

Jesus Saves Also in the After Life: Hope for your unsaved loved ones

written by Alfred Persson | August 2, 2025



Scriptural Evidence of Universal Opportunity for Salvation in Jesus

“God is to us a God of deliverances; And to Yehovah the Lord belong escapes from death.” (Ps. 68:20)

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When asked: “Will there be a second chance for salvation after death?”

GotQuestions.Org a popular Christian, Protestant, evangelical, theologically conservative, and non-denominational ministry answers:

While the idea of a second chance for salvation after death is appealing, the Bible says that death is the end of all chances. According to Hebrews 9:27, when we die, we then face judgment. So, as long as a person is alive, he has a “second chance” to accept Christ and be saved—and a third, fourth, fifth, etc., chance (see John 3:16; Romans 10:9–10; Acts 16:31). Once a person dies, however, there are no more chances.

That is the answer both Catholics and Protestants give since Augustine of Hippo, who said in his “Enchiridion” (421 AD, ch. 110) “It is in this life that all the merit or demerit is acquired, which can either relieve or aggravate a man’s sufferings after this life.”

Few Christians realize that was not the answer the Church gave before Augustine. Early Christian writers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, Hippolytus of Rome, Tertullian, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus the Blind, Ambros of Milan, believed Salvation possible after death for some. Clement once the Head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria (Titus Flavius Clemens, c. 150-215 AD) who spent his retirement years with the Bishop of Jerusalem, answered this question this way:

So I think it is demonstrated that God (being good) and the Lord (being powerful) both save with a righteousness and equality that extends to all who turn to God, whether here or elsewhere. For it is not here alone that the active power of God is present. Rather, it is everywhere and is always at work.... For it is not right that those persons [who died before Christ] should be condemned without trial, and that those alone who lived after His coming should have the advantage of the divine righteousness. Clement of Alexandria (c. 195, EE Eastern), 2.491. Dead, Intermediate State of The. (1998). In D. W. Bercot (Ed.), A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs: A Reference Guide to More than 700 Topics Discussed by the Early Church Fathers (p. 192). Hendrickson Publishers.

The apostle Peter would agree: **“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)

Context reveals Peter's thought. Christians repented of "lewdness, lusts, drunkenness" etc.. The unsaved they once partied with began "speaking evil" of them, "regarding it strange" anyone would give up partying for Christianity. Peter says they will answer to God during the universal judgment of the living and the dead. Verse 6 connects this to the gospel being preached "ALSO" to the dead. The word "dead" must refer to people actually dead because that is its reference in the phrase "living and dead". "For this reason the gospel is preached also to the dead...that they might be judged", implying the dead must fully understand the consequences of failing to obey it "when they are judged according to men in the flesh."

The implication is 'so no one has the excuse they didn't hear the gospel correctly, and would have no excuse when sins like those mentioned in verse 3 are judged.'

Judged as men in the flesh so they could live according to God in the spirit implies Postmortem salvation after repentance and acceptance of the Gospel in the afterlife is possible.

This is not to question eternal punishment exists. Scripture gives at least five examples those who will suffer it: 1] Satan and his angels (Matthew 25:41); 2] The Beast and False Prophet (Revelation 20:10); 3] All who worship the Beast or accept his Mark (Revelation 14:9-11); 4] Blasphemers of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32); 5] Those who destroy belief in Christ in one of His children (Mark 9:42-48).

The question raised here: "Should the harmless unsaved Bingo Lady receive the same Eternal Punishment as Satan and his angels?" Or is each given an "allotment of some amount in the lake of fire" that is "their part" (3313 μέρος meros) or "due":

"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)

Scripture does reveal the book of life is opened on Judgment Day and inspected to see if anyone raised up from Hades had their names in it when they are "judged according to their works":

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)

Compare Jesus' promise all dead in the graves will hear His voice and some will rise to 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)

This writing proves the Early Church before Augustine was right, and what taught now is wrong. Reams of scripture explicitly state the opportunity for salvation is universal, everyone born since Adam and Eve will hear the gospel of Christ and those who accept it will be saved. The only exception are those who sinned eternally and can't be forgiven "in the age to come":

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)

A Survey of Scriptures that may support Postmortem Opportunity for Salvation

Dt. 32:39 [#A]; 1Sam. 2:6 [#B]; 2Sam. 22:5-7 [#C]; Ps. 16:10-11 [#D]; Ps. 30:1-4 [#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 5:21-29[#S]; Rm. 11:15, 30-32[#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]; Luke 16:19-31[#Z]; John 3:16-18[#ZA]

