

# The RESURRECTIONS From the Dead

**According to Hebrews 6, the 'Resurrection from the Dead' is identified as one of six Fundamental Christian Doctrines. To fully fathom this Essential Truth, we need to examine carefully other Resurrection chapters: John 5 and Revelation 20.**

From the earliest times, the people who knew God had a general awareness of a most unbelievable phenomenon, that of a personal resurrection from the dead. Even the pre-Mosaic patriarch, Job, was certain that he would rise from the grave in the distant future, to personally meet God. *"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."* Not only that there is to be a resurrection, but that there is to be a 'judgment'! *"Be afraid of the sword for yourselves; For wrath brings the punishment of the sword, That you may know there is a judgment"*. (Job 19:25-29) (NKJ)

Though the resurrection from the dead is a well known and widely professed belief in the Christian world, few can present in detail the relative timing and the purpose of this enigmatic phenomenon. Though Christ's resurrection is presented as an absolute essential to the faith, how our personal resurrection factors into the redemptive process remains infinitely harder for most believers to explain. After all, if once the believer, having died in Christ, is consigned to his 'eternal reward', what possible need would there be thereafter for a restoration to life? What purpose is there for **any** resurrection from the dead? Why do places like 1 Corinthians 15 and Hebrews 6 present the fact of the resurrection as being an essential component of belief? The Scriptures are far from silent on this matter.

## A Personal Application?

In many churches, the idea of a personal resurrection from the dead, though given lip service, is a relatively minor component. Upon decease, they

see each person assigned to either of two eternal destinations. There they spend eternity. One in a state of bliss, the other under excruciating torment!

## Why is a Resurrection Necessary?

At what point in time, and for what imaginable purpose, are individuals restored to life, with their conscious mentalities reunited with their physical form? For that matter, why are the Saints of God assigned immortal Spirit Bodies.<sup>1</sup> Does one need one in order to attain entrance into Heaven? Do those consigned to that other place need to be changed to anything in order to go there? And, why does this investiture happen all together, at a specific moment in time? (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:52) Being given a Spirit Body does not happen sequentially, just as each person dies, as traditional theology requires, but rather all together in a single moment in time! Can modern Theology answer this?

One can easily see why the Christian community is uncomfortable with major elements of the Doctrine of the Resurrections from the Dead.

## More Than One Resurrection?

Further complicating the picture is the explicitly clear Biblical statements that there are to be more than just one resurrection! *"But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."* (NKJ) (Re. 20:5) So, what is this 'thousand years' and how does it factor into the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead? That contingent of Bible

<sup>1</sup> 1Cor. 15:35 thru 54 *"...we shall not all sleep, but we all shall be changed – in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last Trumpet. For the Trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed..."*

students who can provide a viable explanation at this point are becoming noticeably fewer.

Why is there to be more than one resurrection, and what possible reason could there be for there being **one-thousand years between** them?

One can easily perceive from this that modern day Christianity has embraced a belief system that excludes a certain element of Biblical Truth.

The ‘resurrection from the dead’ is a fundamental Christian truth. First Corinthians 15 states clearly that “...*if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.*” (v.16-17) We can see here the absolute **need** for this doctrinal element in true Christian theology. What may not be quite so apparent is the need for it also on a personal level. Verse 18 of that same passage continues, “*Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*” How could that be? If a personal resurrection is not a reality, then all, even the dead in Christ, are here stated as being forever perished!

### A Fundamental Doctrine

The scripture most commonly used to establish the fact of the resurrection being one of the foundational Christian doctrines is Hebrews, Chapter 6. This passage lists six fundamental doctrines,<sup>2</sup> in the process of advocating pursuit of yet a seventh. Considering what the seventh is, it becomes clear that this is not just a list of fundamental doctrines, it is also an **in-order** description of the progression someone goes through while becoming converted. In pursuit of ‘perfection’, the seventh element, we must progress into and through: Repentance, Faith, Baptism, Laying on of Hands, the Resurrection, and Eternal Judgment. No one is truly converted and brought to their just reward, without developing through and experiencing each of these stages. Each of these are eminently personal. The resurrection not excluded. There is far more involved than just believing and professing Christ’s personal resurrection. There is also a matter of our own!

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<sup>2</sup> Heb. 6:1-2 “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

The Apostle Paul recognized this personal application. In Philippians 3:10, he says, “*That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means, I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.*” In Romans 6:5: “*For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.*” (NKJ) Obviously, this describes a personal resurrection. That **ultimate Grace** referred to in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:13: The resurrection with judgment, being found worthy of eternal life. Those last two elements listed in Hebrews 6, being components of the quest toward ultimate perfection.

### How Many Resurrections Are There?

But, how many resurrections are there? Just from the clear statement in Revelation 20:5, we can know with certainty of at least two. These two are separated by 1000 years. To answer this question, we need to look at the “Resurrection Chapter”. To most, that would be 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15. This resurrection chapter deals with Christ’s resurrection and our personal resurrection: that being, what Revelation 20:5 identifies as the First Resurrection. What Paul, Luke and John refer to as the “better Resurrection”, the “resurrection of the just”.<sup>3</sup> The First Resurrection occurs at the Last Trumpet, concurrent with Christ’s Second Coming, just at the onset of the One-Thousand Years millennial Kingdom.

But there is another resurrection chapter, in which we can glean a better understanding of the subsequent resurrection: The one that occurs after the thousand years. This other Resurrection Chapter is Revelation 20, particularly verses 4 through 15. When we examine this chapter in depth, we begin to see not only the relative timing of the latter resurrection, but its essential purpose in the overall Plan of God. In fact, in these passages, we can see something very noteworthy.

### The Resurrection of the Last Day.

But first, we need to back up a little. Statements of Martha, in John 11:24, and Christ in John 5:28-29 refer to and confirm the common understanding of

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<sup>3</sup> Heb. 11:35, John 5:29, Luke 14:14

that day, that there would be a resurrection at the ‘last day’. One in which ‘the just’ would be separated from ‘the evil’. “...for the hour is coming in which all who are in the grave will hear His voice, and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” Further definition is given in Matthew 25:31-34, in which Christ says, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will **separate** them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the **sheep** on His right hand, but the **goats** on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come you, blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:’” This is very clearly NOT referring to the First Resurrection. This is a resurrection in which the ‘sheep and goats’ types come from their graves together, and appear before God and are separated one from the other. The First Resurrection involves exclusively God’s True Saints, changed instantly as the Dead in Christ rise at the time of Christ’s Second Coming.<sup>4</sup> No **unconverted** people rise in the First Resurrection! Revelation 20:5 states specifically, “...the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years are finished.” So, when does this “**sheep from goats**” resurrection with sentencing, that Christ refers to, occur?

### What Revelation 20 Reveals

First, we should take note of the setting in which the resurrections are presented in Revelation 20. Beginning back in chapter 18 we see:

The fall of Modern Babylon: 18:21 thru 19:4,  
 God’s Earthly Reign announced: 19:5-6,  
 The Marriage of the Lamb: 19:7–10,  
 Dealing justice to errant society: 19:11-16,  
 Beast’s armies defeated: 19:17-21,  
 Satan bound 1000 years: 20:1-3,  
 Saints co-reign 1000 years: 20:4-6,  
 Satan is released, provoking rebellion: 20:7-10,  
 The Great White Throne Judgment: 20:11-12,  
 Final sentencing of all humanity: 20:13-15.

<sup>4</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:13-17, 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:51-52

Here we see the general sequence of events leading up to these incidental references to the resurrection periods in chapter 20: verses 6 thru 14. Revelation 20 is not about the resurrections specifically, but presents them only incidentally to other prophetic matters. However, the small glimpse into this key subject given here is absolutely priceless!

### The First Resurrection.

Let’s review what is known about what Revelation 20 calls the First Resurrection. First, it occurs just before the thousand years.<sup>5</sup> Those who are worthy of this better resurrection are raised immortal,<sup>6</sup> and reign with Christ during the thousand years.<sup>7</sup> On them, the second death (that death from which there is no resurrection) has no power.<sup>8</sup> The rest of the dead are not raised at this time, but will **wait** until after the thousand years have passed.

### WHY the Thousand Years?

This question was posed earlier: Why is there this thousand year interlude between the first resurrection and the last, that general resurrection, in which **all** the dead will be raised? This is a more defining question than might at first be apparent. In order to answer it fully, we need to consider the various components brought into the picture in this chapter.

First, **the Book of Life**, mentioned in verses 12, and 15. (Mentioned additionally in Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5, 13:3, 17:8, 21:27 and 22:19.)

Then, **the thousand years**. We see it mentioned in verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Also, the **Reign of the Saints**, mentioned in verses 4 and 6. (Additionally in 1:6, 2:26, 3:21 and 17:18)

Each of these factor in to this question.

Now, the Book of Life presents an interesting consideration. We need to realize that at the first

<sup>5</sup> Re. 20:5 “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years are finished. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> 1Cor. 15:52 & 54 “...For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible...So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, , then shall be brought to pass the saying, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’.”

<sup>7</sup> Revelation 20:6

<sup>8</sup> Revelation 20:6

resurrection all whose names are in the Book to that time are resurrected as Spirit Born Saints. At that time, just as the thousand years begin, there are no individuals named in the Book who are not already resurrected! Then why, in verse 15, is the Book of Life again opened and names found in it worthy of Life. What else could be its purpose? Asking the question another way, Is the Book of Life the basis of determining who's a 'sheep' type and who's a 'goat' type?

What will the co-ruling Saints be doing during the thousand years? Revelation 1:6 says these washed-in-the-blood Saints will be serving as Kings and Priests! Verse 20:4 indicates thrones of judgment. They'll be the civil and religious governing class, under Christ, in His thousand-year (Millennial) Kingdom.<sup>9</sup> They will be ruling over all those who survived the end-time tribulation and their physical descendants. David will be raised to rule over the Nation of Israel from Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> The twelve Apostles will be raised to each rule a tribe under David.<sup>11</sup> We know from Revelation 20:5 that there will be no-one else resurrected but God's Saints prior to the end of the thousand years.

### The Book of Life Opened

Back to the Book of Life again. In verse 20:12, we see it 'opened'. Why would it be opened, unless it was for the purpose of adding names? All whose names were in it at the start of the thousand years are then known, being evidenced by their status as resurrected Spirit-Born Saints. There would be no other names in it from that point onward, unless more names were being added! It would be useless to open it at the last judgment, to see whose names were in it, if there weren't any! Who are the 'sheep' Christ refers to in Matthew 25:31-34? Where do these **other** sheep come from? If they are not additional names, then we must conclude that not all of those written in the Book were raised immortal at the Last Trump!

The only logical conclusion is that the purpose of the Millennial Kingdom is for the up-bringing of additional mega-thousands into the Family of God,

<sup>9</sup> Malachi 3:18

<sup>10</sup> Ezekiel 37:24 See my articles on the Millennial System.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 22:29-30 Spoken by Christ at Passover

beginning with the physical survivors of the end-time events, and continuing on with their descendants. Christ's Bride, His Spirit-Born Saints, will rule with Him to provide opportunity to the overwhelming masses of humanity for conversion and ultimate salvation. The results from this kingdom opportunity are what provide the additional 'sheep' who are added to the Book of Life and who arise in the Last Resurrection.

We can see from this scenario, that the Plan of God extends the opportunity for ultimate salvation on beyond the First Resurrection. Yet, a nagging question persists among more perceptive Bible students. That being, What about all those who died in past ages, who never had opportunity for salvation? All those who died in the world prior to Abraham, all those who lived and died prior to Christ's sacrifice for sin, all those who died in the Christian era, who never heard the Truth? Are they ever to be afforded an opportunity for salvation? This is where Revelation 20 proves especially insightful!

Before we look there, we should take into account a phenomenon not fully appreciated. Going back to the ancient mention by Job,<sup>12</sup> he refers to being resurrected in a physical state. Also, Ezekiel 37 refers to the whole house of Israel being resurrected physical, flesh being put on their bones, and life being restored to them. Lazarus was raised from the dead in a physical state, only to die a physical death a second time.<sup>13</sup> When God the Father beamed the power to Earth to resurrect His Christ, it caused co-incident resurrections among recently deceased saints in the vicinity. These created quite a stir in Jerusalem at the time!<sup>14</sup> We could also consider Elisha's raising of the old woman's son,<sup>15</sup> or Christ having done the same thing on more than one occasion.<sup>16</sup>

The point here is to illustrate that **physical** resurrections are a well precedented phenomenon, each of these individuals re-experiencing a physical death after some time.

<sup>12</sup> Job 19:25-29 "...in my flesh I shall see God."

<sup>13</sup> John 12:1, 10 & 17

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 27:52-53

<sup>15</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 4:35

<sup>16</sup> Mark 5:42, (Acts 9:36-41), & Luke 8:55

## And the Books Were Opened

These things in mind, we can now better appreciate the extraordinary information found in Revelation 20. Verses 4-6 present the First Resurrection, and in verse 11, we are introduced to a Great White Throne, which occurs after the thousand years. We know that by the fact that this event involves a resurrection in which “*the dead, small and great, stand before God.*” Now, in this situation, we see “*the books (being) opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life.*” Those are two separate books: One plural, one singular. These people then being judged (the Saints are judging at this point in time (Re.20:4)) by their conformance to these ‘books’ (Greek: *Biblion, the Bible*) which are here opened to them, opened to their full understanding, for them to live by, for the first time!

In order to understand the value of what we have here, we need to notice the distinction between verses 11-12 and 13-14. Most commentators see these as a single event, where actually, they should be two separate paragraphs, as they describe two different resurrections! The latter one imposes the ‘second death’ on some. Death itself is eliminated with this final resurrection, but not the earlier one!

## The Sheep from Goats

Verses 13-14 describe the Last Resurrection, in which ALL are raised together, for the purpose of final sentencing, based on their ‘sheep’ or ‘goat’ status, as determined by their conformance to God’s righteous standards. At this one, Death and the Grave, as institutions, are discontinued, being themselves cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the **second death**, from which there is no resurrection. This is a vastly different situation than what we see in the resurrection described in verses 11 and 12.

## An Opportunity to Live Again

In this Second Resurrection, we see a figurative vast clearing, in which they can see God and God can see them. These are raised physical, otherwise we wouldn’t see the distinction between ‘small and great’. (In modern English: elites and commoners!) This physical restoration to life provides opportunity to be called and to gain in understanding (the ‘books’ being opened to them for the first time) pursuant to salvation. This does **not**

include those who **had** opportunity for salvation in their physical lifetimes, but who rejected it. Those who rejected await the Last Resurrection (and their sentencing). These in this Second Resurrection live out the remainders of their lives, awaiting that Last Resurrection, when the wicked of previous ages are raised to join them at, which time they all receive their appropriate reward. (v.13)

Bringing us up to the same point in time as seen in verse 12, after the First Resurrection, just after the demise of the Beast’s kingdom, we find the curious statement, in Re. 14:13. “*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.*” This is consistent with the statements in Revelation 20:12 & 13. Through the millennial age, people continue to die, awaiting the resurrection to Eternal Life or Death, just as now.

Further insight into this period of the Great White Throne is found in Isaiah 65:17-20, where we see a new Jerusalem, a new people, and a joyous world. In verse 20. it says, “*No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.*” The question is, who is this child? How can a ‘child’ be one hundred years old? Well, the ‘child’ is set in opposition to the ‘sinner’. The ‘child’ here would be the child of God. This ‘child’ as well as his contemporary, the ‘sinner’, both shall die, please notice, awaiting their ultimate reward!

In this passage, we are given a glimpse into this period of time, of those who, after the First Resurrection, have opportunity for salvation, and who die awaiting their reward, either eternal life or death in the Lake of Fire. From this, we expect the millennial period to provide lifetimes of up to a century. Beyond that is the Last Resurrection and the end of the human experience on the Earth.

With the elimination of Death itself and the grave, there will be no individuals left worthy or capable of death! Physical existence will here be ended!

## Sodom Berates Capernaum

Another glimpse into this era is given by Christ Himself in Luke 10:12-14 and Matthew 11:20-24.

Here He relates that Sodom, Tyre and Sidon will be raised together with that generation, and will condemn their failure to take their opportunity seriously. In Matthew 12:41-42 *“The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, ... The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.”* Now, would Christ mislead His disciples? Would He present them with a scenario that wasn't true? Would He inspire or allow His Apostles to relate to us years later the same if it wasn't something that was going to really happen? No, these situations He described are of real future events. People from generations living centuries apart are going to be raised together, and come to know one another well enough, to learn what they had opportunity to know, and berate their unbelievable stupidity!

What possible purpose would there be for this resurrection, with the peoples of Sodom (1500 BC) Tyre and Sidon and Nineveh, all being raised from the dead together, other than to have opportunity to learn? These people were obviously unconverted! That's the basis of their condemnation of one another! How could one generation even know of the situation of the other that lived centuries later? Obviously, we are looking at a rising-up together that allows time for them to learn of and to become aware of the witness the others had. In Luke 10:12 we find Christ saying, *“But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom... Woe to you, Chorasin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented a great while ago... But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you, And you Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be thrust down to Hades.”* (NKJ) It's hard to miss the point here, that there will be a time when these people will be restored to conscious life, together, and **have time** to be made aware of one another's life situations!

What possible reason could there be for this physical resurrection of unconverted peoples, all being brought-up together, if not for their being given opportunity to repent?

## A Most Complete Overview

With these situations in mind, we can now better appreciate what Revelation 20 reveals. (John 5: relates the same!) Here we see all THREE resurrections presented clearly, together in one passage:

The **First**, being a Spirit Resurrection, including all those converted prior to the Last Trumpet. A resurrection to Life. (Rev. 20:6, 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:52) This one occurs at the timeframe of Christ's return, prior to His thousand year reign.

The **Second**, a physical resurrection, affording an opportunity to all those who never had opportunity, but after which they stand with those raised in the third, awaiting their reward, as we all do presently. (Rev. 20:12) This one takes place some time after the thousand years and after Satan is once again removed and finally banished.<sup>17</sup>

The **Third**, the Resurrection in the Last Day, in which all who ever lived are raised together, and receive their due reward for their life's experience: the Sheep from the Goats. (Rev. 20:13 and Matt. 25:31-34) This final resurrection occurs after a sufficient time for those resurrected to opportunity to complete their lifetimes, after the end of the thousand years.

## ALL Who Die Will Be Raised!

There is no-one who will not be resurrected. There is no-one who will not be presented with adequate opportunity to be called and become converted!

We can now see how essential this fundamental doctrine is: the Resurrection from the Dead. It is a vital component of God's Plan for saving, or at least **providing opportunity** for saving, the greater segment of humanity! But, there remains for us a 'better Resurrection'!<sup>18</sup> The First Resurrection: the resurrection of the Just. *“...we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.... Therefore comfort one another with these words.”*<sup>19</sup> 

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 20:7 thru 10 *“And when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison...”*

<sup>18</sup> Hebrews 11:35 and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:50-54

<sup>19</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:17 & 18

# Understanding the THREE Resurrections

***Many in God's Church have serious difficulty fully explaining the Doctrine of the Resurrections from the Dead. Our Counterparts in the Catholic and Protestant World find the matter to be even more Theologically Formidable!***

Among the doctrinal teachings proclaimed by the Church of God, which the main stream religious community has taken serious issue with, the matter of the three-resurrections is certainly prominent. I can't say that I've found any other religious organization that understands the matter as in-depth as did the Church of two decades ago. Perhaps there are a few who understand this subject independently, not having that background. It certainly remains **unique**, what we once had. In coming to understand the matter, I find there's **more** on which to elaborate than did the Church of that time. Without knowing everyone's awareness level, I find the Church's teaching on the matter to have been fundamentally good, but we can and should build further on that foundation.

I came out of a religious denomination that had no particular use for ANY resurrection (the Baptists) but who acquiesced to there being one, as the scriptures are unmistakably clear. No doubt it is a problem for them to explain the **need** for any real resurrection (let alone more than one, separated by 1000 years as Rev. 20:5 states) as their version of things has it that all who die go to Heaven forever (or that other place) and once there, what possible need would there be for all people to be raised back to life!?

Popular religious belief systems are as foreign to the resurrections as they are to another clear Biblical teaching: the literal Earthly Kingdom of God, with Christ Himself being on Earth ruling with His Saints for 1000 years. These same who, according to their teachings, are to spend Eternity 'up there'! But the Kingdom and the Resurrections are undeniable Biblical teachings,

which the Church of God, a generation ago, understood rather well.

## Three Major Rejections

It is no accident that main stream religion has no particular use for either the Millennial Kingdom on Earth or the multiple Resurrections so frequently spoken of in the New Testament. That disregard is a natural consequence of taking on elements of worldly religion in the early decades of the second century. Belief in the idea of ones' soul ascending up to be with the Lord in Heaven at death excludes certain Biblical teachings: Most directly, the idea of and the need for the resurrection from the dead. Obviously, if one has attained his eternal reward, immediately upon death, what possible reason would there be for returning that person to a live physical state, especially when the specifically stated reason for such an occurrence is to impose just sentence! What, again?

A third relatively unique area of understanding, also pointedly rejected by the main stream, is the subject of the seven Biblical Holydays: A rejection which also has serious consequences. Another article, "*A Shadow of Things to Come*" addresses the specific things portrayed by each of these seven annual Holydays. That article will bring out the inter-relationship between those ancient observances and the fundamental New Testament doctrine of the resurrections from the dead.<sup>20</sup> The resurrections are more fully understood within the **prophetic outline** represented in the annual Holydays, and the Holydays are enhanced by understanding how the various

<sup>20</sup> Hebrews 6:1-2 names this subject as one of the six (seven) fundamental doctrines of the Church.

resurrections factor into them. The framework for understanding the resurrections is a side benefit of our understanding of the Holydays and vice versa.

The resurrection factors into our Salvation in an essential way, as Paul emphatically pointed out in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:12-18.

First, the Biblical Holydays, particularly the Fall Holyday season, presents a scenario that is tied to and especially dependent upon there being multiple resurrections. Each era within the various ages: the millennial and post-millennial, are bracketed by a resurrection. Each begins with one and ends with one: The Feast of **Trumpets**, which ends the Great Tribulation and begins the Millennial Age marks the occasion of the First Resurrection (occurring at Christ's Return). Only God's True Saints at the Last Trump experience this resurrection. The seven days of the **Feast of Tabernacles** represents that 1000 years time-span between the first and second resurrection, as Revelation 20:5 states. The **Last Great Day**, immediately thereafter begins with a resurrection (the one ending the millennium) and restores all those who never had opportunity for salvation, back to physical life to also have the 'books opened' to them for the first time. The Last Great Day ends with the final resurrection (the general resurrection) where **ALL** Millennial Age and Last Great Day inhabitants, who lived in the flesh and who died at the ends of their normal physical lifetimes within those eras, are raised again briefly in order to be consigned to their respective rewards. (as Matthew 25:31-46 describes, separating *'the Sheep from the goats'*). The Millennium begins with and ends with a resurrection. The Last Great Day also begins with and ends with a resurrection. The one that begins the Last Great Day is the same one that ends the Millennium.

In fact, the Spring Holydays are also bracketed by resurrections. We regard that as the season of 'Firstfruits', culminating in the **Feast of Firstfruits** (Pentecost). The Spring Holydays effectively begin with the resurrection of the first of the Firstfruits,<sup>21</sup> and end with the resurrection

of all the firstfruits. (Those converted prior to Christ's second coming.) The Firstfruits resurrection completes the first harvest, but that same event is symbolic benchmark again at the beginning of the fall Holyday season, which pictures the 'second' harvest. Another consequence of rejecting the Holydays and Resurrections is a loss of ability to understand the two harvests of souls: That there are two 'days of salvation'! (Pictured by the 'early and latter rains'! ( James 5:7 ) (also see Chapter 5)

The **first** resurrection is exclusive to the Saints, who are thereby resurrected to Eternal Life, from their graves or directly from physical life, if they are among those who are 'alive and remain' as 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:15 mentions. But there are so many who **never had** opportunity for salvation in their lifetimes. Those who did and who spurned it remain asleep thru the Last Great Day to the general resurrection of sentencing at its conclusion.

### They HAVE NO CHANCE?

But there are so many people who never had opportunity. There are the great numbers who died in infancy; also vast pagan societies who were never evangelized; the millions who lived before the time of Christ, even including the nation of Israel, who under the Old Testament administration were never truly converted, as that true Sacrifice which provided remission of sins had not yet been offered! That's why the resurrection of the nations of Israel back to physical life is so vividly emphasized in Ezekiel 37. It's really interesting to watch how modern religion *squirms* in response to this obvious situation. Though they try, they can't otherwise explain the destinies of these ancient **unconverted** or of modern day infant deaths with any supporting scriptures. (Some allow the young, say under the age of 8, access into Heaven without comprehending conversion!) Chapter 12, "*And So, All Israel Shall Be Saved*" and my article: "*As in Adam All Die*" explains this destiny dilemma.

Religion's dilemma and question to answer is, How do all those who died without having had

<sup>21</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:20 & 23

the opportunity for salvation ever come to have that opportunity? The Church of the Living God **can** answer this. The Bible is far from silent.

In fact, it's a subject that Jesus elaborated on rather often. Protestants typically read over what He said. Some prime 'red letter' examples are: Matthew 12: 41-42, & Luke 11:31-32 In Matthew: *"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."* In Luke 11 the narrative is similar. In Matthew 11:20, there's more on this: *"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."* These are very insightful. What we see here is a resurrection of men of various historic ages raised up together at the same time, who lived over a wide span of time, who have the time and opportunity to come to know what the others had opportunity to know and to condemn their **unresponsiveness!** They otherwise wouldn't know what the other ages had exposure to (speaking specifically to that generation who lived in the time of Christ). What we need to realize is that even the religious Jews weren't being called **at that time**. God had chosen to keep a veil over their awareness. (John 6:44, 12:40, & Romans 11:7-8) Ultimately then, Christ is responsible for their inability to come to conversion during their natural lives! Chapter 4:

"*The Rejected Resurrection*" addresses this topic. From this also we understand that there **is** more than one day of salvation.

The **second** resurrection, as we understand it, occurs after the 1000 years are ended, (and likely just after Satan is released for his 'little season', (Rev. 20:7)) to have their 'day of salvation', their **opportunity**, which they never really had! The veil is lifted (even for those who had exposure to the Bible) and 'the books' (Bible) are opened to them as they never had been before. The duration of this age is likely limited to one human lifetime, perhaps maxing out at around a generation. Revelation 20:11 sheds some light on this matter. Revelation has the 'books being opened' (v. 20:12) to those for whom '*no place could be found*'. (We'll get to that in Chapter 10.)

This curious statement, I believe, tells us that these people, who come-up in this resurrection, at this point in time, cannot rightfully be consigned to either destiny, as they never had opportunity to respond to a call, as they never were called. And God either blinded them from seeing the truth, or they never were afforded exposure to it. So it would be highly inappropriate to 'consign' them to either place at this point in time. It **isn't** a 'limited space problem', it's a 'just justice' problem!

As to the **third** resurrection, it brings **all** who ever lived up out of their graves, from where ever they are, simultaneously, to a separation and a sentencing. These join the still-living people who'd come up in the second resurrection. All includes also those who disqualified themselves by spurning their opportunity, either in the present age, or in the millennial and post-millennial ages, together with those who **did** qualify for Life during the millennial age and post-millennial age. Even they **WAIT** for their resurrection in order to receive their 'just reward' as we do today. This event is well described in Revelation 14:13 which is placed at an exquisite moment in the narrative, just after outlining the hope of God's True Saints seeing the day of 'justice' on their enemies, but just before the narrative explaining the harvest of the world.

(Not the first resurrection, but the one at which the group is divided between the saved and incorrigible. Two different Beings reap these two separate harvest groups.)

