a) to refuse or withhold belief 1b) to refuse belief and obedience 2) not to comply with.-Strong's Concordance*

Why couldn't they believe Noah and obey his preaching? They didn't believe God would forgive the defilement of the "image of God", its corruption with the "image of angels".

There is good reason for disbelief. Its clear God does not like mixed breeding:

*`You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you. (Lev. 19:19 NKJ Compare Dt. 22:9, 11))*

Ignorance of God makes room for divine forgiveness (1 Tim. 1:13; Lev. 5:18; Ez. 45:20; Lk. 12:48) in the "age to come" (Mt. 12:30-32).

As these disembodied "men of renown" (Gen. 6:4) were a "special case Christ made a special trip proclaiming (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) "liberty to the captives" (Lk. 4:18) because they were not evil, they simply couldn't believe Noah's preaching God would forgive their "mixed breeding":

Formerly they were disobedient. Not when Christ Triumphant appeared clothed in Shekhina glory. They responded to Christ's preaching giving "the answer of a good conscience towards God" just as did the Church, which reminded Peter of the "like-figure" (499 ἀντίτυπος antitypos) of Baptism: "Buried with Christ and raised up with Him to new life" (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:3-7; Col. 2:12-14) through the resurrection power of Christ (1 Pet. 3:21-22). Just as the Church is saved by responding to Christ's preaching with new life, so were these "spirits in prison." Christ led them "captives in His train" (Eph. 4:8-10), receiving "gifts" from the formerly rebellious for they were glad the LORD God could now dwell among them (Ps. 68:18).

*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)*

*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.) (Eph. 4:8-10 NKJ)*

Therefore, ζῳοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι is a "dative of reference" indicating the Holy Spirit is the sphere of existence which enveloped Christ's human soul (Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:31) reviving it (LXX ἐζῳοποίησάς Ps. 70:20; Is. 57:15; 2 Cor. 13:4) and 'in that sphere of the Holy Spirit' (ἐν ᾧ καὶ) Christ Triumphant (Ac. 2:24; Eph. 4:8-10; Heb. 4:14) went and preached proclaiming (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) "liberty to the captives (Lk. 4:18) "spirits in prison" who "could not believe" (544 ἀπειθέω apeitheo) Noah's preaching and so "disobeyed" it.

The antithesis: Jesus was "put to death in the flesh" (by the hand of man), His soul went to Hades/Sheol (Ac. 2:24), but then Jesus is quickened (by the Holy Spirit).

The anthesis is precise because "death of the flesh" is not annihilation as the JW's suppose.

The Holy Spirit formed a protective life strengthening sphere of power and lifegiving energy around the human soul of Jesus, and "in that sphere of the Spirit" ἐν ᾧ καὶ (1 Pet. 3:19 BYZ), He proclaimed liberty to the captive spirits in prison.

According to Bible revelation, human souls are weak when unclothed (2 Cor. 5:2-4) in death, only when clothed in the resurrection of the body

do both become “immortal” and powerful (1 Cor. 15:42-53). Therefore, as Jesus’ soul was truly human, it was too weak to endure the pangs of Sheol and proclaim liberty to the captives.

Therefore, in Hades Jesus soul was “quickened in the sphere of the Holy Spirit, revived and strengthened”. Then emanating the Shechinah glory of God, Christ Triumphant descends to the lowest hells fully protected from all harm, in brilliant light without variation (Isa. 9:2-3; Jas. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:14-16), proclaiming liberty to the captive spirits in prison.

*The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. (Isa. 9:2 NKJ)*

***Christ proclaimed liberty to the captives to the glorious end of His earthly ministry, in glorious Triumph over Satan and Death.***

*45 And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

*46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.*

*47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.*

*48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.*

*49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

*...*

*55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”*

*56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.*

*57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:45-49, 55-58 NKJ)*

Then Peter returns to the theme of “Christ preaching liberty to the dead”. This time to a different group of unsaved humans, dead folks just like those speaking evil of Christians and mocking the gospel to Peter’s church:

*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. 4:4-6 NKJ)*

## End Note

At Christianforums.com a poster suggested:

*“These spirits in prison refers to:*

- 1. the deceased patriarchs and the Old Testament saints. (Papists’ Limbus)*
- 2. the people who died in Noah’s flood a long time ago.*
- 3. those who are alive but spiritually dead. (Amplified Bible)*
- 4. the good Christians who died as martyrs.*
- 5. everyone who is dead but all will head to heaven eventually. (Origen, universal salvation)*
- 6. to the general dead. Some to heaven; others to hell.*
- 7. to a selected (or elected) group of dead people who never heard of the gospel when alive but would believe it if they heard it.*

*I think options 6 and 7 are most likely.”*

None of those options are correct if we focus on the facts given by Peter and Scripture.

The “spirits in prison” were “disobedient...in the days of Noah when the ark was a preparing” (1 Pet. 3:19-20).

That rules out #1, the patriarchs and OT saints weren’t alive then.

#2 and #3 are ruled out because “unregenerate humans” or “spiritually dead” are never called “spirits”.

The tripartite nature of man, “body soul spirit” (1 Thess. 5:23) came into existence when Divine Breath was “breathed into” “dust”(Job 33:4) and the body and soul became animated by spirit (Gen. 2:7). “Soul” often stands for the whole person (Gen. 12:5; 17:14) and “is the immaterial person himself”. When the “soul” becomes weak in animating spirit it diminishes into a “shade or shadow” (**07496** רָפָא rapha’ Is, 26:19) of its former self. But when it is “revived” it is said “his spirit returned” (Gen. 45:27). But when a person’s life is preserved it is his “soul” that “lives” (Jer. 38:17-17). Jesus’ human soul went to hades when He physically died on the cross (Ps. 16:10; Ac. 2:27), OT saints “under the altar” are not normally called “spirits” (Rev. 6:9).

When a believer is “regenerated” he partakes in divine nature (2 Pt. 1:4), that changes their souls, infused with Holy Spirit (“born from above” Jn. 3:3, 7 NRS) they become “new creatures” (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) and can rightly be called “spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:23).

They can’t be either the Nephilim fallen angels or their contemporaries the “sons of God” (Gen. 6:4) who left their habitation to sin with women (Gen. 6:2), because these fallen angels either are in the Abyss (Rev.

9:1ff) or tartarus ( Pet. 2:4) and won't be forgiven, and they know they are damned forever.

They both however sired the "men of renown" (Titans of Greek myth, perhaps builders of ancient megalithic sites now being discovered above and under the ocean). These "men of renown" were hybrid human-angel "men". Disembodied, that hybrid nature would make them "spirits" in death.

#4) Christians didn't exist in the Days of Noah to end up as "spirits in prison" and they don't go to prison when they die, they go to "paradise" (Lk. 23:43) which is in "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:3) beneath the altar of God (Rev. 6:9).

#5) Universalism is incorrect, but even if it were true that wouldn't identify these "spirits in prison" as those physically alive when Noah's Ark was being built.

#6) The dead in paradise/heaven are never called "spirits in prison" in Scripture.

#7) These "disobeyed" Noah's preaching, so #7 is incorrect. "Sometime were disobedient" (1 Pt. 3:20) denotes disobedience that arises from "disbelief", they couldn't "believe" (544 ἀπειθέω apeitheo) Noah's preaching so they disobeyed it:

**544 ἀπειθέω** apeitheo {ap-i-theh'-o}

**Meaning:** 1) not to allow one's self to be persuaded 1a) to refuse or withhold belief 1b) to refuse belief and obedience 2) not to comply with

In Genesis 6 Noah, his family, "sons of God" angels, "Nephilim" (fallen ones) and "men of renown" are mentioned. So the "spirits in prison" must be one of these. They wouldn't be Noah and the 7 souls saved with him. They can't be either the Nephilim fallen angels or their contemporaries the "sons of God" (Gen. 6:4) who left their habitation to sin with women (Gen. 6:2), both evil and good angels siring the "men of renown" (Titans of Greek myth, perhaps builders of ancient megalithic sites now being discovered above and under the ocean). These "men of renown" were hybrid human-angel "men". Disembodied, that hybrid nature would make them "spirits" in death.

