

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

written by Alfred Persson | September 12, 2024



Scriptural Evidence of Universal Opportunity for Salvation in Jesus

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

Christ alone is the door to salvation. But what about those who lived before His time, or in places where His message was unknown? What hope exists for those who died without hearing of Him, including our family and friends? Is the Gospel truly good news for everyone?

The Bible shows that salvation through Jesus is universally accessible, encompassing both this life and the afterlife. The sacrifice of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8) was offered “once” at “the end of the ages” to cover the sins of all who lived from “the foundation of the world” (Heb. 9:26). Just as Christ’s one sacrifice is timeless and universally available, humanity faces an appointment with death followed by “a judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

This judgment includes those who have never heard the Gospel during their earthly lives. The apostle Peter affirms that the Gospel was preached “also to the dead” so that they might be judged according to God’s judgment of men in the flesh but live according to God in the Spirit (1 Pet. 4:6). This implies a postmortem opportunity for salvation, where the dead may respond to the Gospel message, and their final judgment reflects whether they received Christ’s sacrifice with a repentant heart.

Jesus Himself says that “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:25). Those who respond will come forth to “the resurrection of life” (John 5:28-29).

With this understanding the context becomes clear. Christ entered the eternal holy of holies in heaven and through the eternal Spirit life is given to the many who believe. Those who repent and embrace God’s Eternal Redemption then eagerly wait for Christ’s second to be raised up from Hades. Having passed the Judgment they now live according to God’s law enveloped by the Holy Spirit protected from the torments of Hades, waiting to be raised up with the church (1 Th. 4:13-17; 2 Th. 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:51-52)

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. 9:24-28 RPTe)

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)

This understanding of postmortem opportunity does not apply to those who knowingly reject Christ in this life. For them, no further chance exists (Heb. 6:4-8). Only ignorance of Christ’s identity invites divine mercy,

as suggested when He says, “anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him” (Mt. 12:32). Those who oppose the Son without full knowledge may find forgiveness even in the age to come, but deliberate rejection of the Spirit’s work remains unforgivable.

Salvation is exclusive to Christ, who declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). This doesn’t imply “luck” of birth or geography, for all will eventually hear the Gospel. When people die, they face a judgment where God, who “dwells in eternity,” applies the timeless sacrifice of Jesus to all who respond (Isa. 57:15; Mk. 10:27).

A Survey of Scriptures Supporting 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 5:28-29[#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]; Luke 16:19-31[#Z]; John 3:16-18[#ZA]

[#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 who can deliver from My hand.

40 For I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, I live forever.” (Deut. 32:39-40 KJV)

This passage, taken literally, affirms God’s absolute authority over life and death, including His power to restore life after death.

Keil and Delitzsch interpret this as a figurative statement about Israel’s national restoration:

“These words do not refer to the immortality of the soul, but to the restoration of the people of Israel, whom God had delivered up to death.” – Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). Commentary on the Old Testament (Vol. 1, p. 1002). Hendrickson.

However, the surrounding context does not support this view. Instead, it emphasizes God’s unique sovereignty over life and death and His role as the judge of those who worship false gods:

35 “Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot shall slip in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them.”

36 *"For the LORD will judge His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining, bond or free.*

37 *He will say: 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge?*

38 *Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, and be your refuge.'*

39 *'Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.*

40 *For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, "As I live forever,*

41 *If I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay those who hate Me.'"*

(Deut. 32:35-41 NKJ)

The context does not mention Israel's restoration but rather underscores God's authority to give and take life and His right to judge and forgive according to His will.

[#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)

This passage directly affirms God's power over life, death, and resurrection, indicating His authority to restore life from Sheol.

Hannah's praise continues to contrast the fate of the godly and the wicked, portraying the LORD as uniquely just, rewarding the faithful while silencing the wicked in darkness:

3 *"Boast no more so very proudly; do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and with Him actions are weighed.*

4 *"The bows of the mighty are shattered, but the feeble gird on strength.*

5 *"Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry cease to hunger. Even the barren gives birth to seven, but she who has many children languishes.*

6 *"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.*

7 *"The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.*

8 *"He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and He set the world on them.*

9 *"He keeps the feet of His godly ones, but the wicked are silenced in darkness; for not by might shall a man prevail.*

10 *"Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; against them He*

will thunder in the heavens; the LORD will judge the ends of the earth and give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed.” (1 Sam. 2:3-10 NASB)

This passage underscores God’s ultimate authority to judge and restore, rewarding the humble and righteous, while humbling the proud and wicked. Just as God sovereignly acts among the living, so also does He in Sheol.

[#C]

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

“For the waves of Death compassed me. The floods of Belial assailed me. The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of Death confronted me. 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)

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 LORD’s response to his cry demonstrates God’s power to save from the very grasp of death.

The language here vividly equates earthly deliverance with salvation from Sheol, implying that God indeed rescues from Sheol. This comparison would be incoherent and offensive if it were merely metaphorical and God did not actually deliver souls from Sheol.

Consider this analogy: imagine a Homeowner who never retrieves anything cast into the cellar. Praising him for care by likening it to retrieving things from the cellar would be absurd and even insulting, suggesting neglect rather than genuine concern.