[#A]

It is I who put to death and give 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 (02421 יָחַיִּיתִי chayah). I have wounded, and it is I who heal; And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. (Deut. 32:39 NAS)

“Give life”: “To cause to have life or cause to have life a second time”. -Logos Bible Sense

As God cites “killing, making alive; wounding and healing as proof He alone is God they cannot be imitated by any creature man or angel in any realm of existence, which includes the spiritual realm beyond the physical:

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

*“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
(Matt. 10:28 NKJ)*

In the Spiritual realm “wounding” implies judgment or affliction of the soul, and “healing” implies reconciliation, restoration, which follows divine forgiveness.

who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness— by whose stripes you were healed. (1 Pet. 2:24 NKJ)

Therefore, postmortem forgiveness and revival to spiritual life are implicit in Deuteronomy 32:39 given the divine nature of the wounding and healing are functions of divine forgiveness for sin.

[#B]

He bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up

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

The context is 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Key verses and idioms imply God responds to repentance with raising up in both physical and spiritual realms.

Verse 3. “The LORD is a God of knowledge, and with Him actions are weighed” (vs. 3). God discerns and responds to hearts and deeds by: “He brings down to Sheol and raises up. (v.6). “He brings low, He also exalts” (v.7).

Verse 8. “”He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles.” Hebrew idiom “dust” and “ash heap” symbolize mourning and repentance (Job 42:6; Jonah 3:6; Mt. 11:21) which is rewarded making them “sit with nobles”

Verse 9 “He keeps the feet of His godly ones, But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; For not by might shall a man prevail.” “Godly ones” are repentant over their sins, the wicked are not.

Therefore, the “reversals” in Hannah’s song imply the opportunity for

repentance to reverse God’s bringing down to Sheol, so He would raise them up.

[#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)*

The death dealing waves surrounded David, the attacks of worthless men assailed him. Like a constrictor knot the cords of sheol were about to tighten their grip and not let David go. Any strategic misstep by David and the snares of death would have another victim. In David’s many trials the LORD saved him when He heard his cry.

The figurative language refers to earthly trials have no reference to post-mortem opportunity for salvation.

[#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 refers to Christ. By Holy Spirit Peter says David understood that to be so:

*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)*

As God’s prophet David understands his future depends upon the coming Messiah, His sacrifice for sin which would cover David’s many sins. It was for this reason his flesh could “rest (dwell, inhabit sheol) in hope”, because Christ the “Holy One” wouldn’t see corruption, His sacrifice for sin accepted and His body raised up.

David’s flesh “resting in hope” contradicts the theory David hoped for “translation” like Enoch and Elijah—resting in hope of resurrection does not apply to either.

Therefore, postmortem opportunity for salvation exclusive to Jesus Christ is implicit in David’s confidence he would be forgiven his many sins, and his soul not left in Sheol.

[#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 (05927 אָלַח `alah) 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)

Thesis
Read on its own terms—and in light of the Hebrew lexemes, the syntax, the intertextual echoes, and the form-critical setting—Psalm 30:2–4 (MT vv. 3–5) can be read as claiming literal post mortem deliverance (a return from death). The psalmist says not merely that he was near death, but that YHWH “brought up my nephesh from Sheol” (אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁאוֹל וְחַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁאוֹל וְחַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח) and “gave me life” (חַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁאוֹל וְחַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח) “from among those who go down to the Pit” (בְּרַח אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁאוֹל וְחַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח). The collocation of Sheol (שְׁאוֹל), Pit (בֹּרַח), the resurrection coded verb pair “bring up” (אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁאוֹל וְחַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח Hiphil) / “give life” (חַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח Piel/Hiphil), and the extraction formula “from among those who go down” forms a semantic constellation elsewhere used for the actually dead, not merely the gravely ill. While many commentators take the language as conventional hyperbole of a thanksgiving psalm, the text itself supplies enough lexical and syntactic weight to defend a literal after death experience reading.- ChatGPT