Genesis 6:4 doesn't suggest these "men of renown" were wicked. Peter says they couldn't believe and so disobeyed Noah's preaching. Its likely they couldn't believe God would forgive the corruption of the image of God they represented. If you study the OT's prohibition against "breeding with another kind" (Lev. 19:19), they had a solid reason "not to believe Noah".

As the "men of renown" who died physically in the flood went to a "prison" in hades, segregated from other human dead, they became the "spirits in prison" Christ preached liberty to. They are the human dead Christ took with Him as He ascended, depositing them with the other



saints in paradise or “Abraham’s bosom” (Lk. 16:22; 32:43; 2 Cor. 12:2, 4; Rev. 6:9).

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# John Ankerberg and Dr. Ron Rhodes refuted re “Is there a second chance for those who never heard”

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



The John Ankerberg site posted excerpts of Dr. Ron Rhodes articles claiming “No Second Chance After Death”.

*No Second Chance After Death*

While I agree those who reject God in full knowledge don't get a second chance, billions of have died before Christ came, or in lands which the gospel wasn't fully and convincingly preached. Or they were slaughtered in their mothers womb. The "second chance" will actually be their "first chance".

Dr. Rhodes will be contradicted after each statement.

*Some people believe sinners will have a second chance to become saved after they die.*

More than "some" believe it. Dr. Jonathan observes there has been a "Revival of interest in the destiny of the unevangelized In more recent times, there has been an upturn in scholarly interest in the fate of those who have never heard. Okholm and Phillips claim that "the debate within the evangelical academy regarding salvation and the unevangelized is intense and fierce, dominating all other discussions."- Grace beyond the Grave: Is Salvation Possible in the Afterlife? A Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Evaluation (Stephen Jonathan). Other books on the subject: "What About Those Who Never Heard?: Three Views On The Destiny Of The Unevangelized" (John Sanders); "PostMortem Opportunity: A Biblical and Theological Assessment of Salvation After Death" (James Beilby).

*In some cases, they misinterpret a particular Bible verse they think supports this idea. "*

The following verses explicitly or implicitly describe redemption from Sheol, or use the imagery of that to describe deliverance from death in this life:

'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; **It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal**, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. (Deut. 32:39 NAU)

**"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.** (1 Sam. 2:6 NAU)

10 For **You will not abandon my soul to Sheol**; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. (Ps. 16:10-11 NAU) [Although applied to Christ, verse 11 shows it also applies to David.]

O LORD, **You have brought up my soul from Sheol**; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit. (Ps. 30:3 NAU)

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

1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry.

2 **He brought me up out of the pit of destruction**, out of the miry clay, And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.

3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD. (Ps. 40:1-3 NAU)

19 For Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?

20 You who have shown me many troubles and distresses **Will revive me again**, And will bring me up again from the depths of the earth. (Ps. 71:19-20 NAU)

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

**Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death?** O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from My sight. (Hos. 13:14 NAU)

As for you also, **because of the blood of My covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit**. (Zech. 9:11 NAU)

**“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. 12:32 NKJ)

25 “Most assuredly, I say to you, 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**.

26 “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

27 “and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

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. 5:25-29 NKJ)

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.** (Rom. 11:25-32 NKJ)

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,** (1 Pet. 3:18-19 NKJ)

**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)

**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. 5:5 NKJ)

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.) (Eph. 4:8-10 NKJ)

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)

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

*In other cases, they assume that God’s love will compel Him to provide another chance.*

Would a Just God make the Opportunity for Salvation a matter of temporal and geographical luck, so that those born before Christ or after in lands where Jesus was unknown had no opportunity to be saved? No, that would be unjust. Therefore, Salvation in Jesus is Universally offered to every

soul born into the Cosmos since the foundation of the world, past present or future.

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)

John 3:16-18 delivers a powerful message of love and redemption: ‘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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 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.’

The Greek κόσμος (kosmos) appears four times positioning ‘the world’ opposite to Heaven from whence God’s Son came. This shows the “universality” of God’s offer, κόσμος signifies the entirety of creation, including every person born into it. God’s love reaches out to every corner of the *kosmos*, offering salvation to all who believe in Him. This vast scope implies that God’s redemptive love is not limited by time, place, or circumstance. Therefore, the *kosmos* could not possibly exclude those born before Christ or those who did not hear the Gospel of Christ after the 1st century.

Nor would God sacrifice His Only Begotten Son if He is not the only way to salvation. Therefore, Salvation is possible only for those who grasp the opportunity God gives, by believing in His only begotten Son.

**God sent His Son to save the entire *kosmos* (Jn. 1:9, 29; 4:42; Rm. 5:10; 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:19) encompassing all of humanity whether living or dead (Jn. 5:24-25, 28-29; Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Pt. 4:6). This universal aspect of God’s plan is clearly taught in the following Scriptures (Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:24-26; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:9-10; 8:32).**

*Is there a second chance after death?*

*Such a view contradicts the clear teachings of Scripture. Consider the words of Jesus in Luke 16:19-31:*

*“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And*

he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Once the rich man died and was in a place of great suffering, he had no further opportunity for redemption. Nothing could be done at that point to ease his situation. There was no possibility of a second chance. The Believer’s Bible Commentary affirms: “We learn here that the choices of this life determine our eternal destiny, and once death has taken place, that destiny is fixed.”

Dr. Rhodes quoted the parable, to ignore it. Yes, he was in great suffering, but nothing else Dr. Rhodes said is in the text.

The parable does not depict the Rich man as irredeemably wicked. Nor does he act like a Reprobate. When his cries for aid are refused he doesn’t begin cursing both Abraham and Lazarus. Throughout this context he reverently refers to “Father Abraham”, pleading “have mercy” (1653 ἐλεέω eleeo) not a whit differently than did blind Bartimaeus who called out to Jesus for the same thing: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Mk. 10:47 NKJ). The aorist tense indicates both had specific acts of mercy they wanted, relief from thirst or blindness. Nothing in either’s cries for pity implies unrepentant hearts or hostility against God’s justice and truth.

“Repentance” is on the Rich Man’s mind, he proves that when he begs Lazarus warn his brothers so “they will repent” (Lk. 16:30).

Moreover, its “twisting” to say Hades is the final place of the damned, when everyone knows Hades will be emptied of its souls, and anyone found in the book of life will live:

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)

This parable has many indications the Rich Man was actually getting his “second chance” in Hades.

1.) We would expect an irredeemably wicked man would curse both Abraham and Lazarus for refusing to help him. Instead, he shows great reverence for “Father Abraham” and selfless concern for his family (Luke 16:27).

2.) Abraham affectionately calls the Rich Man “son” (Luke 16:25). That would be impossible 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 with him wanted to comfort the Rich Man, but an “great gulf” prevented them (Luke 16:26). It is impossible they would rebelliously desire to subvert God’s just punishment, therefore that is not what the Rich Man is experiencing.

4.) Although translators have the Rich Man crying “I am tormented (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao) in this flame”, the reverse of the “comfort” (3870 παρακαλέω parakaleo) Lazarus was experiencing, ὀδυνάω can denote “anxiety (Lk. 2:48) and “sorrow” (Ac. 20:38). These could be part of the Rich Man’s torment.