In the same way, if God did not truly rescue from Sheol, comparing His earthly deliverance to Sheol’s release would misrepresent His power. Thus, the text affirms God’s real authority to save both in life’s trials and beyond death itself.

[#D]

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

“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 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)

This prophecy explicitly anticipates the resurrection of Christ, as

confirmed by Peter through the Holy Spirit:

“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. 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, 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)

David, as a prophet, placed his hope in the Messiah’s future victory over death. His confidence that his own soul would not be abandoned in Sheol is anchored in the certainty of Christ’s resurrection. This divine assurance enables David’s flesh to “rest in hope,” affirming a belief in his own eventual resurrection through Christ.

The notion of David “resting in hope” directly counters the idea that he anticipated a fate like Enoch’s or Elijah’s—who were taken without experiencing death. Instead, it signifies David’s expectation of resurrection, a hope that would be unnecessary for one translated directly to heaven.

Thus, the text supports the concept of postmortem salvation uniquely through Jesus Christ. David’s assurance of forgiveness and resurrection is entirely predicated on the future work of the Messiah, who would not see decay, but would rise, securing the same hope for David and all who trust in Him.

[#E]

You have brought up my soul from Sheol

“A Psalm of David. A song at the dedication of the temple. I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit. Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.” (Ps. 30:1-4 ESV)

This passage describes a vivid experience of deliverance where David, perhaps believing he actually died, was rescued from Sheol. He credits God not merely with temporary relief but with a true restoration to life, lifting him from the depths where the hopeless descend. Today this would be called an “After Death Experience”.

The Hebrew term חַיָּה (*chayah*) here, meaning “to restore to life,” underscores a literal return from the edge of death. Keil and Delitzsch confirm that *chayah* signifies reviving what has genuinely succumbed to death, not a metaphorical recovery. Thus, David’s words reflect an actual return from Sheol’s grasp, not just an emotional or figurative “rescue.”

Several scholars, including Hamilton, Longman, and Smith, less precisely interpret David's testimony as a near-death experience, wherein he felt himself slipping toward Sheol, a realm associated with finality and separation from God. This is further supported by descriptions in the Masoretic Text, identifying Sheol as "the pit"—the place where the damned go without hope of return (Ps. 28:1, Ps. 88:5).

To interpret David's statement as purely metaphorical would be to strip the passage of its force. Scripture's plain language would lose credibility if it praised God for actions that are not real. David's claim of literal deliverance from Sheol points directly to the belief in God's power to restore life even after death, affirming the concept of postmortem salvation.

If this event was solely a metaphor for earthly distress, the depth of David's praise would be misleading. True praise, as rendered here, implies a real experience, not symbolic survival. Therefore, David's account serves as theological evidence that postmortem salvation is indeed present in scripture, highlighting God's power to save even from Sheol itself.

[#F]

He also brought me up out of a horrible (07588 שׂוֹאֵן sha'own) pit (0953 בֹּרַחַב bowr), Out of the miry (03121 יָבֵן yaven) clay (02916 תֵּיטִי tiyt)

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. 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. 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. Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies." (Ps. 40:1-4 NKJ)

In this psalm, David's vivid imagery of the "horrible pit" and "miry clay" symbolizes the bleak and inescapable depths of Sheol, a place of desolation and separation from God. His deliverance from this "pit" conveys not just a rescue from physical danger but a profound salvation from death itself, as Jacobson and Tanner note, depicting burial and a return to life from Sheol. David's testimony reflects the hope for God's intervention even in the realm of the dead.

The rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai identified the "horrible pit" and "miry clay" as symbols for Gehenna, illustrating the depth of despair and lostness from which God rescues His faithful. David's deliverance emphasizes a belief in God's ability to save from the lowest depths, even beyond death, supporting the concept of postmortem redemption.

The "new song" that David sings, often associated with salvation in Scripture, marks his restored life and renewed spirit, affirming God's power over death. This "new song" in the context of Messianic hope (Ps.

40:6-10; Heb. 10:5-9) becomes a song of salvation in Christ, the Rock upon which David's faith and resurrection hope are founded (Rev. 5:9; 14:3).

David's personal deliverance is not only a testament to God's power but a witness to others: "Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD." The term רָאָה (*ra'ah*), meaning "to see" or "to perceive," implies a deep recognition of God's saving power, prompting reverence and faith in those who witness it. Through David's experience, others turn from lies to trust in God's truth, underscoring that salvation through divine deliverance is available even to those in despair.

In conclusion, David's rescue from the "horrible pit" serves as both a literal testimony of deliverance and a theological affirmation of resurrection hope and postmortem salvation, with the "Rock" foreshadowing Christ as the foundation of this ultimate redemption.

[#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 deliverance of the righteous from Sheol is taught in this context.

Sheol imprisons forever only the unrighteous. Eternal death rules over them, as they continue to waste away. But the righteous are redeemed from Sheol, God receives them into His presence. Whereas defeat before Death befalls the rich, the righteous will be victorious over him. Unlike eternal night for the wicked, the righteous will see "morning." His form is not consumed by Sheol, becoming a shade of his former self (Isa. 26:14 RSV). The Lord will redeem the righteous from Sheol.

If God does not deliver the righteous from Sheol the statement is both incoherent and potentially offensive.