Text and Translation

1. The Hiphil of 05927 אָלַח depicts an actual movement out of the realm of the dead “a dead (or sick) person from the underworld 1Sam. 2:6; 28:8, 11, 15; Jonah 2:7; Ps. 30:4; 40:3; 71:20 ; a dead person (by exorcism) 1S 28:8, 11, 15. The LXX’s ἀνήγαγες (aorist) (Ps. 29:4 BGT) renders it literally of movement from a lower to higher point.
2. 02421 חַיָּה chayah is from the same root used for revivification: To return to life, revive 1 Ki. 17:22; 2 Ki. 8:5 13:21; Isa. 26:14, 19; 39:1 (1Q Isa for אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁאוֹל וְחַיֵּיתָנִי מִבְּרַח); Ezek. 37:3, 5, 9f, 14.
3. Sheol (07585 שְׁאוֹל she’owl) the post mortem underworld (e.g., Ps 49:14–15; 88:3–6; Isa 14:9–11; Job 7:9). It is not the usual word for “grave” (קֶבֶר) nor for “sickness.” While poetic usage can extend Sheol to “near-death” experiences, when Sheol is combined with movement verbs like

“bring up” (הִפְחִיל Hiphil) and paired with bor (“pit”), it overwhelmingly gestures to actual death and the hope (or miracle) of reversal (cf. 1 Sam 2:6: “Yehovah kills and makes alive; he brings down to Sheol and raises up”).

4. Bor (0953 בֹּר bowr) (“pit”) is a stock term for the place of the dead (Num 16:30, 33; Ps 28:1; 88:4; Ezek 26:20; 31:14–18). The expression “those who go down to the pit” (הַיֹּרְדִּים הַלְלוֹתָם) is almost a technical designation for the deceased. Thus, to say, “you made me live from among those who go down to the pit” is to say the speaker was already counted with the dead and then removed from their company.

David experienced postmortem opportunity literally. That is implied by its impact upon him, he refers to it again (Psalm 60:15; 71:20). God brought his soul up from Sheol after he cried for help, and he was “healed”. Restored to life “הִפְחִילָהּ ... 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.

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).

David’s descent into hell and back may have consumed only minutes of time. The experience of time slows 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.

As a prophet of God (Ac. 2:29-30) would not mislead people. The literal language of rescue from the pit after a cry for help would cause many to conclude postmortem opportunity exists. In the Days of Christ the two major theological schools of Shammai and Hillel believed Scripture taught postmortem opportunity, and likely this context was a major reason for that.

[#F]

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

NKJ Psalm 40:1 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.

4 Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works Which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

7 Then I said, “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.”

9 I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know.

10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly. (Ps. 40:1-10 NKJ)

Postmortem opportunity is not taught in this Messianic prophecy.

Psalms 40:1–4 narrates a death-to-life reversal (“you brought me up from a pit,” פָּתַחְתָּ לִּי פֶתַח בְּרִיחַ), climactically issuing in a “new song” (שִׁיר חָדָשׁ) (New Covenant in Christ’s blood) that many see, fear, and trust (v. 4[3]). Verses 5–10 (Eng. 4–9) then transpose that resurrected life into obedient, messianic vocation: the one whom Yehovah has raised and set upon the Rock now rejects sacrificial formalism in favor of embodied obedience to the written will of God—“Behold, I come... to do your will” (vv. 8–9[7–8]). The “resurrection” movement in 40:1–4 is therefore structurally and theologically prerequisite to the messianic self-offering of 40:5–10: deliverance → new song/public witness → incarnate obedience that supersedes sacrifice. The New Covenant Song sung to the church worldwide. The LXX’s famous rendering “a body you prepared for me” (σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίωσ μοι) in v. 7(6) makes this progression even more explicit and is the foundation of Hebrews 10:5–10’s Christological reading.

[#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” of the second death that consumes the resurrected forms of fools and their followers (Cf. Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 20:11-15).

[#H]

For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living. (Ps. 56:13 NAS)

The deliverance is not postmortem therefore, not relevant to postmortem

opportunity for salvation.

[#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 salvation taught in Psalm 68:18–20 together with the NT “harrowing of hell” texts (Eph 4:8–10; 1 Pet 3:18–20; 4:6) yields a coherent descent–ascent soteriological pattern: the victorious Divine/Messianic figure descends to the realm of the dead, subdues/empties “captivity,” and distributes gifts—even to the rebellious (πνευματικὰ // ἀπειθοῦντες) whom 1 Peter 3:20 explicitly says characterized the spirits Christ preached to during His descent into hell (1 Peter 3:18-20). Later Peter adds the gospel was “preached even to the dead” (νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη, 1 Pet 4:6) that they may live according to God in the Spirit. The combined lexical, syntactic, and intertextual data provide positive textual footing for post mortem evangelization (opportunity for salvation).