5.) Christ did not use the common word for “fire” (4442 πῦρ pur) that appears when speaking of God’s judgment (Lk. 3:9, 17; 17:29). He chose “flame” (5395 φλόξ phlox)” which is the “visible aspect of a fire that springs upward and is usually orange”(Logos Bible Sense Lexicon). It is this “flame” that often accompanies revelation of God (LXX: Ex. 3:2; Judges 13:20; Isa. 66:15; Acts 7:30; 2 Th. 1:8). When Christ is revealed His eyes are “like a flame of fire” (Rev. 1:14; 2 Th. 1:7-8).

6.) In Hades was “where he was being tormented(931 βάσανος basanos)...this place of torment” (Lk. 16:23, 28 NRS). The word denotes “a touchstone, which is a black siliceous stone used to test the purity of gold or silver by the colour of the streak produced on it by rubbing it with either metal 2) the rack or instrument of torture by which one is forced to divulge the truth.-Strong’s Concordance. The symbolism suggests a refining process (Zech. 13:9; Ps. 51:7; 66:10; Isa. 1:25; 6:7; 48:10; Ezek. 24:13; Dan. 11:35), a purging of sin that reveals the truth of the individual, the “gold” within:

But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire And like launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness. (Mal. 3:2-3 NKJ)

7.) The symbolism of water, extreme thirst (Lk. 16:24) alludes to Christ’s triumphal trip to the “spirits in prison”:

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit (0953 βωρ bowr) wherein is no water. (Zec. 9:11 KJV)

*This is even more evident in Hebrews 9:27, which assures us that “it is*

*appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.” We live once, die once, and are judged once. The idea of a second chance cannot be forced into this verse.*

We don't have to force it into Hebrews 9:27 because Hebrews 9:28 says after their judgment some “eagerly wait” for Christ's salvation:

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. 9:27-10:1 NKJ)

*In keeping with the judgment mentioned in Hebrews 9:27, we can observe in Scripture that the primary basis of judgment has to do with one's behavior during earthly life.*

Incorrect. Jesus said the dead in graves will hear his voice, and all who heed will rise to the resurrection of life on Judgment Day:

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...**

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 good (ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες aorist participle), unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil (φαῦλα πράξαντες aorist participle), unto the resurrection of damnation (Jn. 5:28-29 KJV)**

The aorist participle in John 5:29 rendered “done” in many translations can be translated “do” or “did” (YLT, NAS, NJB), the action occurring AFTER hearing Christ's voice:

“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.

*Revelation 20:12 tells us that God's record books will be opened, and the dead will be “judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.”*

*We are likewise told that Death and Hades will give up the dead that are in them, and they will be “judged, each one of them, according to what they had done” (Revelation 20:13). If there were a second chance after death, such verses would make no sense. We cannot rewrite God’s Word to say: “Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and—assuming they don’t respond to the second chance they will be given in the afterlife to trust in Jesus for salvation—they will be judged, each one of them, according to what they had previously done on earth.”*

If there weren’t any raised from Hades to “the resurrection of life” the “book of life” would not be opened to confirm their names are in it. ONLY those “not found” in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire:

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 not found written in the Book of Life** was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:12-15 NKJ)

*Scripture is clear: We live once, die once, and are judged once!*

Hebrews 9:27 says judgment happens immediately after death:

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, (Heb. 9:27 NKJ)

That’s when the gospel is preached to them, and those who repent and believe the gospel “live according to God in the Spirit” and “eagerly wait for Christ’s Second Coming to rise with the Church at the Rapture:

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)

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. 9:28 NKJ)

Although these repentant dead remain in Hades, God the Holy Spirit shields them from anything unpleasant and “time flies” because they rest as though they are asleep. Christ revealed that when he spoke of the righteous dead as “asleep” (John 11:11). The same Holy Spirit who protected the human soul of Christ as He went and proclaimed liberty (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso, Luke 4:18) to the spirits in prison:

18 Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;  
19 in which also he went and preached (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) unto the spirits in prison, (1 Pet. 3:18-19 ASV)

*It is therefore no wonder that the apostle Paul spoke to the Corinthians with such urgency: "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). No one should wait to respond to the gospel, for death could come at any time (see Ecclesiastes 9:12).*

I agree. Now is the best time to repent and believe. Hades should be avoided at all costs, as the Rich Man testified, he was in "torments" (Luke 16: 24). Why go through that when it can be avoided by believing now, in this life.

"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. (Jn. 5:24 NKJ)

*This brief life on earth is the only time we have to decide for or against Christ. Once we die, there is no further opportunity to believe in Jesus for salvation.*

Christ said there is, all in the grave will hear His voice and those who obey the voice, will rise to the resurrection of life:

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)

*Assessing The Claim That 1 Peter 3:18-19 Implies A Second Chance*

*In 1 Peter 3:18-19 we read, "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison." The King James Version renders the latter part of the verse, "...he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." Some people reason that if spirits in the afterlife can listen to preaching, they must be able to respond to gospel preaching and become believers in the afterlife. This implies there is a second chance for everyone to believe in God in the afterlife.*

*Such a view is untenable...*

*The Greek word rendered "preach" (kerusso) in the King James translation of 1 Peter 3:19 is not the word typically used for preaching the gospel, but instead points to a proclamation, as in a declaration of victory.*

I agree, Christ was victorious over Satan and Death. Christ Triumphant then proclaimed (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) victory, and liberty to the captive spirits in prison:

18 “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

19 To proclaim (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) the acceptable year of the LORD.”

20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Lk. 4:18-21 NKJ)

One cannot read this account and others without seeing the “triumphal aspect” of Christ’s victory on the cross!

That is why Peter chose this word, to remind everyone Christ proclaimed liberty to captives, just like the spirits in prison!

Because Dr. Rhodes cites multiple interpretations of others and doesn’t pick any of them, I deleted the rest of his argument. The good Dr and his scholars **are easily contradicted by the elegant fact the spirits in prison “gave the answer of a good conscience towards God”, just like the church and this reminded Peter of Baptism: “Dying with Christ and being raised with Christ”.**

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:3-4 NKJ)

buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (Col. 2:12 NKJ)

So the identity of the “spirits in prison” doesn’t matter, they clearly played a role in Christ’s Triumph over Satan and Death. Just as the Church responded to Christ’s preaching and were made alive in Christ, so were these “spirits”.

Christ led them captives in His train when He ascended to heaven:

8 This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.”

9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?

10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) (Eph. 4:8-10 NIV)

*They reject a “second chance” because Scripture emphatically teaches*

*that those who refuse to turn to Christ by faith in this present life are irrevocably consigned to a destiny in the lake of fire (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:44-48; Luke 16:23; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 20:15; 21:8).*

That begs the question what happens to those who never had a “first chance” and never refused Christ at all. They either never heard, or were so poorly evangelized they remained unbelieving and so never refused Christ either. Its called a “second chance” because they weren’t evangelized when alive. The willfully wicked or those who knowingly rejects the gospel of Christ, don’t get a “second chance.” They are condemned forever.

*Assessing the Claim that 1 Peter 4:6 Implies a Second Chance*

*First Peter 4:6 states: “This is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.”*

*Some interpret this verse to mean that people might be able to respond positively to the gospel in the afterlife and thus have a “second chance” for salvation after death.*

*This verse is difficult to interpret. An important principle of Bible interpretation, however, is that we ought always to interpret difficult verses in light of what the clearer verses teach.*

Its not difficult to interpret, especially when Peter just revealed Christ preached to the spirits in prison. Those who mocked Christians and the gospel didn’t fully understand the gravity of their situation:

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 Pt. 4:3-6 NKJ)

Because of their ignorance of Christ, He forgives their blasphemy and gives them a second chance:

“Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him... (Matt. 12:32 NKJ)

Dr. Rhodes then repeats passages I have already commented on:

*The clearer verses teach that our decision for or against Christ is made during this one life on earth. For example:• The rich man, suffering in*



agony, was given no second chance after he died (Luke 16:19-31).