To illustrate this point: Imagine a Homeowner who never retrieves anything cast into the cellar. Now, imagine a friend praising the Homeowner saying, "His concern for others is just like how he treats everything cast into the cellar." This so-called "praise" would not only be nonsensical, but it could also be taken as an insult, implying indifference or neglect rather than care.

Therefore, postmortem deliverance from Sheol is taught in this context.

[#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)

Prophet David describes Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem to dwell among His people in the End Time after His ascension into heaven (Joh. 20:17; Ac. 1:9-11). Paul's Midrash reveals this prophecy's dual fulfillment expanding on David's "to GOD ("Yahweh, Jesus") the Lord belong escapes from death". The postmortem opportunity for salvation exclusive to those who respond to Christ's preaching with "the answer of a good conscience to God" (1 Pet. 3:18-22; 4:5-6; comp. John 5:25-27; Heb. 9:27-28).

Rabbinic Midrash often changes pronouns and wording for interpretive reasons. Here "You" becomes " He" because Paul interprets this as a Messianic prophecy. After Armageddon the conquered pay tribute to the King that is passed on to His people, but in the first fulfillment the Ascended Christ Triumphant blesses His church with apostles prophets

teachers etc. to prepare the people “that God might dwell there”.

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 taught here because this is a prayer for deliverance before death.

[#K]

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

You, who have shown me great and severe troubles (06869 טַסָּרָה tsarah), Shall revive (02421 חַיָּה chayah) me again, And bring me up again from the depths of the earth. (Ps. 71:20 NKJ)

A few translations read “us” rather than “me”, rejecting the marginal reading:

Thou, who hast showed us many and sore troubles, Wilt quicken us again, And wilt bring us up again from the depths of the earth. (Ps. 71:20 ASV)

Surprisingly the perspective shifts from “me” [personally] to “us” [as a nation], impacting who is likely speaking. Most translations chose marginal reading “me” (KJV, LXX), not “us” (ASV). If “me” is accepted,

David is likely speaking as the anonymous old man. A few Hebrew manuscripts group Psalm 70 and 71 there are parallels with David's psalms (cp. Ps. 71:12; 70:2; 40:14). It begins like Psalm 31 and closes like Psalm 35. That David wrote this as an old man who still played the lute is possible. (Ps. 71:22-24).

David is recalling God rewarded his patience and faith during the "troubles" (06869 תַּסְרַח tsarah) God showed him (Ps. 116:3) because of his sin. God's mercy and love inspires confidence He will again quicken his soul bringing him up from the depths of Sheol (Ps. 30:2-4).

David speaking for himself cites past postmortem salvation for confidence God will again revive him. Anonymous speaking for the nation cites God past deliverance of Israel as reason to trust He "will quicken us again...raising us from the depths of the earth". Either way, postmortem salvation is implicit.

[#L]

You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol

8 Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; Nor are there any works like Your works.

9 All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name.

10 For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.

11 Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.

12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore.

13 For great is Your mercy toward me, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. (Ps. 86:8-13 NKJ)

Pertinent to our search for Postmortem Opportunity is the transition from prayer to praise for "Wonderous Acts" of salvation in the heart of the earth (Ps. 74:12) none of the "gods" can do:

Affirmation of the incomparable sovereignty of Yahweh (86:8–13). These verses...sets forth the incomparable nature of the lordship of Yahweh, using language found in other contexts as well (e.g., on v 8, see Exod 15:11; Deut 3:24; Ps 35:10; for v 9, see Isa 2:3–4; 66:18–19; Zech 14:9, 16; 2 Kgs 19:15, 19; Neh 9:6; Jer 16:19, Tob 13:11; 14:6; Pss 66:4; 22:28–29; for v 10, see Pss 72:18; 77:14–15; 83:19. Yahweh is declared to be a "Worker of Wonders," one who does acts of deliverance and salvation which lie beyond human powers (cf. Ps 9:2). Brueggemann...proposes to translate תַּסְרַח ("wonders") as "impossibilities," arguing for a faith tradition involving the word תַּסְרַח especially manifest in Gen 18:1–15, Judg 13:1–20, and Jer 32:16–35, and reflected in numerous references in the Psalms (e.g., 72:18; 78:4, 11, 12, 32; 96:3; 98:1; 111:4; 139:14; 145:5; also 105:2, 5; 106:7, 22; 107:8, 15, 21, 24, 31; 136:4). He contends that the varied usages of תַּסְרַח

point to acts of God, or potential acts, which “challenge accepted definitions of reality”... Yahweh is without a peer among the gods, and he cannot be confined within the parameters of normal life. He is the “Worker of Wondrous Impossibilities,” the one who gives hope to the hopeless, and the one who destroys the pretensions of those who think themselves secure from judgment.”-Tate, M. E. (1998). *Psalms 51–100* (Vol. 20, pp. 381–382). Word, Incorporated.

It is impossible God the “Worker of Wonders” among the gods is being praised for what He literally does not do, therefore He literally saves repentant sinners from Sheol (cp. Ps. 30:1-4; 40:1-4; 71:20 &c.).

[#M]

To release those appointed to death.