Christ's explanation of this resurrection (which is distinct from any other in that it brings up the saved and **unsaved together**) is related in Matthew 25:31-46.) Revelation 20:13-15 also correlates to this one, in that it involves looking into the 'book of life' to determine whose names, (of this final segment of resurrected humanity), ARE IN THERE. There'd be no need to look, if none were! (Yet the book of life was emptied of names in the first resurrection, telling us that others are to be **added** subsequently, which is the point of Revelation 20:12, which describes that 'opportunity period', when the 'bible is opened' to them!). So we here see a segregation at this resurrection, like is described in Matt. 25.

Now I believe the above is consistent with the Church's understanding of years past, with the possible exception of the matter regarding the 'sheep from the goats' separation, which I place with the third resurrection. Many, I find, hold that only the wicked come up in the third, thus disregarding Matthew 25:31, (and Revelation 14: 14-20) and offer no logical explanation of it.

### Where Does it Say THAT?

But so many say, "I don't find anywhere in the Bible where **three** resurrections are mentioned." In fact, there are at least two places where the three are mentioned, in order, and all together! There is no reason why we should remain unaware of them! Previous topics included my harmonization of these two in Matthew 5 and Revelation 20, both narratives being BY Jesus Christ to the Apostle John, some sixty years apart. I'll repeat it here for convenient reference, but with additional comments. These passages are extremely informative, as they both present **all three** resurrections in sequence, together in one place. Main stream religion hasn't paid adequate attention to these at all!

## Christ's Personally Inspired 'Three-Resurrections' Exposé given thru the beloved Apostle John!

( From these two harmonized passages,  
all three resurrections are seen together,  
comprehensively, in sequence.)

*Light: John 5 / Bold: Rev. 20*

Perhaps the reason most students of the Bible have overlooked these is that first, they're not aware of there being multiple resurrections, and secondly, they haven't noticed the distinct time breaks, discernable in these narratives. When examining the categories of peoples Jesus here describes, we can see that **more than one** resurrection is represented.

**1.** *"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. "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years."* These are they in the first resurrection, occurring at Christ's Second Coming, prior to the Millennium, prior to the Last Great Day which culminates with the Great White Throne Judgment, in which the Saints will also co-officiate! (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:2 & Malachi 3:18)

Notice, the use of the term 'first', which requires there be at least one other resurrection. But then, the 'second' death illustrates a curious (to most religions) situation. The first **death** is not the one that brings us to our 'sentencing'. That is achieved only at and thru a resurrection. Note also, these in the 'first' are exempted from the need to stand before the final judgment seat, <sup>22</sup> as their situation is already pre-determined.

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<sup>22</sup> Heb. 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" We await the 'judgment' in order to receive our assigned destiny: 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body..."

These ONLY, with those who are ‘alive and remain’ at the second coming, bypass the latter evaluative judgment. Both these demonstrate a uniqueness to the ‘first’ resurrection. They pass directly into ‘Life’, (John 5) and the ‘second’ death has no power over them. (Revelation 20) Such is **not** the case with all of the rest who are alive and remain (**un**converted at this point in time) or who are afforded opportunity for salvation in the millennial or post-millennial age. (the post-millennial age being the ‘second resurrection’ period, as pictured by the Last Great Day).

(Notice, the sentencing to the ‘second death’ is not commemorated by any Holyday!)

**2.** *“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<sup>23</sup> will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. “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. (to be assigned?) And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the 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.”* This resurrection provides opportunity for those who **never had a chance** to respond to God’s call and live ‘by the things written in the books’: (their names then being added into the Book of Life). No such opportunity is referred to in the next and final resurrection. The only book referred to there is the Book of Life, and that only for the purpose of seeing whose names are written in it!! And, notice, that final resurrection is **all**-inclusive! The previous one wasn’t, nor does the previous impose the ‘second death’!

Those who rise to this opportunity period likely

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<sup>23</sup> Notice here the wording, suggesting that not all in this contingent will hear His call to ‘rise’. In the next resurrection discussed, ALL will hear it and will appear!

will remain alive to stand with those who died in previous ages who will arise to final sentencing, which occurs with the third resurrection.

It’s interesting that Jesus **punctuated** each resurrection era in John’s first account but not his second. That perhaps because by the time of the second account (Revelation 20) the Church already understood there being more than one. But Jesus thought it necessary to lead-in with each with a “*Most assuredly*” and a “*Do not marvel*” because they would have ‘marveled’ as they were being introduced to something **quite new** at that point in time.

**3.** *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. “And 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...This is the second death.”* This final ‘sentencing and consignment’ resurrection involves all who ever lived (excepting only those made immortal in the first resurrection) and is that ‘*sheep from goats*’ separation-for-sentencing event Christ explicitly referred to in Matthew 25: verses 31 – 46.

The **first** resurrection is direct into **Life**. Then the **second** is to afford (an evaluative) ‘judgment and justice’ to those who died never having had **opportunity**. The **third** is for **final sentencing** of all, either to life **or** to condemnation: the second death! The second death is experienced by no-one, without their first having had opportunity and having passed through an evaluative judgment. For the Saints of God, that evaluation period is now! <sup>24</sup> For the rest, the dead who were never called at least, that period is after the thousand years are finished.

Now that we can understand from the above passages, the essential doctrine of the **resurrections** from the dead, and as a result, another doctrine listed there in Hebrews 6: that

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<sup>24</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:17...judgment must begin at the house of God... This is for evaluation, not condemnation.

of **eternal judgment**: How **fair and equal** judgment and justice will come to all who have ever lived, but in their appointed time.

We are ready to understand the vital purpose for the Last Great Day. It is God's WILL that 'not any should perish' (needlessly). That also happens to be His PLAN! **The Last Great Day is the Day for 'them too'**! After the Millennial Age, and after Satan's brief release, those dead who never had an opportunity to know the Truth, with time to appropriately respond to it, by having God's Spirit offered to them (which is essential to True Salvation) will be raised again, still physical, to be afforded that opportunity. They'll live in an age absent of Satan's influence, as did their physical predecessors in the Millennial Kingdom. (Except for that brief 'interval' between the Millennial and post-millennial ages that we read of in Rev. 20:7-10.) They will be allowed to live out the remainder of their allotted lifetimes with salvation at last open to them! (Consider also Matthew 22:30)

### **Whosoever Will May Come**

This is that '**whosoever will**' era! This is that era when whether to respond to God's call is **entirely up to the individual**, as ALL will be called at this time! (Revelation 22:17) That's not the situation now. Those who are called are limited to just those that the Father, for some undefined reason, chooses to call during this timeframe. "*No man **can** come to me, **except** the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" (John 6:44) "*...Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, **God** hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*" (Romans 11:7-8 quoting Isaiah 29:10) How do **we** understand these words of Jesus, except in the context of the above?

Why would **God blind** the majority? Especially His Chosen Peoples Israel? Paul answers that later in the same chapter! "*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own*

*conceits; that **blindness in part** is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so **all** Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:"* (Rom. 11:25-26 quoting Isaiah 59:20) Blindness prevents those who can't respond now from blowing their chance, so that an even **greater** number CAN successfully attain to it under far more amenable circumstances! There IS a physical resurrection to opportunity **between** the first resurrection and the last resurrection. 

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### **Question from a Reader**

I have been reading your "Resurrection" article. It is quite well presented. But, though I am not through all of it, and what I am saying may be answered later in your articles, I felt that I need to ask this question.

**When you are resurrected, what type or sort of body (soma) will you have?** *It depends on who and when.*  
**Spiritual or physical?** *Those in the first resurrection will be raised Spirit, like Christ's resurrected body. We see that He was able to be manifested in a 'normal' appearing body, and at other times, depending on the occasion, in a brilliant (blinding) glorified body. He was able to pass thru walls, appear and disappear, yet He could be touched and could eat. (Luke 24:36-43)*

**What body did Jesus have when he was resurrected? Spiritual, or physical?** *Spirit, but with capability of appearing 'normal'. Keep in mind that 'good Samaritan' angels who have appeared to people at various times have seemed to be normal people, but disappear when the victim of an accident or whatever looks away.*

*Others, though, in the second resurrection, will be raised back physical, as were Lazarus and the 'saints which slept'. They will receive sentence when their physical life opportunity periods are completed. In the 'sentencing' resurrection, the waiting dead will also be raised physical, but the "life" people will go on to be invested with the spirit form after their sentencing. The rest will be consumed (both body and soul) in the lake of fire, still in a physical state.*

# The Rejected Resurrection

***Despite Significant Mention, Even By Christ Himself, This Resurrection Has Been Disregarded and Pointedly Ignored by the Religious Establishment, as It Finds No Place in Their Cherished Theological Scenarios.***

Most Bible students are familiar with the fact that the Bible, in both the Old Testament and especially the New, makes frequent mention of what Hebrews 6 identifies as being a fundamental Doctrine of ‘the Resurrection from the Dead’! Where this becomes problematic with many is the challenge of providing an answer as to HOW this squares with typical Christian Theology. After all is said and done, and all have died and gone on to their ‘eternal reward’, either of those “H” places, either the six-letter one, or the four-letter one, what possible **need** is there for any resurrection from the dead, where the deceased’s souls or spirits are reincarnated back into their bodies? This is not a minor problem!

## More than Just One!

Not only this, but the fact that there is to be more than just ONE resurrection! Revelation 20:5 makes clear the fact that there is to be more than one, where it says, *“this is the first resurrection* (implying that there has to be at least one other), *“but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years are finished”*... Not only is there to be **a** resurrection, but that there’s to be **another** one, occurring a thousand years after the first!

Who can explain, not only the need for a future resurrection, but why it is that there is a thousand-year gap between the first and any other one.

In fact, we can discern an answer to these questions from **yet another** resurrection besides these. One that is referred to even more often in the New Testament than the others: One that Christ Himself spoke about often: One that established religion has been forced to completely disregard, because, you see, it exposes too many embarrassing questions.

The idea of a resurrection from the dead is not a new idea. It is, in fact, a rather **ancient belief**.

Even in the time of the patriarch Job, who lived back in the days before Moses, who said, ... *“all the days of my appointed time will I wait, til my change come”*... *And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”*<sup>25</sup> Job anticipated being restored to life again, some time in the future. Then there’s Ezekiel chapter 37, which describes a valley of dry bones, representing the whole house of Israel. God will one day collect and reconstruct these bones, each to its own bone (v.7), placing sinews, muscle and skin upon them, and breathing into these bodies the breath of life. (v.8-10). This describes a **physical** resurrection.

## There IS Precedent.

The phenomenon of a resurrection from the dead was not just a theoretical or theological conviction. In rare cases, it was also an experienced reality. Elijah raised the widow’s son,<sup>26</sup> Elisha raised the elderly Shunammite couples daughter,<sup>27</sup> Christ raised Jairus’ daughter,<sup>28</sup> Lazarus was raised after having been dead four days.<sup>29</sup> But, all these were raised physical. Not one is still alive today. Each one was restored to life, lived out the remainder of their days, and died a physical death a second time!

The point here is that a **physical** resurrection is not an unprecedented occurrence. Excepting for the prophesied resurrection in Ezekiel 37, these were special resurrections. In fact, there was another notable resurrection, again little mentioned, found in Matthew 27:52-53. This was unique, and only

<sup>25</sup> Job 14:14 and 19:26-27.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Kings 17:17-24

<sup>27</sup> 2 Kings 4:32-37

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 9:25, Mark 5:23-42, Luke 8:55

<sup>29</sup> John 12:1, 10 & 17

Matthew's account mentions it. When the Father beamed down the power to resurrect His Son, other saints in the vicinity, who had recently died, also were brought back to life. These were raised in physical form. They were known to the brethren. And, like the others, they lived out their normal lives and **died** once again. (This curious event <sup>30</sup> can be explained when we consider and come to understand the purpose of the 'rejected' resurrection.)

There is to be another resurrection: a physical resurrection. The New Testament makes mention of it more than any other, yet this is the one that established religion is so compelled to reject.

### **The Unrepentant are Raised?**

This rejection wouldn't be so extraordinary, except for the fact that it was Christ Himself who, in His own words, referred to this physical resurrection time and time again. Do we believe Him? He reiterated often the event described in Ezekiel 37, except that He made clear that this physical resurrection would involve more peoples than just the 'whole house of Israel'! This fact was beyond the scope of Ezekiel's interest.

In Matthew 10:15, we read: *"Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."* Mark 6:11 repeats the same, and Luke 10:12-14 adds to the narrative by including: *"Woe to you Chorasin! Woe to you Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented a great while ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you."*

Already we have two important clues as to the purpose of this resurrection, but we'll come back to it. First, let's consider the many other places this event is referred to. In Luke 11:29-32, another day and in another context, we read, *"And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, 'This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of*

*Jonas the prophet. For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.' "* Continuing the theme, in Matt. 11:20-24, expanding upon what is presented earlier in Matthew 10:15, He continues, *"Then He began to upbraid the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 'Woe to you Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.' "*

**(Note: How could it be 'more tolerable', if judgment meant obliteration either way?)**

This passage then inserts an interesting parenthetical in the very next verse, (v.25) by adding, *"At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.'"* What things? The things He'd just, 'at that time', been saying! That there would be a day of judgment in which people of different generations would be raised-up together, from their un-repentant state, in the flesh! Further, that it would not be the eminent theologian who would understand it!!

A final couple of places we need to look at, is found in John 5: verses 25 to 29, in which He alludes to two different resurrections, as He does again in Revelation 20. The language is similar in both places. *"Most assuredly, I say unto 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.*

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<sup>30</sup> A few saints, known personally to Christ, who died during His earthly ministry, were resurrected so that they could be present on the Day of Pentecost to receive God's Spirit and be added to those destined for the First Resurrection!

*Most assuredly, I say unto 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. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*” Like in Revelation 20, here we see all three resurrections set out in order! First, we see a segment of people, by their conversion, exempted from judgment. (v.24) Next, a group raised for Christ’s judging.<sup>31</sup> (v.25-27), And finally, one in which ALL who are dead will come forth alive to receive their final sentencing! (v.28-29) Notice that the verse 25 group does not state “all”. This intermediate resurrection does not involve all, but only those who died, not having had adequate witness or opportunity, such as Sodom, Tyre, Sidon, Nineveh, the queen of the South, and those various generations. These encompass the time from Abraham clear thru to the first century at least!

But the point here is that He refers to three distinct and separate resurrection situations, as He does again in Revelation 20.

In the above, we see that there is to be a ‘day of judgment’, and that the formerly **non**-repentant will be restored to a physical life. We see that generations who lived even centuries apart WILL BE raised-up together and will have time to learn of the other generations’ experiences and opportunities, with sufficient awareness to soundly condemn them for disregarding what they in their day were privileged to have!

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<sup>31</sup> We should remember that ‘judgment’ involves not only final sentencing, but also the presentation of evidence. The biblical word has that latitude. Revelation 20:12 presents this picture also, of ‘an evidentiary period’ involving those who never had opportunity to live by God’s Word, not having heard it. That’s why ‘the books’ are opened unto them, opened to their understanding for the first time. Their living conduct over the remainder of their resurrected lifetimes provides that record, which will be rewarded at the ‘end’, the final resurrection, the one in which ‘the sheep are separated from the goats’.

## Was He Lying?

Did Christ mis-represent the facts when He said that ancient generations WILL rise together with modern generations? Those who lived before Christ will live again with those who lived after His ministry. Did He mis-lead His disciples? Did He forget to make them aware that He was only speaking allegorically, and that the gospel writers should have understood that these things weren’t **really** going to happen, when He inspired them to recall and write these accounts 20 to 30 years later?

One might make that case, except that Christ again said effectively the same thing in His revelation thru the Apostle John more than sixty years later!

### The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

In Revelation chapter 20 we see a narrative of end-time events, in which these resurrections are again laid-out in explicit language. *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show His servants – things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,”* ( Rev.1:1 NKJ)

Revelation 20 addresses four basic subjects.

- 1.) The 1000 Years Satan is bound,
- 2.) The Saints’ co-rule with Christ,
- 3.) Satan provokes rebellion after that,
- 4.) The Great White Throne Judgment.

Interspersed into the narrative is the place and part each resurrection will play. It also, (like in John 5), describes three different situations. In verse 5, we see, *“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”* This corresponds with John 5:24, which says, *“...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.**”* It wasn’t the first (physical) death being referred to here, it was the second. Those raised in the first resurrection are exempted from any possibility of the second death or any need to be brought through the judgment period explained in Revelation 20:11-12. In verse 25 of John 5, John presents what we see again in Revelation 20:12. *“And I saw the dead small and great, (common*

folk and v.i.p's), *standing before God, and the 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.*" In John 5:25-27 He presents this post-millennial resurrection, beginning with the words: "**Most assuredly**!" This event, in Christ's own words, is **certain!!** He then goes on to discuss the judgment period for them.

### On to Sentencing!

If the above isn't incredible enough, Christ went further, prefacing His words with, "*Do not marvel at this...*" anticipating that many certainly would have marveled. He then goes on to describe an all-inclusive resurrection in verses 28-29, corresponding to His 'sheep from the goats' resurrection mentioned in Matthew 25:31-34 & 41, which clearly shows that this 'sentencing' event occurs **AFTER** His second coming! This being consistent with the fact that the First Resurrection involves only the Saints at that time, not any others, until after the 1000 years are over.<sup>32</sup>

When we realize there's a subject break between John 5, verses 27 and 28, and also that the same break exists between Revelation 20, verses 12&13, the differences in each really stand-out. John 5:27 and Revelation 20:12 describe a resurrection that is not all-inclusive, where John 5:28 and Revelation 20:13 are all-inclusive. Notice, in Revelation 20:13-15, the 'books' are **not** opened. They are irrelevant at this point. In the final resurrection, even Death itself, and the grave, as institutions, are rendered non-existent in the Lake of Fire. At this point in time, after final sentencing of the last, there is no one left capable of death.

So, we see Christ in numerous places, revealing another resurrection, one where the non-repentant from widely different eras are brought up together in the flesh are given time to learn what the others

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<sup>32</sup> My article "The Resurrections from the Dead" deals more specifically with the First and Last resurrections. This post-1000 year resurrection occurs at the beginning of that evaluation period known as "*The Great White Throne Judgment*". A physical resurrection to opportunity occurs at the onset of that period, which may be up to a generation long, and the sentencing resurrection occurs at the end of it.

had opportunity to know and what they did or did not do with it, as well as learn what they themselves should do with what they are now given. They live out the remainder of their allotted lifetimes, in conformance to or in willful disregard of the books (in the Greek, *biblion*: Strong's #975), **the Bible**, and they await sentencing with those in the final resurrection at the Last Day. The question is, do we believe Him? Does our theological position allow such a situation?

### What Do We Do With This?

Of course, the 'going to Heaven' or 'going to Hell' persuasion will have real difficulty with not only the basic idea of the resurrection, let alone there being **TWO** of them. Now, add into this Christ's 'most assured' certainty of there being a physical resurrection, some time after His Millennial Kingdom and you have all the components of a major theological conundrum! Most main-stream religious organizations hold views which do not allow or accommodate such an idea!

Those who hold the belief that all those unfortunate millions, who died in past ages, never having had opportunity for salvation, are burning in everlasting torment in an ever-burning Hell, may rest assured, that God has a better answer than the papacy or the protestant reformers ever did. He provides a time for them!

That's what this physical resurrection is for. Those in the grave, who never were called, will hear His voice, will come forth into the post-millennial age and will come to know His Plan and His Truth. They'll have the Bible opened to their understanding, much of which might not even have been written in their natural life-times. Final sentencing afterward will then be eminently just!

It's time that established religions looked into this Truth, and modified its various rejectionist belief systems to accommodate what Christ plainly said! Why would we want to do otherwise! 

# The Early and the Latter Rains

***The Early Church Understood the Essence of what Worshippers today seem NOT to Understand. Can Generations of False Teachings Account for the Loss of a General Awareness of a Significant Prophetic Illustration?***

The early New Testament Church was no less interested in Bible Prophecy than are people today. Living in an age of relentless persecutions and mortal dangers, such subjects had a relevance with them much greater and more vivid than anything we can relate to. Yet, their prophetic resource field was relatively limited, compared to what we have currently. But even so, in many ways, certain fundamental truths were as knowable among pre-Christian generations as they are today. In fact, without the distortions absorbed into Christian Theology from first century Gnosticism, some things were more easily understandable then than now.

One fundamental concept, referred to by James and others, escapes modern apologists, who align themselves with the idea that this day and age is the ONLY day of salvation. It's the rare evangelical ministry that isn't obsessed with the vital need to get all people converted NOW in this lifetime, under the conviction that this is the ONLY day salvation can be attained!

But then, we have the Scriptures which show that God is **not trying** to call all of humanity to conversion at this time. In fact, a major ethnic group, destined for ultimate salvation, is deliberately blinded by God, lest they come to conversion in their day and age! When Jesus was asked why it was that He spoke to the general public in parables, His response was startling, to put it mildly! *“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of*

*Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”* (Mat. 13:11-15) Mark 4:12 confirms the same with regard to those who we'd consider the prime candidates for conversion.

What we can discern from this startling explanation is that it is given to some to understand, but that the majority, even of the Jewish nation, are given over to blindness, at present, by God!

## **Blinded in This Age!**

What's particularly curious is the statement in John 12:35-40. *“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light,... believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light...But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they (the Jews) believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, **He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”*** The Apostle Paul understood the situation, and confirmed the same in Romans 11:7-8, *“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeks for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, **God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;**) unto this day.”*

But the essential point of this is that these people ultimately will have their sins forgiven! Blind-ness of a segment of even their ultra-religious community was deliberate, not for the purpose of exclusion, but that a greater number would ultimately be converted and saved! Further down in Romans 11, Paul explains the reason: *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved:** as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is **my covenant** unto them, when **I shall take away their sins.** As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.”* (vs. 25-28) A number of things are revealed here: 1). Blindness is temporary, 2). God has a covenant to save these people, and will save the majority, and 3). God will take away their sins.

Well and good, but there's the knotty little problem of the obvious fact that the majority these people are long dead! They went to their graves still that way!

We have to this point considered Old Testament prophecies. It's appropriate then that we consult the same source for an answer, because one exists.

### THE Day of Salvation

What underlies the common perception that this is the **only** day of salvation is the oft quoted passage in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:2, which states, *“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”* **“The day of salvation”** is regarded as indicating that salvation is limited to just the living generation. This quote is actually from Isaiah 49:8, which states *“A day of salvation”*. *“Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;”* The actual wording allows the possibility of more than one,

which in effect, is essential if we are to answer the obvious question. When is the day of salvation of those who were blinded by God, who went to their graves still under that blindness? If God is going to fulfill His Covenant with them, and take away all Israel's sins, When?

### Answer in the Rains

The Epistle of James makes reference to a set of harvests little known in this generation, but rather well known among the early Church. The particular passage which begins to explain the (seeming) 'problem' is in chapter 5, verse 7. *“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive **the early and latter rain.**”* This quotes Old Testament prophecies going back to the time of the Exodus.<sup>33</sup> In Deuteronomy 11:14: *“That I will give you the rain of your land in his due<sup>34</sup> season, the **first rain and the latter rain,** that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.”* More specifically, he quotes Hosea 6:3, *“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the **latter and former rain** unto the earth.”* James didn't need to explain himself in detail to his audience, as they were already familiar with this illustration as it related to the days of salvation.

The early Church generally understood the prophecies and the explanations offered by Paul, that the majority would be saved, but not in the present generation!

We should also give thought to the common general assumption that many seem to espouse,

<sup>33</sup> Job 29:23 suggests that the concept of early and latter rains was understood in the most ancient times. This is not to say that the correlation between grain harvests and the days of salvation were fully developed. Job's day was before Moses!

<sup>34</sup> Some allege that the latter rain equates to the spring season and the early rain to the fall. (Keep in mind that the rains precede their respective harvests by some months.) Though there are two grain harvest seasons, only the fall harvest yields grapes and olives, which we see here referenced to the latter harvest. Early and latter harvests make greater sense in the contexts of the Holyday seasons when regarding the early part of the year as being the springtime, as God instructed Moses regarding an inversion of the calendar. (Ex. 12:2)

that the early rain and the early harvest are the same. They're not! Rain sets up the conditions necessary for a good harvest. Rain suggests a waiting period until the harvest. Joel 2:23 has this: "*Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*" The use of the term 'moderately' alludes to a greater outpouring in the time of the latter rain!

This verse is one that causes people to deduce that the latter rain is associated with the springtime. But we need to ask ourselves, is the rain and the harvest resulting from that rain **at** the same season? Secondly, which 'first month' is this referring to? Is it using the religious Mosaic calendar or the 'traditional' civil calendar, which regards the seventh month as the start of the year? Further, the 'first month' of Exodus 12:22 is the month of first-ripe ears, the Abib, the start of the spring harvest. Significant rainfall during the first month would be detrimental to the harvest. Rain at the time of harvest is undesirable as it would make the fields muddy, and ripened grain that is too moist, bears a strong likelihood of rotting. As Proverbs 26:1 suggests, "*As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.*" You don't want rain **IN** the harvest, suggesting that the rain precedes the harvest by weeks or months.

(The word 'first' in Joel 2:23 is Strong's #7223, (*ree-shone*') which has a wider range of meaning than just 'first', as opposed to second or third. This word can refer to something that happens before. It could be translated 'in a previous month', which would please the farmers greatly, having an appropriate rainfall as the grains are approaching maturity.)

Understanding the **two** harvest seasons and their essential prior rains provided God's spiritual nation with the **most primitive outline** of the spiritual harvests of the world as revealed *later* in God's annual Holydays. What we clearly see in the revealed annual Holydays is a two-part series of harvests. The first harvest is represented in the spring Holydays, which culminates with the First Resurrection. Beginning with Christ's return at the

Last Trump, which is co-incident with the First Resurrection.<sup>35</sup> The age resulting from the Saints of God being raised immortal, and reigning with Christ for 1000 years, opens the 'spiritual outpouring' onto the 'field' for the second (greater) harvest. As we can see from Ezekiel 37, the ethnic nation of Israel (not just the Jews, but including the greater segment, the 'lost House of Israel'), will become re-unified, and live out their physical lives in a renewed nation. A world far more accommodating to the attainment of salvation than today's world! In this environment, God will fulfill His Covenant with ethnic Israel to remove their sins. "*For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.* (Romans 11:27 quoting Isaiah 27:9)

Reinforcing the understanding of why God 'blinded' His people with intent of 'saving' the greater number is Romans 11:32. "*Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*" Notice, it is thru the projected 'mercy' of God's Saints that all the rest will have greater access to God's unilateral mercy!

But the most profound illustration contained within the '**former and latter rains**' is the essential Truth of there being a second 'day of salvation'.

An understanding of the various Resurrections from the dead, one of those seven fundamental 'Doctrines of Christ', as Hebrews 6 enumerates, is also a pre-requisite to understanding these days.

### Out of Your Graves

There is a **day** when God's Covenant of Promise to the 'whole House of Israel' (Ezek. 37:11-27) will be fulfilled. "*Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: ...Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and*

<sup>35</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16 & 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-53

ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD... And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them **one nation** in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be **no more two** nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all... I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my (resurrected) servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. ...Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an **everlasting covenant** with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and **will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore**. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

This is the spiritual environment of the later era, that of the ‘latter rain’. This isn’t Heaven, it’s the final phase of the literal millennial Kingdom of God on Earth.<sup>36</sup>

First Israel will be re-gathered into a viable, unified, ethnic nation and then offered their long-promised spiritual opportunity, then with them the rest of humanity. This is the resurrection that occurs after the thousand years are finished. (Revelation 20:5)

### The Greater Harvest

Holding to the concept that our age, prior to the Second Coming, is the **only day** of salvation there ever will be disregards important Biblical Truths. Not the least of which is the resurrections (plural) and the real purpose of the millennial age. Those who physically survive the great tribulation and

<sup>36</sup> These and their unconverted gentile counterparts live again **after** the millennium is past. Satan will have been removed from society at this point in time, after his brief release. See the chapters: “*And So All Israel Shall Be Saved*” and “*Understanding the Three Resurrections*”.

live on over into the post-Advent era, and their offspring, will enjoy a day in which salvation will be openly offered to all. “*And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.*” (Isaiah 65) (These in the millennium aren’t resurrected people, those will be brought up later, after the 1000 years are finished.) But, **the latter rain begins here**, at Christ’s return!

