

Heaven, Hell, or Somewhere Between?

by Homer Kizer

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Heaven, Hell, or Somewhere Between?

What is the reward of the “saved”? Christians secretly chuckled when, following the 9/11 terrorist attack, Western news media discussed the tenet of Islamic belief that has a man receiving seventy celestial virgins when he enters heaven. How, Christians wondered, could anyone believe in such a nonsensical idea? Yet these same Christians have no doubts that they will someday be in heaven with God. They will, because of their faith, be with Christ, who has gone ahead of them to prepare a spot [*topos* in Greek] for them so that when He comes again, they will be with Him (John 14:2-3).

Is a person born with eternal life, or is immortality truly the gift of God?

When is a person “saved,” if salvation is really possible? What must the person do, or not do? And if once saved, is a person saved regardless of what a person does afterwards?

Can a “saved” person sin and still expect to receive salvation?

Are the terrorists who attacked World Trade Center on 9/11 presently in heaven? Or are they in hell? Or are they ashes in a New York City landfill?

Where will Christ be when He comes again? Here on earth, correct? So the oft-quoted passage—“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places [*mones*]. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3)—has Christians being here on earth with Christ when He returns as the all-powerful Messiah. The Greek word *mones* is translated as mansions in the King James Version, and dwelling places in the New Revised Standard Version. The linguistic icon suggests a “staying,” as in a legal expectancy. It expresses a relationship more than a building. The passage can be as accurately translated, changing from first person to third, *There are many awaiting adoptions in God the Father’s house. Christ has gone ahead to prepare a relationship for each saint so that when He comes again, every saint can be with Him.* And someone should remind me that the meek shall inherit the earth (Matt 5:5).

When does a person receive eternal life?

Before I proceed to answer the question from Scripture, let me say that throughout the past year, I have grown in knowledge through a series of small revelations that add up to significant new understanding. A year ago, after thirty years in the Body of Christ, I would have answered the question as my teachers had taught me. I actually did answer the question in that manner in two apologetics sent to publishers in 2002. But my teachers only understood in part. I only understood in part. I still only understand in part, but in a far larger part than before I was drafted to do this job of writing the literature for this endtime Fellowship of Faith one year ago, exactly forty years after the then most visible remnant of spiritual Israel to have left

spiritual Babylon said that it perfectly understood prophecy, that no additional understanding would come. That organization’s work has been tested, and has been found to have been made of straw. Its work was blown away because of its refusal to grow spiritually. Yet that organization, less than one-eighth of its former size, prides itself for how much it has grown in grace and knowledge. The evidence doesn’t support its claims of having grown. Rather, the evidence suggests the work is nearly dead, strangled by its adoption of apostate doctrines. Its splinters now pride themselves for not having grown any spiritually the past two decades

This paper will position *The Philadelphia Church* — *Stonefort* outside of the commonly taught understandings of greater spiritual Israel, and outside of the teachings of the various Church of God splinters. As such, it should be intellectually challenged, but challenged by teachable minds. The key of David isn’t knowing the genealogy of the endtime descendants of the ancient house of Israel, but rather, understanding why King David will be in the resurrection of Firstfruits. It is answering Jesus’ unanswerable question. The key of David involves David, not the United States and Britain in prophecy. It is the spiritual key that locks and unlocks the gates of spiritual Jerusalem. It is not the physical key used by the *watchmen* to misread endtime prophecies.

Returning now to the question of when does a person receive eternal life, we can first look to King David’s example. On that day of Pentecost when Jesus’ disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit as Eve was filled by the first Adam (Gen 4:1 — the second Eve was created when the disciples received the Holy Spirit/*Pneuma* that is the Breath of God [John 20:22]), the Apostle Peter preached, “Fellow

Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day” (Acts 2:29), and “For David did not ascend into the heavens” (v. 34). If David, of whom the prophet Ezekiel spoke, declaring that David would be king over the resurrected houses of Judah and Israel (Ezek 37:24–28) under an everlasting covenant—if David had not ascended to heaven fifty days after Jesus became the Wave Sheaf offering of the Firstfruits, is it likely that David has anytime since ascended to heaven? No, it isn’t likely. In fact, we can with certainty that David hasn’t ascended into heaven, but remains in his grave, awaiting his change. And if David, the eternal prince of Israel, hasn’t gone to heaven, then who might have gone, and when did they go?