Takeaway (Psalm 68): The Divine Warrior ascends after a prior descent (implied in the victory motif), subdues or empties “captivity,” acquires gifts, and does this “even for the rebellious,” in a context where deliverances “from death” are God’s specialty. The psalm’s syntax permits, and its logic encourages, seeing benefaction extended to the previously excluded.

Paul’s Midrash of this event changes perspective (“You received” to “You gave”) moving from the victorious Christ leading captives, to victorious Christ the King, who gifts the church with Holy Spirit gifts of ‘apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers’ to effect the changes necessary so “God could fill all things” (Eph. 4:8-13).

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; (Eph. 4:7-13 NKJ)

[#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. 69:2-4), 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 (תְּהוֹם הָאֶרֶץ tehôm hă- ’ě·rěṣ). (Ps. 71:20 NKJ)

Postmortem reversal of judgment implied, “Thou wilt revive me again”
hearkens back to God’s forgiving David and reviving him from death (Ps.
30:2-4) [#E].

[02421 חַיָּה chayah] Ps. 71:20: “Thou ... wilt revive me again, from the
depths (תְּהוֹם tehômôth) of the earth thou wilt bring me up again,” or Ps.
30:4(3): “Thou hast brought up my nephesh from Sheol, restored my life
from among those gone down to the Pit (בֹּרַת bôr).” With this group of
passages belongs Isa. 38:16, from the thanksgiving psalm of Hezekiah.-
Ringgren, H. (1980). חַיָּה. in Theological Dictionary of the Old
Testament (Revised Edition, Vol. 4, p. 334). William B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company.

תְּהוֹם הָאֶרֶץ (tehôm hă- ’ě·rěṣ) Sheol, formally, depths of the
earth, i.e., the place where the dead reside (Ps 71:20).-Swanson, J.
(1997). In Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains :
Hebrew (Old Testament) (electronic ed.). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

[#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. 30:2-4 [#E]; 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)

Not relevant to Postmortem Opportunity. Future generations will see God's acts of deliverance from death and praise Him.

[#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)

Irrelevant to Postmortem opportunity. Praise for God's deliverance from certain death in this life.

[#O]

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)

Paul approvingly quotes the Septuagint’s interpretation of the Hebrew. Paul approvingly quotes the Septuagint’s interpretation of the Hebrew. God either hides his pity from Death, or those God still holds guilty (Hos. 13:14 e).

Postmortem opportunity is not found in God’s ransoming from the grave or redemption from death. However, the theological logic of the context is one of graceful forgiveness of sin.

Hosea condemns Israel’s idolatry, but consistently holds out future restoration (cf. Hos 1:10; 2:14–23; 6:1–2; 14:1–9). Hosea 13:14 is a climactic interruption of grace before the judgment of v. 16.

Therefore, I argue this text does imply postmortem opportunity for repentance and salvation.

[#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 must exist for Jonah to liken his cries to God and subsequent salvation to being in Sheol, the place of the dead. The premise God ignores the cries of the dead is contradicted in 1 Samuel 2:6 and Psalm 30:3.

Jonah explicitly says God answered him from Sheol (Jon. 2:2) and cites this event as proof God is unlike worthless idols who neither see or hear (Jon. 2:8) God’s ability to save even from Sheol is reason to sacrifice to the LORD, to proclaim “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jon. 2:9).

The entire becomes a fraud if in reality God ignores the cries of those in Sheol.

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.

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

This employs language and imagery that strongly implies redemption extending even to those already in the realm of death (or Sheol). The phrase “waterless pit” (מִקְדָּשׁ מִיָּבֵשׁ מִיָּבֵשׁ) is a stock metaphor in the Hebrew Bible for the underworld or deathly imprisonment (cf. Jer 38:6; Ps 88:6; Isa 24:22), while “prisoners” (שְׁבוּיִים) often represents those in spiritual or physical bondage awaiting release (Isa 61:1). Coupled with the blood of the covenant as the cause and guarantee of release that is later foundational to the New Covenant in Christ, this verse implies postmortem release and forgiveness.

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

*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)*

Christ explicitly says there is forgiveness of sins in the “age to come.” The “age to come” necessarily includes postmortem intermediate state for it is from there souls are resurrected.

Therefore this context requires postmortem opportunity for salvation and

reconciliation exists, or the contrast to unforgiveable sin vanishes.

[#S]

" 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. (Jn. 5:25 NKJ)"

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. 5:25-29 KJV)

Postmortem Opportunity to repent upon hearing Christ voice even if in the grave is clearly taught.