Christ’s return and the Kingdom, set-up with His Bride, will open opportunity fully to all from that time onward. “...**blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved:**”

Ironically, it’s the predominantly Gentile world that will first experience that ‘spiritually sanitized’ environment that resurrected ancient Israel will be raised-up into!

“*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, **Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:***” 

# The Days of Salvation

***Hand in Glove with the Predestination Teaching is the Belief that THIS is the ONLY Day of Salvation. Anyone Not 'Saved' TODAY Should Anticipate Spending Eternity in an Ever Burning HELL ! ? Is That Perception TRUE?***

Compassionate Christians of all ages have to some degree been self-traumatized by the thought that their loved ones, family, friends, work associates or neighbors, face a dire future, due to their disinterest in or neglect of becoming 'saved' ( at least as the concerned believer conceives of it ) at this present time. Yet, so many haven't given the matter even a passing thought. In fact, if we think about it, the overwhelming majority don't know, and couldn't care less. What ups the anxiety level is the widespread conviction in modern religious society, that a person's **only** opportunity for salvation is this present day, sometime before they die at least.

Now, that poses a serious question, once we realize that no-one CAN come to the Son, unless drawn by the Father.<sup>37</sup> Further, that there are so many in society **not** called, not due to any perceivable fault of their own. Many in this present era are even **kept under a veil**, lest they come to a correct understanding.<sup>38</sup> At least, that seems to be what we read in places such as 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:13-16. We have Christ speaking to the general public in parables,<sup>39</sup> wording it in such a way, that though hearing, they wouldn't really comprehend in any real depth and come to an effective understanding.

It would seem to us, that **IF** God was intent on saving as many as possible **in this present age**, He surely is employing poor technique! At least, that's how we'd see it.

<sup>37</sup> John 6:44 & 65, Acts 2:39, John 10:27-29

<sup>38</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:14-16

<sup>39</sup> Matthew 13:10-15 (Isaiah 6:9) Acts 28:23-28

## Chance, What Chance?

Then, there are all those in remote parts of the world, both now and back when the easy transportation or communication methods we have today didn't yet exist, who never had a chance to even hear of there being a God (other than a concept of one their own societies may have invented) and any plan of Salvation. Also, there are vast millions who lived before the time of Christ, who had no means of salvation, as there is no salvation in any other.<sup>40</sup> Need we mention children who've died young? Where do these all stand?

Clearly, uncountable millions lived and died prior to the time of Christ without awareness of any need to, or obligation to, personally respond to any call to repentance or to become converted. In fact, scriptures plainly reveal that **only a few** are called of God, even in these, the best of days. For proof of that, just look around. It was Jesus' emphatic assertion that no man CAN come to the God of Salvation unless specifically drawn of the Father. *"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."* (John 6:65) This reinforcing the prior statement, that *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:"* (John 6:44)

## Harden Not Your Hearts

This admonition in Hebrews 4, verses 1 and 6 explains: *"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you*

<sup>40</sup> Acts 4:12

*should seem to come short of it... Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:”* This illustrates that even those to whom the words of salvation were first proclaimed did not have the means to respond in an adequate manner. The prime ingredient, the gift of Gods’ Spirit, necessary for true repentance and the building effective Faith, was not yet available to these whom **we** would regard as prime candidates for salvation at the time! Romans 11:32 speaks of Israel’s spiritual condition: *“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”* If God placed even the informed into a state of ‘unbelief’, then what of the rest of humanity? Verses 7 and 8 of the same chapter in Romans 11 state: *“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.”* Even those who sought for salvation, and who had in their possession the oracles of God, did not ultimately attain to what they pursued. What was the obstacle?

Only a very few, these referred to as ‘*the election*’ (a word which poses an interesting consideration), attained salvation, even in the Christian era, but the overwhelming majority, even those who **were** ‘evangelized’, are held in a state of unbelief for a particular reason!

### **Understanding Withheld!**

So, we’re faced with an uncomfortable fact, one that theologians have struggled with through much of the Christian era. That the vast majority haven’t been converted in their lifetimes. And, IF we read the scriptures correctly, the best informed nation, those with the greatest chance of understanding, were purposely blanked from understanding by God. A condition which persisted into the late first century (when the above words were written) and which apparently remains the case to the present day, judging by the response levels we see!

But it’s the line in Romans 11:32 that reveals something profound. It says God concluded them in unbelief, **“that he might have mercy upon all.”** How can we interpret this situation as being ‘merciful’? In what way is it merciful that great numbers went to their graves, ‘*all concluded in unbelief*’ and patently unconverted, still in their sins? (No matter how religious they were.) Another relevant passage offers more insight into this situation. Verses 25 to 27 of the same chapter explain, *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”*

This reveals something we should all understand, not being smug about our own election. That the condition of blindness is temporary, that all Israel shall be saved, and that God will take away their sins! What we need to consider is that most of these peoples are **presently dead in their graves!** Even more, most of the world’s religions hold that they are in an ever burning Hell and have been since their decease!

It’s here at this juncture that we are forced to factor into our thinking, the resurrection from the dead. And we can identify the time for that from places such as Revelation 20:5-12. There is a resurrection occurring **after** the 1000 years. This one for ‘*the rest of the dead*’, whose names weren’t written in the Book of Life at the time of Christ’s return. What we also need to consider is what becomes of those who are converted during the Millennium. With a thousand years of open availability of Gods’ Spirit, with Satan under restraint, how many will become converted?

Whether we regard the present Day of Salvation as being continuous on into the post-Advent era, or whether we regard the Millennial Age and the second resurrection period following it being *another* distinct and separate Day of Salvation, we are left with the same conclusion. That these vast numbers, most of whom are presently

deceased, **will** see a day in which an opportunity for salvation will be opened to them. Traditional religiosity poses no provision for this!

Where present day theology made its mistake was with the common presumption that the opportunity period ENDS with Christ's return, where, if we read with understanding, and with awareness, of the outline of God's Master Plan, as presented in the '*shadow of things to come*' (an outline of future events) mentioned in Colossians 2:17, (referring to God's seven annual Holydays), we would realize that Christ's return doesn't end the opportunity for salvation, but rather **opens it** in a way humanity has never before seen. That age, even extending into the post-Millennial era, described in explicit detail in Ezekiel 37, (where God explains how He's going to use His people to be examples to the rest of the world) will provide access to God's Spirit without its present limit. As to Israel, restored to life and reunited nationally, He will put His Spirit within them unilaterally. (Ezek. 37:13-14) This following the age in which '*whosoever will*' may come is fully implemented. (Rev. 22:17 and compare John 37:7-8)

We know that in the present situation, only a few are called, they being specifically *drawn* of the Father. (John 6:44)

After the Second Coming, the entirety of mankind will be called-upon to 'worship the Creator' (Revelation 14:6-7) From this, we may anticipate that the vast majority, of those who survive on over into the Millennial Age, and their descendents, will respond positively. With all doubt removed, with Satan restrained from influence, with all Truth established without question and with God's Spirit freely available to any who ask, it will be a very different societal climate than we know today.

But we can also know that the vast numbers who went to their graves unconverted, due to inopportunity or to God-induced blindness, will, for the first time, have their opportunity to have their sins forgiven, not unlike those in the Millennial Age. One notable condition regarding Israel that we may draw from Ezekiel 37:13-14 is that God will place His Spirit within the restored nation

unilaterally, apparently without their having specifically requested it! All Israel, from there, will have to grow in grace and knowledge or face the second death.

In each of these distinct eras, we see God's Spirit offered with increasing availability.

### One Day or Two?

So whether we consider there to be **just one** Day of Salvation, extending from the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Christ's 'Wave Sheaf' presentation, to the end, at the Great White Throne judgment, or whether we regard there being **two**, with this present day ending and the next beginning at Christ's return, it effectively matters little. What is essential is the realization that the availability of God's Spirit extends through the Millennial Age and through the Last Great Day. After all, it was in reference to the Last Great Day that Christ's declaration of open availability of His Spirit was made. (John 7:37) (See Chapter 11 titled: "*Whosoever Will May Come*")

The opportunity for salvation is **NOT** limited to this present pre-Advent era. There's where religiosity has made its big mistake on this important issue. **And that mistake is largely the result of having rejected Biblical Holydays, which foreshadow the entire Plan of God,** one consistent with His Will. His Will being that 'not any should perish', other than those who **willfully** choose to do so, by either refusing to receive God's Spirit or by quenching it totally once they have it! For those who do that, there is no further period allowing opportunity!

Those not converted in this present age are not necessarily doomed to *gehenna* fire. Making such pronouncements exposes a general ignorance of the Millennial Age: the thousand years of Christ ruling with His Spirit-Born Saints on the Earth and the purpose for the resurrections from the dead, which Hebrews 6 lists as one of the six foundational Doctrines of the Church.

Any who **have** received God's Spirit and who let it die out may anticipate that fate, but not those who simply aren't being called of God in this present age. 

## Questions from a reader:

A reader asks: I want to ask you a couple of related questions. Regarding those who are raised in the second resurrection compared to those in the First Fruits.

**Does the bible say anywhere that those in that resurrection are given a Spirit Composed body? Are the promises of the bible for all people or only the first fruits?** *Reply: As I understand it, (from places such as Ezekiel 37 &tc.) those raised after the 1000 years are in physical form. They would logically have to be, as they aren't yet converted. All those who were converted were resurrected in Spirit form in the first. The second resurrectees at the point of being raised are as yet 'un-judged', (unevaluated) and thus can't rightfully be assigned to either destiny: Life or the Lake of Fire. These in the millennial age complete their lifetimes, and go to their graves, as people do now. The same is possible for those who live in the second resurrection period, except I can envision that most in that contingent of people could be 'alive and remain' types, as we see in advance of the first resurrection. The first resurrection will occur in the lifetimes of some who are converted prior to Christ's second coming. These who die in the millennial age await sentencing in the third. The sheep-from-the-goats event described by Christ.*

**I realize that the First Fruits are privy to a better resurrection and I wonder just how much better sometimes.** *Reply: Think about it! They are given an extra 1000 years of Spirit form Life, and will occupy the higher echelon of prestige and authority in the Kingdom under Christ! Not a bad assignment. (e.g. Matthew 19:28)*

**He says He shall separate the Sheep and Goats and give the Sheep the Kingdom but he doesn't say they are resurrected to a Spirit body in that final 3rd resurrection.** *Reply: Correct. They rise in the third in their former state, physical, and then are assigned entry into the Spirit form IF awarded Life. If a goat type, then they, in their physical state, are thrown into the Lake of Fire (the second death) to be consumed. Spirit can't be consumed in that manner! (This detail suggests a physical form at that time.)*

**Those who are to be sent to the lake of fire will certainly be in a physical body. Yes The kicker is those in the second resurrection have already died once. Yes Are they going to die again during the Judgment period?** *Not*

*necessarily. This could be for some. ALSO possible, the second resurrectees will most all be still alive to the end of that age, and present when the millennial deceased are brought up for sentencing. If not, the separation at the 3rd resurrection indicates a physical resurrection, and if they are still alive then they are still physical humans, with great bodies perhaps? Reply: Yes, but they'll be kissing their physical bodies 'goodbye' shortly thereafter. The third resurrection concludes all life in the physical form. What happens next is described in my articles: "The Hope of Glory" and "The Elements Shall Melt". Also check 1st Corinthians 15:24-28 for a description of what happens after the third resurrection and sentencing is complete.*

**Isaiah 65 does seem to indicate that a child will die 100 years old so death must be a part of the life of those brought up in the second resurrection?** *Reply: Yes. This has been the Church's take on that verse, that it applies to the post-millennial age. We have two types contrasted: the '100 year old child' and the 'sinner'. It's illogical that a child would be 100 years old, so it must be referring to a 'child of God' (of Christ and His Bride) as opposed to an unconverted sinner of similar vintage. Make sense? If so and they are brought to another resurrection for final judgment then where is the promise of a Spirit Body? It is interesting to consider that some people will experience more than one resurrection and more than one physical death. Walking thru someone like the Shunammite woman's son: 2nd Kings 4:32 &tc. The lad died, was resurrected by Elisha, then returns to the grave. Presuming he wasn't converted (a relatively safe deduction) he will arise in the second resurrection for the opportunity for salvation that he never really had. Then, if he doesn't live out the full 100-years, (being among those 'alive and remaining' at THAT resurrection, he'd die again to await sentencing when the third resurrection calls ALL up for their final stand in Judgment. (The final sentencing event.) Consider Lazarus: Raised from the dead by Christ, but is again in the grave. He being converted (a deduction) will be in the first resurrection. But he experienced the first death (a physical decease) twice. These kinds of paradoxical situations may be what accounts for WCG's (and its successors) choke on being able to explain these matters clearly.*

*It is more logical that the second resurrection period is one generation long, and that those in the second resurrection will have healthy bodies, and remain alive at the time when those in the third resurrection come up to join them at the final sentencing.*

# The HOPE of the Last Great Day

***A MAJOR Component in the Plan of God is illustrated in a Separate Holyday: the Seventh, Yet One which Remains 'Well Off the Radar Screen' when it comes to being Understood by the 'Accepted' Religious Community!***

Much is understood about that prophetic period known as the “Last Days” in Bible Prophecy. But that period in human history known as the “Last Great Day” is another matter altogether. It has, in fact, nothing to do with that specific area of Pre-Millennial prophecy dealing with these Last Days, which generally include historical events having to do with and leading up to the impending return of Jesus Christ to Earth in Great Power and Glory.

Few places in the Bible talk about this major era, and few people have any awareness of its existence or the vital place it plays in revealing to us the **ultimate hope** for that less fortunate segment of humanity who were never afforded opportunity to become ‘saved’ in their all too brief lifetimes. We can all identify peoples and times who we know never had an adequate opportunity to repent and become ‘converted’. Those who die in infancy, for example, or the millions who lived in remote lands without ever having been evangelized, or who lived back in that era before Christ’s ministry and sacrifice for sin. When did these ever have an opportunity to know, let alone to respond, in their lifetimes? It’s interesting to notice that two major religious organizations sought an answer to this question. The Mormons with their genealogical interests and the Catholics with their Limbo<sup>41</sup> and Purgatory Doctrines, each pose an answer in their own distinct way to this enigmatic question. To their credit, at least they considered the question.

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<sup>41</sup> Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary: on: **Limbo**: “In Catholic Theology, a place for those who have not received the grace of Christ while living, and yet have not deserved the punishments of willful and impenitent sinners.”

The Last Days involve a series of troubling events, but the Last Great Day, on the other hand, occupies the opposite extreme, illustrating a time of great hope for the greater majority who ever drew breath on the Earth. It **should** occupy a prominent place in Christian theology, yet few in this age have any awareness of this Day or what it reveals. Be it ever so humble, there just is no place in our typical theological process for this final era and what it offers to the vast sea of ‘discarded’ humanity.

## What’s It All About?

In Leviticus Chapter 23, we are introduced to a list of Seven Annual Holydays, which God revealed to Israel through Moses. These Annual Holy Days are at best minimized in religion, being explained as having to do with Israel’s history or perhaps their primitive harvest rituals. Any sense of their true meaning is lost to most by this means, as it obscures their prophetic relevance. Of all of the revealed Holydays, it was this seventh one that proved to be the most veiled in its earliest presentation.

In Leviticus 23, we are given only the most cursory mention, not even allowing us a name. In fact, if we didn’t count, we might not even have noticed it. We are given the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles, but then we see that there’s an ‘**eighth day**’ after it in Leviticus 23:36. No name, not one of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, just this ‘eighth day’! All we know from this is that there’s one last Holyday set immediately after the end of the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles.

In the reiteration of the Holydays in Deuteronomy, (a name which means the second giving of the law) chapter 16, this un-named day

isn't even directly mentioned. The only clue, and one admittedly obscure, is a specific reference to judgment and justice, placed at that point in the narrative where we'd expect to find this 'eighth day' discussed.

### Thank God for John!

If it weren't for the Apostle John, we might not even have a biblical name for this obscure day!

In chapter 7, referring to the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, he writes in verse 37: "*On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink,'*" This refers to being allowed open access to God's Spirit, which was to come. So, not only are we given a name for this day, but also an early glimpse into its ultimate meaning. From this, we now know this eighth day as the **Last Great Day**. We see also that it will involve unrestricted access to God's Spirit.

He continues: "*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, <sup>42</sup> out of his heart <sup>43</sup> will flow rivers of living water.*" <sup>44</sup> The narrative continues with Jesus later on, within the same day, pointedly discussing the matter of **judgment** and **justice**. We are again, in the gospel of John, brought to the same general subject reference as in Deuteronomy 16. What does this Last Great Day have to do with justice and judgment?

So, immediately after the seven day Feast of Tabernacles, there is an eighth day. This day, if we understand Jesus' proclamation correctly, offers open access to God's Holy Spirit, and has much to do with the matter of just judgment.

### Revelation Completes the Scene!

We understand the millennial reign of Christ and His Saints on Earth as being the true prophetic fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. Its seven

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<sup>42</sup> Proverbs 18:4 ...wisdom is a flowing brook...

<sup>43</sup> It says 'belly' in the KJV. (Anciently, regarded as the seat of emotion.)

<sup>44</sup> Revelation 22:1 Personally reflecting God's Throne.

days illustrating the seventh millennium, the Kingdom of God, established after six thousand years of man's mis-rule on Earth.<sup>45</sup> Here, God's Spirit-Born Saints rule Earth with Christ for a thousand years, where those who survived through the times of 'extreme trouble' become the progenitors of a new generation, living in peace and prosperity, like mankind has only dreamt of. Where the 'rest of the dead' continue to await their resurrection, as it's stated so clearly in Revelation 20:5. These 'rest of the dead' have no hope in the millennial age. It's over before they are raised-up. They are raised-up into a time called, "the Great White Throne Judgment"! Do our eminent scholars have any concept as to what this day involves? This is **after** the thousand years. What happens then, and within how long a time period?

For lack of better definition, most assume this Last Great Day, this Last Day of 'Judgment', involves their resurrection only to a **sentencing**. Because the Christian world hasn't been correctly oriented to the fact of, and the purpose of, the various resurrections from the dead, as Scripture reveals them, this 'Day', this Era, is outside their theological envelope. How many religious leaders can explain exactly why there is one thousand years between the '**first** resurrection' and the **next**? To most, a 'second resurrection' would have no place and no real purpose. Some theologies even render any and all resurrections from the dead as irrelevant. But to the Plan of God, both the first and the second have a most profound purpose, because you see, God has a Plan to, in all fairness, provide opportunity for 'judgment and justice' to those who died, never having had **any** opportunity. How could someone, who died as a child, ever have been afforded a fair evaluative judgment? How could they ever be regarded as having received justice? Yet, they, and others with them, will! This area of understanding is relatively rare and unique in the world of religion.

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<sup>45</sup> The weekly Sabbath alludes to the seventh millennium. It's interesting that many opt to worship on the 'eighth day' the day after the Sabbath. Could it identify their true opportunity as also being within this extended time-frame?

## It Isn't Their Fault !?

Think about it. There are multiple millions who died, who, by no fault of their own, were not afforded reasonable opportunity to meet even the mini-mum criteria for 'salvation'. Just considering those who died in infancy, it'd be millions. It wasn't their fault. They had no conscious decision abilities in their brief existences. Yet, many religious creeds regard all these to be hopelessly **lost** forever. The entire segment of humanity, who lived and died on earth prior to Christ's Sacrifice, lived and died completely ignorant of the fact that such opportunity was ever to be available. It wasn't their fault that they were born when they were born. But, then again, what hope did they have?

The Mormons at least recognized the question, and pose a solution. Thus their interest in genealogies. They pose an answer to this 'problem', taking actions on behalf of the dead. Catholics as well, in recognition of the need, offer a belief structure that provides an 'answer' to this very unsettling dilemma, as they conceive it: Thus their "limbo infantium", for example, where, like with the Mormons, loved ones on this side of the grave can intervene positively on their behalf. So, the problem is recognized. What is lacking in many theologies, (with some not having even put any effort at all toward providing an answer), is solid Biblical evidence of the true status of those who died without any awareness or any real opportunity to have become converted and to pursue life in the eternal family of God. The bleakest of all theologies are those who pre-consign all of these to an ever-burning hell. Calvinistic teachings come to mind for this. But if you investigate, even the most magnanimous evangelical expressions, if you probe, you'll find that they too can offer no explanation, nor offer any possibility that these 'unfortunates' ever have any further hope once they die!

Such is the state among those who embrace the unsubstantial theological position of each receiving his eternal reward immediately upon death, who reject the substantial Biblical doctrine of the resurrections from the dead. They don't

understand the resurrections, and thus, can't understand what they need to understand, in order to be able to answer this enormously important question. **What about the rest of the dead?** And, if they have already received their eternal reward, why would the dead even **need** to live again? As this area of thought kicks the legs out from under much of the theological establishment of our time, it just isn't seriously pursued.

It is central to God's Redemptive Plan that every one in the Grave, will at some point in time, "**hear His voice, and come forth...**" Christ affirmed as much Himself.<sup>46</sup> Yet, this is not central to every denomination of the Christian faith!

Martha understood that "the Last Day" involved a resurrection. (John 11:24) To her, this expressed a hope. Few today hold expectation of the Last Day as involving hope, only a dread of impending sentence. Notice, Christ didn't correct her in this regard. Though it is unlikely she understood the 'first resurrection' as it later became revealed, she reflected what was commonly understood,<sup>47</sup> that there was to be a resurrection in which all would be raised, and separated to differing sentences. The same general situation that Christ elaborated on in his '**sheep from the goats**' narrative, found in Matthew 25:31 – 46. It was only later in Church history that believers began to be specifically aware of there being more than one distinct resurrection. Christ alluded to multiple resurrections in John 5: 24 – 30, but at that time, it wasn't clear. The comparable passage in Revelation 20:5-6 & 11-15, when overlaid with John 5: makes for us a clear and unmistakable distinction.

The "First Resurrection"<sup>48</sup> involving God's True Saints **only**, occurs just prior to the 1000 Years. There is no other resurrection until after the 1000

<sup>46</sup> John 5:28-29, Matthew 25:31-32

<sup>47</sup> Though those of the Sadduceean persuasion would have disagreed! Matt. 22:23

<sup>48</sup> Rev. 20:5 "*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the First Resurrection*"

Years are finished! That clearly places any and all remaining resurrections into this period of time we know as “The Last Great Day”: that period immediately following the Millennial Age. So, we know from this, that any and all remaining resurrections fall within this last period of human existence. After seeing that even death and the grave, as institutions, are abolished from existence at the conclusion of the “Great White Throne Judgment”, (Revelation 20:14) no further resurrection could be possible.

This leads us to an inescapable conclusion: That all major resurrections of the dead occur **within** it, except only that limited one which occurs at Christ’s Return, at the “Last Trump”. (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52)

### What’s Great About It?

If this Great White Throne Judgment involves only a ‘final sentencing’, we’d have to ask, What’s so great about it? Here, as many understand it, God is going to consign the overwhelming majority of humanity who have ever lived to the “Lake of Fire”, so, if that’s all that this ‘Day’ involves, then God would be asking us to celebrate His over-whelming failure!! That being, His failure to gather (save) from among His Creation more than just the most infinitesimal percentage of those who ever lived. Do the math! It’s fewer than one in a hundred thousand of all who ever lived! Maybe not even that good! His Ultimate Plan, that “none should perish” would have to be regarded an abject failure! Why would He have us celebrate as a “Great Day” such an apparent failure? The point here being, that, NO, there is something in this Day, and what it means IS, in fact, extraordinary. Using this logical approach, we can begin to see that we ought to investigate further.

### Did God Mis-Calculate?

Did God make a mistake? Was He mistaken as to how many would ultimately respond to His Plan of Salvation? Was He intending there be more? Did He have any idea 40 centuries ago, how few would repent and become converted? After all, the total numbers are under-whelming

when compared to the uncountable billions who have lived and died throughout history.

Actually, the answer is contained within the Day itself. God is not disappointed or embarrassed by the few who have responded. The very fact of the Day’s existence, and its time-placement, suggests that there is a final phase, not apparent in typical religions. No, God didn’t mis-anticipate. He chose to emphasize through this final day a fact revealed from the earliest times! A fact that there is a later day of salvation, greater than the first one. That there are **two** harvests of souls, an “early rain and a latter rain”! <sup>49</sup> This is the general picture we see in Creation, and given in ancient times, upon which the Holyday Seasons, as later revealed, were built. “*A shadow of things to come*”, <sup>50</sup> as they’re called, or ‘an outline of future events’.

God’s Plan involved choosing a specific few in the first calling, thus the earlier harvest: Pentecost / Trumpets, and a greater harvest to follow: Tabernacles / Last Great Day. The purpose of the Last Great Day was revealed gradually: Veiled at first, only becoming understood in the contexts of the Book of Revelation in the late first century!

From this, we can understand that God isn’t through with His Creation. It wasn’t His intent that the overwhelming majority respond right at first. He is building His Eternal family deliberately and thoughtfully. The ‘firstfruits’ first, of which Christ is the first firstfruit. The firstfruits will be harvested at His Second Coming. Those called in the first harvest period are specifically limited to those who He calls. “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* (John 6:44 KJV) Who can respond is limited! This is an area the religious world can’t understand, largely because it does not understand God’s overall Plan. It doesn’t understand God’s Plan because it doesn’t understand the resurrections, nor does it understand their setting and purpose as revealed in the

<sup>49</sup> Deuteronomy 11:14 & 32:2, Hosea 6:3, Joel 2:23, James 5:7, etc.

<sup>50</sup> Colossians 2:16-17

Holydays. Rejection of Biblical teachings and illustrations has its price!

But, if this were true, then wouldn't that leave the majority without choice or opportunity? Come to think of it, didn't we come to the conclusion earlier that the majority haven't responded? Is it because they were never really called? (see also John 5:21)

Again, a clue is contained in the phraseology. For there to be a 'firstfruits' harvest, there must be a subsequent harvest. If in the first harvest there is limited opportunity, wouldn't it be logical that in a subsequent harvest there would be an open call? In other words, is there a time when the individual can decide to respond or not at his own discretion? But, most people would have already died by the time this would be possible.

If we go back again to the Feast-time narrative in John 7: and understanding that what was said, was said in the context of the Last Great Day, we can see something else in the message. Verse 37 says, "*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.***" This refers to that period of time, and that circumstance, where responding is up to the individual. The Temple is open.<sup>51</sup> The setting of the passage in Revelation 22: is reminiscent of the John 7: statement: "***And the Spirit and the bride say Come, And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.***" The very same theme as the Last Great Day message of John 7. The opportunity to receive of God's Holy Spirit is to be then opened to any and all who choose to avail themselves. There is a day in which the opportunity for at-will salvation will be fully open to all. (And without Satan's influence.) This, of course begins in the Millennial Era, but that doesn't allow for those long deceased who remain dead

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<sup>51</sup> A key development seen in Rev. 11:19, where the Temple is opened (for business (redemption)) and the Ark of God's Covenant seen. This is in that time-setting just after the Saints are raised, and Christ takes full Power over the nations.

until after the thousand years are finished. It's the massive numbers in their graves, who died prior to any period of real opportunity for them that we need to focus on. This has been an enigma thru all time. The answer is revealed in this Day. The second greater harvest provides for including them too!