Paul writes to the Gentile converts at Rome, “Do you not realize that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath on the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will repay according to each one’s deeds: to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life” (2:4–7). So, according to Paul, those Gentile converts who seek immortality will receive eternal life on the day when God’s righteous judgment is revealed, that day being the day of wrath.

Further, Paul, concerning his conduct as a minister, writes, “It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God” (1 Corth 4:4-5). Thus, the time of judgment is the great day, the day when Christ Jesus returns as the all powerful Messiah. It is on this day when the hidden things become known, when those who are to receive commendation will, when those who seek immortality will receive eternal life.

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus to ask what he must do to inherit eternal life (Luke 18:18-30)—he didn’t believe he had eternal life, but he believed receiving eternal life was possible, for the David was prophesied to receive life eternal—the young ruler assured Jesus that he had kept the commandments since his youth. Jesus told him to sell all he had and give the money to the poor. The young ruler couldn’t do this, and he went away sad. Jesus then made His observation of it being easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle

than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. The disciples wanted to know who could be saved. Peter said that they had left their homes, and Jesus responded by saying that there was no one who has left possessions or relationships “who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life” (v. 30). So Jesus, Himself, confirms that a disciple will receive eternal life in the age to come, which begins with His return as the Messiah.

By the mouths of how many witnesses is a “thing” established? Peter says that David has not yet ascended to heaven, and has not yet received the eternal life promised to him. Paul says that judgment is revealed when Christ comes as the all-powerful Messiah. Jesus says that His followers will receive eternal life in the age to come. Plus, Jesus told Nicodemus, “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:13–15). So, according to Jesus, whoever believes in him will receive eternal life, but will receive it in the age to come, will receive it when judgment is revealed and when David is resurrected, according to the prophecy. And do any of us need a more reliable witness than Jesus? If we do, perhaps we ought to be Muslims. We would certainly not be Christians.

Jesus also said, “Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his [the Son of Man’s] voice and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29), with the implication being that both disciples who are righteous and those who are the evildoers presently await in their graves for the age to come when these disciples will be resurrected in one of two resurrections. The disciple who believed “him [God the Father] who sent me [Jesus] has the eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life” (v. 24). But when will this disciple actually receive what he or she possesses? When the age to come arrives, for until Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah, those things which are hidden will not be known. An individual’s judgment will not be revealed. A person slated for the lake of fire won’t know his or her fate until Christ’s return. If the person awaited his or her judgment in hell, then the person’s judgment would be revealed ahead of time. Likewise, a person won’t await condemnation in heaven. And Jesus doesn’t

reveal any other fate for saints than resurrection unto life, or resurrection unto condemnation. According to Jesus, saints are in the grave until resurrected.

As humans, we don't know who has been faithful and who hasn't. All judgment is given to Christ—and Christ doesn't reveal what His judgments are until He returns as the Messiah. Not even the dead know whether they will be resurrected unto life or unto condemnation. Only Christ makes that determination, and again, He doesn't reveal His judgment until the age to come.

Eternal life is the gift of God (Rom 6:23), which is opposed to the wages of sin; i.e., the second death for drawn disciples. So death is the absence of life. Under the second covenant, God set before Israel life and prosperity, death and adversity (Deu 30:15), and He commanded Israel to choose life. Under the new covenant, better promises were added to this second covenant. Instead of hearts and minds being circumcised following obedience to God by observing all of His commandments and decrees written in the Book of Deuteronomy, drawn disciples have the laws of God written on their hearts and minds prior to obedience. In both cases—circumcision of hearts and minds, and the writing of the laws of God on hearts and minds—what occurs is that the Israelite, physical or spiritual, receives the Holy *Pneuma*, the very Breath of God, which empowers the Israelite, giving the Israelite the ability to keep the laws of God by faith. The realization that the Holy Spirit was available to physical Israelites who obeyed *YHWH* by faith precedes understanding the key of David. When the prophet Nathan came to David about Bathsheba, David prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, / and put a new and right spirit within me. / Do not cast me away from your presence, / and do not take your holy spirit from me” (Ps 51:10–11). The phrase “holy spirit” is correctly translated. What David had was the Breath of *YHWH* within him. Jesus confirms this: “While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, ‘How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, “The Lord is my Lord”’” (Mark 12:35–36 & Matt 22:43).