- “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). This verse alone negates any possibility of a second chance.
- The Lord knows how “to keep the unrighteous [dead] under punishment until the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:9, insert added for clarification). This verse indicates that the Lord is keeping the wicked dead in spirit prison until the future great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). No mention is made of a second chance.

As for the meaning of 1 Peter 4:6, it apparently refers to those who are now dead but who heard the gospel while they were still alive.

This makes sense in view of the tenses used in the verse: The gospel was preached in the past to those who are presently dead.

These individuals heard the gospel of Christ when they were still alive, but had died by the time Peter wrote this letter. The Amplified Bible translation reflects this understanding: “The good news [of salvation] was preached [in their lifetimes] even to those who are dead.” Seen in this light, 1 Peter 4:6 does not support the idea of a second chance.

What About The Love Of God?

Some people argue for a second chance of salvation based on the love of God. They reason: Surely God in His love, compassion, and mercy will give those who reject Christ another chance for salvation beyond death’s door. So, no worries!

Scripture reveals that God is indeed characterized by love (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:8,16,19). But He is also characterized by holiness (Exodus 15:11; Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8; Psalm 99:3; Isaiah 6:3; 57:15; 1 Peter 1:15; Revelation 4:8) and justice (Genesis 18:25; Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 34:12; Psalm 9:7; 89:14; Jeremiah 5:5; Zephaniah 3:5).

God, in His love, gives human beings plenty of opportunities to turn to Him for salvation during earthly life. But once a person dies, that person will face God in judgment, and God will render a verdict in accordance with His holiness and justice. There are no second chances.

That means that time is running out for every person still alive on earth. Ecclesiastes 9:12 tells us that “man does not know his time [that is, the time of his death]. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them” (insert added for clarification). If this passage tells us anything, it tells us that death often comes suddenly, without warning. The implication is that we must take steps now to be prepared for the moment. This sense of urgency would be unnecessary if we had a second chance following death.

Likening human beings to fish taken in an evil net, when proving the love of God, is odd...perhaps irrational. The opening proved God’s Love was so great He gave His only begotten Son so everyone born into the fallen realm had a chance to be saved.

I don’t disagree with what follows so I will let Dr. Rhodes have the last word:

*People would be wise to take Proverbs 27:1 to heart: “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.” Each new day may bring the prospect of death. It is therefore wise to turn to Christ for salvation while there is still time.*

*Now is the day of salvation!*

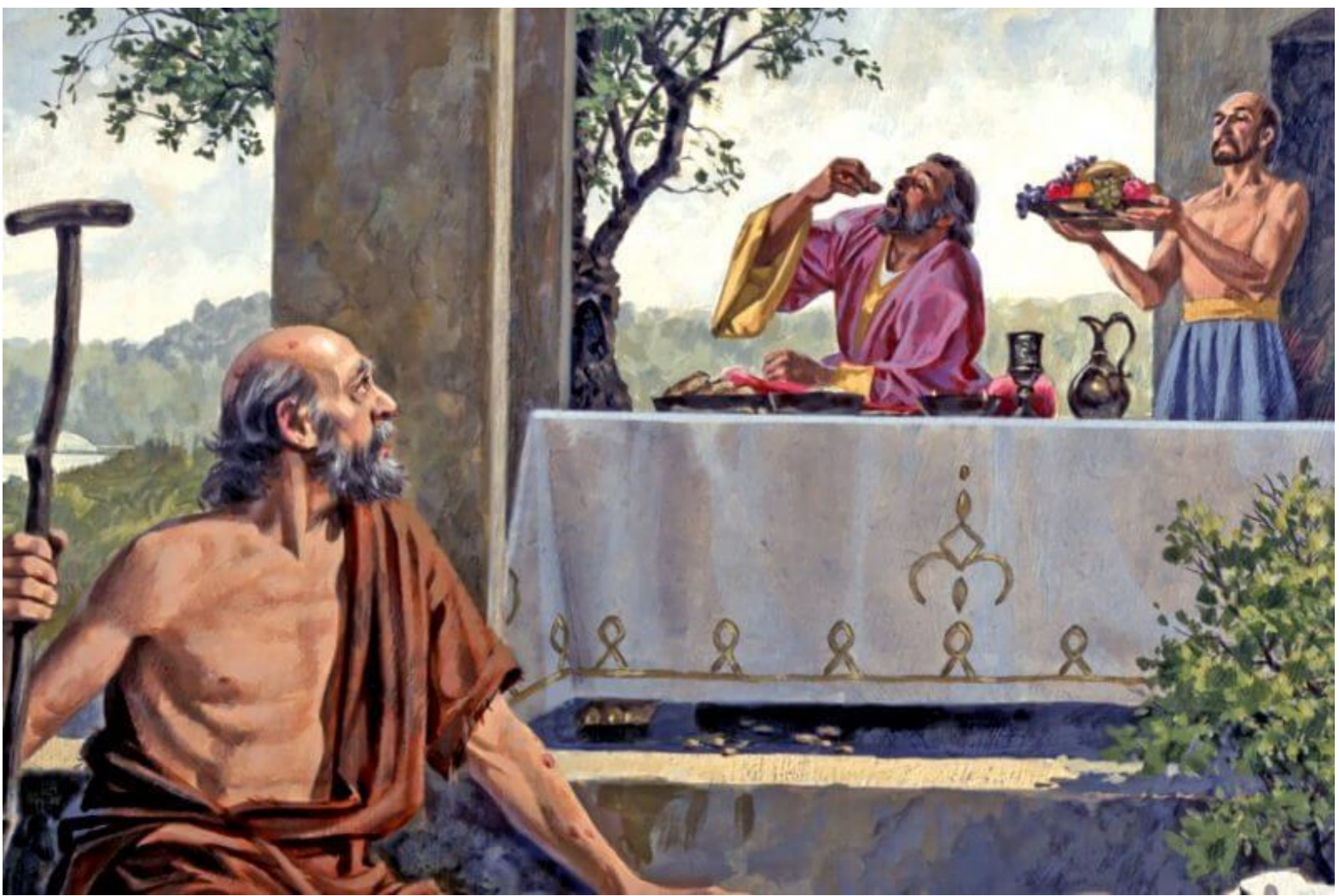
*This article was adapted from three of Ron Rhodes’ books:*

- What Happens After Life: 21 Amazing Revelations About Heaven and Hell (Harvest House Publishers, 2014).*
  - The Big Book of Bible Answers (Harvest House Publishers, 2013).*
  - Commonly Misunderstood Bible Verses (Harvest House Publishers, 2008).*
- <https://jashow.org/articles/no-second-chance-after-death/#comments>*

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# Is The Rich Man and Lazarus Story About Hell Prophecy Parable or both

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



*34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them,  
35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:34-35 NKJ)*

When Jesus asserted Messianic authority, the Pharisees derided Him. Jesus warns 'the Law and the Prophets were until John', after that everyone pressing into the Kingdom accepts His authority:

*13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."  
14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.  
15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.  
16 "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. (Lk. 16:13-16 NKJ)*

Jesus prophesied the Pharisees would reject His teaching against adultery with mammon and end up in hell, even though Lazarus would return from the dead to warn them:

*9 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.*

10 But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,  
11 because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. (Jn. 12:9-11 NKJ)

Therefore, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is prophetic, a revelation about the afterlife the Pharisees were certain to experience:

19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

20 "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,

21 "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

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.