16 For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory.
17 He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, And shall not despise their prayer.
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. 102:16-22 NKJ)

This context does not suggest postmortem salvation. It is a Messianic prophecy of Christ’s Parousia, His second coming when “Yahweh shall build up Zion; He shall appear in glory...to release...those appointed to death” (Ps. 102:16, 20; Mt. 24:30-31). This is written about the NT Church (Jew and Gentile) to come, a people yet to be created to declare the name of Yahweh in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem when the peoples are gathered together and the kingdoms serve the LORD.

[#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 (04672 מַצָּא mattsá) trouble and sorrow.
4 Then I called (07121 קָרָא qará) 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. Prophet David recalls his "Near Death" or "After Death" salvation experience (Ps. 30:2-4; 71:20; 86:13) confessing he loves God because God loved him first hearing his voice. Jewish scholars of the apostolic era understood David's switching to the future tense in the verbs *אמצא* (Emtsa, "I find") and *אקרא* (Ekra, "I call") (Ps. 116:3-4) implied David applied his postmortem salvation experience to future generations on judgment Day:

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.

אמצא m. (*אמצא*) saving, delivery. Pes. 118a *אמצא* *אמצא* *אמצא* 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.

The following, as illustrating the views held by the Rabbis of the Apostolic age on the duration of the punishment of the wicked in gehenna, will be deemed opportune and important.

b. Tradition records: The school of Shamai (who flourished as the opponent of Hillel immediately before the Christian era) say: There will be three divisions on the Day of Judgment (when the dead will revive. Rashi). The perfectly wicked (whose demerits preponderate. Rashi); the perfectly just (whose merits preponderate. Idem); and the intermediate class (whose merits and demerits are evenly balanced. Idem). The first will be inscribed and sealed at once to gehenna; the second will be inscribed and sealed at once to life eternal (Olam. Da. 12:2); and the third will descend into gehenna, and keep sinking and rising; as it is said (see Zec. 13:9; 1 Sa. 2:6, only for "grave" read sheol).

c. The school of Hillel (endorsing the above teaching) add (with reference to the intermediate division), that abounding mercy will incline the scale on the side of mercy; and that David had them in view when he composed Ps. 116. Since, adds Rashi, their merits and demerits are evenly balanced, mercy will incline the scale towards acquittal, and they will no more descend into gehenna (where they will have been from

the time of their decease). Hershon, P. I. (1883). *Genesis: With a Talmudical Commentary* (p. 27). Samuel Bagster and 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)

Postmortem salvation, deliverance from death and the grave explicitly stated. Keil and Delitzsch reject changing the text to make this statement a question:

Hos. 13:14. But in order to preserve believers from despair, the Lord announces in v. 14 that He will nevertheless redeem His people from the power of death. V. 14. “Out of the hand of hell will I redeem them; from death will I set them free! Where are thy plagues, O death? where thy destruction, O hell! Repentance is hidden from mine eyes.” The fact that this verse contains a promise, and not a threat, would hardly have been overlooked by so many commentators, if they had not been led, out of regard to vv. 13, 15, to put force upon the words, and either take the first clauses as interrogative, “Should I ... redeem?” (Calvin and others), or as conditional, “I would redeem them,” with “si resipiscerent” (supplied (Kimchi, Sal. b. Mel. Ros., etc.)). But apart from the fact that the words supplied are perfectly arbitrary, with nothing at all to indicate them, both of these explanations are precluded by the sentences which follow: for the questions, “Where are thy plagues, O death?” etc., are obviously meant to affirm the conquest or destruction of hell and death. And this argument retains its force even if we take אֶפְרַיִם as an optative from אֶפְרַיִם, without regard to v. 10, since the thought, “I should like to be thy plague, O death,” presupposes that deliverance from the power of death is affirmed in what comes before. But, on account of the style of address, we cannot take אֶפְרַיִם even as an interrogative, in the sense of “Should I be,” etc. And what would be the object of this gradation of thought, if the redemption from death were only hypothetical, or were represented as altogether questionable? If we take the words as they stand, therefore, it is evident that they affirm something more than deliverance when life is in danger, or preservation from 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 cessation or annihilation of death is expressed still more forcibly in the triumphant words: “Where are thy plagues (pestilences), O death? where thy destruction, O hell?” of which Theodoret has aptly observed, παιανίζειν κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου κελεύει. אֶפְרַיִם is an intensive plural of debher,

plague, pestilence, and is to be explained in accordance with Ps. 91:6, where we also find the synonym מַדְבָּח in the form מַדְבָּח, pestilence or destruction. 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. We must not restrict the substance of this promise, however, to the ultimate issue of the redemption, in which it will receive its complete fulfilment. The suffixes attached to 'ephdēm and 'eg'âlēm point to Israel of the ten tribes, like the verbal suffixes in v. 8. Consequently the promised redemption from death must stand in intimate connection with the threatened destruction of the kingdom of Israel. Moreover, the idea of the resurrection of the dead was by no means so clearly comprehended in Israel at that time, as that the prophet could point believers to it as a ground of consolation when the kingdom was destroyed. The only meaning that the promise had for the Israelites of the prophet's day, was that the Lord possessed the power even to redeem from death, and raise Israel from destruction into newness of life; just as Ezekiel (Ezek. 37) depicts the restoration of Israel as the giving of life to the dry bones that lay scattered about the field. The full and deeper meaning of these words was but gradually unfolded to believers under the Old Testament, and only attained complete and absolute certainty for all believers through the actual resurrection of Christ.-Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). Commentary on the Old Testament (Vol. 10, pp. 104–105). Hendrickson.