In John 5:25–29, Jesus declares that His life-giving authority extends to the dead (οἱ νεκροί) who “hear His voice” (ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς), both in the present and future. The phrase “the hour is coming, and now is” (ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν) introduces a new eschatological reality—the beginning of postmortem salvation through Christ. By examining the Greek text, the grammar of “hearing” and “doing good,” and the theological framework of Johannine eschatology, it is clear that Jesus’ statement inaugurates the possibility of salvation for the dead starting from His earthly ministry.

Key Terms:

οἱ νεκροί (hoi nekroi) – “the dead.” In Johannine usage, this can denote spiritual death (John 5:24) but, in context, extends to those who are literally dead (cf. v. 28).

ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς (akousontai tēs phōnēs) – Future middle of ἀκούω, “they will hear the voice.” The phrase refers to the powerful call of Christ that penetrates even death, as in John 11:43 (Lazarus).

ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν (erchetai hōra kai nyn estin) – “the hour is coming, and now is.” This eschatological present signals that a future event is already breaking into the present reality as in John 4:23.

In 5:25, Jesus proclaims: “and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”

This means that from this point forward, through His own divine life (v. 26), Jesus has begun calling even the dead to life—a clear allusion to

postmortem salvation power the Son has even as the Father has (John 5:21-23).

ποιήσαντες / πράξαντες – Aorist participles (“having done”) implying completed deeds that follow hearing Christ’s voice, judged at the resurrection.

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.

Who Are “the Dead”?

While some argue “the dead” (οἱ νεκροί) are only spiritually dead, v. 28 clearly shifts to “all who are in the tombs” (οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις), showing that Jesus has all the dead whether physically alive or not in view. The present “hour” (νῦν ἐστίν) suggests that even those who had died before Christ’s ministry could be included among those who will “hear His voice” and receive life.

Christ has the Father’s Authority to Judge and Give Life

The Father has given the Son “life in Himself” (ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ)—a divine prerogative (cf. John 1:4; 14:6).

The Son has authority (ἐξουσίαν) to execute judgment, which includes granting life to those who hear and believe. Just as with the Father, the Son’s power to give life is not bound by time or death—His life-giving word reaches even the realm of the dead, beginning from the time He speaks.

Therefore, Christ taught postmortem opportunity for all who obey His voice even if in the grave.

[#T]

What will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? (Rom. 11:15 NKJ)

Postmortem Opportunity is implicit in the exchange of man’s repentance and belief for God’s “acceptance” (πρόσληψις) and reconciliation. The symmetry of world and Israel, both experiencing “life from the dead” implies this is part of a future eschatological event where “All Israel is saved” (Rom. 11:26) and God has “mercy on all”, proving this goes beyond the limits of the living.

In Pauline thought, reconciliation (καταλλαγή) is always mediated through repentance and faith (Rom 5:1, 10–11; 2 Cor 5:18–20).

The critical question is when and how this “acceptance” occurs. If Israel’s current state is one of unbelief—even unto death for many—Paul’s vision of their future acceptance cannot be limited to this life. It must extend into the eschatological sphere, which includes the resurrection.

Israel’s restoration, even after generations of unbelief (including those who have died), demonstrates that God’s mercy extends beyond death.

Therefore, while Paul does not detail a step-by-step doctrine of postmortem repentance, the logic of Romans 11:15, especially in its link to the eschatological reconciliation of Israel when God shows mercy on all [who believe] implies the opportunity for postmortem salvation.

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. 11:30-32 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 by the Spirit,

19 by whom also He went and preached (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) 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,

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)

In 1 Peter 3:18-22 describes a Postmortem Salvation Event. After His death, Christ proclaimed liberty to the captive “spirits in prison” Peter himself explaining “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)

That Jesus proclaimed liberty to the captives (Luke 4:18; Eph. 4:8) is confirmed when Peter likens the symmetry of Christ’s death and resurrection to baptism, which now saves the church after it also gave Jesus’ preaching “the answer of a good conscience towards God”(Rom.

6:4-5; Eph. 2:4-7; Col. 2:12-14).

Notes:

1 Peter 3:18–22 establishes a theological symmetry between Christ’s descent to the dead and the saving act of baptism. Peter links the proclamation to “spirits in prison” with Noah’s salvation through water and the church’s being saved, not by water but by the “answer of a good conscience towards God.” This suggests that just as the church is saved by to Christ’s preaching through faith and repentance, these spirits in prison also “responded” to Christ’s proclamation. This symmetrical logic, rooted in the motif of burial and resurrection with Christ, proves Peter is speaking of postmortem evangelization and salvation of the “spirits in prison”.