### **Re-opening the Book of Life**

When the Last Trumpet sounds, and the dead in Christ are raised, all those whose names are in it will be raised to immortal life. From that moment, the Book of Life will have no names in it of those awaiting Life! Yet in Revelation 20:15, clearly referring to the concluding events of this Great White Throne Judgment, we see the Book of Life **opened** to see whose names are written in it. We need to consider whose names would be in it. If the book was 'emptied' of names, back at the first resurrection, and if no others were to ever be added, what would be the point of referring to the Book of Life again here to see whose names are in it? The obvious conclusion is, that many additional names were added AFTER the first resurrection!

At the final resurrection, we see the 'sheep being separated from the goats'. (Matthew 25) The question is, where do these 'sheep' come from? Were there by-passed Saints left out of the first resurrection, or were more names added to the Book of Life AFTER it?

Here again, we are presented with a situation that attests to the fact of yet another day of salvation, in which new names are added to the Book of Life.

It begins with those who survive through the Great Tribulation, and their descendants, in the thousand years. But that doesn't provide for those who died throughout history. There is no resurrection for them prior to the end of the thousand years. They remain in their graves through the Millennial Age.

### **The Second Resurrection**

After the thousand years are finished, the rest of the dead are to be raised. (Rev. 20:5) What we

need to establish is, What for?

Now, this is the area where many people have problems. There's a segment of Christianity that has no real use for any resurrection to life. Their conviction is that each person's eternal reward is assigned immediately at death. Those more knowledgeable understand that there **is** to be a resurrection, but are at a partial loss to explain exactly why. Fewer still understand that there are multiple resurrections. Christ Himself pointedly addressed this matter. In one, He was personally quoted. In the other, He gave the most explicit narrative on the subject to the last living Apostle, John, with the latter passage adding clarity to the earlier one.

Those two passages are found in John 5 and Revelation 20. These are the real 'resurrection chapters'. When we 'harmonize' both, together, we can distinguish a startling clarity on this fundamental Christian Doctrine (verified as such in Hebrews 6:1 & 2) not as apparent independently. Very likely, the Gospel writer didn't fully understand this early. Below, the two relevant passages:

John 5:21- etc. *"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, (v.24) "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. ¶ 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. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. ¶ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Notice, He prefaces each phase with a 'most assuredly' then finally a 'do not marvel', as they were no doubt incredulous at what they were*

hearing!

**This was no 'metaphor'!** It was newly revealed Truth!

**Revelation 20:4 etc.** *"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years. Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth... (v.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. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the 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. ¶ And 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...This is the second death. (from the NKJ)*

For clarity, I have inserted the ¶ symbol where the narrative shifts to a subsequent resurrection.

Here, we see **three** distinct 'judgment' categories.

**1.** Those who bypass appearing before the sentencing throne, having been pre-assigned directly into **Life** and the first resurrection by Christ Himself, *then*,

**2.** Those who are raised physical (notice it says '*there is no place for them*') have the books opened to their understanding, and for them to live by, with **opportunity** for their names to become added into the Book of Life, if deemed worthy, *then*,

3. The final sentencing phase, where all who ever lived are raised up for **final sentencing**: those who rejected their opportunity for salvation prior to the Last Trump, those who lived and died during the millennial age, together with those who were finally given opportunity to respond to God's grace in the Great White Throne era, completing their opportunity period.<sup>52</sup> With these subject blocks in mind, when we read the two narratives, we can see that Christ revealed His Plan with respect to the various resurrections, and what vital role they play. Below, a 'harmonization' of these two, enhancing what they add to each other. Both are from Christ's personal revelation, both thru the Apostle John. The *light italic* and the **bold italic** are retained to identify which passage is quoted.

### Christ's Own Revelation!

*"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. **And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years.**"* These are they in the first resurrection, occurring at Christ's Second Coming, prior to the Great White Judgment Throne, in which they will also co-officiate! (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:2 & Malachi 3:18)

*¶ 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. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. ¶ **Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it,***

<sup>52</sup> See my article; "*The Rejected Resurrection*" for a full explanation of this Biblically revealed scenario.

*from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. (to be assigned?) **And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened.***<sup>53</sup> *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.* This resurrection provides opportunity for those who never had a chance to respond to God's call and live 'by the things written in the books': their names then being added into the Book of Life. No such opportunity is referred to in the next and final resurrection. The only book referred to there is the Book of Life, and that, only for the purpose of seeing whose names are written in it!! And, notice, that final resurrection is all-inclusive! This previous one wasn't, nor did it impose the 'second death'!

*¶ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which **all** who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. . ¶ **And 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...This is the second death.*** This final 'consignment' resurrection involves all who ever lived (excepting only those first resurrected) and is that 'sheep from goats' sentencing Christ explicitly referred to in Matthew 25: verses 31 – 46.

The **first** resurrection is direct into **Life**. Then the **second** is to afford 'judgment and justice' to those who died never having had opportunity. The **third** is for **final sentencing** of all either to life **or** to condemnation: the second death! The second death is experienced by no-one, without their first having passed through an evaluative judgment. For the Saints of God, that evaluation period is now!<sup>54</sup> For the rest, the dead who were

<sup>53</sup> Books (Greek: Biblion) The books we are to live by!

<sup>54</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:17...judgment must begin at the house of God...

never called at least, that period is after the thousand years are finished.

Now that we can understand, from the above passages, the essential doctrine of the **resurrections** from the dead, and as a result, another one listed there in Hebrews 6: that of **eternal judgment**, how judgment and justice will come to all in their appointed time, we are ready to understand the vital purpose for the Last Great Day. God has a PLAN that ‘not any should perish’ (needlessly). That plan also happens to be His WILL! **This is the Day for ‘them too’!**

After the Millennial Age, and after Satan’s brief release, those dead who never had an opportunity to know the Truth, and to respond to it, by having received God’s Spirit, which is essential to True Salvation, will be raised again, still physical, to be offered their opportunity. They will live in an age absent of Satan’s influence, as did their physical predecessors in the Millennial Kingdom.

### How Long is this Age?

We can now see that the Great White Throne era begins with the second resurrection and ends with the third! Is there any Biblical indication just how long this interval is?

We don’t really have clear indication, and perhaps God isn’t that concerned that we know just now. But, the millennial setting in Isaiah 65: gives us a clue. (v.17) **“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former (Terrorist-infected Jerusalem) shall not be remembered or come to mind... For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing... No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child will die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.”** From this, we can only deduce that in this new Jerusalem, during the second resurrection era, they will be allowed to live out their lives to the sentencing at the end.

We see the millennial ‘infant dying a hundred years old’, in contrast to the ‘sinner the same age

dying also’. This ‘child’, if understood as being the ‘child of God’ **as opposed to** the ‘sinner’ of similar age, we can understand that all raised in the second resurrection as similarly having the rest of one full generation, to complete their opportunity period. Not a small concession for the extra thousand years they had to wait for their resurrection.

God is good! His Plan is infinitely good! Wish to God more people would read and believe what He has revealed to us.

We can identify strongly with the sentiment expressed in the concluding words of the Book of Daniel (12:9) **“And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed til the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white and refined,... but the wise shall understand’.**” (then v.4) **“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end;”** Isn’t this that time? 

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### A Question from a reader:

**Does the bible indicate anywhere that those in the second resurrection are to die a physical death again?** *Reply: An assertion from a major Church of God organization a generation ago identified Isaiah 65:20 with the second resurrection period. That would suggest a positive answer to your question. But analyzing the context of that chapter, the era as described seems to be the millennial age, not the post-millennial age.*

*It is far more logical to this writer that those raised in the second will be resurrected with perfectly healthy bodies, and will live out their opportunity life-times, however long that may be, but will **remain alive** at the very end, when the rest of the dead, those who lived and died during the millennial age, and the ‘lost’ from the previous age, will be raised back to life to join with them in standing before their sentencing ‘judgment seat’ in order to receive their just reward, either Life or the Second Death!*

*Under that scenario, all from the second coming onward will experience just one death and (for the most part) one resurrection prior to the end when ALL are to be finally sentenced!*

*See the chapter: “The 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Revelation”.*

# The Rest of the Dead

***At Times, Seemingly Simple Verses Can Offer Profound Realizations. Revelation 20:5 Is One Such Passage. Does the Religious Establishment Have Sufficient Understanding to Accommodate What this Verse Reveals?***

A fundamental Biblical teaching, that of the resurrection from the dead, is boldly addressed in the latter chapters of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, which was related by His angel to John the Apostle. Not that this matter isn't addressed in other New Testament passages, it is. But here in this one place, we are made aware that not only is there to be a resurrection, but that there definitely is to be **more than one!**

## **Not Just Alive!**

The passage in question is intertwined among the explicit explanations of the world condition shortly after the Second Coming. Satan is bound for the duration of the Millennium and God's True Saints may anticipate sharing Power with Christ! *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they **lived and reigned** with Christ a thousand years. **But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.** This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in **the first resurrection**: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."* (Rev. 20:4-6) This seems rather clear as stated, but do we appreciate the full scope of what it's telling us?

There is going to be a 'First Resurrection', with a second offset in time by a thousand years. Who is to be in the first and who's to be in the later one?

The first question is perhaps the easiest to answer. Places such as 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15 & 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4 are well-known for their dramatic portrayal of the moment of the resurrection of the true Saints of God. *"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:51-52) Of course, those who understand the seven trumpets of Revelation will recognize the seventh as being that 'last one' when Christ returns and the Saints are **then** to be raised and, of all things, rewarded. (Revelation 11:15-19)

First Thessalonians adds to the picture, explaining further the situation with regard to those still living at the time this event happens: *"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede (go before / precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead in Christ** shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:14-17)

## **Raised, But in What Form?**

It is natural that we would wonder as to the nature of the bodies which God's Saints are to possess. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians adds this: *"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?... But God giveth it a body as it*

*hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. ... There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is **raised in glory**: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in **power**: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a **spiritual** body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a **quickening spirit**. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. **And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and **this mortal must put on immortality**. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory.*” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:35-54 with emphasis.)*

So this explains that our glorified form in the resurrection will be immortal, ever-living Spirit. Like Christ in His glorified resurrected form, in His case able to appear as a tangible physical Being,<sup>55</sup> and also at appropriate situations, in brilliant Glory. “*We know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.*” (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2) Notice, “, ..*when He shall appear*”! There’s an event co-incident with His appearing that will change our form of being. Such change does not happen at the time of our decease.

### Considering All ‘the Others’

But, it’s the matter of ‘the rest of the dead’ that is our focus here. What does this profound passage in Revelation 20 reveal about them? We are told the rest of the dead will remain in their graves until **after** the thousand years have passed. We

<sup>55</sup> Luke 24:36-43

could call this the ‘second resurrection’. After all, the earlier one is called ‘the first’. The underlying question is, Why does this vast multitude remain in their graves as the First Resurrection occurs, and **why do they have to wait** for one-thousand years? What religious organization can pose a credible explanation for this interval?

Embedded in that first question is, To what will these in this latter resurrection be resurrected? Casual readers might suppose it’s to their eternal condemnation. After all, those raised in the First Resurrection are the Saints of God only, not any ‘not in Christ’. Yet, these aren’t called ‘wicked’!

But that supposition ignores this question, Are those physical beings who live during the thousand years allowed opportunity for conversion? The answer to that leads us to an answer to a related matter. Does the ‘later resurrection’ include converted people? If people are converted during the millennial era, then the answer must be, YES! That later resurrection, the one **after** the thousand years, must include both converted and non-converted individuals from the millennial age and as yet unconverted people from the time prior to the first resurrection! This opens our awareness to a whole new spectrum of considerations.

### More than One Condition!

That group of individuals who live prior to the first resurrection (which occurs at Christ’s Second Coming) include individuals deemed ‘wicked’ who once were enlightened, but ended up rejecting God’s Spirit. They have no prospect of being in the first resurrection or of being restored to a converted state. (Heb. 6:4-6 & 10:26-31). But with them are another much larger contingent of ‘unconverted’ people: Those who God specifically blinded against being called.<sup>56</sup>

Few denominations ever address this situation, as their awareness of the Plan of God for all humanity is inadequate. They don’t understand the **two** harvests: the early and latter rains!<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:3-4, Romans 11:7, etc.

<sup>57</sup> James 5:7, Revelation 14:13-20.

We can justify in our minds the condemnation to a lake of fire those who **had** God's Spirit but rejected it. But, how do we justify condemnation of those purposely **blinded by God** against being able to understand during their lifetimes?

Of those first resurrected, we have very specific indication of their situation. "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in **the first resurrection**: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*" (Rev. 20:6) But of those resurrected after the thousand years, the text is non-specific as to their condition or destiny. This is a key area with respect to the purpose for the second resurrection contingent. What does that latter resurrection provide? In what form do **they** come up? And, **how long** do they remain alive afterward?

If this were all we had on the subject, our questions would have to be answered largely by speculation. But fortunately, we have substantial evidence on the subject. In fact, there's more said about this general resurrection (the post-millennial one) than the first! Major passages explain the situation that will be created when the later resurrection occurs.

### **Raised to a Physical State?**

Ezekiel 37 goes into great detail regarding Israel when the ancient nation (and by implication, those blinded to a latter day opportunity) are resurrected, to a physical state [please note], and are given God's Spirit for the first time! "*And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and **brought you up out of your graves**, And shall **put my spirit in you**, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it...*" (Ezek. 37:13-14) This isn't a time when God's Spirit is limited in availability like the present age, but is placed within them, it appears, without their having to ask for it!

When we understand the reason for the blinding of the peoples of Israel, (and the Jews in particular) we have more of the picture as it involves the later resurrection. When a person is purposefully blinded by God, and goes to their grave in that

same condition, who can fault them for their unconvertedness? How could God be justified in their eternal condemnation if He is responsible for their inability to respond? In other words, they never had a chance! But we know that..."*all Israel shall be saved*"! (Romans 11:26) When? After their deaths? The answer to that is quite surprising, and is in part what Revelation 20 leads us toward!

We know from this and other sources that in the millennial age Satan will be restrained and that the Saints of God will co-rule with Christ. (Rev. 20:6) That's the **same** thousand years! Then Satan will be released again after the thousand years. Presumably after being released he'll be able to again attempt to mislead a segment of humanity, though only briefly. (v. 7&8)

### **Christ Had Much to Say!**

But Christ explained in detail a situation in which unconverted peoples from vastly different times would rise up together and live together for some unspecified period. Certainly long enough to learn what era the others were from and the witness conditions they each had in their generations. It is based on their disregarded 'opportunities' that they condemn each other! In Matthew 11 we find this: "*Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*" (vs. 20-24) But here's the startling part: In Matthew 12 He continues: "*The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*" (vs. 41-

42) The situation described here (and in Luke 11) shows unconverted peoples from vastly different periods in history being brought back to life **together** and being strongly critical of those in the first century who had potent witness, but weren't responsive to it! To be able to do that, they have to live together for some unspecified period of time to come to know the conditions in their counterparts' day and to learn how they'd responded to it. These are resurrected but as **physical beings**. They aren't raised to immortal spirit form at this time. These aren't in the first resurrection, but are the 'rest of the dead' we read of in Revelation 20:5.

It's interesting to consider the reactions of these Christ spoke of. IF they're going to immediately be consigned to the second death, why would they have any interest in 'condemning' those of other generations? If they **all** face impending doom at this point in time, wouldn't we expect 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' from them instead? The fact of them having time to consider the missed opportunity periods of other later generations suggests that they have at least a 'repentance awareness'. That together with the clear prophecy of the reunited houses of Israel being given God's Spirit (as in Ezekiel 37) bears evidence of a period of real opportunity for these resurrected peoples. Being given God's Spirit doesn't automatically make them fully converted, but it provides them with what they need in order to **become** converted at that time! In other words, this 'second' resurrection provides an 'opportunity period' (for those who never had real opportunity in their lifetimes)! This is the key issue we need to understand. Religionianity, for the most part, sidesteps the matter.

### **Saved & Lost Raised Together?**

Further evidence of an 'opportunity period' exists in Christ's other narratives regarding the general resurrection. Numerous places <sup>58</sup> describe an aggregate group raised-up together and separated out to differing destinies. This can't be the **first** resurrection, as that one involves truly converted Saints only! It has to be a **later** event.

But, with converted and unconverted individuals

<sup>58</sup> Revelation 14:14-20, Matthew 25:31-46, etc.

together, we have to ask ourselves, Where do these other converted people come from? The first resurrection would have emptied all of the names from the Book of Life into a resurrected spirit state. Would any then be bypassed? If not, then we are forced to conclude there are **others** brought to full conversion subsequent in time to Christ's return!

This also is a weak area among even evangelicals. Another 'opportunity period' exists during the millennial age. The question is, Is one afforded to 'the rest of the dead' who were disallowed one in their lifetimes, due to general ignorance or due to being blinded until a later date, as Romans 11:7-11 explains? "*What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and **the rest were blinded**. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they **may not see**, and bow down their back always. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for **to provoke them to jealousy**."* 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:14-15 continues: "*But **their minds were blinded**: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*" Romans 11:32 provides the answer as to **why** they're blinded: "*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have **mercy upon all***." Mercy is **not** when someone is barred from access to God's Spirit and from conversion. The placement of their opportunity into the post-millennial age is to provide for a much greater number becoming converted than otherwise would be! This to fulfill the Covenant of Promise to them to a **vastly greater degree!**

We are brought to an awareness of why 'the rest of the dead' are dealt with **after** the thousand years. Today is **a** day of salvation to those God is specifically calling to the predestination of being a part of His ruling class, but the majority will be afforded their opportunity in a vastly better age, with Satan restrained from influencing society. 📖

# Blessed are Those Who Die in the Lord Henceforth

***The Book of Revelation contains Many Extraordinary Narratives.  
But, What IS the Point of telling us Something we've Known All Along?  
Is there a Relevant Point in this Blessing that has been Overlooked?***

Being a nation that has a high interest in political inaugurations, we should be impressed with one involving a special class of people second to none in all of world history. The 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation presents a scene at a distinct moment in time. That time is clearly just after the Second Coming! Beginning in verse 1, we read: *“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an **hundred forty and four thousand**, having his **Father's name written in their foreheads.**”* It should be clear to all exactly when this event is to take place. Verse 2 takes us into the inaugural ceremony, with its angelic accompaniment. Verse 3 tells us that these 144 thousand sing a song that no one else can learn and do so before the **earthly** Throne and its Spirit Administrators, with an apparent angelic narrator informing us that these are *“the firstfruits, redeemed from among men”*.

In verse 4, we're told more, *“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which **follow the Lamb** whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being **the firstfruits** unto God and to the Lamb. 5: *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God”**

Another passage that refers to these 144 thousand is found in Revelation chapter 7. We are made aware there that the twelve tribes of Israel are not irrelevant as the millennial age is to begin. Twelve thousand are assigned to and are sealed into each of the twelve tribes. These will apparently serve under the administrations of each of the twelve original Apostles, as Christ explained in Matthew 19:28. We know when this is to be, as it's a time Christ called 'the regeneration' which is also the first resurrection

(of Saints), an event that occurs at the time of the Last (the Seventh) Trump, at the Second Coming. (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-52 & Revelation 11:15-19)

With this revealing scene presented to God's Servants, and with Christ's assumption of Power and with the new authority structure in place, we then see a series of three angels who convey a message to the physical inhabitants living on Earth, obviously those not converted at the time. We can tell that from the messages presented to them.

## Three Angels' Messages

Verse 6 introduces this series of three angels. We see “another angel” in verse 6, yet “another angel” in verse 8 and then a “third angel” in verse 9. From the narrative we can see that these three are successive to one another, and the group successive to the angelic messenger who preceded them, presenting the 144 thousand.

What we need to appreciate is the continuity in the chapter. Some pose that the messages of the three angels are pre-Advent, presuming the reference to the beast and his worship system must place these messages prior to Christ's return. But let's notice what these really say and to whom.

The first: v.6: *“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the **everlasting gospel** to preach **unto them that dwell on the earth**, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7: *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for **the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.**”* This message is to those living on Earth at the time, and keep in mind that the successive angels are in sequence to one another. These to whom*

they speak are the physical survivors of the great end-time events who live over into the millennial age, and it extends to all peoples of every ethnicity, something unprecedented to this point. But the message is for them to fear and worship the Creator, informing them that the hour of His judgment is come. Readers often see this ‘judgment’ as referring to a sentence of condemnation, where it actually announces the start of an evidentiary period. (The sentencing event is dealt with under the latter part of the chapter.)<sup>59</sup> Why command these living people to worship their Creator if condemnation is about to be imposed on them? Why preach the everlasting Gospel to peoples who are already irreversibly ‘lost’? This is obviously announcing the beginning of their opportunity period.

Then the next: 8: “*And there followed another angel, saying, **Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.**” Here announcing the very recent destruction of modern Babylon, the second fall of that perverse system!*

Then finally: 9: “*And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,** 10: *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:* 11: *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”* Issuing a prohibition against anyone ever again worshipping under the beast system, which most of them had done up to that point in time, explaining what will ultimately happen to those who don’t heed and who don’t obey.*

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<sup>59</sup> The usual view of ‘judgment’ is for its sentencing aspect. But judgment, as the scripture presents the term, also involves the evaluation of individuals in process of being converted prior to a sentencing. See 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:17 for an example of usage where it couldn’t mean sentencing or condemnation.

So we have the everlasting Gospel being preached and the command to worship their Creator, then the announcement of Babylon having come to a final end as a world order, then the prohibition against any further worship under that old system. This is where evaluation begins of the survivors of the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord. Their choice from this point on is not how to worship, but whether to **worship God His way**, as no other way is permitted. The old Babylonian system died with that city! God’s millennial system is different.

Now, considering the final seven verses of chapter 14: We are taken on beyond the immediate scene to what is referred to as the **white cloud** judgment. This is the time of final **sentencing** as we can see from the narrative. The final harvest of the world, the fruits of the latter rains. (Be sure to read Chapters 5 & 15)

### Two Great Reapings

We see brought up in this next scene two distinctly different contingents of peoples. The first doesn’t specifically say what their destiny is, but in contrast to what happens to the second contingent, we are able to make a logical deduction. These are they who are ‘harvested’ for inclusion in the Family of God, as we see also in places such as Matthew 25:32 and in Revelation 20:13-15.

The first: 14: “*And I looked, and behold a **white cloud**, and upon the cloud one sat **like unto the Son of man**, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.* 15: *And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, **Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*** 16: *And **he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.*** Notice, it is the one like the Son of Man who actually does **this** reaping, where the second is done by two angels! Additional indication of their destiny.

The second reaping: 17: “*And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.* 18: *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp*

sickle, saying, *Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.* 19: *And **the angel** thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great **winepress of the wrath of God.*** 20: *And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”* The presence of blood with these indicates they are present in resurrected state, and in physical form!

Essentially, chapter 14 deals generally with the harvests of the Earth: those resurrected at Christ’s return to reign with Him for 1000 years, then it turns to those He will guide into a true knowledge of Him in the millennial and the post-millennial ages, then it projects on to the final reaping of the two categories of physical beings at the very end of the human experience. Without the three angels’ messages being related in this context, we would not be as cognizant of the religious situation of the millennial age with its opportunity period for salvation that begins with Christ’s return. Notice, the placement of this narrative gives us specific information by where it’s said, more than if the same information was given by itself in some other context.

### Placement can be Important

Basically, in Revelation chapter 14, we have four time-successive sections: The introduction of the 144 thousand being alive with Christ, then the messages to all the unconverted physical survivors of the tribulation, then a promissory message to those who will become converted during the millennial and post-millennial ages, then a description of the final harvest that is to conclude all physical human life on Earth. The chapter is reflective of the first and last resurrections, but without mentioning that word specifically!

But to this point, we haven’t focused-in on the third section of this prophecy, the message of promise to those converted in this latter-rain era. Here also, the placement of these two verses is revealing by **where** it’s placed as much as in what it says. Those two verses are: 12: *“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the*

*commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.* 13: *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead **which die in the Lord from henceforth:** Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may **rest** from their labors; and their works do follow them.”* Some tend toward connecting the message of verse 12 with verse 11, but it is more meaningfully connected with the **hope** of the converted individuals toward their future in verse 13, than with their seeing just dues brought upon those who troubled them in their pre-millennial lifetimes.

### What This Adds to the Picture

But it answers for us a question as to how and when those converted after Christ returns and has set up His Kingdom on Earth, His immortal Saints ruling with Him, **how and when they also will become ‘fully born’ into the Spirit Family.** It’s an area little mentioned directly, except for the rare millennial era glimpse we see in places such as Isaiah 65:16-25, (especially verse 20) which presents basically the same thing as does Revelation 14:13.

We need to pause and consider not only the *exquisite placement* of verse 12 in the prophetic progression, but also its wording. Where it says **“from henceforth”**, we’re being told that something would be the case ‘from this point in time onward’. Why does it insert that just at this point in the narrative? Isn’t this something that always has been the case ever since Christ’s resurrection and the greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Why add a, ‘from this point onward’ if it weren’t **pivotal**? If I were to say, from henceforth pennies will be made of copper, there would be reason to wonder when that statement was made, or what I didn’t know about pennies, because pennies have been made from copper for generations! Converted Saints have always passed from this life and awaited their eternal reward in their graves. Why say this here at the onset of God’s Kingdom on Earth?

I pose here that this tells us that those converted who die during the millennial age will go to their graves and await a resurrection to Life into the immortal Spirit dimension, just as happens in this age! That affirming what Isaiah 65:20 states

regarding the millennial world, “*There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the **child shall die** an hundred years old; but the **sinner** being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*” The child of God: progeny of Christ and His Bride, these whose names have been **added to** the Book of Life during the millennial age, are assured of a similar hope as we in this present age in that regard. Just that their Family station (not being in the Bride) won’t be the same.

### Gift versus Reward?

Some have reservations regarding this message due to the mention of ‘works’. Salvation is a gift, not a reward! Though true, it’s another area that needs to have the overburden of theological misconception removed, and is considered in my article on “*The REWARD of the Saved*”. The Revelation 14:13 passage reflects a truth way too many haven’t adequately understood. Where salvation is a **gift**, there also is a **reward** awaiting those who are in possession of that gift, commensurate with their life’s accomplishments.

### Direct Assumption?

Let’s also consider another matter. If Saints converted in the millennial Kingdom **don’t** die, but are changed over into a Spirit existence<sup>60</sup> as were those who were ‘alive and remaining’ at the Second Coming, then we’d be forced to conclude that these never actually will die! Yet, we’re also told that it’s appointed to all men **once to die** and **all must appear** before the judgment seat of Christ in order to receive the things done in their physical lifetimes. In what body does that happen? If they are to appear already in their spirit body, then why would they need to appear there in order to receive that body? Consider 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:9. “*Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10: For we **must all appear** before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*” (If a death and grave is to be experienced by only the **unconverted**, then when would **all** appear?) Romans 14 has more. 10: “*But why dost thou*

<sup>60</sup> A major world ministry and its successor organizations teach a variation of this.

*judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for **we shall all stand** before the judgment seat of Christ. 11: For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12: So then **every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**”*

The picture we draw from passages such as these suggests a determination being made at that time with an appropriate sentence rendered, the sentence due at the end of ones’ life, once each has had his or her legitimate opportunity for salvation. (Keep in mind, God intentionally blinded certain peoples for a greater purpose. See for example John 12:37-40, Romans 11:7-8 & 26, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:14 & 4:4.)

### Death: the Great Eventuality

Well understood in every age, even back in the time of Job, (Job 19:25-27) is the inevitability of our personal demise. What we don’t often hear being factored into peoples’ thinking is the ‘day of judgment’. Hebrews 9 has this: “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but **after this the judgment:***” (See footnote 1 on page 2.)

Only a very specific few are exempted from this **required** appearance, as we read in places such as John 5:24 and Revelation 20:6, where we see a pre-assigned few who are awarded Life even while alive in this generation. They are specifically exempted, even now, from being subject to the second death. They will be raised *incorruptible* in the first resurrection, **before** that judgment period opens.