[#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)

If God doesn't deliver souls from Sheol, prophet Jonah praising Him for doing precisely that would be incoherent, and disrespectful. Therefore, postmortem opportunity for repentance and salvation is explicitly in Jonah's metaphor of his deliverance.

Unlike modern scholars, Jewish Scholarship of Christ's Day didn't question the reality of Sheol, or deliverance from it. In fact the Rabbis identified another name for a section of 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. (Zech. 9:9-12 NKJ)

Post Mortem Opportunity explicitly stated in this Telescoped Messianic Prophecy of Christ's First and Second Coming during which the dead in Christ are raised up to be in the Lord's presence, in Zion.

Like the Quentin Tarantino movie "Pulp Fiction" scenes past and future suddenly appear without transition. The first coming of Christ "on a donkey" (John 12:14-16) opens the scene, but then flashforwards to Christ Triumphant; then goes back in time to His Second coming when the Dead in Christ are raised up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58), set free from the pit of Hades where there is no water (Lk. 16:24) because the New Covenant in Christ's blood (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25) sets them free (Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Pet. 4:5-6; John 5:28-29; Heb. 12:23-24). Reigning as Kings and priests with Christ (Rev. 1:5-7; 5:9-10; 20:4-6) is like being given a double portion because Levitical priests were considered the "firstborn" (Num. 3:41); firstborn receive a double portion (Deut. 21:17).

Likely Paul had this prophecy in mind when declaring: "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)

All who knowingly oppose Christ are opposed to Christ and can't be forgiven: All knowingly against Jesus who is God the Son are also committing ETERNAL SIN, just as those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit. But those who blaspheme the "Son of Man" see only Jesus' human flesh, and therefore can be forgiven:

Sins committed in ignorance can be forgiven (Heb. 5:2; 9:7; 1 Tim. 1:13; Lev. 5:18; Ez. 45:20; Lk. 12:48). That is why blasphemy against the Son of Man whose Incarnate Deity is veiled by Human Flesh can be forgiven. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven as His Deity was fully revealed in the miracles Jesus did.

Ignorance of Christ determines if one belongs to the "many" whose sins are covered by His eternal sacrifice (Heb. 9:26-28). The timing of this forgiveness begins at Christ's Second Coming when He appears to those eagerly waiting for Him for salvation which is when "the age to come" (ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι Mt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21) begins:

Ὁ αἰὼν μέλλων, the period that succeeds the coming of the Messiah, οὐρανὸν οὐρανῶν, as Jesus understood it: the time that follows the second coming."-Meyer, H. A. W. (1880). Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the

Gospel of Matthew (F. Crombie, Ed.; P. Christie, Trans.; Vol. 1, p. 342). T&T Clark.

At Christ's second coming those "in the grave" who died in ignorance of Christ are forgiven "every sin and blasphemy" and if they obey the gospel of Christ preached "also" to them they will be "judged according to men in the flesh" covered by the sacrifice of Christ for sins and rise in the resurrection to life when Christ appears "a second time...for salvation" (John 5:28-29; 1 Pet. 4:5-6; Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:23, 51-57).

This excludes all who committed eternal sins like blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Mt. 12:32), stumbling one of God's children (Mk. 9:42-48), accepting the Mark of the Beast or worshipping him (Rev. 14:9-11).

Therefore, this context teaches postmortem opportunity for salvation.

[#S]

**all that are in the graves shall hear his voice (ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς),
And shall come forth; they that have done (ποιήσαντες aorist participle)
good, unto the resurrection of life**

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 says the "dead" whether living or in the graves will pass "from death unto life", emphatically declaring there is postmortem opportunity for salvation.

“For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he will” (John 5:21).”

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 while still alive. But the scope of Jesus’ proclamation applies also to those still “in the grave”:

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.

<https://endtimenews.net/the-gates-of-hell-could-not-stop-jesus-from-preaching-eternal-life/>

[#T]

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.”

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. 11:25-36 NKJ)

Postmortem salvation for Israel occurs at Christ's second coming, when God will show mercy on those who died "disobedient" "enemies of the gospel". Just like their gentile brethren all who repented and believed are saved.

[#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 Noah preaching to his generation, the eight souls saved from being buried in the water caused Peter to compare it to 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).

The entire relates the postmortem evangelization and salvation of at least some of the "spirits in prison".

[#V]

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

5 οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἑτοίμῳ ἔχοντι κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς.
[those]-who will-give an-account to-the ready one-who-is to-judge the-living and the-dead.

6 Εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη,
For this-[reason] because also to-those-who-are-dead the-gospel-was-preached,

ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκί,
so-that they-were-judged {indeed} according-to men in-the-flesh,

ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.
they-may-live but according-to God in-the-spirit.

-The Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament (1 Pe 4:5-6). (2008). Bracketed "{indeed}" mine.

Postmortem evangelism with possible salvation was literally stated.