Allow me to back up and run this by everyone again: the Holy Spirit/*Pneuma* is the very Breath of God. Jesus confirms the Holy Spirit's breath-like qualities: “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). The Holy Spirit is not a singularity, is not a personage,

but is, rather, the Breath of every member of Elohim. David did not know God the Father (John 17:6, 25–26). He only knew *YHWH* (Exod 20:2–3), who was born as the man Jesus Christ (John 1:1–2, 14). So it was *YHWH's* Breath that he had, not God the Father's. It is the glorified Christ's Breath that Peter, James, John and the other Apostles received when they received the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). They were filled the glorified Christ's Breath on that day of Pentecost—Jesus is the second Adam. It wasn't God the Father that knew the second Eve, but the second Adam. So Peter had the same Holy Spirit in him as David had in him. It is a theological mistake to teach that David only had the Holy Spirit with him, and not in him, that teaching usually based on a poor reading of John 14:17. Jesus' disciples would have the Holy Breath in them when Jesus breathed on them (again John 20:22). They didn't receive the Holy Spirit for the first time on that day of Pentecost as is usually taught in spiritual Israel. Rather, they received the Holy Spirit right after the second Adam awakened from the reality that the first Adam's deep sleep shadowed. Elohim [singular] didn't withhold Even from the first Adam for seven weeks after creating her. Rather, Elohim presented Eve to the first Adam right after He awakened Adam. Likewise, the second Eve is created and given to the second Adam right after He awakens from three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He doesn't wait seven weeks to meet her. Rather, He waits seven weeks, the time of spiritual purification, before He knows her, and with her conceives about three thousand disciples.

Under the new covenant, spiritual Israel has hearts and minds circumcised prior to baptism, what Peter's vision shows through the example of Cornelius. The model for spiritual Israel's conversion changed. No longer does baptism precede receiving the Holy Breath of God. All of physical was baptized when the nation crossed the Red Sea dryshod (1 Corth 10:2). When the nation, on Pentecost, heard the living words spoken by *YHWH* from atop Mount Sinai, the nation became holy, a nation of priests (Exod 19:5–6), hearing those words being directly analogous to a spiritual Israelite having the laws of God written on his or her heart and mind through receiving the Holy Spirit. Yes, that is correct: hearing *YHWH's* spoken works—the Decalogue—equates to spiritual Israel receiving the Holy Spirit, which writes these same laws on hearts and minds.

Every physical Israelite male born after Israel passed through the Red Sea was circumcised on the eighth day, and thereby through physical

circumcision, make a part of the nation of Israel. But that nation was rejected. That covenant was abolished (Eph 2:15). Spiritual Israel replaced physical Israel. The new covenant replaced the Sinai covenant. And under the new covenant, drawn disciples “are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Peter 2:9), but they are not born into this holiness. They have to be drawn from the world (John 6:44, 65). And they won’t know to leave the world until after they receive the Breath of God, for the natural mind is hostile to God (Rom 8:7), and cannot even choose to obey God. The disciple, a slave to sin, must be modified spiritually before the disciple even realizes that escape from Satan is possible. Therefore, the model for when newly drawn disciples receive the Holy Spirit changes when Gentile converts are drawn from the world. Cornelius reflects that change. Peter’s vision is about this change. And baptism replaces physical circumcision as the act that makes a drawn disciple an actual part of Israel, a part of the holy people.

Under the new covenant, eternal life and spiritual prosperity, which is treasure stored in heaven., stand in opposition to the second death, or lake of fire, and spiritual adversity, which can come in the form of a delusion that doesn’t allow those who are perishing to repent (2 Thess 2:9-12). So eternal life stands opposed to the lake of life, which will consume even Satan (Ezk 28:18-19), the beast and the false prophet (Rev 20:10), these three being the principle demons in the antiChrist scheme. (The clause in verse 10 that is translated “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” [KJV] in the original Greek uses the expression “to the *aionas* of the *aionon*,” which could be translated *perpetuity of the world*, or *course of the world*, or *age of the world*, indicating that when the physical world is transformed by fire, or made spirit, in preparation for the new heaven and the new earth, and for the arrival of the new Jerusalem, the lake of fire, like the former world, will cease to exist.)