### The Harvests of the World

So we find Revelation Chapter 14 to be very informative as it regards how and when God will reap the fruits of His labors of Redemption. Verse 13 is particularly revealing in presenting the fact that those who ‘die in the Lord’ after the first resurrection may expect a future resurrection to Life, but more than that, we’re also given positive indication that all people will continue to have opportunity for salvation after Christ’s return. With Satan being excluded from influence during the thousand years, and with the ‘blindness’ removed, that response rate should be extraordinary. 

# And No Place Was Found for Them!

***A Very Curious Comment Regarding those to be Resurrected After the Millennial Age is Found in Revelation 20:11. The Implications of this Comment Provide More Insight than is usually Noted or Expounded Upon.***

Other articles in this series deal with the various considerations regarding the resurrections from the dead. A subject having far more importance than traditional main stream religions allows it to have, it being specifically identified in Hebrews Chapter 6 as one of the fundamental ‘doctrines of Christ’. The first two verses read: *“Therefore leaving the principles of the **doctrine of Christ**, let us go on unto **perfection**; not laying again the foundation of **repentance** from dead works, and of **faith** toward God, Of the doctrine of **baptisms**, and of **laying on of hands**, and of **resurrection** of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**.”* These have been identified as the seven fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

But in the two distinct places where Jesus clearly explained **all** three varying resurrections together in one place, John 5:25-29 and Revelation 20:5-6 & 11-15; and in his descriptions of a **concurrent** physical resurrection involving vast segments of long dead societies, in Matthew 12:41-42, Luke 11:31-32, Matthew 11:20-24 and Ezekiel 37; and yet another distinct situation in which the righteous dead and wicked are raised up together for separation and ultimate **sentencing** such as in Matthew 25:31-46, 13:36-42 and Revelation 14:14-19, we can see that the subject involves more than one resurrection period. For that matter, Revelation 20:5 clearly makes the unmistakable point, that there is to be more than just one resurrection!

## **Also, No Place for this Teaching?**

It’s especially curious how that main stream religion has no **real** place for this ‘doctrine of Christ’, despite their profuse profession of love for Jesus and His teachings, though the above references were **all His words!** But that is not the focus of this particular treatise. That’s dealt with in other chapters, such as those listed in the Table of Contents and on page 71.

The passage in question is found in Revelation 20, which reads as follows: 7: *“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8: And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9: And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10: And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”* So we’re brought up to the point in time when the event described is to take place. This is not a long duration nor a non-specific era. It is precisely after the final demise of Satan for all time. (In the millennial age, he is restrained, but after it, he is allowed just a little time to do his usual thing (deceive as many as possible) Rev. 20:7-8).

Right after Satan is taken away from society for the final time and cast into the Lake of Fire, which has the capability of consuming from existence even the institutions of death and the grave! (Revelation 20:14) But the interesting passage is where this continues: 11-12: *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; **and there was found no place for them**, and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* Here we have a rather lengthy sentence strung with a series of connective ‘**and**’s. The relevant statement is the line: *“**and there was found no place for them,**”!*

Being placed where it is in the narrative, the reader could perceive that what there was found no place for is 'Earth and Heaven'. 'Them' could be seen as these components of the material universe. But, alternately, the 'them' could also be referring to those people who are to be brought before the Throne. The important question then is, what or who is the 'them'?

### And Who is the 'Him'?

A little more background might be helpful at this point. Regarding this scene, a **Matthew Henry** Commentary has the 'Him that sat on the Throne' as being Christ, the Judge. **Jamieson, Fausset & Brown** has it being the Son, but as directly representing the Father. **Adam Clarke's** Commentary has the Judge being 'the indescribable Jehovah', suggesting by reference that this is the very event we read of in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:28 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:12, which it could **NOT** be, in that the descent of the Father to assume the Kingdom from His Son, and earthly elements melting with fervent heat due to the power of His Presence, does not occur until **AFTER** the general resurrection a generation later, after the last enemy is destroyed, which we read of in Revelation 20:14. Discontinuing death as a functional institution must be an accomplished fact **prior to** that event in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:12.<sup>61</sup> We're left with the consensus and most logical conclusion that this Judge is the very person of the Son of God.

In the presence of this all-powerful Judge, earth and heavens are described as having '*fled away*'. What we need to keep in mind is that this Being is one and the same as has been ON the Earth continually for the previous 1000 years. Earth and heaven didn't recede from His presence during that time-frame! It isn't so much His presence as it is the **EVENT** which is to occur, beginning at this point in the prophesied time progression. This is the opening of a new phase of God's Judgment process. After the millennium, after Satan's last stand; **then** we see the earth and heavens being spread back, thus creating a vast dimensionally indeterminate arena. That picture in mind, is it logical then to assume the "*no place for them,*" could refer to this space thus created, or to the

innumerable who are about to be brought-up into it? It's far more logical to apply the 'them' to the number of resurrected individuals mentioned next, rather than to the **space** just created, ostensibly **for these** resurrected peoples.

### Who is the 'Them'?

But it's the identity of '**them**' that poses this all-important question. Does '**them**' make reference to the items mentioned just **before**, or to the regenerated peoples mentioned immediately **after**? It is logical to some extent either way.

But if we assume the latter, we're left to answer other resultant questions. Most obviously, why there would be no place for these **for whom** this extraordinary space was created. There would logically be space for at least **some** of them, wouldn't there? But the way it's worded, we are given the picture that there's no room for **any** of them, not just an 'overflow'! Also, in the general resurrection mentioned next in this narrative (also in John 5:29), an even greater number will be raised up for sentencing, and nothing like a '*there is no place for them*' is mentioned. Being that the greatest number of all will arise at the very end, and no 'space problem' is evident in that situation, we are drawn to ponder the intent of this comment.

Then, our attention is called to the **purpose** for this Great Event. It doesn't sound like a sentencing, but one where 'books' (*biblion*) are opened and an examination of their works in response to those now opened books is made. There is something at this point that needs to be **determined** regarding these peoples' spiritual state. These raised-up are the '*small and great*', **not** the righteous and wicked! Another relevant detail we should allow to register. "...and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and **the books were opened**: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the **books**, according to their works." These 'books' contain the moral standards by which the Judge is to evaluate these peoples' conduct. Their worthiness for life or death is **not** already pre-decided. The 'Book of Life' is also opened during this 'judgment'. **NOT** for the purpose of seeing whose names are in there, (like we see done at the end: v.15) but to open it to the addition of yet more names. Realizing this, we're

<sup>61</sup> See the article "*And the Elements Shall Melt*" for further discussion of this extraordinary event.

drawn even more to see ‘*them*’ as referring to these people, rather than these inanimate environmental components: Earth and Heaven.

Why it is that there is ‘*no place for them*’ is the simple fact that those in this resurrection just after the millennial age are not yet ‘judged’ in the sense of having had opportunity to understand and comply with the moral standards of these ‘books’. Therefore, they aren’t yet worthy of death, nor are they recipients of Life. (As those who were, all were raised in the first resurrection described back in verse 5 of this same chapter.) Why there is no place for them is the simple fact that a *Just* God would not rightfully consign these to everlasting condemnation IF they’d never had opportunity to become converted.

### **God Blinded their Eyes!**

Keep in mind that it was God who blinded the minds of many religious people of His day, *lest* they come to a true understanding, and in their present carnal states risk losing out on their opportunity. (“...*Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*” (Romans 11:7-8 quoting Isaiah 29:10)) God did so, NOT with intent to deny them opportunity, but with intent to create a situation in which a vastly greater number **could** attain to salvation, as Paul said later in Romans 11:25-26, “*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*” (quoting Isaiah 59:20) These peoples’ opportunity occurs after Satan is removed from society, providing them the same spiritual environment as existed during the millennial age.

These are the peoples like are described in Ezekiel 37, who are to be raised again in physical form. These are they who come up together *with* the unconverted of the first century that Jesus spoke of so pointedly in Matthew 12:41-42, Luke 11:31-32, and Matthew 11:20-24. People who, if exposed to

the Scripture, were blinded to its truth, or if not, those who never had an opportunity to come to know the only way of Salvation: Those who died too early in their young lives to ever be accountable for their ignorance or rejection. These are they who live again after the 1000 years as Revelation 20:5 identifies: The REST of the dead. (those not having had opportunity).

### **NOT a Second Chance!**

The resurrection just after the millennial age is **not** for the purpose of providing anyone a ‘second chance’. That contradictory consideration causes many to reject what this place in scripture reveals. Those who were called and who **had** opportunity will await a just sentencing. They are not these for whom ‘no place’ can be found for them (yet)! Once having rejected God’s calling and spurning the receipt of His Spirit, there is no hope of ever re-attaining that condition. Only condemnation awaits. “*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*” (Heb. 10:26-29) There obviously IS a place for these people!

So those who had opportunity and died having spurned it have a place. Their destiny is already established even now. Their resurrection is **later**, after this last physical generation, raised up just after the millennium is concluded, and its people are judged and readied for **just** assignment to either life or death depending on their life’s record.

At the end of this opportunity period (a first for them) there is to be a final ‘general resurrection’ in which ‘**all** that are in their graves’ will hear a call to life. John 5:28-29 also describes this same resurrection period: This time, for the purpose of sentencing, **not** for evaluation. Sentencing takes place at the next resurrection (the final one) that the next passage in Revelation 20 concludes with. In

verse 13, <sup>62</sup> “*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were **judged** every man according to their works. 14: And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*” This time, ‘judged’ indicates sentencing. The previously mentioned ‘*no place for them*’ resurrection didn’t involve imposing a second death!

This is the astounding revelation in the middle section of these resurrection chapters, here in Revelation 20 and also the corresponding narrative found in John 5. If we are to insist that there is but one resurrection after the millennial age, we are left with no explanation of how those whom God did not call in their lifetimes are afforded the same chance as those whom He did call.

Protestants struggle with this question. Many of them ascribe to an ‘*age of accountability*’ idea, to accommodate at least the very young, who died **not** being ‘converted’ as it’s defined. Catholics entertain a similar persuasion, providing ‘compartments’ of various ‘*limbos*’ to provide opportunity to resituate the dead who obviously had **no** opportunity. The Mormons have ‘*baptisms for the dead*’ to address this anxiety-laden question. So the question **is** recognized and is on the table! It is the pointed rejection of the fundamental teachings of the New Testament Church with respect to the resurrections from the dead, this ‘*doctrine of Christ*’, that accounts for the gross ignorance on this important issue.

If there be no resurrection from the dead, our faith is meaningless! Paul addressed this fact rather bluntly! “*But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and **your faith is also vain**. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, **your faith is vain**; ye are yet in your sins. Then **they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished**. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is*

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<sup>62</sup> “Judgment” as it is used in the New Testament involves an evaluative period as well as in application to a sentencing. We can see an example of the evaluative sense in 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:17

*Christ risen from the dead, and become the **firstfruits of them that slept.**” (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:13-20)*

Now some would say that this refers only to the fact of Christ’s resurrection. But, as we can see, it involves **we**, the firstfruits, also being resurrected at the Last Trump. This physical life does not provide us the ultimate Promise. That is received only at the moment of Christ’s Second Coming. <sup>63</sup>

It might be good to consider a point raised above, that IF Christ is not raised, then you are yet in your sins. Didn’t Christ’s death alone absolve our sins? Why then is His resurrection to Life a necessary factor in the remission of our sins? It is the rare theologian that has made this potent issue a structural component in his belief system. The resurrections doctrine is essential to the full implementation of God’s Plan for mankind! And we can NEVER fully or correctly understand that Plan of Redemption so long as we disregard key elements of the resurrections, most specifically, the physical resurrection of all those who died without having had the opportunity God intends all to have.

### **At Home in Heaven**

The old ‘spiritual’ has this line: “*If Heaven’s not my home, then Lord what shall I do...*” When people accept the common idea of going to heaven (or hell) immediately at death, they are to varying degrees obligated to disregard key elements of the True Christian Faith! (One of these doctrines of Christ! Those references given in the second paragraph back on page 53 are the words of Christ!) Once in Heaven, or in Hell, what would the possible point of a subsequent resurrection be? Re-assignment right back to the same places? (And, what if an assignment mistake had been made? Boy, would that be a scene! If we’re to take all funeral eulogies at face value, we’d be inclined to think there’s a lot of that!)

So we have, in this apparently innocuous phrase in Revelation 20:11, a **key**, alerting us to the great purpose for the physical resurrection scheduled to happen just after Satan’s final expulsion from human society. We need not be troubled with the anxieties of main stream religion as it regards those who never were called in this age. There IS a place for them, though it’s not determined just yet! 

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<sup>63</sup> Phil. 3:21, 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:47-54, 1<sup>st</sup> Thes. 4:16-17

# Whosoever Will May Come!

***Evangelical Christians, who hold that This is the ONLY Day of Salvation, often Refer to a Passage in John 7 and another in the benediction of Revelation 22 to allege that Anyone who wishes May Come to the LORD at Any Time!***

Despite what is an apparent contradiction by Jesus' own words, believers nevertheless disregard what they wish and apply what they prefer to the words of the New Testament. It's made explicitly clear that being 'called' in the present age is strictly by Divine prerogative. As Jesus stated so plainly in John 6:44, only one chapter earlier, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."** Yet, He proclaimed something which appears to be quite different just a few verses (but an entire season) **later**, in John 7:36-37.

What's been overlooked is what could be refer-red to as the 'temporal context'. Words taken out of their true and full context are the bane of any theological perspective. No less so with these!

## From Holyday to Holyday

Remarkable in its uniqueness is the temporal framework for the Gospel of John. Written much later than the three synoptic gospels, the Apostle John saw need to weave into his narrative an underlying framework not found in any other book. John's Gospel is written largely around the context of Biblical Holyday seasons within Jesus' ministry. With only one minor exception (a brief incident at a traditional observance, the 'Feast of Dedication' (John 10:22)), John skips from Holyday season to Holyday season.<sup>64</sup> This is not without significance!

What we need to be aware of is that this Holyday setting lends significance to the statements made. Many notable statements, such as the one given above, are amplified when considered in the time-

context in which it is set. No less so the passages referred to in the sub-title of this article. *"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* (John 7:36-37) and *"...the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will**, let him take the **water of life freely**."* (Rev. 22:17). Both of these relate to the same general time-setting: the Millennial and post-Millennial period in which the second resurrection is provided major venue.

What is usually overlooked as non-relevant is the simple fact that both of these later declarations are made in the context of a **specific** Biblical Holyday: that of the *"Last Great Day"*, something plainly obvious in John's Gospel. (Keep in mind, the same person also inscribed the Book of Revelation not long after.) As Biblical (Gods') Holydays aren't a factor in main stream Christian Theology, few see any significance even when such association is evident!

In fact, there's much to be realized when considering these potent statements in their proper relevant time-frames. Not the least of which is the actual **absence of contradiction** between John 6:44 (reinforced by verse 39 and 65 of the same chapter) and John 7:38. Both are equally true, but certain conditions apply in the different dispensations of the Spirit of God to humankind. It's the lack of awareness of that **'prophetic outline'** (the *'shadow of things to come'* as Paul referred to them in Colossians 2:16) that's largely missing from 'traditional fundamentalist' theologies, accounting for a general lack of awareness of **Gods' overall plan** for offering an opportunity for salvation to all who've ever lived.

<sup>64</sup> An excellent reference work which documents this fact is *"The Harmony of the Gospels"* by Fred R. Coulter, York Publishing, Box 1038, Hollister, CA, ISBN: 0-967549-1-1

The ‘contradiction’ referred to above: the stated restricted access into the fellowship of Faith through the receipt of Gods’ Spirit, being limited to only those whom the Father specifically calls (in John 6) contrasts dramatically with Jesus’ open exclamation that whoever desires to access the out-pouring of that Spirit **may do so** (in John 7). The difference is in the question of WHEN these statements apply. The John 6 statement that, “**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.**” was given in the context of the Spring Holydays, which illustrate the first Spiritual harvest. (Passover: (the crucifixion) through Pentecost: (the Feast of Firstfruits)) This is further clarified by Jesus’ statements that **it isn’t intended** that the general population, even those religiously inclined, be ‘given’ the ability to discern the spiritual implications of what He was presenting. Only those few **given** to see would see. This was not a new idea, as the explanations offered by Christ Himself were re-quotes of Old Testament prophecies!

### Lest They Understand

Not only was it ‘**not** given’ for them to understand, but Jesus went to great lengths to avoid saying too much too explicitly to the general public, as their time was not yet! Matthew 13 explains, “*And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in **parables**? 11: He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, **but to them it is not given.** 12: For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13: Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14: And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; **lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**” Mark chapter 4 repeats the exclusion: “*And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12:**

*That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; **lest** at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them...33: And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. 34: But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.” The parable form of presentation was intended specifically to limit how much the general public would understand, as it wasn’t God’s intention to call but a few at that time! Even Luke 8:10 has: “*And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might **not understand.**” It is NOT God’s intent to call all people at this point in time. Understanding, (particularly that level of understanding possible only with the receipt of Gods’ Spirit) was specifically limited to just those whom the Father intended be called in the ‘early harvest’.**

The Apostle Paul was not unaware of this situation. He also explained, not only that the majority would not understand in this age, but that certain religious peoples (who we might consider the prime candidates for being brought into the Truth) were specifically **blinded** until a later era, not with intent to exclude them from (eventual) salvation, but to **defer** their ‘opportunity period’ into an era in which the greatest overall number could and would respond. Romans 11:7, “*What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and **the rest were blinded** 8: (According as it is written, **God** hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. 9: And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them: 10: **Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.** 11: I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy....25: For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness** in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in... 32: For **God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he***

*might have mercy upon all.*” Though from this we can see that God has imposed a blindness upon the majority, even including religious peoples, He does so with intent to create an environment amenable to the salvation of a far greater number! Paul refers to an element called “*the election*” (in other places, ‘*the ecclesia*’: called-out ones), and shows that Israel’s blindness opens opportunity for ‘select’ Gentiles, whose successful conversions will prompt Israel to ‘jealousy’ and spur a greater effort, once their day comes!

That creates the logical conclusion that there will be a **later opportunity period** for those whom God has specifically decided to defer calling for the present. Of course, most of these who are and were blinded have gone to their graves still in that condition, which brings us to a second conclusion: That there is to be a resurrection of great numbers of as-yet unconverted people specifically for that purpose, which is spoken of in places such as Ezekiel 37 and Revelation 20.

So why would Jesus say on the one hand, that **no man can come** unless drawn of and by the Father, and only a few months later declare what amounts to a wide open ‘**whosoever will** may come’? There’s a fundamental difference between the two statements, that on the one hand, any real response is God inspired, and the other, where each individual is self-motivated to respond. The answer is found in context of the particular Holyday seasons in which each statement was made. When we understand the essence of the general picture provided by the ‘early and latter rains’, the two general harvest periods, <sup>65</sup> illustrated in greater detail in the two major Biblical Holyday seasons, and with the resurrections associated with them, then the *apparent* contradiction makes perfect sense. In the latter season, God is calling all to repentance. In another time related announcement (that period just after Christ’s Second Coming), the admonition is made for all men to worship God (as they never had!) “*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and*

*give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.* (Rev. 14:6-7) When we analyze **where** this statement is made in relative time context, we find that it is at the time when Satan is banished to a place of restraint for 1000 years (during the Millennial Age). This begins the age of evaluative judgment for those **not** called previously. If this were a sentencing event, why the admonishment to ‘worship Him’, when it would be too late for that?

### **Now is the Time!**

This is the age in which salvation is opened to all living. “*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*” (Rev. 12:10) With Satan cut off from influencing society, a greater number will be able to avail themselves of their opportunity, with a much greater success rate than would occur had they been called in the spiritual environment of this evil age! The focus in this is more on how many would not lose out on salvation if called then, as opposed to how many might lose it if they were to have their opportunity now!

The statement to the effect that ‘anyone’ with a desire to access Gods’ Holy Spirit (that ‘living water’) may **freely** do so is perfectly appropriate in the context of the Millennial Age and the second resurrection era just after it. Especially as it involves those who may have heard, but who weren’t able to really understand due to the blinded condition assigned them by God in the age in which they first lived. In the second resurrection period, the books are opened, (then making perfect sense to them) and their responses evaluated pursuant to their names being added to the Book of Life. “*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*” (Revelation 20:12)

We see from verse 15 of this same chapter that the purpose of the Book of Life being opened is for the addition of new names into it. It would be

<sup>65</sup> Articles: “*The Early and Latter Rains*” and “*The Harvests of the World*” explain this subject more fully.

pointless to look into the Book of Life at the very end to see whose names are in it if no new names had been added since all whose names were in it previously were made Spirit Beings at the first resurrection!

The statement that no man can come except the Father draw him is perfectly appropriate in the context of the pre-Millennial Age in which God is preparing the Bride of Christ, a relatively small *chosen* contingent, who will be the ruling class, administering the Kingdom of God with and under Christ from that time forward. *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”* (Revelation 20:4)

The other Gospels didn't present these restricted / unrestricted statements. Though we do find some apparent event correlation in places such as Mark 6:45-50 & Matthew 14:22-27 with John 6:14-21, the latter part of John chapter 6 through chapter 10 appears stand-alone in content. John (writing much later than they) apparently saw need to infill what the others' narratives hadn't presented.

So, when we see those occasional places which **seem** to indicate that the choice to respond to a call to repentance rests entirely with the individual, we need to remain aware that in this present dispensation, it is God that grants the repentance which is prerequisite to any acceptable response. It is God the Father who places the desire within a person to respond and repent in the first place. The time when **anyone** may respond at will is during that period of time when all are called, and that time is indicated as being during the Millennial Age and the second resurrection period beyond that.

What we need to be clear about is the fact that those called in this age are pre-designated by the Father's specific choice. To repent is not entirely our own desire or accomplishment. It isn't something that we can brag about! Romans 2:4 has, *“...despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing*

*that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* Romans 8:29-30 makes clear who designates each Saint for conversion now. *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”* We tend to focus on the mis-conceived traditional teaching of what 'predestination' is, while failing to consider who makes this all-important selection.

In John 6:37 Jesus acknowledges where His followers come from. It's the Father who designates who they are to be! *“**All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**”* At the end of His Earthly ministry, He reaffirms the same, *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as **thou hast given him.**”* (John 17:2)

Continuing His acknowledgement of the fact, in verses 6 to 12, He says, *“I have manifested thy name unto **the men which thou gavest me** out of the world: thine they were, and **thou gavest them me**; and they have kept thy word. ... 8: For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for **them which thou hast given me**; for they are thine. 10: And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11:...Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom **thou hast given me**, that they may be one, as we are. 12: While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that **thou gavest me** I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”*

Though this age isn't yet the era of 'whosoever will', that day is coming in which **all** will be called! That day will see massive numbers respond. You would think those who are upset to find that this **isn't** that day they've been proclaiming should draw comfort in knowing their calling is direct and specific! Anyone having a genuine thirst for the water of life can appreciate that they have been personally given it by God the Father. 

# And So, ALL Israel Shall be Saved!

***The Apostle Paul lamented the situation with regard to his physical Kinsmen not being afforded Salvation in this age. You would think they'd be THE Prime Candidates for Salvation, though History has proven otherwise!***

Perhaps one of the most perplexing situations in all of religion throughout the last twenty centuries is the obvious fact that those peoples who we would rate most likely to become converted in the Church Era are not! Nor is it likely that they will be any time soon. Considering Israel's vast history and long relationship with their God, it would seem that these peoples would be perfect candidates for salvation, once it became fully available. Yet, that isn't the case. We see the Jewish peoples of the first century and onward, for the most part, rejecting their Messiah and True Paschal Sacrifice. No more than a very few, referred to in the New Testament and Old as only a 'remnant', are recipients of this Covenant of Promise, and based not on ethnicity, which we might have expected, but rather on the election and foreknowledge of God.

The Apostle Paul says much regarding this matter pointedly addressing it in three chapters of the Book of Romans: Those being chapters 9 thru 11.

We have to ask: "What is God doing?" Why isn't there a better response rate from among the Jewish peoples? What's the problem here?

The Apostle Paul entertained the same questions. He saw the situation and lamented in chapter 9 verses 1 to 5: *"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscious also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came,..."* These people, who had the most going for them, are unexplainedly not responding to God's salvation! This seems illogical!

Paul states emphatically, even considering becoming accursed for them, that he'd sacrifice his own salvation if it'd make any difference, but knew it wouldn't! Do we understand what has happened?

## Salvation to Israel?

God **promised** Israel a Messiah. He stated very plainly that He would bring **salvation** to the nation. Yet, when we flip through the pages of history, we find no such thing. He came as a Messiah that did not exactly match their expectations. They rejected Him as such. But further, the promise of national salvation is also absent from their experience so far.

More than that, we find the nation being blinded! Not saved, (except for a very few) but deliberately set aside! It has been Israel's experience this far that the major salvation promised is yet unrealized.

Now, when we realize that the Lord God of the New Testament is the same Being who we read of in the Mosaic writings and in the prophets, (Luke 24:27) it becomes an even more perplexing situation. Their God, the one who led them in the wilderness, the One who gave them the Commandments and made the Sabbath, He being the One who rested, seems now rather cool toward His people, choosing now to blind them rather than save them en masse! That's what Paul here says, and for that matter, we find Christ's words to the same effect! (Mt. 13:15)

## When Will This BE?

A religious scholar on TBN recently predicted that we would see a **vast** number from the Jewish Community 'come to Christ' in the weeks and months before the Great Tribulation. It may even be in response to 'the rapture' he speculated. Such an occurrence would satisfy to his mind the scripture that says all Israel shall be saved. (Romans 11:26 interpreting Isaiah 59:20 and 60:21) But does this satisfy the stated intent of scripture? That might to

some degree provide access for a relative few **living now** to ‘the promises’, but it would leave the vast majority of Israelites who ever lived never having had such advantage. They’re in their graves, unaware, (or are they in the flames of eternal hell, as some insist is the certain condition of all who’ve died unconverted)?

Another major consideration is the term ‘all Israel’. Modern Christian theology has dedicated itself to **not** knowing the identities of the peoples of Israel. They concoct prophetic fulfillment scenarios with no apparent consciousness of the identities of the nations and peoples of Israel, alleging that the Jews are all of Israel. Ignoring the well-documented divided monarchy and the formation of two separate nations after the reign of Solomon, ignoring their separate national histories thereafter, they speak as though these peoples don’t exist. They refer to and visualize only the Jews when *Israel* is mentioned in the Bible.

The Jews represent only a remnant of the smaller southern kingdom of Judah, that nation taken captive by Babylon a century and a quarter later than their compatriots to the north. The larger nation, Israel, at least those few who didn’t flee, was deported to the north toward Caucasia by Assyria in the eighth century BC and never returned to their land as did the Judahites under Cyrus of Persia.

### Who IS Israel?

When we read verses such as “*blindness in part is happened to Israel*”, we tend to think of just the Jewish nation, largely as a result of our religious conditioning. But the same is true of the rest of Israel. And it’s this fact that may help explain the deliberate rejection of any consideration of the subject of the identities of the peoples of greater Israel, the so called “Lost 10 Tribes”, that affects nearly all of the professing Christian world.

Is this rejection itself one manifestation of that blindness? Considering it from another angle, why would religious people **not** want to know who the peoples of Israel are? Especially when considering that their identities are key to understanding many prophetic scenarios! Well, there is at least one reason and it has to do with the Law. But to pursue that aversion here would divert us from the basic

question that is the subject of this article. Let’s let this suffice to at least point out the fact that the Jews comprise only a small portion of the peoples of Israel, and when we read of them in Bible prophecy, we should not lose sight of the fact that the greater portion of them are ‘blinded’ to certain things, even their own ethnic origin. God knows who they are even if the religious don’t care to. We should keep in mind the prophecy of Ezekiel 37, where in their resurrection God is going to reunite the two national houses: Israel and Judah.<sup>66</sup> But then, this detail also raises ‘issues’ among end-time prophecy devotees. Not all can accommodate a resurrection, let alone a physical resurrection, into their ‘going-to-heaven (or hell) theology’. Despite being Biblical, this also will not do in the structure of theology of main-stream religiosity!