Νεκροῖς must be taken in the obvious sense of the word; they were dead at the time when the announcement was made. Further, it must have the same sense as in ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, that is to say, it must include all the dead, not merely those who perished in the Flood. Εὐηγγελίσθη is impersonal; but, if St. Peter had meant that the agent was any other than Christ, he must have said so expressly. The difference of tense in κριθῶσι, ζῶσι, makes the former verb antecedent in time to the latter, and the sense is the same as if St. Peter had written ἵνα κριθέντες ζῶσι. ... Thus we get a complete antithesis, κριθῶσι answering to ζῶσι, κατὰ ἀνθρώπους to κατὰ θεόν, σαρκί to πνεύματι. Life like God in spirit is blessed life; the object of the preaching was the salvation of the dead; but St. Peter does not say, and probably does not mean, that the object was in all cases attained. The idea seems to be that God will not judge any man finally till the whole truth has been revealed to him.-

Bigg, C. (1901). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (pp. 170–171). T&T Clark International.

Judged according to men in the flesh; live according to God in the Spirit

The good news has even been preached to the dead, so that after they have been judged for what they have done in this life, their spirits will live with God.-CEV

After giving an account to God for their evil speaking (1 Pet. 4:4-6) the gospel is preached again when dead dispelling all delusion and ignorance of liability, they are judged indeed according to their deeds done in the flesh (Luke 16:22-24; Rev. 20:12-13), but those who responded to the preaching “with the answer of a good conscience towards God” (1 Pet. 3:21) then were “made alive by the Spirit” (ζωοποιηθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι 1 Pet. 3:18) “in Whom also” (ἐν ᾧ καὶ 1 Pet. 3:19) they “lived according to God’s rules” while they eagerly waited for Christ’s second appearing for salvation (Heb. 9:27-28).

The animating power of the Holy Spirit reversed their becoming mere shades of themselves in Hades/Sheol (Job 26:5; Isa. 14:9-10; 26:14), living in the Spirit unaffected by the torments of hell while waiting for Christ to save them at His Second Coming with the rest 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). Christ as the firstfruits in effect shows the way even for those who died unsaved but then believed (1 Cor. 15:23; Rev. 1:5).

If we diligently apply Ockham’s Razor reams of competing interpretation is cut, the above interpretation alone survives. The cognitive dissonance this text has generated is truly astounding.

[#W]

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

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. 5:5 NKJ)

Post-mortem opportunity to repent after death and be saved at Christ’s coming is explicit in this text.

“Destruction of the flesh” results in death. “Day of the Lord Jesus” is when the church is raptured at His “second appearing” (Heb. 9:28; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Rev. 14:12-16; 20:4-6).

[#X]

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

27 Inasmuch as (καθ’ ὅσον) it is appointed for men to die once, and

after this, judgment (μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις) (Heb. 9:27 Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament)

“Inasmuch as” (καθ’ ὅσον comp. Heb. 3:3; 7:20) is causal, its because humans die and are then judged Jesus offered Himself *that He may put away the sins since the foundation of the world* (1 Jo. 2:2; 4:14; John 1:9, 29; 4:42; 11:51-52; 12:32; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Col. 1:20).

The classic interpretation violates Occam’s Razor adding “The” and “Final” to the text to interpret this as “The Final Judgment”.

Moreover, it’s a generalization fallacy to claim this “Judgment” is for the “glorification of those who eagerly wait” when Hebrews 9:28 says they wait “for salvation” and these are not the same thing as Romans 8:30 proves. Also forgotten is the elegant fact Christians eagerly wait for Christ before they die once. Having been saved to the uttermost when they believed (1 Th. 2:16) they aren’t subjected to a *krisis* judgment if they are saved death (cp. 2 Th. 1:5-6) but pass through the heavens into the presence of God Himself (2 Cor. 5:6-8). All who believe in Christ before they died once have passed from death into life and do not come under the *krisis* Hebrews 9:27 judgment:

“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)

The proposition a “particular judgment” occurs for the unsaved after they “die once” is not far from universal belief. Throughout Christendom (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant [Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Reformed, Presbyterian] believe there is a “Particular Judgment” that occurs immediately after death, as it did with the Rich Man in Christ’s parable.

After life is done, there is no living it over again a few more times; what awaits each one at death is God’s verdict, either acquittal or condemnation; κρίσις is a vox media.

*To say that this pronouncement of judgment comes only at the time of the final judgment at the end of the world contradicts Scripture. No one needs to wait until the last day to know God’s verdict; he receives it at the instant of death. Death also at once places his soul into either heaven or hell; the verdict is executed at once. To think of anything else erases the correspondence with Christ’s death, for he does not wait until the last day to learn God’s judgment regarding his sacrifice.- Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). *The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James* (p. 319). Lutheran Book Concern.*

Lenski illustrates the common belief in Christendom about a “particular judgment” when people die. But he errs thinking it parallels the “final judgment”. Some of those who pass this judgment will be inscribed in the

“book of life”, and only those raised from Hades whose names are not found written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15 compare John 5:28-29).