The substance of the human soul is spirit (Gen. 2:7) which returns to God (Eccl. 12:7; Ps. 146) upon physical death. As its animating power leaves the soul weakens until it is a shade (07496 רָפָה rapha) of its former self (Isa. 14:9-10; 26:14).

Peter’s choice of ζῶποιοιθεῖς (2227, made alive) in 1 Pet. 3:18 parallels ἐζωοποίησάς (you revived me) in Ps. 71:20 LXX (70:20) , which denotes a “quickening of the soul” prior to being raised up from the dead.

The human soul of Christ was quickened by the Holy Spirit and in that sphere of life giving power He went and preached to the “spirits in prison”.

As unsaved human souls in Sheol are never called “spirits”, these “spirits in prison” must be more than human. A close exegesis of 1 Peter 3:18–20 read against Genesis 6:1–4 reveals disembodied “spirits in prison” were the Elohim-human offspring of angels. The likely cause of their refusal to believe Noah’s preaching is they knew God despises mixed breeds (Leviticus 19:19, Deuteronomy 22:9) and He would view any defilement of the image of God in man as an abomination. (Gen. 1:26-27; Ezek. 8:6-18; cp. 1 Cor. 6:18-19).

Christ proclaimed (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) “liberty to the captives” (Luke 4:18) leading “captives in His train” (Eph. 4:8) taking them to paradise to wait for the resurrection that occurs at Christ’s second appearing (Heb. 9:28; 1 Thess. 4:14-17).

Confirming this was a postmortem rescue from hell is the symmetry Peter sees with Baptism and the Church, how it was buried with Christ, but raised with Him to a newness of life when they gave the answer of a good conscience towards God in response to the proclamation of the gospel.

[#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)

In 1 Peter 4:6 the gospel was preached to the dead (καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη), implying a postmortem opportunity for salvation. A careful exegesis of the context shows this includes those who mocked Christians and the gospel, ignorant of the fact God is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The phrase “living and dead” in verse 5 defines how “dead” is to be interpreted in verse 6, the physically dead as opposed to the physically living.

Their refusal to believe the gospel is rooted in ignorance of God. That ignorance of consequences is present in every sinner’s refusal to repent. “For this cause” the gospel is preached ALSO to the dead [so they would be stripped of all excuse by ignorance].

The text therefore reflects a continuity of salvation opportunity beyond death, consistent with Christ’s sacrifice giving opportunity to all who believe in the entire Kosmos where men inhabit and the only grounds for condemnation is refusal to obey the Gospel (John 3:16-18; 1 John 2:2).

Therefore, this context proves a postmortem opportunity for salvation exists for those who have not rejected the offer of salvation in full knowledge and awareness of the consequences.

This preaching “also to the dead” parallels 1 Peter 3:18–22 the liberation of the captive “spirits in prison” after they gave the answer of a good conscience towards God in response to Christ’s preaching. The Gospel is preached “that they might be judged...but live according to God” (1 Pet. 4:6).

[#W]

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

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)

The opportunity for postmortem salvation is explicit. The “destruction (3639 ὄλεθρος olethros) of the flesh (4561 σὰρξ sarx)” refers to physical death; “spirit” (4151 πνεῦμα pneuma) his immaterial spirit; “saved” (4982 σώζω sozo) refers to eternal salvation; the “day of the Lord Jesus” refers to Christ’s Second Coming “for salvation” (Heb. 9:28) during the eschatological gathering or “rapture” of the Church (1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2

Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6.)

“Destruction” 3639 ὅλεθρος

act of destruction, destruction παραδοῦναί τινα τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὅλ. τῆς σαρκός hand someone over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh 1 Cor 5:5 (handing over to Satan will result in the sinner’s death.-Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature (3rd ed., p. 702). University of Chicago Press.

“Flesh” 4561 σάρξ

Flesh, equiv. to THE BODY, corpus, the animal or external nature, as distinguished from the spiritual or inner man, τὸ πνεῦμα.-Bloomfield, S. T. (1840). In A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament (p. 387). Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longmans.

“Spirit” 4151 πνεῦμα

Man’s immaterial aspect is represented in Scripture by the single terms pneúma, spirit...In 1 Cor. 5:3 a distinction is made between the body and the spirit (see also 5:4, 5...)-Zodhiates, S. (2000). In The complete word study dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

“Saved” 4982 σώζω

Passive be saved, attain salvation...1 Cor 5:5; 10:33; 1 Th 2:16; 2 Th 2:10; 1 Ti 2:4.-Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature (3rd ed., p. 983). University of Chicago Press.