26 'And besides all this, 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.'

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

28 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'" (Lk. 16:19-17:1 NKJ)

A prophetic warning to repent must be literal, or the warning becomes mere comedy. But does "retributive justice" exhaust the symbolism of this parable, or does it imply there is hope the unsaved dead ?

Ask yourself, aren't Abraham and Lazarus "on the Lord's side" completely supporting God's retributive justice? (Exod. 32:26-27) How is it they want to cross the gulf and comfort the Rich Man? (Lk. 15:26) As that would be rebellion against God's judgment, the rich man's torment must have another purpose than "retributive justice". It must have as its goal the possible redemption of the Rich Man.

22 “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 “And being in torments (931 βάσανος basanos) 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 (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao) in this flame (5395 φλόξ phlox).’

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 (3870 παρακαλέω parakaleo) and you are tormented (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao). (Lk. 16:22-25 NKJ)

If the “torment” (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao) is the classic idea of hell-fire, the Rich Man would ask for a lot more than a little water to cool his tongue. *Odunao* here refers to mental anguish (Luke 2:48; 16:25; Acts 20:38). Its antithesis is *parakaleo* ‘to be consoled for sorrow’ like Lazarus (Lk. 16:25).

Christ chose the word “torment” (931 βάσανος basanos) to describe the Torment in Hades:

*Meaning: 1) a touchstone, which is a black siliceous stone used to test the purity of gold or silver by the colour of the streak produced on it by rubbing it with either metal 2) the rack or instrument of torture by which one is forced to divulge the truth.-Strong’s Concordance*

This “torment” is the kind that brings truth to the surface, resulting in “anguish” and “sorrow” (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao cp. Acts 20:38) for sin. The imagery of purging from sin is common in the Old Testament (Zech. 13:9; Ps. 51:7; 66:10; Isa. 1:25; 4:4; 6:7; 48:10; Ezek. 24:13; Dan. 11:35):

2 “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire And like launderer’s soap.

3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness. (Mal. 3:2-3 NKJ)

In Luke 16:24 the “flame” (5395 φλόξ phlox) causes the “agony” or “anguish” (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao). The Rich Man is being purged (Mal. 3:3; Job 23:10; Zech. 13:9 cp. 1 Pet. 1:7) by the “flame of God’s inspection”: “His eyes like a flame” (Rev. 1:14; 2:18; 19:12). The “flame” is the “visible aspect of a fire that springs upward and is usually orange”(Logos Bible Sense Lexicon). God is revealed in the “flame” (Ex. 3:2; Judges 13:20; Isa. 66:15 LXX; Acts 7:30; 2 Thess. 1:8).

The “torments of Hades” are designed to bring the true person to the surface, liberate their free will from all bondage to sin and delusion. After suffering for their sins “judged according to men in the flesh”, if

they choose to believe the gospel preached to them in Hades they will “live according to God in the Spirit” apart from any torment, eagerly waiting for the Second Coming of Christ when they will rise with the dead in Christ [2]:

*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. 4:6 NKJ)*

[Compare the similar wording in 1 Peter 3:18 θανάτωθεῖς μὲν σαρκί, ζῶποιοιθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit”. This implies the “trial/judgment/torment” in hades ends” when they repent and “live according to God in the Spirit” (ζῶσιν δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι). Their “spirit” quickened is now abiding surrounded by the Holy Spirit (Compare ἐν ᾧ καὶ “in which also” 1 Pet. 3:19) shielded from any torments.]

After death is a trial, a judgement, so Christ was offered to bear their sins to make possible they pass the Trial by believing the gospel preached to the dead (1 Pet. 6:4) and then eagerly wait for Christ’s return, for salvation.

*27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,[1]*

*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)*

Context confirms the torments in Hades have redemption in view. The Rich Man is clearly sorrowful. He has Christian like concern for his family, that they not end up like he. Moreover, the redeemed in heaven want to comfort the Rich Man (Lk. 16:26), but that would be out of place if he were irredeemably wicked and was being punished eternally for sin. That would be rebellion against God’s judgment (compare: Deut. 19:21).

If the Rich Man knew his torment was eternal, if he were irredeemably wicked the entire conversation is irrational. Its much more likely he would curse God and Abraham and everyone else. Therefore, his rational demeanor, his concern for his family are consistent with his still having hope for future relief.

Finally, it follows from God’s love for humanity (John 3:16) Hades is among the “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28) because the majority of these would be eternally lost if postmortem evangelization does not occur. Hades is an “intermediate state” before the final judgment; therefore its logical purpose is re-education, not judgment. If that is not so, from whence these who rise from Hades to a resurrection of life?

*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)*

*13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them...*

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

John is viewing this terrifying event and observes only those NOT written in the book of life were cast into the Lake of Fire. For John to know that, he had to see those who WERE written in the book of life and notice they were NOT cast into the Lake of Fire.[4]

That fits the scripture revealing God is in Hades, no doubt to save as many as He can:

*If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. (Ps. 139:8 NKJ)*

*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. (Jon. 2:2 NKJ)*

*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)*

Upon repentance and belief in Jesus Christ, it follows torment in Hades ends once God’s anger for sin is turned away (Isa. 12:1-2; 54:8; Ps. 30:5; 126:5).

The purpose of Hell is to liberate those who are slaves to sin, restoring their free will so they can choose life in Christ rather than eternal death. Having been “judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Pet. 4:6), compare the similar wording in 1 Peter 3:18 θανάτωθεῖς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit”. This implies the “trial/judgment/torment” in hades ends”[3] when they repent and “live according to God in the Spirit” (ζῶσιν δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι). Their “spirit” quickened and now abiding in the sphere of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 139:8; Jonah 2:2). Now that their “judgment” ended they eagerly wait for the return of Christ (Heb. 9:27-28) when their “spirit will be saved in

**the Day of the lord Jesus (cp. 1 Cor. 5:5) either rising with all the dead on Judgment Day (Jn. 5:28-29; Rev. 20:13; Da. 12:2) or at His coming. [2]**

In other words, once ‘judged according to men in the flesh, they live according to God in the Spirit’ (1 Pet. 4:6; Psa. 86:13; 139:8; Jonah 2:2). Although they remain in Hades (Luke 16:26), when they repent and believe the gospel preached they live according to God in His Spirit apart from torments eagerly waiting for the Return of Christ (1 Pet. 4:6; Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 4:15-18). Like Lazarus they are in a restful state.