To sum up, the classic interpretation this refers to the final judgment violates the context. Chronologically, the context puts some of these who were judged before Christ’s Second coming and its not for glorification, but “for salvation (Heb. 9:27). Parsimony is again violated when the words “the” or “Final” judgment are read into the text when the words don’t appear in the Greek. Moreover, the correspondence with Christ’s death rules out Him waiting for the last day to learn God’s Judgment regarding His sacrifice.

With the above in view, lets reread the near context:

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. (Heb. 9:24-26 RPTTE)

27 Inasmuch as (καθ’ ὅσον) it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment (μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις)

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. 9:24-28 Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament)

Universal Opportunity for Salvation clearly extended to everyone born since the foundation of the world after they “die once” and undergo “judgment”.

Unlike the temporally and geographically limited Old Covenant, the New Covenant “has made the first obsolete” (Heb. 8:12). Unlike the Old Covenant whose earthly sacrifices for the sins of the people and priests had to be repeated often “Christ came as High Priest...of the greater...tabernacle...not of this creation...and with His own blood entered the Most Holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption...through the eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:1-23).

Corresponding to the High Priest who went alone offering sacrifices “for himself and for the peoples sins committed in ignorance” which was “symbolic for the present time” Christ as High Priest entered “the greater and more perfect tabernacle” so through the Eternal Spirit all who died in ignorance of the Gospel of Christ could be saved (Heb. 9:7-15).

7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not

without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;

8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.

9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—

10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,

14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Heb. 9:7-15 NKJ)

The New Covenant flows from Christ in the Most Holy and therefore transcends time and space. Unlike the old covenant on earth where sacrifice for sin was repeated often, Christ offers Himself once at the end of the age and need not suffer repeatedly "since the foundation of the world" to cover all born into it:

24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

25 nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own.

26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. 9:24-26 NAS)

Therefore, all who repent and believe the gospel of Christ that is preached "also" to the dead (1 Pet. 4:5-6; comp. 1 Pet. 3:18-22) pass the judgment and eagerly wait for Christ's Second coming for salvation from the dead (Heb. 9:27-28).

[#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).

The "book of the living" (Ps. 69:28) is also called "the Book of Life" (Rev. 20:12, 15). In Revelation 20:12 multiple books are opened listing the names of those who would be added or not added to the book of life. This implies the existence of the Book of the Undetermined who had chosen Salvation, and the Book of the Wicked who were unyielding in their rejection of Salvation. Then the Book of Life is opened to write in the names listed in the Book of the Righteous so they too will be saved. As for those listed in the Book of the Wicked, as they are not found in the Book of life they are cast into the Lake of Fire.

This is 1st century Jewish belief, not something I made up. In the Jewish Talmud we learn three classes of People appear on Judgment Day: The Righteous, the Wicked, and the "Middling People".

[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 reasoning is direct: The Thoroughly Righteous are in the book of the living; The Middling who do righteousness in the book of the righteous; Those blotted out of the book of the living, and not inscribed in the book of the righteous, must end up in the book of the Wicked.

The Book of the Middling who choose Righteousness is described here:

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.

17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."

18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him. (Mal. 3:16-18 NKJ)

The tripartite view in Judaism, which classifies humanity into the Righteous (Tzaddikim), the Middling (Beinonim), and the Unrighteous (Resha'im), is rooted in various scriptures and is further elaborated upon in rabbinic literature and Talmudic discussions was the prevailing view in the days of Jesus (Luke 2:6) and Paul (Acts 23:6; 26:3). Given how it overturns Calvinistic Reprobation (which requires a binary view), Jesus may have considered it "treasure":

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)

[#Z]

If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded.

This prophecy the Pharisees would not heed resurrected Lazarus was fulfilled shortly after the parable was spoken (John 12:9-11), but this parable still sheds light on the intermediate state of the dead who were judged liable for sins done in the flesh. It cannot be cited as proof of postmortem salvation because its focus is on events immediately after death and not beyond. However, in the symbolism is more than enough proof the rich man was likely paying for sins done in the flesh but would eventually be redeemed from Hades.

1)His demeanor is not that of a wicked eternally condemned man, he does

not blaspheme either Abraham, Lazarus or God even when he doesn't get what he asked for.

2) Abraham calls him "son...child" displaying affection which implies the rich man is not irredeemably wicked.

3) Both Abraham and many redeemed with him WANT to cross over into Hades to lessen the torment of the rich man. That would be rebellion against God's Judgment and therefore implies the rich man ultimately would be saved.

4) The symbolic language implies a "torment" with a goal beyond retributive justice:

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).

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. 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.

[#ZA]

that the world (2889 κόσμος kosmos) through Him might be saved.

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)

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole (3650 ὅλος world (2889 κόσμος kosmos). (1 Jn. 2:2 NKJ)

3650 ὅλος holos

Meaning: 1) all, whole, completely.-Strong’s Concordance

It would be unbalanced God trade the infinite value of Christ’s sacrifice only for the lucky few born after the 1st century in nations where the gospel was preached, forsaking billions of potential believers from Adam and Eve onward. The opportunity to be saved by Christ’s sacrifice is extended to the entire Cosmos.