### Blindness to What?

When we understand who, we can better understand the dynamics of this condition. Identifying the Jews *only* as being Israel brings us to the issues that exist among Judaic persuasions. But once we understand that Israel is a **greater** ethnicity than just the Jewish peoples, we can better comprehend the full dimensions of the condition.

The descendants of the Kingdom of Judah tend to embrace Judaism, but the descendants of the Kingdom of Israel tend toward Christian persuasions. The point of this observation is to ask, Could the statement of ‘the conclusion of blindness’ affect both houses similarly? This may provide a second subliminal reason why the Christian community doesn’t want to pursue knowing the identities of the peoples of Israel. While most of what is called Christianity distances itself from obligation to keep the Law, especially the more evangelical, yet they will acknowledge the Jews’ obligation to keep it. When the matter of **the rest** of the peoples of Israel comes into the discussion, a very obvious question emerges. A question typically ‘cut off at the pass’! So long as we don’t allow ourselves to know the

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<sup>66</sup> Ezekiel 37:23-24 “*And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: ...And David my servant shall be king over them; ...*”

identities of the peoples of the northern house, we can avoid it. At least for the present!

Hand-in-glove with that is the other question. If greater Israel is non-Jewish, then is it similarly 'blinded', and if so, in what areas? Well, could this identity issue be one of those areas? If something IS true, and people refuse to consider it, what do we call that, enlightenment?

The Truth encompasses a network of inter-dependent components. When one area becomes distorted or deficient, it can skew other doctrinal areas. It was a perceptual anomaly regarding the true Nature of God that impacted the Jew's from being able to fully accept their Messiah. This pre-established 'blindness' contributed much to their being non-receptive.<sup>67</sup> A distorted view as to the effectiveness of the Law in attaining a state of righteousness was another. Paul addresses that issue also in these three chapters of Romans referenced earlier.

So we see two or three important issues already. Israel (the Jews at least) is blinded in their conception of the identity of their GOD, their view as to the efficacy of the Law in attaining a state of righteousness and the identities of their own peoples. As it turns out, their Israelite brothers to the north have problems in these same areas, but in different ways: The Nature of God, the place and purpose for the Law and ignorance of their ethnic identities, (which furthers misconceptions with regard to the need for Law in the Christian life).

### Hardened Hearts?

We all know the story of Pharaoh of the Exodus whose heart was hardened to further God's purpose. But in Romans 9:17-20, Paul uses that same situation to address the issue of hardened hearts among us. By 'shadow-arguing' with an imaginary opponent, who argues that it isn't a person's individual fault if he's not converted, because God removes his choice! Paul's counter is that though the major segment of humanity isn't called, it shouldn't be used as an excuse to not make effort. Yes, only a certain few are 'called', and the rest are blinded, but NOT to negate personal choice.

<sup>67</sup> See the articles: "Who IS the God of the Old Testament" and "The Deadly Revelation of Psalm 110"

But fault is an appropriate topic of discussion. We shouldn't fault the overwhelming majority who are not being called, but we also shouldn't use the matter of God hardening peoples' hearts as an **excuse** for non-response. It's the old double-bind! Someone with enough awareness to pose that defense is sufficiently aware to not have that excuse.

But, here's the odd thing. After stating that Salvation is of the Jews,<sup>68</sup> and after forming and representing Israel as His model nation from the time of Abraham, and after coming to His own people, to whom He gave the Promises and the Law, and with whom He made the Covenant, yet He allowed (or caused?) that nation to become sufficiently blinded to where they could not accept Him and His Salvation! Then He calls out a few also from the Gen-tiles to provoke them to jealousy!<sup>69</sup> God promised them Salvation, but seemingly denied them it for all time. They're dead, most of them, and beyond hope, as Ezekiel 37:11 cites them as saying. Cut off from not only their national (reunification) hope, but any individual personal hope! (At least, we'd have to conclude that they have no hope, un-less there is a resurrection allowing them an opportunity to respond! This is a serious theological 'problem area' under some religious persuasions!)

In Romans 9:18 we read, "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will **He hardeneth**." Later in 11:7, "What then? Israel has not obtained that which he seeks for; but the **election** has obtained it, and the rest were blinded (As it is written, **God has given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;**) unto this day." And in 11:25, "For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this **mystery**,.. that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." Then verses 26 & 32, "And so all Israel shall be saved:... For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."

Now, Paul calls this a 'mystery'! And from the perspective of typical religion, it remains an unexplainable one. You see, in order for all Israel to

<sup>68</sup> John 4:22 citing Isaiah 2:3 and Romans 3:1-2

<sup>69</sup> Romans 11:11

become ‘saved’, though having been blinded, there must be a restoration to life for the vast majority of Israel who is long deceased! Not only a resurrection to sentencing, which could be accomplished relatively quickly, but to opportunity to become converted, to accept God’s Truth and live out a life in and by His Spirit, which takes time. To ‘unlock’ this mystery, many prominent and ‘accepted’ religions will need to revise their theology!

### It Wasn’t the Plan!

Despite what people think, God never intended to call the majority from every age right at the beginning. His intent was to call a few, according to His mercy and Grace, and to leave the rest clueless. Now He says that the result of this approach would be to ultimately see a vastly greater number saved. Being ignorant of God’s Truth in sufficient degree, protects the casual or disinterested individual from rejecting, and therefore losing, their opportunity. “...for God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon **all**. Leaving people in the ‘unaware, unconverted’ state effectively protects them from **risk** of losing it in this age. “...and so **all Israel shall be saved**” is the final outcome.

Does this resolve the mystery? It doesn’t if you don’t believe in the resurrection, especially that one that provides opportunity, in the flesh, for the blinded ones to become enlightened and receive the call to truly follow God’s Way of Life, the life He personally demonstrated for us, and which He is presently living **in** those who have been called and chosen and who He is presently justifying, toward ultimate ‘glorification’! (Romans 8:30)

Has God cast off His people? In Romans 11:1 Paul asks the question. Even now, He has a few reserved for salvation, though the majority are blinded.

But, behind Israel, we have all the nations that are not blessed with the opportunity for understanding that physical Israel had. Resurrected and reunified Israel will see what God’s grace and Spirit can do even with Gentiles, and will be provoked into responding more fervently than they ever would have otherwise.<sup>70</sup> Following the lead of the Spirit Born Saints of God (His first fruits), Israel will become

that model nation they were originally created to be, showing the rest of the world God’s Truth and the Right Way. “*And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: For out of Zion shall go forth the **Law**, and the **Word** of the LORD from Jerusalem.*” (Isaiah 2:3) This isn’t today!

We shouldn’t be perplexed as to why God isn’t calling everyone in this age, especially not that nation to whom He first promised. The Plan in motion is designed to ultimately produce a vastly greater result than otherwise would be. God is mercifully deferring the majority of peoples’ personal calling into the millennial age and the post-millennial resurrection period, when Satan and his destructive societal environment are absent. When the actual results of God’s Salvation are plainly evident in the persons of the *Saints of the Most High*, made Spirit at that point in time, co-ruling with Christ on His Throne over all the Earth.<sup>71</sup> The religious system now in effect will be gone, as will the political and educational systems as we know them. The Cults of man will be discontinued, and the halls of ‘higher learning’ will be revamped and restructured to levels of Truth unattainable in this blinded society! Only the ‘right people’ will occupy the seats of power.

This is the world condition in which “**all Israel shall be saved.**” Not just the Jewish peoples but also the descendants of the ten tribes. “*Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?*” (Rom. 11:12)

We’re all familiar with the oft-quoted passage that accentuates God’s characteristic: “*..how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.*” In fact, that verse is the conclusion of this very subject, found in Romans 11:33. Understanding the answer to this matter involves identifying correctly who God is, who all of Israel is, the place for the various resurrections, the millennial rule of Christ and His Saints, and the role that God’s Law plays in His gracious master plan. 

<sup>70</sup> Romans 10:19-21 “...I will provoke you to jealousy...”

<sup>71</sup> Revelation 5:10

# The Saints Which Slept Arose!

***Rarely Mentioned, and Little Understood, (Even Pointedly Ignored),  
a Brief Reference in the Book of Matthew Poses Fascinating Considerations.  
Why Did God the Father Raise Certain 'Saints' at Christ's Resurrection?***

Only one of the four Gospels makes reference to an astounding event that occurred in the early first century, an event unique in history, and one which puzzles Bible students to this day! That enigmatic reference is found in Matthew chapter 27, verses 52-53.

As it turns out, **only** the book of Matthew contains this resurrection-related account. On this event, the other gospels are completely silent. For some unexplained reason, not only did God insert an extraordinary and unique occurrence into the historical record, He also inspired only the briefest account of it to be included in the narrative, having it placed in the context of the Temple Veil being torn! The pertinent passage reads:

*51: "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; (some accounts translate this as "from above") and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52: And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53: And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54: Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."*

It doesn't help the matter that this passage is placed in an unwieldy place in the narrative. The way it's worded, we're at first inclined to connect the event with the moment of Christ's death, rather than that of His resurrection, but verse 53 corrects that. (The JF&B Commentary suggests that the graves were opened (at Christ's death) but that the occupants didn't come to life until

His resurrection. These commentarians also pose (correctly) that these were of the ecclesia, destined to eternal life, but without mentioning their return to the grave. The only possible reason offered for this event was to illustrate Christ's victory over the grave, though apparently no contemporary bible author saw fit to make this particular connection.)

In fact, there were TWO noteworthy earthquakes, a detail we can establish right from Matthew's own account. Just look over into the next chapter, verse 2. We can see that there was an 'aftershock' that occurred when the angel of the Lord descended to open the Tomb. Another rock-splitting tremor, that pins the account in verses 27:52-53 to Christ's resurrection, not to the time of His death. This unclear wording, no doubt, contributes to the overall enigmaticity of the events timeline!

Mark mentions the veil being torn but neither earthquake. (Mark 15:38) Luke, in chapter 23 verse 35 mentions the veil tearing also, but neither earthquake. John doesn't mention the veil being torn nor the earthquakes, though he does insert the fact of Christ's death being just prior to an annual 'high day', an annual Sabbath, as opposed to it being a regular *weekly* Sabbath. (Rabbi Alfred Edersheim in his book, "*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*", page 611, indicates that the first earthquake was the ultimate means of the tearing of the heavy veil Other very early historical accounts of the earthquake and the tearing of the veil are found in "*The Christian Passover*" by Fred Coulter, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pages 380-383. See Hebrews 9:1-9 which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.)

## What Message in This?

But the relevant question here is, Why did God do this? For what possible reason did He raise **just these** several *select* ‘saints’ known specifically to His Son’s called-out disciples? Was it merely to call attention to the FACT of His Son’s resurrection, or was there a greater purpose being illustrated in their restoration to physical life? Is there anything that can be said with regard to this event having any relevance to **our** situation or **our** hope?

Others have also asked the same question, demonstrated by the commonly held opinion that this event was to affirm Jesus’ victory over death. Commentaries make a case for this event being “a powerful statement of Christ’s victory over death and the grave”.

The thing is, no example can be found where any New Testament writer elected to cite this particular resurrection in such a context. Posing this event only as verifying Jesus’ victory over death, wouldn’t His earlier resurrections have done that? (Mark 5:42, Matt. 9:25, Luke 8:55 & (Acts 9:36-41)) In this case, the more potent illustration was of the fact of the existence of **another** powerful Being projecting the power to raise the dead, (Acts 2:32) as Christ was unconscious at the time!! Those Jews were given much to ponder!

This is the *final* resurrection (but for one (Acts 9:40)) that scriptures relate as having occurred! (The next will be the two witnesses. (Re.11:11), but will theirs be physical or spirit bodies?) These in Mt. 27 also differed from Christ’s, being purely physical.

## His Resurrection Faked?

We can imagine the religious leaders’ consternation later in attempting to convince their followers that His body was ‘*stolen*’, not resurrected, while under that intimidating awareness of these well-known new inclusions to the list, besides the previously resurrected Lazarus, whom they’d been made aware of and conspired to eliminate. (John 12:10)

Irrespective of any of the possible reasons, the fact remains, that when God beamed down the power to raise His Son from the dead, there was a ‘peripheral effect’ resulting in the physical regeneration of several Jerusalem saints who had recently died.

## Illustrating the Second Resurrection

But in answer to the question, we have little to go on, other than ‘informed deduction’. We shouldn’t be too surprised that the religious community is completely in the dark with respect to understanding certain aspects of what God was showing us by doing this. We have accepted the deductions of religionists who have no awareness or regard for a second resurrection. Isn’t it time we allowed those who DO understand it to pose other possible answers? Only the few who understand the fact of and the purpose of the second resurrection have the *wherewithal* to pose certain plausible answers.

A relatively new concept in the first century was the revelation by Jesus of the fact of a resurrection to **physical** life. Even though Ezekiel 37 makes that case rather explicitly, the general expectation of the time was oriented to life in the earthly kingdom of their Messiah, and of a general resurrection at the last day, which assigned all to their appropriate reward. (See John 11:24) But **this** event powerfully illustrates what Ezekiel 37 does, that there is to be a post-millennial resurrection, involving a category of individuals, restoring them to **physical** life. (Mt. 12:41-42 etc.) This Matthew 27 event fits the pattern of the future second resurrection. The question is, what **is** its real purpose?

But, it’s also the second resurrection, or at least one specific reference to it, that causes **our** dilemma.<sup>72</sup> The reference in Revelation 20:5 suggests that the remaining individuals raised after the Saints of God are raised in the first resurrection will be **only after** the thousand years

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<sup>72</sup> **Our** dilemma being the general understanding that we who live in the millennial age must wait for 1000 years to see our unsaved loved-ones, as a result of the definitive assertion made in Revelation 20:5.

are complete. That the 'rest of the dead' will not be raised until after the thousand years are finished! (This clear point is a *major* dilemma for those who advocate the assignment to 'heaven or hell at death' teaching. If all are assigned their eternal reward **at death**, then what purpose is there for *any* resurrection, let alone **more than one**, separated by a thousand years? )

But to pose more comprehensive answers to the question, there are a number of important details we should first glean from the narrative.

1. These people were all raised to life, but in a physical state. They again died some time later!
2. They were of then recent decease, being of that *immediate* generation.
3. They were all well known in the emerging Christian community as 'fellow saints'.
4. There were quite a number of them!
5. This is the only account of a mass resurrection having occurred.
6. These are the only individuals, other than Christ, raised directly by the Father!

### Exceptions to the Rule?

A hopeful possibility illustrated in this event is that the second resurrection isn't as 'hard and fast' as Revelation 20:5 might suggest. -- That there are a few whom God has specific reason to raise to physical life at the onset of the millennium rather than after it.- That there could be certain 'exceptions to the rule' in the near future, just as there were with Lazarus and these saints which slept. (In Lazarus' case, he was a close personal friend of Jesus. My belief is that raising him allowed him to be alive and present on the Day of Pentecost, when God's Spirit was first made generally available, which made him eligible for the first resurrection, when he otherwise might not have been.) Quite possibly, these other 'saints', whose decease also preceded the Day of Pentecost, were in the same situation as Lazarus. That God chose to honor their developing faith with the opportunity to receive His Spirit with their own generation.

(We should keep in mind that true and full conversion was not possible until the receipt of God's Spirit, which was made available on the Day of Pentecost some weeks later. (Luke 22:32 & Rom. 8:9))

### Un-Completed Conversions

Another possibility is people throughout the ages, called of God, whose lifetimes were interrupted before they could complete their process of conversion. As were these first century saints, those who **were being** called, but who didn't have time to develop sufficient Faith before their lives were cut short, but who God determines **could** attain full conversion in the shortened time-frame of their remaining life spans, will be raised physical and allowed opportunity to complete the process in the *early* years of the millennium.

### Peripheral Loved-Ones

What's especially intriguing about the possibility of an early resurrection of pending 'saints' is the hope that we don't all have to wait 1000 years to see particular 'loved-ones'. -- That certain people, who mean so much to those of us who experience the first resurrection (or who experience the instantaneous change from flesh to spirit at the Last Trump), could be raised back to a physical life when we're raised immortal. That, as a requisite of our faithfulness, and that of our deceased predecessors in the Faith whose names are also in the Book of Life, those presently unconverted, who mean so much to us could be 'exceptions to the rule', as were these first century saints, who were known to the disciples (and to Christ)! That, in certain exceptional cases, we will not have to wait until after the 1000 years to see certain unconverted loved ones.

Just as there was what could be described as a peripheral effect, when God the Father beamed down the power to raise His Son, that caused sympathetic resurrections of certain individual saints, so also, when Christ beams down the power to raise **us**, certain individuals, who mean a great deal to us, **may**, as a result of **our** attainment, experience a resurrection back to physical life, ahead of that general resurrection to

opportunity which we know as the 'second resurrection era', providing them with a resumed opportunity (as in the case of the above mentioned 'saints which slept') or an opportunity which they never pursued! How much better their likelihood of success in attaining full conversion if they have us, fully manifested <sup>73</sup> sons of God, to lead them through the process!

Many intriguing possibilities arise from this unique event. Whether any of these are entirely correct or not is something we'll come to know for sure when the Last Trumpet sounds. But, it's certain, God raised them for *some* purposeful reason. Being such an obvious illustration of the second resurrection, there's hope that specific loved ones of ours will be allowed as exceptions to the rule, while **the rest of the dead** await their first opportunity period in the post-millennial age, as Revelation 20:5 affirms. 

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<sup>73</sup> Romans 8:19 "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Revelation 5:8-10 & 20:4 "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9: And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10: And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." ... "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

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**59 ABSENT from the Body and PRESENT With the Lord!** A Well Known Passage in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5 Has Become almost a Cliché for Those Who Anticipate Being Taken To Heaven After This Life is Over. What Does This Potent Passage Actually Establish, and why don't people Accept What it Plainly Says?

### 64 The REWARD of the Saved?

To Those within the Embrace of Orthodox 'Grace Theology', the Indication of a Personal Reward associated with Salvation seems oddly Out of Place. What Reward should Christians anticipate receiving at the Second Coming?

**82 " And The Elements Shall Melt with Fervent Heat "** The Apostle Peter describes a Major Event that seems Rather Inapplicable as it Regards our Understanding of the Millennial Age. What do we Not FULLY Understand and Where does this Disconcerting Prophecy in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3 Factor-In? (See also #83)

**83 The Hope of GLORY** An Event in Our Conversion Experience, Grossly Under-reported by the Main Stream Religious World, is Our being Made SPIRIT at the Last Trump. The Event we should Anticipate the MOST Seems to be Understood the Least! (A companion article to #82)

**123 Atonement and the Holy of Holies** An unusual Event, occurring in the afternoon of the day Christ Died, poses a greater Significance that it is Usually Given. Harking back to the time of Abraham, THE Focal Point of the Ongoing Covenant is Developed to its Fullest Degree as the Veil in the Temple was torn " from above " !

**165 Grace, Works and Reward** Failure on the part of Theologians to Comprehend the Full Auspices of Grace Can Confound the average Worshipper as to What Response is Appropriate on the part of Those who Truly Have Been Brought Under Grace. Failing to understand this vital response area can significantly impact the receipt of ones' 'Crown'.

# WHY Must Satan be Released from Prison?

**Revelation 20 shows Satan being Held in the Bottomless Pit for 1000 Years. For WHAT Possible Reason will He be Released Again After the Millennium?**

Among the many curious events that have bearing on the spiritual climate in the Millennial Age, we find the twentieth chapter of Revelation to describe a long period of time during which Satan will be restrained from having any contact with humanity, those living during that one thousand year period of time. Presumably, this restraint from contact and influence will include his fallen angelic hosts as well.

We can only imagine the dramatically different societal conditions of that age, with all Satanic influences totally absent. No longer will false religion or godless scientific errors be imposed upon wayward humanity. No longer will there be any doubt as to who is the True God, Creator of the universe or of what is the Truth in any educational discipline. Righteous standards will be the foundation and structure of day to day living, and none of the aggravations or injustices will provoke hateful or violent reactions. What spirit influences there are will be wholly Holy! (Isaiah 30:18-21)

What a different world it will be when Christ and His Spirit-born Saints **are** the government of the world.<sup>74</sup> The primary motivations for rage leading to wars, either interpersonal or international, will be completely absent from anyone's thinking.<sup>75</sup>

## The Bottomless Pit

Revelation chapter 20 provides this insight:

1. *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*
2. *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and **bound him a thousand years,***
3. *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should*

<sup>74</sup> Daniel 7:26-27, Revelation 20:6, 1:6 & 5:10.

<sup>75</sup> Isaiah 2:1-4

*deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."* With the revelation of his removal from society, we're told of his release. Not only his release, but that there is a NEED for it. "He **must** be released, it says! Well, WHY?

Later in the same chapter, we're told more:

7. *"And when the thousand years are expired, **Satan shall be loosed** out of his prison,*
8. *And shall go out to deceive the nations which **Zare** in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*
9. *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*
10. *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*

Does it make any sense to restrain Satan for 1000 years, but then release him again into society? Is there an explainable reason for doing such a disruptive thing?

Here we have a long period of time in which some forty generations will live out their lives in full and un-interrupted peace and prosperity. (Consider the impact of military expenditures and the waste and destruction of war no longer being a drain on the world's economy.) Forty generations of true righteousness and the 'restful' environment that will yield. Sort of a 'sabbatical' from man's destructive ways!

To fathom why Satan will need to be released for just a short season as this millennial era draws to a close, we need to understand the great event that will occur just afterward. What's that great event? We're told of it in the intervening verses. Verse 5 tells us: "*But the rest of the dead lived not again*

*until the thousand years were finished.*” The rest of the dead involves massive populations!

### **The Second Resurrection**

These forty generations living in the millennial age will be blessed to not have to deal with the pulls and influences present in this age in which we live. Their experience will be vastly different. There, the greatest thing to overcome will be personal lethargy. With all of society going the ‘right way’, it will be easy to just drift along with the flow, which in and of itself is not ‘conversion’ per se. No, in fact, what the release of Satan tells us is that there will be a segment of society who will in effect be ‘faking it’, seemingly compliant, but inwardly, secretly, they will not take their opportunity for true conversion all that seriously! The spiritual condition that we see in the seventh ‘church era’ will also carry over into that age!

But it isn’t so much the complacent that are the concern. As in present society, there will be a certain few who will not care about becoming converted. Not only not care, but will actually resent the Way of God, and effectively come to despise His standards. We have those kinds today! Not only disinterested in conversion, though aware of it, there are those in society today who actually hate God and His Way of Life! That component is buried rather deeply within the natures of some people. Human nature will not change, though future societal conditions will. So, why would these be a consideration as the millennial age draws to its close?

Those who live in the millennial age will be blessed to not have to deal with Satanic influences. Yet, there will be some militantly unconverted people among them. What influence will they have? Upon the converted, perhaps little. But we need to consider those, called ‘the rest of the dead’, who are raised up after the 1000 years. The rest are those who lived and died prior to the second coming, who were not called in their lifetimes, who did not have the opportunity for salvation offered to them. They also are to live again in an age, like the millennial age, without Satan being present. But in their previous lifetimes, they **did** have to deal with Satan. How vulnerable to a similar mentality will they be, should they be exposed to one, in people, carried over from the millennial generation?

Conversely, the last generation in the millennial age that completes their lifetimes, living on over into the second resurrection era, will be exposed to people raised-up who originally lived in a Satan-inspired world. What impact would they have on that last millennial age generation who knew none of that? After having just been exposed to the released Satan, likely very little! (Keep in mind, those living in the millennial age will live out their lives and die, as happens in this present age.) Those unconverted among them at the end will end their lifetimes in an ‘accursed’ state, as we read of in Isaiah 65:20.

But it’s the final generation of the millennium that would interface with and potentially impact, or be impacted by, these who will come up in the post-millennial age: That age we know as the second resurrection era. If there’s a segment of that then-living society who harbors resentments toward God, wouldn’t their attitudes resonate with any who had been exposed to similar Satan-like resentments toward God in their previous lifetimes, if the newly resurrected generation were to interface with them?

It’s this militant element within the late millennial age that needs to be removed prior to that great event, the time when the ‘rest of the dead’ will come up. Satan will facilitate that removal!

### **Deceiving the Nations**

With Satan’s release back into society, that element who has basically rejected their opportunity for salvation, will coalesce, joining together with Satan, responding to his ever-resentful attitude, and will arm themselves for an attack against the world headquarters at Jerusalem. *“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”* (Rev. 20:9)

With that element removed from the final generation of that society, the ‘rest of the dead’ will come up into a society cleansed of Satanic thinking and repressed human resentments. This will provide them with the environment that will allow them to better avail themselves of conversion with the least distraction or negative influence. The final generation living at the end of the millennial age will have been rid of its resentful types. This is the vital function that Satan’s release will provide. 📖

# The 14th Chapter of Revelation

***This Revealing Chapter steps aside from the Book's sequential narrative to present an Oblique Look at the three Main Segments of Humanity, as it Relates to being awarded their Just and Due Rewards. Has Religion fully appreciated its Comprehensiveness? Encapsulated within this one Chapter is a Message Profoundly Revealing with respect to God's Plan for the Salvation of ALL of the World's Un-evangelized Masses.***

Many aspects of the Book of Revelation remain an enigma to most of the religious world. To most people, it remains a mystery without clear comprehension. Of the multitudes who have made attempts to explain its mysteries, wide variations exist in what they perceive its messages to be.

To some degree, Chapter 14 is not as profoundly unfathomable as are many other chapters.

Breaking away from the prophetic story-flow, this chapter pauses to focus on a subject largely misidentified in traditional theology. The picture we get from commonly accepted religious teachings is rather bleak as they attempt to explain the situation involving the uncountable and 'hopelessly lost' masses of humanity, as they're so often described. A degree of Calvinistic thought is incorporated into the outlook of more of our churches' teachings than they'd like to admit.

## What Hope for the Masses?

Uncountable billions have gone to their graves ignorant of God's Salvation Message since the time of Adam. World over, and especially throughout non-Christian lands, infants and children have died and continue to die without even the least awareness of salvation, let alone having had opportunity to have pursued it. It isn't much better with their elders. The thought of their being instantly consigned to an ever burning hell at death is patently objectionable to most sensitive thinking people, causing some to incorporate a non-biblical 'age of accountability' idea into their explanations, which at least provides them a more comforting answer as it regards at least those little ones! But, what about the vast numbers who never had a real opportunity for salvation? Why are so few among us able to provide good answers?

It is the rejection of certain fundamental Biblical teachings that has caused this perceptual blind spot. Clear fundamental doctrines, such as the **resurrections** (plural) from the dead (particularly the one mentioned in Rev. 20:5) and the purpose for Christ's **Millennial Kingdom** on Earth, have no explainable purpose among those of traditional 'heaven or hell' persuasions. Despite numerous Biblical passages devoted to these teachings, few denominations have a clear understanding of their essential place in the overall Plan of God for mankind. With the result of that being that the subject isn't a part of their theologies.

Revelation 14, when correctly understood, presents a scene which contains a picture of hope that accepted religiosity cannot offer. But in order to see that hope, we must correctly identify the intent and message of this insightful chapter.

## The Harvests of the World

My Nelson NKJ Bible sub-titles verses 14 to 16 as "*Reaping the Earth's Harvest*". Above verses 17 to 20, it has "*Reaping the Grapes of Wrath*". My old Oxford KJV sub-titles the second half of the chapter "*The Harvest of the World*", both of them indicating at least a general awareness of what is being presented.