[#X]

it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment

24 For Christ hasn’t entered into holy places made with hands, which are representations of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;
25 nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place year by year with blood not his own,
26 or else he must have suffered often since the foundation of the world. But now once at the end of the ages, he has been revealed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
27 Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment,
28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, without sin, to those who are eagerly waiting for him for salvation. (Heb. 9:24-10:1 RPTÉ)

Hebrews 9:24–28 says Christ’s once for all, heavenly self offering is far superior to offerings under the Law of Moses as it was done only once to cover all sins in time and space. Its efficacy spans the whole sweep of human history (“since the foundation of the world,” v. 26. Cp. “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” Rev. 13:8); that the universal

rule “it is appointed for humans to die once, and after this a trial (v. 27) will identify the “many” from all who die who thereafter “eagerly” wait “for Him for salvation” (v. 28).

Its tight death/judgment/second appearing parallel strongly support the claim that everyone unsaved born since the world’s foundation stands under the judgment of v. 27, and that the implied criterion is acceptance of the gospel preached to the dead (John 5:25; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 4:6) and this separates (“judges”) “the many” who now eagerly wait for Christ for salvation (v. 28), from those who do not.

This “trial/judgment” (κρίσις) is not “the Judgment” at the end of time, it lacks the definite article. It therefore is not neutral judgment with a formal outcome; it implies a formal trial setting involving a judge, plaintiff, and an advocate (1 John 2:1–2)

The author of Hebrews invokes the concept of what the early theologians referred to as “the particular judgment.” Its a divine trial, not merely a neutral evaluation of guilt or innocence. This is required by context as it moves from all experiencing this trial after death, to the “many” covered by Christ’s sacrifice, who become those “who eagerly wait for Him...for salvation” (Heb. 9:28) Not everyone who dies will see a positive result from a divine trial. Therefore, “those who eagerly wait for Him...for salvation” implies these saw a positive outcome, unlike those not among “the many” not covered by Christ’s sacrifice. Jesus excluded who believe in Him in while alive, they “pass from death into life” before they die, from any after death *krisis* judgment (John 5:24; 11:26; cp. Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23).

Therefore, this text teaches that the opportunity for salvation is universal, not bound by time or space. The existence of those who received a positive outcome from this after death trial/judgment prove the infinite sacrifice of God’s only begotten Son extended the opportunity for salvation to the entire universe *kosmos* (John 3:16) of man’s habitation, which includes the dead in Hades.

Notes

κρίσις (krisis). n. fem. judgment, legal case. Refers to the process, event, or result of legal proceedings intended to evaluate punishment. This noun occurs 47 times in the NT and refers to the process or event of judgment. The noun can refer to a “trial” for a crime in human history (Matt 5:21–22). It can also refer to the evidence brought forth within a trial (John 3:19). It can refer to the positive resulting state after judgment, i.e., “justice” (Matt 12:18–20). -Garrett, J. K. (2014). Justice. In D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), Lexham Theological Wordbook. Lexham Press.

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

Mainstream interpretations view Revelation 20:11–15 as reflecting a final and irreversible judgment, but that consensus overlooks the dynamic status of names in the “Book of Life”. Names can be blotted out or written in (Rev. 3:5; Ps. 60:28) and the construction εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη... γεγραμμένος (“if anyone was not found written”) implies an investigative process that confirmed which names were written in the book. This implies there was a change in the names written in the book of life.

Moreover, twice it stated for emphasis this judgment is according to works, which in biblical theology includes humble repentance, faith, and a proclamation those who repent will live (Ezek. 18:21-23, 30-32; Jer. 18:7-11; Jonah 3:6-10). Christ pleads for repentance (Rev. 2:5, 16) and gives space for repentance (Rev. 2:21-22).

The Jewish background of the “Three Books” during Judgment (Rosh Hashanah 16b)

- “Three books are opened on Rosh Hashanah”:
 1. The Book of Life (for the righteous)
 2. The Book of Death (for the wicked)
 3. A third book for the intermediate—judged and sealed on Yom Kippur depending on repentance

Applied to Rev. 20 there is room for intermediate judgment, and a trial-like process by which the final fate is determined, including an opportunity for salvation by repentance or acknowledgment of the Gospel of Christ so a name could be written in “the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev. 13:8; 21:27).