Humans will either receive eternal life in the great White Throne Judgment, or they will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:14-15). A person will either have eternal life, or no life when the first heaven and the first earth pass away (Rev 21:1). There can be no in-between state. Life is a linguistic absolute. A sentient being either has it, or the being doesn’t. No modifiers are appropriate. There is no almost having life, or close to having life, or mostly having life. There is life or death. There isn’t eternal life in heaven versus eternal life in the lake of fire. Eternal life is, again, the gift of

God, given only to those who are in the resurrection to life. It is not given to those who are in the resurrection to condemnation. Those individuals experience the second death, which is the permanent absence of life. There is no resurrection from the second death.

A spiritual Israelite must believe that eternal life comes only as a gift from God; it doesn’t come any other way. You cannot get eternal life through fornication in the backseat of a Buick. All you can give or receive is physical life, the life that comes from your own breath, from the oxidation of sugar within your cells. Eternal life comes from the Breath of God. This is how Jesus received it (Matt 3:13–17).. This is how His disciples received it (John 20:22). This is how the three thousand devout Jews added on that day of Pentecost received it (Acts 2:4–12). This is how Cornelius and his household received it (Acts 10:44–47). This is how you will receive it—and make no mistake, you have eternal life once judgment is upon you. You don’t have to do anything to receive it, except to accept judgment, which is baptism. But to keep it, you have to endure in covenant with God to the end, either yours or the end of the age.

Without having the Breath of God in you, all you have is physical life. You have no immortal soul, which would be you having eternal life apart from receiving it as a gift from God. To teach that the sinner who has never known God will spend eternity in hell, roasting on first the person’s left side then on the person right, is to teach that this sinner received eternal life through fornication, or however the person was conceived. That teaching is a lie!

King Solomon, when confronting his own mortality, wrote,

I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every matter, and for every work. I said in my heart with regard to human beings that God is testing them to show that they are but animals. For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. (Eccl 3:17-20)

Yes, God has appointed a time for wrath, and a time for judgment, and a time of resurrection unto

life. That time is at the end of this age. And yes, God is testing all of humanity to see what we will believe concerning life and death—and what His testing reveals is that most humans believe the serpent's lie that Eve swallowed.

There are two basic beliefs concerning life, with a few variations of each. The first comes from God, who told Adam before Eve was created, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen 2:16-17). The second belief is what the serpent told Eve: "the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it [the tree in the middle of the garden] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'" (Gen 3:4-5). The juxtaposition cannot be clearer: God said eat and die; the serpent said eat and be like God. Eve's choice was to eat, or not to eat—to be, or not to be.

Eve used scientific reasoning in that she saw that the fruit looked good, and was good for food. By physical reasoning, there was no reason for her not to eat. The fruit was even desirable spiritually: it would make one wise, would make one like God, knowing good and evil (but without the ability to only choose good). So believing her eyes over her husband, or over her Creator, she took of the tree's fruit and ate. She then gave the fruit to her husband, and he ate without having been deceived by the serpent. Neither of them could know what death was, or whether they would die until after they ate. They had to believe God by faith.

Both Adam and Eve died; they were of dust and they returned to dust. They are not now in Iraq, avoiding CNN cameras. Since God only placed in them the breath of life [*naphesh* in Hebrew and *pneuma* in Greek], thereby making them breathing creatures (Gen 2:7), when their breath stopped, they, like their slaughtered livestock, returned to being the elements of the earth.

To have avoided death, Adam and Eve needed to have believed God through faith in God's Word being absolutely reliable. They certainly believed there was a God; they talked with Him. But the demons also believe, and shudder (Jas 2:19). Adam, simply, didn't believe what his Creator said. Prior to the serpent's arrival, he had nothing with which to compare the Word of God. He had no choice of whom to believe. He was like the created angels before iniquity was found in Satan. He believed God because there was no one contradicting what God said. Angels believed God prior to Satan's rebellion because the thought of not believing God

had never entered anyone's head.

Adam, however, once he had a choice, lacked the faith to believe God. His lack of faith becomes his sin, which begins with his violation of the first commandment—he put his wife before God. When Jesus offered the rich young ruler a place in the first resurrection, the young ruler found that his wealth stood between him and God. Whatever a person serves other than God, that *whatever* stands between the person and God. And in every case, that which is served prevents the person from having the faith necessary to believe God unto obedience. Paul writes, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (Rom 6:16). Believing God requires obedience to God, which leads to righteousness and eternal life. Without belief, without obedience, without righteousness, the person is without eternal life.