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.” The Cosmos includes the realm of the dead. Christ’s atoning sacrifice is available to the “whole world” not just part of it. Therefore, it is impossible the infinite sacrifice of 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)

Chronology of Judgments/Resurrections

Paul's summary of main events will be followed by a more detailed list:

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (1 Cor. 15:20-26 NKJ)

During Christ's Second Coming just before He enters Jerusalem all the dead in Christ, whether they came with Him or rise from Hades, take part in the First Resurrection-Rapture of the Church (Heb. 9:28; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:5, 15:51-54; Rev. 14:12-16; 20:4-6).

When Christ enters Jerusalem judgment begins first with the House of God. All the Sheep and Goats of Christendom from every nation, who weren't born again are judged if they came to the aid of Christ's brethren during the Great Tribulation. The Sheep who did vicariously "receive Christ" join the kings and priests seated with Christ receiving a "supernatural body" just like Christ and His brethren have. The goats who did nothing to aid persecuted Christians are cast into Gehenna Fire (Mt. 25:31-46; 13:36-42).

Immediately after or perhaps during that judgment Christ's angels gather all the irredeemably wicked and followers of the Beast and cast them into Gehenna fire (Mt. 13:47-50).

The rest of humanity enter Christ's millennial Kingdom unchanged except they do not grow old or get sick. They repopulate the earth and Christ's brethren reign over them as kings and priests for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6).

Satan is released from his prison to deceive the earth once more; God sends them such a strong delusion (2 Th. 2:11) like hooks drawing Gog and

Magog to their doom (Rev. 20:1-10; Ezek. 38:4; 39:2) Fire from heaven consumes them implying they are cast into Gehenna fire, aka "Lake of Fire".

Yahweh God in Compound Unity sits in the Great White Throne but it is Jesus Christ God the Son who does the judging.

The first is a judgment of the survivors of the Millennial Kingdom. If their deeds and works merit their names being written into the book of life.

Then the Rich Man and all still in hades rise and if they repented after being purged of all wickedness and with their restored free will choose to obey Christ as LORD, their names are then written in the book of life.

But the irredeemably wicked are not written into the book of life and so are cast into Gehenna Fire, also known as the Lake of Fire. It is the second death from which there is no return.

The wicked cast into the lake of fire must have been the majority raised from hades as the vision of them being cast into the lake of fire is emphasized by John (Rev. 20:15).

All found written in the book of life during the Great White Throne judgment eye are given immortal supernatural bodies and join Christ and His brethren as they enter the New Heavens and New Earth. New Jerusalem descends onto the earth and God dwells among mankind, He in us and we in Him (Rev. 21-22).

ADDENDUM

A theory why most of the Christian Church lost this first century concept of salvation after death.

The Gentile Church became confused about eschatology when Aramaic Palestinian Jews vanished from it. The Roman Empire dispersed that culture, only a remnant of Jews remembered what it was. Many uniquely Jewish concepts became unknown.

We see the change when Christian scholar Clement of Alexandria (150-215), who retired to live with the Bishop of the Jerusalem at the end of his life, says:

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 Catholic doctrine of Purgatory is a corruption of early Jewish Christian concepts that saw Hades as an intermediate place for the dead that wasn't necessarily a place of punishment but rather a shadowy realm where souls awaited their final fate. First Century Palestinian Jews believed the dead could undergo purification or purgation in preparation for their eventual resurrection or judgment. NT scripture is in agreement plainly stating the dead will rise from Hades and it will cease to exist:

*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)*

Christ our Teacher (Mt. 23:8) agrees:

*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)

All the dead "in the graves" who obediently "hear" God's voice will rise in "the resurrection of life" but those who do not "hear" obediently will rise "to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:25, 29).

It is written:

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. 3:3 NKJ)

Levi's descendants are God's first fruits (Num. 3:41), as God does for them He will do for all who obey the gospel preached ALSO to the dead that they may live according to God (1 Pet. 4:6):

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)

For there is no partiality with God (Rom. 2:11 NKJ)

The reason why the “Book of Life” is open during the Great White Throne Judgment is to write the names of those redeemed from Hades in it:

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 the teaching of the school of Hillel in Christ’s day:

[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].

“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*

It is inconsistent with sound hermeneutic exegetes ignore 1st century Jewish Tradition, which Paul the apostle was immersed in (Acts 23:6; 26:4-6) and some of which our LORD Jesus described as “treasure”:

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)

If everything the Pharisees taught was wrong Jesus would have said so. Instead, we read:

*1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,
2 saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.
3 “Therefore **whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do (Matt. 23:1-3 NKJ)***

A likely reason for God using Paul to write most of the NT was his expertise in 1st century Judaism:

*6 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men and brethren, **I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!**” (Acts 23:6; 26:4-6)*

*4 “So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem;
5 since they have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify, that **I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.***

6 “And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; (Acts 26:4-6 NAS)

This 1st century Jewish context sheds light on Paul’s statement “All [obedient] Israel” would be saved, even those who had died “enemies of the Gospel” will find mercy. Repentance and redemption is implied:

*26 and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “**The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.**”*

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

*28 **From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;***

*29 **for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.***

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

*31 so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you **they also may now be shown mercy.***

*32 **For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. (Rom. 11:26-32 NAS)***

All who repent and believe, of course.

End

Does the Lake of Fire Symbolize Eternal Torment for all cast into it?
Predestination unto Salvation: Was Divine Election Conditional or
Unconditional?