Confirming repentance and eventual salvation is possible for the elect in Hades, Jews who died enemies of the Gospel are still God’s Elect (Rom. 11:28) He will not forsake (Rom. 11:1). God’s election to predestination (Rom. 8:29), the gifts and calling of God; are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29). Although they died enemies of the Gospel (Rom. 11:28), and so judged according to men in the flesh, they can choose to live according to God in the Spirit (1 Pet. 4:6), eagerly waiting (Heb. 9:28) for their Deliverer:

*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. (Rom. 11:26-29 NKJ)*

When God’s mercy and love, His righteous judgments are made manifest, all the earth will see His glory and cry out:

*Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.” (Rev. 15:4 NKJ)*

**END NOTES**

**[1]**

*27 Καὶ καθ’ ὅσον ἀπόκειται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅπαξ ἀποθανεῖν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις·  
28 οὕτως καὶ ὁ χριστός, ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας (Heb. 9:27-28  
BYZ)*

The article doesn’t appear before *krisis* so this does not refer to “the Judgment” before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11). The parallel with humans is elegance with a twist. Both Christ and humans were appointed to die once for sins. His death is a sacrifice for our sins, while our death

for our sins. The Divine “determination” or “Judgment” is we bear their cost in Hades, but the Divine “determination” for Christ’s sacrifice is He became our Redeemer who takes away the sins of the many who repent and “live according to God in the Spirit” (1 Pet. 4:6). That is why these human dead eagerly wait in Hades for the coming of Christ a second time apart from sins when He will raise them from the dead in Salvation:

*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. 9:28 NKJ)*

[2]

It is possible those who died and repented before Christ’s Second Coming rise with the church (Consistent with the precedence set in 1 Pet. 3:18-22; Eph. 4:8 compare 1 Thess. 4:13-18); but its possible they must wait until Judgment Day (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15; Compare Luke 16:26 but see Mt. 19:26). **Perhaps the most likely scenario is a combination, those who repented before Christ’s coming rise with the Church’s dead at His coming, those who repent after rising on Judgment Day.** *That is consistent with all these scriptures.* As for the wicked who die during the Millennial Kingdom, including those with Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-9), they die “accursed” (Isa. 65:20) and so rise to a resurrection of condemnation.

[3]

Objections have been raised on two grounds. 1) Faith in Christ is a gift and not a “work” (Eph 2:8-9); 2) There is no work possible in Hell (Eccl. 9:10).

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1 NKJ)*

1). Faith without “seeing” “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1) is materially different than faith in what one sees (John 20:29). Christ calls those having faith in Him because they saw Him “a work” therefore those obeying Christ’s preaching in Hades can be saved:

*28 Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”*

*29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (Jn. 6:28-29 NKJ)*

2). No works in the grave like building houses, making money or getting married or any of the other works related to the “vanities of life”. This scripture does NOT rule out all works in the grave:

*9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for*

*that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.*

*10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going (Eccl. 9:9-10 NKJ)*

[4]

*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 discussion, it is a prose report of what is being seen by John. This is NOT a conditional argument, 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? Whether the multitude of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:8-9) are judged first (cp. Mt. 20:16) or last, the impression of so many not written in the book of life and cast into the lake of fire would be searing, set the tone for the entire horror.**

God's Plan for the Lost

Elect Rise From Hell On Judgment Day?

Preaching to the Dead (Postmortem Evangelism)

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

Jesus Preached to the Dead

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

Where Is The Judgment Of Fallen Angels?

The Origin of Satan and Demons

The Coming False Christ and His Followers Revealed

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

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



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

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,<sup>94</sup> 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”<sup>96</sup> 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 mikšôl, cause of guilt, offense, in Ezek. 14:3, 4, 7; 18:30; 44:12. It is used in connexion with the vb. kâlam 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. ἐλαιῶν). 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). κοῤἰλασις. 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)

Predestination unto Salvation: Was Divine Election Conditional or Unconditional?

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

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



## 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 ὁδυνάω 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” (ἀφεθήσεται)”. 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 NKJ)

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 *ṭîṭ 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 הַמָּוֶת מִן הַגֵּהֶנָּה 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 (ζωοποιηθεῖς) 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 understatements 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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# Jesus Preached to the Dead

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



## Jesus preached to the dead

*5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.*

*6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Pet. 4:5-6 KJV)*



The adjoining “the dead” (1 Peter 4:5-6) can’t have different meanings, the first “the living and dead” of the entire earth; the second only “the spiritually dead” that Peter and church preached to; because “the dead” in v. 6 is linked to its predecessor in v. 5. “For this [same] cause was the gospel preached ALSO to them that are dead”.

A paraphrase of Peter’s point:

*5 The [mockers 1 Pet. 4:4] will give an account for their rejection of the gospel to God who is ready to judge the living and the dead [of all mankind].*

*6. For this reason the gospel was preached ALSO to the dead [who never accepted the gospel], so all are judged equally as men in the flesh [who died unbelieving], but [then repent and choose to] live according to God’s gospel in the Spirit.*

All who die without Christ are judged according to the Gospel of God as unsaved men in the flesh (1 Pet. 4:6), they go to Hell (Lk. 16:23; Jn. 5:28-29; Rev. 20:13). In Hell they can repent and believe the Gospel and then live according to God’s gospel in the Spirit (1 Pt. 4:6; 1 Cor. 5:5) eagerly waiting for Judgment Day (Heb. 9:27-28; Zech. 9:11). Their torment purges away both self-deception and bondage to sin so free will is absolutely free. Torment ends when the free will choice is made to “live according to God in the Spirit”. Those rejecting Christ’s ransom continue in torment keeping open their opportunity to repent before Judgement Day, and have their names written among the living in the Book of Life (Rev. 20:13-15; Ps. 69:28; 1 Cor. 5:5).

Its possible to repent and believe in Hades. That is proved by the “spirits in prison” who were saved when Christ preached to them. If they weren’t, they couldn’t be a “like figure” “antitype” to the Church. Just as the Church is saved by the Gospel when it gives the “answer of a good conscience toward God” through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so were the “spirits in prison” saved Christ preached to after His crucifixion.

*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, 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, (1 Pet. 3:18-21 NKJ)*

Was this a “one off”, one-time event? Evidently not, Jesus tells us to “marvel not”, the dead (in the grave) hear His voice, and all “doing”

(ποιήσαντες, aorist active)” good [living according to God in the Spirit”] will rise unto resurrection of life; and they “continuing (πράξαντες aorist active)” in evil [rejecting God’s offer of salvation] rise unto a resurrection of damnation. The “doing” and “continuing” are active until the resurrection:

*28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,  
29 And shall come forth; they that have done (ποιήσαντες, aorist active) good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done (πράξαντες aorist active) evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (Jn. 5:28-29 KJV)*

Some object the dead cannot “do good”, but “doing (4160 ποιέω poieo) good (18 ἀγαθός agathos)” is a moral choice the dead can make (Luke 16:19-31).

Moreover, Paul says the “spirit may be saved” after the “destruction of the flesh” “in the day of the Lord Jesus”, i.e., on Judgment Day. That locates the saving event after he died:

*5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor. 5:5 KJV)*

Compare:

*13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.  
14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.  
15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:13-15 KJV)*

Only those “not found written in the book of life” are cast into the lake of fire after rising from Hades, which implies “some were found written in the book”. If they were saved before physical death, they already passed from death into life before Judgment Day (John 5:24-25) and wouldn’t be in Hades.

James L Boyer classifies “if anyone” (ei tis) a “first class conditional” and says:

*(“if this”, then that is true) which may imply nothing beyond the logical connection.-“First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean,” Grace Theological Journal, Spring 1981.*

However, John is observing and states factually what happened. That requires a reality beyond a logical connection.

*I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. (Hosea 13:14 KJV)*

*As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. (Zec. 9:11 KJV)*

God’s Plan for the Lost

Elect Rise From Hell On Judgment Day?

Lazarus and the Rich Man: Can the Rich Man Repent and be Saved?

Preaching to the Dead (Postmortem Evangelism)

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

Where Is The Judgment Of Fallen Angels?

The Origin of Satan and Demons

The Coming False Christ and His Followers Revealed

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# Elect in Hell Rise On Judgment Day?

written by Alfred Persson | February 10, 2024



**Why are there Elect in Hell on Judgment Day? Only those whose Names are not found written in the Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire. Therefore, some names of those in hell were written in the book. All written in the book of life are called “the Elect” in scripture. Therefore, Elect in Hell rise on Judgment Day, but are not cast into the Lake of Fire.**

*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them*

...