Jesus, when the Pharisees sent the temple police out to arrest Him, addressed the subject of going to heaven: "I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come" (John 7:33-34). The clear implication is that the temple police, not even in the future, can go to where God the Father is. But Jesus doesn't limit who cannot go to heaven: on the night of His last Passover, He tells His disciples, "Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'" (John 13:33). So not even the disciples could go where Jesus was going when He returned to heaven.

If the Pharisees as sinners cannot go to heaven, and if the Disciples as saints cannot go, then who can go to heaven? Air-breathing men and women? Is there air in heaven? Not as far as we know. So flesh and blood cannot enter heaven. A person would need life that doesn't come from the oxidation of sugars at the cellular level to enter heaven; the person would need eternal life, which is the gift of God, received when the age to come arrives.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus and was told that he must be born of spirit [*pneuma*] to be born from above, the qualifier for entering into the kingdom of God (John 3:1-21), he asked, "How can these things be?" (v. 9). Jesus answered his question with a question, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?" (v. 10). Jesus could ask the same question of the wouldbe

teachers of spiritual Israel: how can they not understand what it is to be born from above, or in modern parlance, *born again*? Most don't. Most teach the serpent's lie, that humanity has become like God in that humanity has eternal life residing in each person in the form of an immortal soul. This belief is the primary tenet of Platonism, and neoPlatonism. It entered Judea prior to the 1st-Century B.C.E. through Hellenistic acculturation, and it is the belief that separates those spiritual Israelites who are of the synagogue of Satan (Rev 3:9) from genuine disciples.

Continuing how Jesus answered Nicodemus, Jesus said, "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (John 3:13). So if King David hadn't ascended into heaven prior to Christ's crucifixion, and he hadn't ascended when the Holy Spirit [*Pneuma*] is given to three thousand on that day of Pentecost, is it likely that he has ascended anytime since 31 A.D.? Not really. David hasn't ascended into heaven, has he?

Concerning King David, Ezekiel's prophecy says, when all of the resurrected houses of Israel and Judea are joined together, that God "will make one nation of the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms" (37:22); and God adds,

My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. They shall live in the land that I gave to my servants Jacob, in which your ancestors lived; they and their children and their children's children shall live there forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations shall know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them forevermore. (v. 24-28)

King David shall live again when the house of Israel and the house of Judah are again one nation, which happens when God makes an eternal covenant with both houses of Israel. At that time, God will set up His sanctuary here on earth, and God shall dwell in His sanctuary. This all happens when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah at the beginning of the age to come. So King David is resurrected when Christ returns as the Messiah. Until then, he is dead and buried, with only his name written in the Book of Life (Rev 20:12, 15).

Let's pause and explain what the key of David is. The Apostle Paul said that you, a physical Israelites who have a circumcised heart and mind (Deu 30:6)—who have received the Holy Spirit under the covenant that Paul identified as the "righteousness that comes from faith" (Rom 10:6)—need only to "confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead" (v. 9) to be saved. These three things (circumcision of heart and mind, confessing Jesus is Lord, and believing God raised Him from the dead) equate with Jesus' instructions to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19). These three things also equate with the promises of the new covenant:

"This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall not teach one another, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more. (Heb 8:10-12)

Baptizing in the name of the Holy Spirit is the circumcision of the heart and mind, which is also the writing of God's laws on the heart and mind. Baptizing in the name of the Son is confessing Jesus is Lord, which is also the forgiveness of sins under the new covenant. Baptizing in the name of the Father is believing God raised Christ from the dead, which is also the new covenant promise of knowing the Lord. And when these things are satisfied, a person will be saved. Ezekiel's prophecy states that King David will again be king over both houses of Israel, which means he is saved, and will be resurrected to life when Christ returns. His judgment has been revealed ahead of time. So David had to confess Christ will his mouth, and