## An Inset Chapter

Revelation 14 is recognized as what is known as an 'inset' chapter, in which the writer breaks away from the overall chronological story flow to pause and focus-in on a particular subject. In pursuing the message of this chapter, we need to remain attentive to these **key questions**: Does the chapter subject present a comprehensive whole, and is it

internally chronological? With those two answers, we can better grasp its real message.

Before we look into the message of Revelation, chapter 14 analytically, it is presented below, in its entirety without comment.

### Scene One – The 144,000 Firstfruits

1. “*And I looked, and, lo, a **Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.***”
2. *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*
3. *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but **the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.***
4. *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were **redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits** unto God and to the Lamb.*
5. *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault **before the throne of God.***

### Scene Two – Angelic Messages

6. “*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto **them that dwell on the earth,** and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,*”
7. *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for **the hour of his judgment is come:** and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*
8. *And there followed another angel, saying, **Babylon is fallen, is fallen,** that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*
9. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,*
10. *The same shall **drink of the wine of the wrath of God,** which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be*

***tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*
12. *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*
13. *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, **Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:** Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

### Scene Three – White Cloud Harvest

14. “*And I looked, and behold a **white cloud,** and upon the cloud one sat **like unto the Son of man,** having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*”
15. *And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, **Thrust in thy sickle, and reap:** for the time is come for thee to reap; for **the harvest of the earth is ripe.***
16. *And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and **the earth was reaped.***

### Scene Four – Winepress of God’s Wrath

17. “*And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a **sharp sickle.***”
18. *And another angel came out from the altar, which had **power over fire;** and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are **fully ripe.***
19. *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and **gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.***
20. *And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”* (King James Version)

Apparent from the text is the fact that there are four distinct presentations: The 144 thousand

(which are further explained in Chapter 7), then we see the messages to that segment of humanity who survives the Great Tribulation and the fall of Babylon, then at some undetermined later time, a harvest scene involving one group, reaped by one like the Son of Man, followed shortly thereafter by a second group, assigned to wrath, reaped by two collaborating death angels.

Above, it was asked, Does the chapter subject present a comprehensive whole, and is it also internally chronological? Let's consider the chronology issue first.

### Internally Chronological?

First, we're presented a time-referenced scene with the Lamb standing on Mount Zion together with His 144,000 Saints. We know when that is. It's shortly after the Second Coming! These, we are told, are redeemed from among men, being *the firstfruits* unto God and the Lamb.

Next, we shift to a three-angel address to those who are living on the earth AFTER the Second Coming. It involves all of humanity. The message to them begins with: *Fear God, give glory to Him, and worship the Creator*. It also announces to them that **their** judgment period has begun. Do we know when that is? There we have another time reference: Judgment is extended upon all the world at this time, where previously it had been upon only the ecclesia (those called 'the house of God').<sup>76</sup> So in this detail also, we have a time marker.

The second messenger (an angel) announces that modern Babylon has fallen (its second fall). This too is a positive time marker, which is further explained in another inset chapter, chapter 18, when the running narrative continues.

Then the third messenger pronounces a prohibition against any further worship under the Beast's worship system (and that system had existed long before the Beast Power became manifest in the

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<sup>76</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:17 We need to understand 'judgment' in its evaluative sense, not its condemnative sense. The first to be judged toward salvation are those **called** of God. The rest of humanity is destined to be called **later**. May we call it Post-destination? (Would such a consideration shed light on the meaning of what is called 'predestination'?)

end time), and a dire warning of what the punishment will be of those who defy the prohibition. This too indicates a time reference, that of the age beyond the Second Coming. It shows that mankind will be worshipping God in the coming era, and that all the former forms of man-made worship will be strongly prohibited. Verses 10 & 11 describe the punishment imposed upon any who disregard the warning, which we then see imposed in verses 19 & 20.

(Those who identify verses 17 to 20 of chapter 14 with the defeat of the Beast's armies impose a break into the internal chronology of the chapter and impose that severest of penalties BEFORE the warning is issued to them!)

### The White Cloud Harvest

Next we move to the third scene: The "*White Cloud*" harvest. In this scene, we see Christ Himself wielding the harvest instrument to "reap" the earth's harvest, for **it IS ripe!** Commentaries, such as the respected Jamieson Fausset & Brown<sup>77</sup> identify these as being *the righteous!* Halley's Bible Handbook<sup>78</sup> presents a similar assessment, that these in verses 14 to 16 are the righteous, making a further point that these are referred to as '*the harvest*', while those reaped later in verses 17 to 20 are referred to as '*the vintage*'.

Considering this scene for its chronological aspect, we need to ask ourselves, when will this harvest of the earth's Saints occur? It can't be at Christ's return, because we've seen that contingent identified in the opening verses of the chapter, with the 144,000, His 'firstfruits', standing with Him on Mount Zion. That 'harvest' is past already, and as we've seen in verses 6-11, we have moved beyond the fall of Babylon and into the millennial age.

So, **who are these** righteous individuals harvested by Christ sitting upon the White Cloud? That answer is provided in part by the drastic contrast with the next scene.

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<sup>77</sup> JF&B Bible Commentary, Hendrickson Publishers, March 1997, Volume 3, page 704.

<sup>78</sup> Halley's Bible Handbook, Zondervan Publishers, 1965, 24<sup>th</sup> edition, page 728.

With that distinction clearly in mind, we are now ready to move on to the final scene of this chapter. Using angelic representatives, this order also goes out from the Temple in Heaven to gather the vintage destined for the Wrath of God. In this reaping, 'fully ripened' grapes are gathered by two angels. These represent the wicked of all time, who had opportunity for salvation, and who rejected it, many choosing to perpetuate prohibited forms of worship or not worship at all. One thing apparent in this scene is its finality. These are assigned to God's Wrath. (Luke 19:27) This completes the harvest of all of the earth's humanity for all time.

Some may notice, and may think to ask, that IF this is THE harvest at the absolute end of time,<sup>79</sup> what is there that suggests such a **lengthy time gap** in the narrative? Such an event will be only after the millennial age and the second resurrection era is past. Where scholars have assigned verses 17-20 at least to the battle of the Day of the Lord, (not that that phrase is in the narrative), their assignment requires a set-back in time placement.

That being similarly 'problematical'!

Well, actually there is such a consideration. If we notice the continuing narrative after the three angels' messages, we see the Saints addressed. Verses 12 & 13 address them, third party: "*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the **commandments** of God, and the **faith** of Jesus. 13. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, **Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.**"*

Now, which Saints are these? They can't be the 144,000, as their 'patience' is already rewarded in the fact of their being made immortal Spirit

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<sup>79</sup> The 'end of time' as it relates to the end of the existence of mankind in **physical** form. Not the 'end of the age', as we typically refer to the Second Coming to be, but that Judgment and Sentencing event that occurs **AT** the third resurrection. There is to be a great indeterminate age after the 'last man' is made Spirit in the immortal Family of God, which is another subject for another day. (see 1<sup>st</sup>. Corinthians 15:24-28)

Beings at the Last Trump. Is this speaking to present day Saints? If so, we have to break away from the internal chapter sequence to a time before Christ's return. If not either of them, then it must be those who are **becoming** Saints in the millennial age. And, that is where they're addressed: after the three-angels' messages, at the onset and duration of the 1,000 years. It indicates that they will live out their lives and die, but await a sure reward for their faithfulness to the Commandments (yes, they're still quite relevant and applicable). Verses 12 & 13 take us sequentially through the millennial age, from the beginning of it clear to the time of the White Cloud Harvest. This then provides us another increment in a chronological progression, applying to that interval between the start of the millennial age and the end of the Great White Throne Judgment period in which those who never had an opportunity for salvation will be afforded one at last!

### Seven Distinct Increments

So we have these seven chronological benchmarks: 1) Christ standing on Mount Zion with His first-fruits, 2) Announcements to the survivors of the Great Tribulation at the onset of the millennium, 3) The second (final) fall of the Great Babylon, 4) A warning at the onset of the millennium against employing old worship forms, 5) A message of hope to those who successfully attain salvation during the millennial age, 6) The Harvest of the righteous, and 7) The extinction of the wicked at the end. The entire chapter maintains and presents a chronological order within itself, though aside from but set into the running narrative of the overall Book.

Is the chapter internally chronological? YES! (But, if we pull verses 12 & 13 out of context to apply them to present day individuals, and if we assign verse 20 to the battle of Armageddon, then NO, it isn't!)

### Comprehensively Whole?

Now, as to the narrative being comprehensive within itself, and I mean by that, does it address one single topic? Does everything within it relate to that topic? We need to consider what it is picturing. It begins with a picture of the righteous

standing with Christ at His Triumphal Return. It ends with the ‘harvest’ of those righteous of a later timeframe into the God Family, and then the utter destruction of those who **would not** have Christ to rule over them. If we consider the chapter’s message to be the “**harvests of the world**”, then, YES, it’s also internally comprehensive. But again, if we make those same assignments as described in the paragraph above, we lose its comprehensiveness as well as its chronological order.

### A Vital Answer

The beauty of this chapter is that it places and further describes the event that we read of in Matthew 25:32-46.<sup>80</sup> We can see in Revelation 14 when and how this ‘final sentencing’ (either to a good or bad sentence) will be brought upon those who have had their opportunity to come to know the Truth and to avail themselves of True Salvation.

It shows the absolute necessity of understanding the three resurrections. Without that, we can never come to understand how this final sentencing will come to pass in its proper time context and in its full inclusiveness. The *resurrections of the dead* is a fundamental Christian Doctrine. (Hebrews 6:1-2)

The first resurrection is of the Saints, living and dead, whose names are in the Book of Life at the time of Christ’s Return. (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:50-58, & 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:13-18). The second resurrection adds all those who died without a real opportunity for salvation onto the end of the millennial age to be provided with their first opportunity. (e.g. Ezek. 37) The third resurrection brings up **all** the dead from their graves to stand conscious before God for final sentencing. The general outline of these all being evident in Revelation Chapter 20 and John 5:24-29.

The millennial age begins with the first resurrection and ends with the second. The second resurrection era begins with the second resurrection and ends with the third. The third resurrection brings to the human experience the finality of sentence to

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<sup>80</sup> Related passages being: Luke 19:27, Matthew 25:31-46, Matthew 13:47-50.

eternal Life or the **second death**, after which there is no consciousness and no prospect of ever being brought back to any kind of a living state.

In the second resurrection, those who died prior to the time of Christ’s Return, without having had opportunity for salvation, will be raised (as Rev. 20:5 indicates). They will live on into the post-millennial age, within the same Satan-free culture as those who lived in the millennium had, and then in the ‘last day’ stand before the Judgment Seat for sentencing to either Eternal Life or Death, according to their responses. (Their ‘works’!) This is the scene we see set in Revelation 14:14-20.

### How Long IS the Post-Millennial Age?

Among the ‘mysteries’ we enjoy speculating about, we have this one. How long will it last? I feel it safe to conclude that it will afford sufficient time for those raised in it to become fully converted. In an age with the whole world full of the knowledge of God, and with no Satanic influence (Rev. 20:10), perhaps as much as one full lifetime. We aren’t told specifically how long the post-millennial age will be, but we do see the ‘final sentencing’ scene time-set, located and described in detail!

### The Harvest of the WORLD!

But, what this chapter DOES give us is a comprehensive answer to the enigmatic question that God’s Church has struggled with for decades: **Those converted** during the millennium and the relatively short opportunity period after it, will be made immortal Spirit Beings, (as were those at Christ’s Return), in a great Harvest at the White Cloud Judgment. This is the clarity that Chapter 14 provides us.

Those who willfully do not repent and do not avail themselves of true conversion will pay the penalty for their sins with **their own blood**, as Hebrews 9:22 so clearly requires. The wages of sin is death! The picture we see in Revelation 14:20 illustrates that fact very graphically. 

# “Blood to the Horse Bridles!”

***A most Astounding Visual Picture is Presented in Revelation 14:20 of a Flow of Blood, as Deep as Horses' Bridles, extending out for 1600 Furlongs. What Extraordinary Event is being Described Here, and is it a Reality?***

It's an historically unprecedented situation to see a huge stream of blood flowing out from a battle location. On rare occasions, such as during the Revolutionary War, when a pond was stained red by the blood of British soldiers, or on assault beaches during WWII where the sands and surf were stained red, has anything like that been reported. But to have an event where an actual river of blood flows out from a wide valley for a considerable distance, suggests an event on a scale well beyond anything mankind has ever experienced or even imagined! Our question is, Is this a real prophetic event, or is it merely exaggerated figurative language?

High reputation commentaries and various churches regularly associate this event with the great battle of “the Day of the Lord.” That being, the defeat of the Beast Power's armies at or near Jerusalem just after Christ's return. Our challenge is to settle in our minds if this event is real or not, and if it is an actual event, when is it destined to happen? After all, the scale of the carnage is mind boggling!

Now, many regard the Battle of Armageddon, as it most often is called, to be the final battle with the enemies of the returning Christ. With that in mind, it is somewhat logical to associate this event described in the 20<sup>th</sup> verse of Revelation 14 as being that very event. However, the narrative in this chapter doesn't specifically describe a **battle** scenario, per se. Rather, it seems to describe the **harvest** of a ‘fully ripened vintage’ of humanity. To envision this scene as being a battle, with armies coming to war against the returned Christ, we must draw upon other cross-referenced passages, as the language for a battle just isn't found in this particular place. That seems to have escaped the notice of many a theologian!

The particular passage that presents this picture is found in the last seven verses of chapter 14: 14: “*And I looked, and behold a **white cloud**, and upon the cloud one sat like unto **the Son of man**, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*”

15: *And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for **the harvest of the earth is ripe.***

16: *And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and **the earth was reaped.**”*

What is noteworthy at this point in the narrative is that there are **two** separate and distinct reapings: One by ‘the Son of man’, (isn't that Christ?) seated on a white cloud, followed by another reaping, conducted by two angels, one wielding a sickle, the other controlling fire. Of the second reaping, we see: 17: “*And **another angel** came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*”

18: *And **another angel** came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and **gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.***

19: *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

20: *And the winepress was trodden without the city, and **blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.**” (200 miles)*

The general consensus with regard to this passage is that the battle of the Day of the LORD is being described, or at least the result of it. But the

picture represented may not be one so simple as that!

### A Commentary's Observation

Regarding this passage, verses 17 to 20, a JF&B Commentary<sup>81</sup> makes reference to Joel 3, another passage having similar sounding language and from this, deducing that the event describes the obliteration of the antichrist's armies. However, these commenters do very insightfully note that the event described in the preceding three verses, 14 to 16, present the harvest of **the righteous!** "*(Mark iv. 29, where also He sendeth the sickle)* *The Son sends His sickle-bearing angel*<sup>82</sup> *to reap the righteous. By the harvest-reaping the elect righteous are gathered;*" So says JF&B! A more pertinent cross-reference would be that in Matthew 25:31-46, where the righteous are set apart and awarded Life before the confirmed wicked are then sentenced to a just and everlasting punishment.

This observation of there being **two** quite separate groups at this event leaves us with a problem. Who are these righteous who are harvested at this event? And why, if this is a scene of battle against the antichrist, are they in any way a part of this action?

It might also be relevant to point out that to assign the winepress of God's Wrath to this scene breaks the internal time sequence of this inset chapter! (It should be noted that the subject of this inset is to describe **all** of the harvests of **all** of humanity: The first resurrection of the 'firstfruits' is in verses 1 to 5, and the final harvests at the end in verses 14 to 20. Also, verse 10 gives insight to the verse 19 event.)

### More Than One Event

A couple of questions we need to ask ourselves, at this point is this: Will there be **only one** great battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat? (Note: It is

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<sup>81</sup> Jamieson - Faucet – Brown Bible Commentary, volume 3, page 704, by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA, March, 1997.

<sup>82</sup> For some reason the JF&B commentators chose to ignore the clear statement in verse 16 that indicates it was the seated Christ who Himself thrust in His sickle!

presumed, from language in another prophecy, that this is the location being referred to in Revelation 14, despite the fact that no such reference is contained in this chapter!) Second, if all of the righteous are made alive and given Spirit bodies at the Last Trump, at the moment of the Second Coming, then who are these 'righteous' we see harvested by Christ at this (presumably) just weeks-later event?

Could it be that we have diverted our focus as to the true meaning of this revealing passage by associating it with another earlier, though conceivably similar, event?

### Battle or Harvest?

Also, we need to consider more of the imagery. Why describe a great battle by repeatedly calling it a harvest and using a harvest instrument rather than a war instrument, such as a bow or a sword? After all, in many other battle scene descriptions, the LORD is portrayed wielding a great sword! What is the picture here, a military defeat or the final reaping of all of humanity? To be dealing with the military, it still would leave the majority of the general population back at home, un-included!

If we were instead to associate Revelation 14:14-20 with Matthew 25:31-32, a very different explanation of the passage emerges. What we need to resolve in our minds is whether or not the words of Christ, here and in other places such as Matthew 13:41-43, Matthew 13:47-50 and Luke 19:27, are literal events. These others are 'final sentencing' events, not specifically battle scenes!

Places such as Luke 19:27 reveal that these who experience the wrath of their Lord **had** their opportunity for salvation already. In order for them to have made such a decision as "*we will not have this man to rule over us*" it shows that they were aware of who He is and then made a conscious, even determined, decision! Certainly this isn't a non-cognitive situation on their part.

But there are other details contained within the chapter that we should also consider. What **is** the 'white cloud' and what does that picture represent? What means, "*The harvest of the*

*earth is ripe*” (v. 15) and again, “*is fully ripe*” (v. 18)? Should we be expecting, after seeing this statement, that there will be **yet another** significant harvest at some future date? Or, is this describing that final one?

Not only are we introduced to the scene of the harvest of the earth, (and in it we see more than one group identified!) but apparently and ultimately the final one, beyond which no further ripening of humanity is anticipated!

If we’re seeing an event that’s just at the time of the battle of Armageddon, then other questions are apparent, as there clearly IS a continuing ‘ripening toward harvest’ to occur after Christ’s return. For example, those generations that live during the millennial age will to a greater degree become converted. Beyond them, vast multitudes, who are to be raised in the second resurrection, after the 1000 years are finished, will then also enter into ‘judgment’, and, as we understand it, will then have their first and true opportunity for salvation which their first life didn’t provide them. (Rev. 20:5, 11-12)  
Logically, any ‘fully ripened **final** harvest’ would include them as well.

### **Another Great Battle**

We’re introduced to another major rebellion against the long-ruling Christ in Revelation 20:7-10. This is clearly after the Kingdom of God on earth has been in existence for 1000 years. In that event, an antichrist is not part of the scene, but rather **Satan** himself works to deceive the nations, specifically those nations to the far north, Gog and Magog. At times, verses that refer to this event are associated with the battle of Armageddon also, though it is actually a separate invasion force in a later age.

Ezekiel 38 & 39 describes an invasion by the forces of Gog and Magog, but in it we see a very different occasion than we read of in Revelation 14. In this one, the dead bodies will be scattered abroad throughout the land, eaten by scavengers, and it will take seven months to locate and bury all the dead and seven years and collect and burn all their weaponry. Also, Gog and Magog and their allies invade a peaceful land without

defenses! This invasion is set in the pre-restoration years, as we can see in verses 21 to 29 of chapter 39. **THIS** is a better description of how the battle of Armageddon will play out, rather than what we read is to happen in Revelation chapter 14.

The book of Joel is another factor in this matter. Noting the similarity of language in Joel 3, verses 9 to 17, the latter four verses of Revelation 14 are commonly represented as describing the same exact event. Now the Joel 3 battle scene is clearly **pre**-millennial, as we can see from the re-gathering of all the Israelitish peoples and the inhabitation of Jerusalem as a pure city thereafter. But it’s when we assign Joel 3 and Revelation 14 as having a co-incident time-frame, that we cause ourselves to miss the real point of Revelation 14:14-20.

### **A Careful Look at Revelation 14**

If we are to accept this chapter as being topically whole and internally sequential, (though an inset into the running narrative of the overall book), we find some interesting details. The chapter begins with a description of ‘the firstfruits’ (the first resurrected Saints) and then it presents a three-stage announcement to all surviving humanity, explaining that Babylon has now fallen (again) and prohibits any further worship in its former antichrist system, pronouncing a dire warning against any who defy the prohibition. That warning of what will happen, in verses 10 & 11, is generally what we see being brought upon the second group after the white cloud harvest scene. Does that indicate that this event in Revelation 14:20 is in fact **post**-millennial?

Finally, in chapter 14, we see the great harvest of **all** of humanity (not just combatants) at the very end of time. Two distinct groups are represented: the righteous and then the wicked. These are separated and harvested to differing destinies.

We need to ask ourselves, is the Day of the Lord a single point in time? Is there **just one** occasion referred to in Scripture using this name? Another study paper with that title considers the multiple uses of the term “Day of the Lord” in biblical prophecy. (for example, consider 2<sup>nd</sup>

Peter 3:10-12, where it's used in reference to a different day and even a different member of the Godhead!)

We also need to be clear in our minds, exactly who are the 144,000? Who are the innumerable multitude described in Revelation 7?

So, if we are to identify Revelation 14:17-20 with that Day of the LORD, **just after** the Second Coming, we must disregard the white cloud, with its harvest of the righteous and the emphasized fact of the earth being 'fully ripe'. Not only that, but that there's no internal reference in this chapter to any battle situation, no mention of the Day of the Lord, of Armageddon or the armies of the Beast, just a mass assembly of humanity to a 'harvesting'.

It seems that when we mis-assign placement of a passage of Scripture, we effectively lose its relevance to the issue at hand and the information it was intended to convey. That being, the **final sentencing** of all of humanity at the End! 

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### ■ A Postnote on the Winepress location:

The Kidron Valley, IF it actually IS the same as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, presents certain problems with the narrative of Revelation 14:20, at least as it has traditionally been understood. We are given a distance of the flow of the blood 'pressed' from this 'fully ripened' vintage of wicked humanity. That stated distance being 1600 furlongs (a furlong being some 600 feet, or nominally an eighth of a mile). Thus, 1600 furlongs would be **200 miles!**

Our problem arises in the fact that the Brook Kidron, in the valley of the same name IF this is the same location as the Valley of Jehoshaphat, (and that association seems to be dated to the fourth century) the Brook Kidron flows southward and then eastward through the Judean Desert. In its flow distance it drops 4,000 feet in elevation, and empties into the Dead Sea. It's total distance from the city to the sea being a mere twenty miles.

What this information poses to us is that it may

prove that the association between the location and the event that is traditionally made, that the event in Revelation 14:20 is the battle scene with the armies of the antichrist who have come up to Jerusalem to oppose the recently returned Christ, has in some way been mis-identified. Either the location is elsewhere OR the event is mis-dated when being identified as being **at Jerusalem in** the year of Christ's Second Coming.

The current natural topography does not in any way provide for a possible flow of that great distance, by a factor of ten!

Now, if somehow the flow could be conveyed into another valley, one that originates to the southwest of Jerusalem, that stream's flow is to the west and then northwest, and empties into the Mediterranean Sea, but with a flow distance of only about fifty miles from Jerusalem.

### When and Where?

What we need to consider is that there might be proof in these topographical facts that the scene we read of in Revelation 14:20 is **not** one for the present day, (the end of this present age) but of some later time, when the topography of the area has been altered either geologically or by human engineering. (See Zechariah 14:10) This would strongly pose the likelihood that it is in fact, as the preceding article suggests, that the event we read of is a much later time, **not** in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but more than 1000 years into the future.

(It is logical that the fresh water drainage within the land, rather than 'wasting it' by dumping it into the Dead Sea, in the millennium might be rerouted to flow thru the land southward to Elath (Ezion-geber) on the Gulf of Aquaba (the Red Sea). Such a diversion would make fresh water available to the southern interior, (the Negev Desert) and co-incidentally, result in a flow distance of 200 miles! Then again, where is all that sparkling fresh water that continually drains from under the threshold of the Temple to go, that we read of in Ezekiel 47?)

If it's a fact that this event in Revelation 14:17-20 is the full harvest of all of humanity (in this case the wicked of all time, raised up for final sentencing) **after** the millennium, then the flow

dimensions, its depth and distance, would have a far greater plausibility.

### Death and Opportunity

Now, on the ‘punishment’ issue, we recognize that the warriors of the antichrist’s army are not ‘lost’ for all time, but they, being blinded and deceived, will have opportunity for understanding and salvation in the second resurrection. Not so of that other contingent who come against world headquarters, Jerusalem, in the post-millennial release of Satan to gather his army. (Rev. 20:7-10) These from that era are within their opportunity period, and will die to await sentencing in the third resurrection.

We shouldn’t overlook the fact that there will be more than one great battle in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. (There will be two great battles, 1000 years apart, and one immense slaughter.) Nor should we be casual in our assignment of Revelation 14:20 to a day other than when the great and final sentencing event will actually come to pass. 

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### ▣ Further Comments on Rev. 14:20

It is a common perception in the scholarly religious world that Revelation 14:20 is referring specifically to the great Battle of Armageddon, which is to marshal on the plains of Megiddo but will engage in battle up in the Jerusalem area some 50-miles south, an event prophesied to occur just after Christ’s return. But what is noteworthy is the detailed account of that very battle that we find in another place.

#### Armies Engaged

Revelation 19:14-16 *“And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”*

This particular account of what we would have to conclude is that same battle, is given in the chapter just before. But what we need to allow is that a very different scene is presented. In Chapter 19, we see God’s army from Heaven being involved, we see the combatants slain with **a sword**, the sword of His mouth, not a sickle! Though we have some similar wording, such as *“treading the winepress...”* we also see the slain lying dead on the ground unburied to be eaten by raptors (birds of prey). This is nothing like the fate of those we see described in chapter 14, verse 20.

Continuing in Chapter 19, resuming with verse 17: *“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”*

Not only here, but in Zechariah 14, we read of another battle description, this one conclusively at the time of Christ’s return: 1 *“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.”*

## Contrasting Descriptions!

Does this sound anything like the scene we read of in Revelation 14:17-20? There the death instrument is a **harvest** tool: a **sickle**, not a sword, the dead are first pressed of their blood and then burned-up. In the battle of Armageddon, the combatants are opposed by Christ's army, not just two 'reaping angels', with Him mounted upon a white horse, not seated on a white cloud. The Revelation 14 scene is not the same at all as the accounts we read of the battle of Armageddon!

Some may regard Ezekiel 38 & 39 as describing the same battle scene, based in large part on the reference to Gog (and Magog). But this battle is more correctly identified with the battle that we read of in Revelation 20:7-10. Gog and Magog

are the major players (from Asia) in the battle resulting from Satan's release and his attack against the Holy City of God and His Saints **after the millennium**, not the great battle of Armageddon (involving Europe's armies) at the Second Coming. In Ezekiel 39:11 we see all those dead are to be buried. But in Revelation 14, they are burned up in fire (presumably eternal fire / the Lake of Fire!).

After the Revelation 20:7-10 battle, there is yet one more generation until the Revelation 14:20 harvesting event!

Passages that belong with one event have been crossed-over and identified with another! We need to look at these various accounts more critically to be sure they are considered in their proper and intended context! 

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## ❧ CHAPTER -17- ❧

# Defining the Second Death

***Inherent with the Doctrine of the Resurrections from the Dead is a Co-Dependent Phenomenon identified in Scripture as 'the Second Death'. How Many Christians Understand what this Unique Penalty Involves?***

When a person comes to understand that essential fifth Doctrine of Christ, identified in the first two verses of the sixth chapter of Hebrews: *the Resurrection of the dead*, he is also drawn into a more acute awareness of the counterpart experience to this phenomenon, that of deaths, which we all face with inevitable certainty. We're all familiar with death, but common religious convention in some ways obstructs our understanding the matter fully.

