

Critical Rejection of “No Second Chance After Death” by Dr. Ron Rhodes

written by Alfred Persson | September 7, 2023



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

No Second Chance After Death

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

Dr. Rhodes will be contradicted after each statement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 For Your righteousness, 0 God, reaches to the heavens, You who have

done great things; O God, who is like You?

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

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

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

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

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

25 “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when **the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.**

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

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

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

29 “and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Jn. 5:25-29 NKJ)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. (Rom. 11:25-32 NKJ)

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

by the Spirit,
19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, (1 Pet. 3:18-19 NKJ)

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

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

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

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

10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) (Eph. 4:8-10 NKJ)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 “For God so loved the world (2889 κόσμος kosmos) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 “For God did not send His Son into the world (2889 κόσμος kosmos) to condemn the world (2889 κόσμος kosmos) , but that the world (2889 κόσμος

kosmos) through Him might be saved.

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:16-18 NKJ)

John 3:16-18 delivers a powerful message of love and redemption: ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.’

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

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

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

Is there a second chance after death?

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

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and

none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

(Rev. 20:13-15 NKJ)

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

1.) We would expect an irredeemably wicked man would curse both Abraham and Lazarus for refusing to help him. Instead, he shows great reverence

for “Father Abraham” and selfless concern for his family (Luke 16:27).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is even more evident in Hebrews 9:27, which assures us that “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.” We live once, die once, and are judged once. The idea of a second chance cannot be forced into this verse.

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

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,
28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. **To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.** (Heb. 9:27-10:1 NKJ)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

of them, according to what they had previously done on earth.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hebrews 9:27 says judgment happens immediately after death:

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

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

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

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

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

18 Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

19 in which also he went and preached (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) unto the spirits in prison, (1 Pet. 3:18-19 ASV)

It is therefore no wonder that the apostle Paul spoke to the Corinthians

with such urgency: “Now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). No one should wait to respond to the gospel, for death could come at any time (see Ecclesiastes 9:12).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such a view is untenable...

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

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

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

of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
19 To proclaim (2784 κηρύσσω kerusso) the acceptable year of the LORD.”
20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.
21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Lk. 4:18-21 NKJ)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That begs the question what happens to those who never had a “first

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

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

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

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

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

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

The clearer verses teach that our decision for or against Christ is made during this one life on earth. For example:• The rich man, suffering in agony, was given no second chance after he died (Luke 16:19-31).

• *“It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). This verse alone negates any possibility of a second chance.*

• *The Lord knows how “to keep the unrighteous [dead] under punishment*

until the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:9, insert added for clarification). This verse indicates that the Lord is keeping the wicked dead in spirit prison until the future great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). No mention is made of a second chance.

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

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

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

What About The Love Of God?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now is the day of salvation!

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

- What Happens After Life: 21 Amazing Revelations About Heaven and Hell (Harvest House Publishers, 2014).*
- The Big Book of Bible Answers (Harvest House Publishers, 2013).*
- Commonly Misunderstood Bible Verses (Harvest House Publishers, 2008).*

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