*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:13, 15 KJV)*

That is consistent with Scripture:

*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. 4:5-6 NKJ)*

A paraphrase of Peter's point:

*5 The [mockers 1 Pet. 4:4] will give an account for their rejection of the gospel to God who is ready to judge the living and the dead [of all mankind].*

*6. For this reason the gospel was preached ALSO to the dead [who never accepted the gospel], so all are judged equally as men in the flesh [who died unbelieving], but [then repent and choose to] live according to God's gospel in the Spirit.*

All who die without Christ are judged according to the Gospel of God as unsaved men in the flesh (1 Pet. 4:6), they go to Hell (Lk. 16:23; Jn. 5:28-29; Rev. 20:13). In Hell they can repent and believe the Gospel and then live according to God's gospel in the Spirit (1 Pt. 4:6; 1 Cor. 5:5) eagerly waiting for Judgment Day (Heb. 9:27-28; Zech. 9:11). Their torment purges away both self-deception and bondage to sin so free will is absolutely free. Torment ends when the free will choice is made to "live according to God in the Spirit". Those rejecting Christ's ransom continue in torment keeping open their opportunity to repent before Judgement Day, and have their names written among the living in the Book of Life (Rev. 20:13-15; Ps. 69:28; 1 Cor. 5:5).

No one can leave Hell before Judgment Day (Luke 16:26; Rev. 20:13-14), but those living according to God in the Spirit now eagerly wait for the return of Christ for salvation (Heb. 9:27), the resurrection of life on Judgment Day (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20: 13-15).

*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)*

**It follows millions (if not billions Gen. 13:16; Rev. 7:9; Rom. 11:26-33) of those who died without Christ, were evangelized and saved in the afterlife.** [It would be absurd Omniscient God delegate to a demonstrably incompetent Church the job of evangelizing all He foreknew and loved to be in His Creation. Then He would mourn the billions lost for all

eternity. Then He would never have chosen to Create all things.]

All in the grave can choose to “do good” (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:13-15)–“live according to God in the Spirit” (1 Pet. 4:6). God is impartial, all have equal chance to be saved. Its their free will choice.

Everyone has every opportunity to choose life and join the Elect. That is required by the presence of names in the Book of Life that are not “The Elect”:

*“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)*

The promise is a fraud if the overcomer’s name cannot be blotted out from the Book of Life. Therefore, this is not spoken to the Elect whose names cannot be blotted out. Elected before they did good or bad (Rom. 9:11) their names were written “before the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8; 17:8; Eph. 1:4). As they are predestined unto salvation (Rom. 8:29) they overcome.

Therefore, names exist in the Book of life that are not “Elect”, they are “undetermined” and these names can be blotted out. They have free will choice and equal chance to be saved with the Elect. For example, the names of the wicked men chasing David were ALREADY in the Book of life. David asks God their names be blotted out, not recorded with the righteous:

*May they be blotted out of the book of life, And may they not be recorded with the righteous. (Ps. 69:28 NAS)*

The Book of Life has the names of both the Elect and the undetermined (who could choose to go either way), and the latter are judged according to their works (Rev. 20:13,15) which determined if their names were blotted out or not on Judgment Day.

God is “longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9 NKJ). If the “undetermined” do what is right, their names won’t be blotted out from the Book of Life.

God’s gift of free will is irrevocable (Rom. 11:29), God would never force anyone against their free will to live in His Kingdom. If someone is forced to be saved, that is evil tyranny. Moreover, their “free will would be a farce”, their forced “robot love” an abomination.

Only those God foreknew would love to live with Him, were Elected and predestined unto salvation (Rom. 8:28-31). God did this to proceed with Creation. He could not bear permitting the Fall (so absolute Free Will exist) if it meant He would lose even one of those He foreknew loved Him in His Omniscience. Only by predestining them unto salvation, could He

create all things. That is why all things work together for the good of the Elect, including Hades Hell (Rom. 8:28).

But God is just, He cannot allow the wicked go unpunished. Those who refuse salvation in Christ will be judged according to their works (Rev. 20:13) and rise to a resurrection of 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)*

Death and Hades are emptied of souls on Judgment Day:

*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)*

God went the extra mile trying to save the non-elect. But they are children of the Devil, the torments of Hades could not dissuade their craving evil perversions. They willfully recoil from God’s light:

*16 “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.*

*17 “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world 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.*

*19 “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

*20 “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*

*21 “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (Jn. 3:16-21 NKJ)*

That “less than Eternal Torment” exists for MOST cast into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna) follows logically from the warning of Eternal Torment for accepting the Mark of the Beast (Rev. 14:9-11); stumbling one of Christ’s children (Mark 9:42); blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31-32). These threats are meaningless if everyone cast into the lake of fire receive eternal torment.



Again, as receiving the Mark of the Beast is *special meriting ETERNAL torment*, it follows lesser sin meriting LESS THAN ETERNAL torment is what MOST cast into the lake of fire will receive.

As Fire is also a symbol of total destruction (Jude 1:7; Rev. 20:14), “ashes” symbolize annihilation, “their souls burnt up” as some Talmudic Rabbis said:

*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)*

The “lake of fire” is the “second death” because it is the death from which there is no resurrection, their place before the “face of God” destroyed forever:

*who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might (2 Thess. 1:9 ERV)*

**HOWEVER, Jesus Christ our LORD warned about Gehenna far more than anything He said about Hades. Compared to Gehenna, Hades is a paradise. Hades a temporary (Rev. 20:14) place of reflection, the fire of God’s inspection tormenting (931 βάσανος basanos); burning away all self-deception, then sorrow (3600 ὀδυνάω odunao) for sin (Luke 16:23-24).**

**Gehenna is exponentially worse, souls are not prompted to divulge the truth of themselves, souls are imprisoned in abhorrent resurrection bodies (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 66:24)—maggot infested carcasses burning in flames like garbage in heaps.**

*But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” (1 Cor. 15:35 NKJ)*

Paul’s described the resurrection body of believers. Organically connected to the body that died (John 20:25-27; Rom. 8:11, 23) as a seed is to the plant that springs from it (1 Cor. 15:36-38), it will be glorious like a celestial body (1 Cor. 15:40-41) infused with the principle of incorruption (1 Cor. 15:42). A powerful body whose animating principle is life giving spirit (1 Cor. 15:43-45) like Christ’s resurrection Body (1 Cor. 15:46-50).

Only in Galatians does Paul allude to the resurrection body of the wicked who rise on Judgment Day (Dan. 12:2; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:13–15):

It reeks of corruption:

*For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Gal. 6:8 NKJ)*

That implies an antithesis to the resurrection body of believers. This antithesis is manifest in Christ's words also:

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

The "resurrection to life" requires a body that is alive, having the spirit of life as its animating principle. The antithesis to that would be a resurrection body that is "dead", having the "spirit of death" as its animating principle. Logically, it would reek of corruption, be infested with maggots, an abomination that causes its wearer shame:

*"And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isa. 66:24-1:1 NKJ)*

*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan. 12:2 NKJ)*

These aren't the "living dead zombies" seen on TV, these carcasses are blind, cannot walk to a less tormenting region of Gehenna, and can only weep and gnash teeth:

*'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* (Matt. 25:30 NKJ)

Therefore, Christ warns His disciples:

*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 "their part" (3313 μέρος meros, Rev. 21:8) First

implies total destruction of the body and soul as “fire that consumes” is never quenched, all is burnt up (Mal. 4:3; Isa. 26:14). The second implies eternal torment, undying maggots require a body to continue forever, therefore the abominable resurrection body (Isa. 66:24; Dan. 12:2; Gal. 6:8) reeking of corruption continues forever, communicating the wrath of an offended Holy God for all eternity.