Not only do we have religious persuasions which see no real **need** for any resurrection, as they hold the belief that all who die go immediately to their eternal reward! Of those who hold that persuasion, but who acquiesce to the certainty of a resurrection on the strength of clear and pointed

scriptures, it is the rare individual who can explain the real need for such an occurrence, and fewer still which can offer a sensible explanation of the need for **more than one**, with one thousand years between!

### Beheaded for their Witness

A well-known passage in the book of Revelation makes this thought provoking assertion: "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and*

*reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”* (Rev. 20:4-6) Already, just from this short scripture, we’re at odds with several key elements of main stream theology!

We are here introduced to a scenario quite different from the common persuasion. First, there is to be a thousand year government in which Christ and His Saints will rule. Second, these who were beheaded for their witness (who obviously were dead as a result) are then raised again to become co-rulers in that Kingdom, which verses such as Revelation 1:4-6 and 5:8-10 show to be upon the Earth. Third, we’re introduced to a ‘first’ resurrection, which necessitates that there be a subsequent resurrection.

If these truths don’t create enough theological mayhem, it also speaks of those who are privileged to be in the ‘first’ as being exempted from a potent phenomenon, that of a ‘*second death*’! So not only is there more than one resurrection, (with 1000 years between them), but also there IS a ‘second death’! Under commonly held views regarding death and humanity’s eternal reward, what possible need is there for a second death? Isn’t one death sufficient? In most belief systems, a first death is all that’s needed to usher the deceased into either heaven or to heave them into hell. Is there some further assignment beyond that requiring a resurrection and a subsequent death? What does main-stream religion not fathom, as these events are spoken of as very necessary and **were** understood by the early New Testament Church.

There are many examples of individuals who have been raised from the dead, such as when Elijah raised the widow’s son,<sup>83</sup> when Elisha raised the elderly Shunammite couples’ daughter,<sup>84</sup> and when Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter,<sup>85</sup> and

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<sup>83</sup> 1 Kings 17:17-24

<sup>84</sup> 2 Kings 4:32-37

then later raised up Lazarus after he had been dead four days.<sup>86</sup> Besides these, there were many un-named **others** who came up out of their graves<sup>87</sup> when God the Father beamed-down the Power to raise His Son. Many ‘saints’ who had recently died also arose and went into the city where they were recognized by *many* people who had known them! These all **were dead**, but were raised again to physical life. But, none of them are still alive today, which means they all died a second time.

Now was their second decease **the** ‘second death’ as Revelation 20:6, 20:14 & 21:8 refers to? Or is the second death the phenomenon Jesus referred to in Matt. 10:28? “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*” (Hell is ‘gehenna’, **not** the grave in this place). There’s the KIND of death men can cause and there is the kind of death only God can impose: a total extinction of life from further possibility of any continuing existence! Destruction of the soul is a formidable consideration, another theological conundrum with main-stream religious beliefs.

### A Second First Death?

There is precedent of people having been raised from the dead (not to mention those resuscitated medically) who later died the physical death, the same as had occurred before. We have people who experienced (or will experience) the first death more than once. These all died the ‘first death’ a second time. Their second decease wasn’t the ‘second death’! **The** second death is not determined just by any numerical sequence, but rather, it’s a different kind of death. Men can’t cause **this** kind of ‘first death’, which is insightful in its own right. It **is** possible to die a physical death more than one time, as the above five examples illustrate.

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<sup>85</sup> Matt. 9:25, Mark 5:23-42, Luke 8:55

<sup>86</sup> John 12:1, 10 & 17

<sup>87</sup> Matthew 27:52-53 “*...the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*” These were well-known individuals!

## Why Did He Do It?

We might pause to consider why it was that Jesus raised Lazarus (whom Jesus loved).<sup>88</sup> IF such a resurrection had the remotest possibility of subjecting him to the second death, would He have raised him? Consider the possibility that Jesus wanted Lazarus alive on the impending Day of Pentecost, when he could receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, making him eligible for the ‘first resurrection’, where he otherwise might not have been! Jesus wanted him to be among those raised in the first resurrection, the *better* resurrection, as well as certain select ‘*other saints*’ who had died some short time before Christ’s resurrection, whom we read of in Matthew 27:52-53. This situation also helps us properly define the second death.

Now these several peoples named above, they **all died again!** Their deaths were the *physical* death both times. The same could be said of anyone ‘raised’ from certain death by medical intervention. Their recurring death is a repeat ‘first death’ by type, **not** the ‘second death’ experience, which involves a different kind of cessation. This area of understanding is more essential to understanding the various resurrections than might first appear. It removes one obstacle that many struggle with.

Consider IF any of these three, prior to Lazarus, were not converted in their lifetimes. After all, Christ hadn’t yet died for their sins, we have no record that they lived righteous lives, and God’s Spirit wasn’t yet available to them, as Christ hadn’t yet risen and His Spirit hadn’t yet been poured out, as happened first on the Day of Pentecost! If any of these were not ‘saved’ in their lifetimes, due to **in**opportunities, (not rejection) then they will be afforded their (first) chance in the second resurrection. But coming up in the second resurrection *could* subject those three, resurrected in past ages, to the *first* (type of) death yet another time! But perhaps I’m getting ahead of the story at this point. Where we need to think carefully is in resolving how those whom God (and/or Satan) blinded lest they come to conversion without ‘the Father

having drawn them’. (John 6:44, John 12:40, quoting *Isaiah 6:10* and Romans 11:25-26, quoting *Isaiah 59:20*). Those who died too young; those who lived and died before the time of Moses; those who lived in un-evangelized pagan societies; those who God specifically blinded: (Romans 11:7-8, quoting *Isaiah 29:10*) **all** of these never had a legitimate chance! Are they to ever have one?

In that other place where Christ elaborated on the various resurrections, in John 5:24, we find this comment. “*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.*” When we contrast this with Revelation 20:6, we read: “*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the **second death hath no power**, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*” There are people pre-assigned to Life, who by their conversion, are exempted from the power of the second death. Both of these passages refer to the same contingent of specially elected people.

## Bypassing Death Entirely?

Now an interesting side consideration to this is a small contingent of people, who are referred to as “*those who are alive and remain*”. A certain fortunate few won’t even experience the first death! Those Saints still alive at the point in time when the first resurrection occurs will pass directly into the immortal state. (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:15-17)

## Bypassing the Second Resurrection

Another familiar category of people spoken of by Jesus, John the Baptist and the Apostle Paul are those who have rejected their calling.<sup>89</sup> Being truly called of God is not something that’s disregarded or spurned without consequence! Those who **do** spurn it await *death*, not opportunity, like is to be afforded those who live again (not just being resurrected for sentencing,

<sup>88</sup> John 11:36

<sup>89</sup> Matt. 3:10-12, 13:40-42, **John 15:6**, **Hebrews 10:26-31**, Luke 3:16-17.

but who truly *'live again'*) in the second resurrection era.

At the resurrection to sentencing in which ALL that are in their graves will hear a call to appear before the Great White Throne for **sentencing** (compare Rev. 20:13 with John 5:28-29 and Mat. 25:31-46). This resurrection is not the one mentioned just before in which *'the books are opened'* to the understanding of those brought up, and their record thereafter **evaluated** for proper placement. As Rev. 14:13 states, *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which **die in the Lord from henceforth**: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."* Noting the exquisite placement of this verse, just **after** the Saints see justice upon the Beast Power which tormented that final generation but **before** the final harvest of the world, the second harvest of saints, concurrent with the gathering-in of the wicked to burn them up in the Lake of Fire, we can see that same period of time referred to also in Isaiah 65:17-22.

Referring to the millennial age: *"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the **child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed***

*...for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and **mine elect** shall long enjoy the work of their hands."* For both the *'sinner'* and the *'child'* (God's elect) to approach the same relative age, (the century mark), **together**, and for the *'sinner'* to be regarded as accursed, we must be seeing people living within an opportunity period: This same age in which **the books** (*biblion*) are opened! *Accursed* is the same condition we read of in Hebrews 10:26-27. *"For if we sin wilfully after that we **have received** the knowledge of the*

*truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and **fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries."*

### Death in the Lake of Fire

One essential thing to understand about the *'second death'*: it involves the Lake of Fire, **not the grave!**

Referring to **final sentencing**, we read this in Revelation 20:13-15. *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death**. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into **the lake of fire**. And in Revelation 21:8, *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in **the lake** which burneth with fire and brimstone: **which is the second death**. This is no ordinary death! **

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### A Question from a reader:

**At what point in time are people consigned to the second death? Is it only after the Great White Throne Judgment?** It depends on what is being asked. People can be assigned to that fate at any point in time, but only when and IF they reject their true and only opportunity for salvation. Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-31 more than suggest that some from the present and previous ages have already set themselves up for this destiny.

Now, as for the vast majority, who lived and died not ever having had any real and true opportunity for salvation, never having been called of God, and never having been given God's Spirit, they are not, and can not justifiably be consigned to such a fate unless and until they respond inadequately or negatively to it.

But the point in time when such a fate will ultimately be experienced is in the last harvest, the Grapes of Wrath harvest, that we read of in Revelation chapter 14.

# The Incurrigibly Wicked

***In the process of Understanding the Resurrections to Life Immortal,  
We Encounter a Category of individuals who Populate the Opposite Extreme:  
Those who, in the End, rightfully merit Eternal Death.***

Despite religions' profound assurances of life after death, what they describe as an ongoing consciousness in either of two places, when we carefully examine the biblical descriptions of either of man's ultimate destinies, we're forced to at least 'qualify' what is so commonly taught. Between what the typical preacher alleges and what the Bible teaches, we are forced to make a choice: Hopefully, an informed one. The preachers of the land assure their congregants that an eternity in Heaven is their **sure and eternal hope**. But, of course, that of the overwhelming majority is 'death' in an ever-burning Hell! What is most obvious, is that those truly converted are a distinct minority, especially of late, as our civilization plunges into the depths of blatant irreverence, lawlessness and depravities unimagined by our grandparents.

But then, the Bible prophesies of God's Saints being raised *immortal* and *incorruptible* at the time of Christ's return to rule the nations here on Earth for a thousand years and then some, while the wicked **later** are thrown into the Lake of Fire. Clearly NOT the same scenario posed by orthodox religion. Not the same at all!

The matter of the resurrections from the dead poses another incongruity with the common teaching of Heaven and Hell. Why would such a thing as a resurrection even be necessary? Yet we're assured that it **is** essential to God's Plan.

## What Does it Mean to 'Perish'?

It's when we consider the 'wicked' that we're especially drawn to the consideration of the biblical phenomenon of someone 'perishing'. 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9 tells us that, "*God is not willing that any should perish...*", but we're assured in many places that quite a number in fact will! The old

familiar John 3:16 offers an alternative from perishing, "...whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But who in the religious community actually believes in perishing? It is the overwhelming opinion among the religious, and for that matter, society in general, because that's what we've been taught for so long, that it isn't really a matter of perishing, but **where** a conscious afterlife will be spent. Alive, fully conscious, just as now, only absent of our fleshly manifestation. Jesus presented 'perishing' in contrast to 'living eternally', but that concept doesn't register today. The persuasion now is that it's 'eternal life' either way, where only the destination differs! Since the 'soul' is believed to be immortal, it must exist somewhere!

You would think the contrast between what the New Testament presents and the 'story line' recited continually in the churches of the land would be obvious. Why is 'perishing' in the New Testament presented as being the opposite of living forever, and why is a resurrection from the dead to incorruptible immortality **at** Christ's second coming such an oft repeated Biblical theme? But where-ever these 'difficult' theological contrasts surface, it seems, religiosity is all too quick to change the subject.

## Judgment is Certain

Paul makes the clear and emphatic declarations that "...we shall **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ", <sup>90</sup> and "*For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that **he hath done**, whether it be good or bad.*" What is obvious in these statements, and many others like them, is the fact that 'judgment' is not

<sup>90</sup> Romans 14:10 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:10

just a pronouncement of guilt and condemnation. We often see it as only that. The righteous are **also** to pass before the judgment seat in order for their situations to be duly assessed. This requires that evidence of our responsiveness, conduct and true character be established in order for just sentence to be awarded. The process of judgment always involves an evaluative or evidentiary phase and **then** a sentencing phase. Judgment is begun with believers, and will later broaden to involve the rest. *“For the time is come that judgment must **begin** at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (Presuming they are called to obey.) And if **the righteous scarcely be saved**, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God **commit** the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”*<sup>91</sup> This judgment is not indicating a condemnation, but rather an evaluation of righteousness, pursuant to ultimate<sup>92</sup> salvation. There must be an enduring commitment!

(In this we see also another anomaly with regard to common teachings: That it involves the **keeping** of our own souls in an appropriate subordination. He doesn't do it **all** for us! He did for us what we can't do, but doesn't do for us what we **can** do with His spiritual support.<sup>93</sup> As Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9: 25-27, *“And every man that striveth for the **mastery** is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I **keep under** my body, and bring it into **subjection**: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a **castaway**.”* We must achieve and maintain the mastery of our personal natures!

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<sup>91</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:17-19

<sup>92</sup> Many pronounce themselves 'saved' by the fact that they are 'converted'. Saved is a term used perhaps too loosely. No-one is 'saved' while still in the flesh. The commonly uttered phrase 'once saved always saved' is a misnomer. We wouldn't say 'once converted always converted' as we know that there are people who **give up** on the quest! Salvation is the ultimate condition awarded to those who maintain their conversion **thru to the end**.

<sup>93</sup> He being OUR *Hupostasis*. See the article of that title.

Paul clearly recognized, that to obtain the crown we must successfully finish the race!)

### What about the Wicked?

But it isn't the Righteous that is our focus here. It is to consider, What about the Wicked? There is also a category of people who are identified in many places and from many situations as 'the wicked'. Who are these, where do they come from and what happens to them?

### Condemned Already

One noteworthy passage spells out the tragic condition as it regards those who **were** converted, who ultimately spurned 'the gift'. In Hebrews 10 we read, *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth **no more sacrifice for sins**, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall **devour** the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the **blood of the covenant**, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* (vs. 26-29)

What we can clearly discern from this is that there **are** certain individuals who had been converted, who had received God's Spirit and Grace, but who 'laid down and died' spiritually, on the track. A spiritual condition from which there is no resuscitation! *“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were **made partakers of the Holy Spirit**, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall **fall away**, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”* (Hebrews 6:4-6) So these go to their graves to await their ultimate sentencing, having

worked themselves into a condition from which there is no possibility of pardon! In other words, they've become '**un-pardonable**'! They will have already completed their 'evaluation' phase.

But that addresses itself to those in **this** day of salvation. That considers those who do have or did have an opportunity in '*this* day of salvation'. What about those who, for various reasons, **didn't have opportunity**? Those who didn't live in this Christian day and age? Even those, who for the stated reason,<sup>94</sup> were blinded, even by God, against understanding, effectively barring them from any opportunity for salvation in this day? This is the area which modern religion, (and for that matter, the early apostate church), struggles with. Does the condition of their passive 'un-conversion' make them the same thing as '*the wicked*' ?

Besides that, those whom Jesus declared 'blinded' were the exceptionally religious! "*Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, **He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:***" (John 12:38-42) The "He" above is God! As it says, "*Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, **God hath given them the spirit of slumber,**<sup>95</sup> eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;)* unto this day.." (Romans 11:7-8 quoting Isaiah 29:10)

Not only that condition, but Satan also factors into the blindness of yet others, as 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:4 says: "*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*"

<sup>94</sup> John 6:44 & 12:40, Romans 11:7 & 25, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:14, etc.

<sup>95</sup> Not a slumber from which they can not awaken. See Chapter 12

The question is, Are all these people responsible for their blindness, and are they by it forever barred from having any opportunity? Further, are they eternally condemned, even now, because of it?

### The Fullness of the Gentiles

As it regards the peoples of Israel, Paul gives us an insightful glimpse into another opportunity period. In Romans 11: he writes this: "*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness** in part is happened to Israel, **until** the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so **all Israel shall be saved:** as it is written, *There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when **I shall take away their sins.*** (vs. 25-27) We here read that God has a Covenant with Israel that **all will** (eventually) be saved! The problem is, most of these are already **deceased**. Where was or when is their 'opportunity'? Secondly, they couldn't be regarded as '*the wicked*', as God **will** '*take away their sins*'! So they are, until a certain point in time, unconverted, but not wicked in the sense that post-resurrection passages identify. We can also discern from this that blindness does not preclude eventual salvation.*

(Now some in the 'evangelical' world suggest that this refers to the post-Rapture, Tribulation era, in which massive numbers of 'Jews' will become converted. (They're **unaware** of who Israel IS.) The problem is, at this interval of time, the 'fullness of the Gentiles' will **not yet** have been fulfilled. Secondly, it will do nothing for the majority who **died** in past ages! And third, this same era is that of which Amos prophesied: "*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that **I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.*** So they speculate of a massive response during a period in which it's all but impossible to find anyone proclaiming the Word of God truthfully! What kind of conversion would that be? This **can't** possibly be it!)

## In God's Face!

These who are blinded and who survive to the last days are brought into direct contact with God's wrath focused on them and their leadership. Revelation 16 presents the fore-runner of an even greater manifestation of man's deception-inspired rebellion. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the **wrath of God** upon the earth. 2: And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore **upon the men which had the mark of the beast**, and upon them which worshipped his **image**. 3: And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. 4: And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5: And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6: For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7: And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. 8: And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9: And men were scorched with great heat, **and blasphemed the name of God**, which hath power over these plagues: and they **repented not** to give him glory. 10: And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11: And **blasphemed the God of heaven** because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. 12: And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13: And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14: For they are the **spirits of devils, working miracles**, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that **great day of God Almighty**. 15: Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he

walk naked, and they see his shame. 16: And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. 17: And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18: And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19: And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of **the fierceness of his wrath**. 20: And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21: And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: **and men blasphemed God** because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

Now, despite these peoples' adamant refusal to exhibit anything resembling repentance, we are still drawn to the question of these peoples' condition. We know they are Satan inspired and blinded, yet we see in the paragraphs above that blindness is caused by or allowed by God upon most of humanity. We need also to consider that many in these armies are not necessarily there by personal choice. We should also note that in the expression of wrath from God against these armies, that it is the top leadership that is cast into the Lake of Fire at this point! We don't see the general population (their armies) being consigned to the same fate at this point in time!

Is there a reason for that?

### The Beast and False Prophet

Chapter 19 continues the story. "19: And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20: And **the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet** that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. **These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone**. 21: And the remnant [of this army] were slain with the sword of him

that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” Here we see the Beast and False Prophet cast physically alive into the Lake of Fire, but the armies are slain by the sword physically. Why doesn’t the same punishment apply to all?

### **Satan is Temporarily Bound**

The next thing that happens is described in the continuing verses of the next chapter: 20. “1: *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.* 2: *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,* 3: *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”* So this source of blindness and deception will be removed from society. This is after Christ returns. No doubt, any blindness proscribed by Him is lifted at this point in time also.

### **And Deceive Them He Will**

After the Millennium, Satan will again be released for a short intense campaign. Chapter 20 continues: “7: *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,* 8: *And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.* 9: *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.* 10: *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [were cast 1000 years earlier], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

Now this time, the armies are led by Satan himself! But notice, in this case, fire devours these whom Satan was able to deceive, who’s millennial conversion was not effective or genuine. These are consumed by fire, unlike the armies of the Beast Power, as we see up in 19:21, which are slain by the sword. We may account for the difference, in that these HAD opportunity,

where those of the final pre-millennial generation were under ‘blindness’, not entirely of their own doing, until the fullness of the Gentiles was come! <sup>96</sup> By their fate, we may conclude that these are proven ‘wicked’?! Satan recruited them out of the millennial Kingdom.

But that still leaves open the status of those who lived and died, without having been drawn (called) by God, (John 6:44) prior to the Millennial Kingdom, who were held in uncomprehending blindness, until their opportunity was come. But these are all long dead at this point in time! Does their ‘unconversion’ amount to the same thing as unardonable ‘wickedness’?

### **‘The Rest’ Live Again**

Here we see the significance of the seemingly minor parenthetical found in Revelation 20:5 “*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.*” *Question:* Why do these ‘live again’ now, after Satan is permanently removed from influence on society? *Answer:* To provide them an environment most amenable for them to be able to successfully respond to being provided opportunity.

Another consideration we should note: These dead were designated so from before the thousand years. These are **not** the dead who became dead (being added to that category) during the thousand years, as those people HAD their opportunity for salvation already. This contingent of people, dead before the millennial age, are those who weren’t ever called by God to Salvation in their day! They never had a legitimate opportunity! This is the ‘second resurrection’. (Those who came up back in the first resurrection were the converted **Saints** of God **ONLY!** No unconverted persons were in that resurrection! (Rev. 20:6))

With this in mind, the words of Revelation 20:12 become especially insightful, “*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*” The phenomenon of the ‘books’ (*biblion*) being

<sup>96</sup> Romans 11:25

opened, and their being evaluated (*judged*) out of those books is something we should take particular notice of. There's something **undetermined** at this point in which a comparison between the content of the books and each individual's conduct is called-for. **Though unconverted, there's something that God can't yet positively say about them! How will they respond to His True Call once they've received it?**

Only unconverted people who died prior to the Millennium come up in this resurrection.<sup>97</sup> Those who died **during** the Millennium do not!

Irrespective of their conversion status, the dead of the millennial age remain so, awaiting just sentencing, (not unlike the present situation) which assignment will come with the resurrection at the end, (of physical human existence) the end of this 'Last Great Day'. (The Last Great Day Holyday pictures the **opportunity period** for salvation being extended to those who never had opportunity.) (Those who had been converted, but who rejected God's Call and His Spirit prior to Christ's return were identified above on page 74, under the subject heading 'Condemned Already'. They also remain dead in their graves until the general resurrection to final-sentencing.<sup>98</sup>)

Also notice, the verse identifies '*the small and great*' here being raised. These sound like the full spectrum of society from the lowest slave to the most eminent in social status. It does **not** allude to any spiritual inferiority or superiority, such as in saying, 'the righteous and the wicked'. That isn't determined of them at this point in time!

The central issue here is, so **who are the wicked**, destined to destruction in the Lake of Fire, but also what opportunity will be afforded to the millions

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<sup>97</sup> Notice that in this resurrection, it is said that those who hear will arise (inferring that there are some who will **not** hear anything), but in the final resurrection, **all** will hear. Compare John 5:25-29 with Revelation 20:12-15.

<sup>98</sup> This 'final sentencing' resurrection is different than either of the two previous. It involves the righteous dead **and** the **unrighteous** dead being brought up **together** for the purpose of imposing sentence. The 'sheep from the goats', and 'wheat from the tares' scenarios posed by Christ paint this picture. Matt. 25:31-46, 13:36-42 and Rev. 14:14-19 are several explicit examples. Also see the chapter, "*And No Place Was Found for Them.*"

who died thru-out history who never were called, without which **it isn't possible** to come to the Father? What constitutes legitimate incorrigibility?

### The 'Wicked' Can be Known

Some will be quick to point out scriptures such as Romans 3:19, Ephesians 2:12, or 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:31-32. These **seem** to suggest that those unconverted are hopelessly condemned. "*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world may become guilty before God.***"... "*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and **without God in the world.***"... "*But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be **condemned with the world.***" Here we see another use of the word 'judged' in a non-condemnative sense!

Though it's correct that the *ultimate* destiny of the unconverted is, at present, the same as the wicked, the two are not necessarily in the same situation, as the unconverted still CAN become converted if and when opportunity is provided. Such a situation is described By Jesus in His resurrections narrative found in John 5. "*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.***" (John 5:24) "*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not **is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*" (John 3:17-18) This describes individuals who **had** opportunity. Their original pre-converted state thus remains certain "condemnation".

But what about those who were too young to have known of their needed response before they died? What about those who were never made aware of the existence of any redemptive plan? What about those, even in His day, that Jesus stated God had chosen to blind, or that Satan blinded? Are these,

by their unawareness or blindness automatically wicked, despite their unconvertedness? This is the essence of the question.

### Ignorance Matters

But the wicked are ever thus, having **had** their opportunity, having deliberately embraced self-destroying choices and having passed from any possible follow-up chance of re-repentance and forgiveness.

It appears that it's possible to render ones' self **wicked** in this lifetime prior to experiencing a first death, but that isn't a unilateral condition upon all humanity in general. Those 'unconverted' who fail to respond when their opportunity **is** presented can **prove** and thereby render themselves incorrigible!

Under these considerations, we can begin to see the great importance of understanding the purpose for the 'second resurrection'! The day when society will be 'at rest', when Satan will be removed as a motivator of society, and when God's Truth will be universally appreciated. In Jeremiah 65:18 we have this description of that age: "*But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy... 21: And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22: They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, (long life) and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23: They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, (the children of God) and their offspring with them. 24: And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*" (A society in which the LORD will be presently available!) 19: "*And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying... 20: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."*"

We see an entirely new world. God's Elect, the seed of the blessed of the LORD, living in the millennial age, are still physical, still having offspring. These and their offspring will have the books opened to their full comprehension, with open and near instant access to God. But despite this, if they spend their lives procrastinating and come to their life's end never appropriately responding to their opportunity for salvation, their unconvertedness transfers into accursed-ness! Once this opportunity period passes, they're consigned into that category known as: Unconvertable! Effectively incorrigible!

### The Final Day

With the exception of having offspring, those raised up to live again during the second resurrection, the Last Great Day (of salvation) also live out their lives with the same extraordinary access to their LORD as did their predecessors in the millennial age. They too, if unresponsive to the opportunity that this day provides them, will remain in the ranks of the unconverted. God accepts whatever response level His created want to exhibit. "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"<sup>99</sup> This is that age when it is entirely up to the individual. God's call is wide open. (No longer the John 6:44 situation) The Spirit, the Bride (the Bride being those raised in the first resurrection) and the 'hearer' (their converts) all together invite and encourage the undecided to **come!**

But, realizing that not all will, it says, "*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*" (Revelation 22:11) We see two basic kinds of responders living out their days together.

### All Physical Life Ends!

As this age draws to a close, a dramatic event is set-up. As the next verse says, "*...behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*" A vast

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<sup>99</sup> Revelation 22:17

arena will be created, the Lord will occupy "...a great white throne, ... from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away;... 12: *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;* ... 13: *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* 14: *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* 15: *And **whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*** "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is **the second death.**" (Revelation 21:8)

The wicked, the accursed, and the unconverted, all will be removed from God's Kingdom forever! Hopefully, with opportunity for salvation offered to all, and under the most amenable conditions, the actual numbers who reject it will prove to be far fewer than the present indications would suggest!

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**RECAPITULATION:**

In the above, you've seen how three resurrections are essential to providing opportunity for salvation to all who have ever lived or will ever live and to effect a just and final sentencing. Vast multitudes went to their graves without ever having a legitimate opportunity to attain what is often referred to as a 'saving knowledge', and more importantly, receiving God's Spirit. "*It is appointed to men once to die, but after this, the judgment.*" For those of us who are called now, that judgment (our evaluative phase) is now. For the rest of the dead, they await their evaluation and then sentencing which will come after the 1000 years in the second resurrection.

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🌀 **The Age Beyond?!** 🌀

Once the age of physical humanity is complete on Earth, there is a whole new World Order to come, one so far beyond the comprehension level of mankind, that we can scarcely conceive of it. "*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*" (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:9) We are given a glimpse into that Age in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 15. "*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that **God may be all in all.***" (verses 24-28).

Once sinful humanity is removed forever from the world scene, Christ is going to surrender up the Kingdom to the Father. The Father then can and will descend to live with His Family of Immortals: the Spirit-Born Saints. At that point in time, we will realize the placement on Earth, from Heaven, of His New Jerusalem, which we read of in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

But, that's an intriguing subject for consideration another day! 📖

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"*For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*" (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:25-26) Now you know how that last enemy will be conquered! "*So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: **Death is swallowed up in victory.***" 📖

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