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

[#Z]

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. 16:19-31 NKJ)

Indications the Rich Man is under A “Particular Judgment”, and not The Final Judgment

- 1) The Rich man is not portrayed as Reprobate.
 - a) Respectful toward Abraham
 - b) No cursing, rage or blaming. Just a desire for relief and warning others.
 - c) Asks for mercy, does not deny his guilt.
 - d) Implicitly accepts the justice of his situation.
 - e) He advocates repentance in the warning to his brethren, a sure sign of internal change.
 - f) His dialogue indicates moral awareness, concern for others, and submission to divine authority.

- 2) Abraham’s response is affectionate.
 - a) “Son”/“Child”: τέκνον (v. 25; Lk. 15:31) is affectionate, “Child, remember” is not a legalistic or judicial rebuke.

- 3) The “Great Gulf” (v.26) is temporary, during the Final Judgment all in Hades will be raised, Hades emptied then destroyed (Rev. 20:13-14).
 - a) Abraham and redeemed with him WANT to cross over into Hades to comfort the rich man, a compassionate impulse they wouldn’t extend to a Reprobate

rebellling against divine justice (Rev. 16:5-7; Ps. 7:9; 139:19-24).

4) Emphasis on Repentance (v. 30)

- a) Rich man says: “If someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.”
- b) Context implies his concern is genuine; he has internalized the message.
- c) The grammar suggests the Rich Man knows repentance is necessary, and now advocates it, inferring a changed heart in himself.
- d) He does not plead innocence or blame Lazarus or God but wants his brothers to avoid his fate—a mark of moral transformation.

5) φλόξ (flame) (v. 24) is often associated revelation of God and purging of sin (Dan. 7:10; Isa. 66:15; Mal. 3:2-3).

- a) “The burning lamp” (Gen. 15:17); “Angel of the Lord appeared in the flame” (Ex. 3:2).
- b) God’s rebuke in a “flame of fire” (Isa. 66:15-16) points to exposure and correction, not destruction.
- c) Christ’s eyes are like flames symbolizing divine inspection, exposing (Rev. 1:14)

6) Purpose of Torment: βάσσινος (v. 23) and ὀδυνῶμαι (vv. 24–25)

- a) a. βάσσινος (v. 23) primary meaning: a touchstone, used to test metals. Secondly, torture or pain used to extract truth. Root concept: exposing what is hidden, bringing truth to surface, not merely retributive suffering. This casts the torment in Hades not as final punishment but as diagnostic or revelatory in purpose—a testing of character and bringing one to realization.
- b) ὀδυνῶμαι (vv. 24–25) verb for “anguish,” also used in Acts 20:38, where Paul’s friends sorrow at his departure—emotional pain, not necessarily punitive. In Luke 16, it can denote emotional or spiritual distress, consistent with penitential awareness.

From all this one could reasonably infer 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. That would be the perfect time the Gospel is preached, able to deliberate upon it and make their decision whether to obey it, or not.

[#ZA]

- 16 “For God so loved the world (κόσμος) 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 (κόσμος) to condemn the world (κόσμος), but that the world (κόσμος) 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. (Jn. 3:16-18 NKJ)

The grammar and syntax logically depict God's offer of salvation is made to everyone in the *kosmos* of human habitation, which necessarily includes the realm of the dead.

1) "πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων" "everyone who is believing" (v. 16)

a) The phrase πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων is a present active participle: "everyone who is believing" logically permits those not believing now can do so later.

2) Christ's Sacrifice is of infinite worth as He is the "only begotten Son" of God.

a) The symmetry requires the sacrifice cover everyone in the entire *kosmos* and not limit it to certain times and certain spaces.

b) Divine purpose requires the opportunity to believe is available everywhere the unsaved are.

c) God's Love for His Son is infinite, He would not diminish His sacrifice by limiting it to some humans in time or space.

d) As Unbelief is the only ground for condemnation it is necessary the gospel be preached also to the dead so they can be judged and live according to God in the Spirit (1 Peter 4:6).

3) 1 John 2:2 explicitly states, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole [holos] world [kosmos]." The Greek word holos (Strong's 3650) means "all, whole, completely." This cannot mean merely "many" or "some," but rather affirms the comprehensive scope of Christ's atoning work. God's intention was to reconcile all of creation to Himself (cf. Col. 1:20), not just a subset of it.

4) Scripture affirms that God's redemptive reach extends even into the realm of the dead. John 5:25 declares, "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..."

END

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