So “everyone” one cast into Gehenna 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).

The different “part” or “destiny” of those cast into Gehenna (aka Lake of Fire, Furnace of Fire, Abyss) is implied 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” exist or the threat has no force.

*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, or preservation as meat is preserved with salt.

That explains why both the Old and New Testament has the wicked suffering either “destruction” or “eternal torment”. It is not a “one size fits all” situation, God sentences the wicked according to their deeds. Those guilty of eternal sins receive eternal torment, those who are not, do not.

*‘And be not afraid of those killing the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but fear rather Him who is able both soul and body to destroy (622 ἀπόλλυμι apollumi) in gehenna. (Matt. 10:28 YLT)*

Jesus gravely warned about Gehenna (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47; Lk. 12:5), it is far worse than being killed. Therefore, the “destruction” (622 ἀπόλλυμι apollumi) must be worse and last longer than dying. In Matthew 9:17 it is translated as “ruined”. New wine “ruin” old wineskins but they continue to exist, destroyed because they no longer can be used.

**The context in Mark is spoken TO HIS DISCIPLES: “If thy hand...foot...eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out; it is better for thee one-eyed to enter (Mk. 9:43, 45, 47). Mark 9:50 compared to Matthew 5:13 and Luke 14:34-35 confirms this. By extension it would apply to everyone (Matt. 5:27-30).**

*49 for every one with fire shall be salted, and every sacrifice with salt shall be salted.*

*50 The salt is good, but if the salt may become saltless, in what will ye season it? Have in yourselves salt, and have peace in one another.’*

Every disciple of Christ will be purified by Holy Spirit and fire (Lk. 3:16), salted with salt. But if the salt becomes saltless, its only fit to be cast outside (Lk. 14:34-35; Rev. 22:15).

Pedophiles and/or those who stumble Christ's children spiritually, blasphemers of the Holy Spirit, accepting the Mark of the Beast, and similar eternal sins will not be pardoned, regardless any profession of faith. They only fooled themselves (Mat. 7:22-23).

**Our LORD gravely warned Gehenna is far worse than anything men can do (Mat. 10:28). The symbols of unquenchable fire burning, maggots that don't die, consuming carcasses piled high like garbage, imply conscious physical torment in a contemptible resurrection body (Dan. 12:2; Gal. 6:8) that imprisons the soul within, much longer than a moment in time. Possibly even forever. Gehenna as described is far worse than Hades (Lk. 16:23-24). It would be unwise we "water down" Christ's warning and suggest Gehenna is something less than what Christ taught.**

END NOTES

In the Talmud some believed those not guilty of eternal sin would suffer for twelve months:

- 2. I:15: 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. The thoroughly righteous immediately are inscribed and sealed for continued life. The thoroughly wicked immediately are inscribed and sealed for death. Middling people are left hanging from New Year until the Day of Atonement."
- 3. I:16: It has been taught on Tannaite authority: The House of Shammai say, "There will be three groups on the Day of Judgment when the dead will rise: one comprised of the thoroughly righteous, one comprised of the thoroughly wicked, and one of middling people. The thoroughly righteous immediately are inscribed and sealed for eternal life. The thoroughly wicked immediately are inscribed and sealed for Gehenna."-Neusner, J. (2011). *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* (Vol. 6b, p. 240). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

The School of Hillel quoted, "He is plenteous in mercy" (Exod. xxxiv. 6); He inclines towards mercy; and concerning them said David, "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications" (Ps. cxvi. 1). The whole of that Psalm was composed by David about them: "I was brought low and He saved me" (ibid. 6). **The sinners of Israel with their bodies and the sinners of the Gentiles with their bodies descend to Gehinnom and are judged there for twelve months. After twelve months their bodies are destroyed, and their souls burnt and scattered by a wind under the soles of the feet of the righteous; as it is said, "Ye**

**shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet”** (Mal. iv. 3). But the sectaries, informers, epicureans who denied the Torah <sup>1</sup> and denied the Resurrection, they who separated themselves from the ways of the community, they who set their dread in the land of the living,<sup>2</sup> and they who, like Jeroboam the son of Nebat and his associates, sinned and caused the multitude to sin (cf. 1 Kings xiv. 16), will descend to Gehinnom and be judged there generations on generations; as it is said, “They shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched” (Is. lxvi. 24). Gehinnom will cease but they will not cease (to suffer); as it is said, “Their form shall be for Sheol to consume that there be no habitation for it” (Ps. xlix. 14). Concerning them said Hannah, “They that strive with the Lord shall be broken to pieces” (I Sam. ii. 10). R. Isaac b. Abin said, Their faces will be black like the bottom of a pot’ (R.H. 16b et seq.).

We gather from this extract that in the first century one of the principal Schools, influenced by a verse from Daniel, assigned the utterly wicked to eternal punishment; but the other School found such a doctrine incompatible with Divine mercy. Sinners must be penalized. They undergo twelve months of pain and then suffer annihilation because they are unworthy of entrance into Gan Eden. They who have been exceptionally wicked stay in Gehinnom for ‘generations on generations.’ That this expression does not signify eternity is clear from the statement that Gehinnom will cease.’ They will not, after their sufferings there, undergo extinction, but will continue in existence as conscious entities—how and where is not explained—in a perpetual state of remorse.—A. Cohen, *Everyman’s Talmud*, (Schocken Books, NY 1995), p. 377-378.

**Whether twelve months, or according to deeds, Christ said we should fear Him who can cast into Gehenna, “yes, I say to you, fear Him!” (Lk. 12:5 NKJ)**

Why consider the Jewish Talmud on these things? Our LORD Jesus Christ valued learned discussion of scripture in His day, and He says so while discussing Gehenna with a Scribe:

49 “So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,  
50 “and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”  
51 Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”  
52 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. 13:49-52 NKJ)

SCRIBE

1122 γραμματεὺς grammateus {gram-mat-yooce’}

Meaning: 1) a clerk, scribe, esp.a public servant, secretary, recorder, whose office and influence differed in different states 2) **in the Bible, a man learned in the Mosaic law and in the sacred writings, an interpreter, teacher. Scribes examined the more difficult and subtle questions of the law; added to the Mosaic law decisions of various kinds thought to elucidate its meaning and scope, and did this to the detriment of religion. Since the advice of men skilled in the law was needed in the examination in the causes and the solution of the difficult questions, they were enrolled in the Sanhedrin; and are mentioned in connection with the priests and elders of the people.** See a Bible Dictionary for more information on the scribes. 3) a religious teacher: so instructed that from his learning and ability to teach advantage may redound to the kingdom of heaven.-Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance.

The resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29) was prefigured by this event:

*30 Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him.*  
*31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.*  
*32 Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.*  
*33 Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. (Lk. 8:30-33 NKJ)*

To their horror the swine imprisoned the demon spirits, and against their will stampeded (3729 ὁρμάω hormao) into the lake “body and soul” (Mat. 10:28; Rev. 20:15).

No agreement was made they not end up in the Abyss, they assumed Jesus agreed when He permitted they enter the swine. But as the swine drowned, the Abyss swallowed the demons spirits whole. The Lake of Fire still awaits them.

Lazarus and the Rich Man  
Jesus Preached to the Dead  
God’s Plan for the Lost  
Preaching to the Dead (Postmortem Evangelism)

Does the Lake of Fire Symbolize Eternal Torment for all cast into it?  
What did the apostle John reveal when he said: “It is the last hour”?  
Where Is The Judgment Of Fallen Angels?  
The Origin of Satan and Demons  
The Coming False Christ and His Followers Revealed