believe that God the Father raised Christ from the dead, even though the textual evidence is that no one knew the Father prior to when Jesus revealed Him to His, Jesus', disciples. Yet, since God is not a respecter of persons, we should find evidence of David professing Christ and believing God. Scripture is clear that David had the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Peter on that day of Pentecost when disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit said, concerning David, "Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, "He was not abandoned to Hades, / nor did his flesh experience corruption"" (Acts 2:30-31). Peter cites Psalm 16 to show that David believed that the Messiah would be raised from the dead., thereby satisfying being baptized in the name of the Father. Since he had the Holy Spirit, David would've also satisfied being baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit. He need only profess that Jesus is Lord—and this is the answer to Jesus' unanswerable question. Both Jesus and Peter cite Psalm 110:1 ("The Lord said to my Lord"). Both cite the Septuagint, and because of how the Psalm had been translated into Greek, Jesus' question is virtually unanswerable. However, if these Pharisees had remained primarily Hebrew speakers, they would know that the first "Lord" is *YHWH*, and the second *adoni*, which always refers to a human in the 195 or so times it is used in Scripture. Strong's Concordance is not a reliable when it comes to *adoni* versus *Adonai*, which is a substitute name for *YHWH*. David has the Messiah coming as a man in the Psalm. Therefore, David satisfies being baptized in the name of the Son, without stretching Scripture excessively. And a person either believes that God is no respecter of person, or the person will do a fancy linguistic softshoe dance routine to explain what has already been explained in Scripture. Peter tells the three thousand devout Jews that David had satisfied the requirements for being saved, yet David still had not ascended into heaven, but was awaiting his change in the grave.

Similarly, a person either believes God, or Satan about whether the person has eternal life residing in oneself. The person has no other choice. A person either believes that he or she receives the promise of eternal life as a gift of God under the new covenant; or the person believes that he or she received eternal life through fornication in the back seat of a Buick, or wherever the person was conceived. **You will believe one or the other.** Certainly, a person can believe that there will be no

resurrections, that this physical life is all there is. This person would like to reject both God and Satan, but in rejecting God, this person acknowledges his or her servitude to Satan, who seems perfectly content to accept worship however a person wants to give it to him. Satan will, though, require this person to accept his slave mark (i.e., the mark of the beast, *Chi xi stigma*, or *Xx[tattoo]*) once God the Father and His Messiah liberate all of humanity (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:11-12) three and a half years before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah.

About the joining of the house of Israel and the house of Judah, Jeremiah prophesies, "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (31:31). This new covenant is the eternal covenant about which Ezekiel prophesies. This covenant will have David as king over all of both houses of Israel when these nations are resurrected. The terms of this covenant have the law of God (*v.* 33) written on the hearts and minds of the house of Israel. This singular law of God is the singular commandment of God in which the hearts and minds [*naphesh*] of Israel will be circumcised (Deu 30:6-14). Paul calls this singular commandment "the righteousness that comes from faith" (Rom 10:6 — compare to Deu 30:12-14). This is Paul's law of faith (Rom 3:27), which has God imputing righteousness to drawn disciples who have been called to be a holy nation, a royal priesthood, God's own people (1 Peter 2:9), known as spiritual Israel, which is the singular house of Israel into which even physical Israelites must now be grafted (Rom 11:17-24).

The single law of God, or commandment of God that forms the basis for the new covenant is the second covenant of Moses (Deu 29:1-31:13). This law requires Israel, in order to receive circumcised hearts and minds, to believe God unto obedience by observing all of commandments and decrees written in the Book of Deuteronomy. This second covenant was physical when mediated by Moses; yet, under it salvation was possible with righteousness was sought through faith, not through the added sacrifices. But now that Christ is the mediator, with His addition of better promises, this second covenant is spiritual. When the Lord says, "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity" (Deu 30:15), under Moses this was physical prosperity and adversity. Under Christ, this is eternal life and spiritual prosperity, stored in heavenly treasures.

Jesus said there were conditions attached to

receiving eternal life: a lawyer, testing Jesus, asked, "[W]hat must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). Jesus then asked the lawyer, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" (v. 26), suggesting that the correct reading of the law would, indeed, give eternal life.

The lawyer's answer was that a person was to love God with all of the person's being, and to love the person's neighbor as oneself (v. 27). The lawyer's answer summarized not just the Ten Commandments as is sometimes taught, but all of the law of God, all of the Book of Deuteronomy. Jesus told the lawyer, "You have given the right answer; do this and you will live" (v. 28), by receiving eternal life, the answer to the question the lawyer initially asked. So salvation can come with the correct reading of the law, but only with a reading that foregrounds love.

In Mark's account of how Jesus answered the question of which commandment is first in importance (12:28), when the scribe who asked the question heard Jesus' answer the scribe said, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and beside him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all understanding, and with all strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'— this is much more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices" (vs. 32–33). Jesus then told the scribe, "You are not far from the kingdom of God" (v. 34). Thus, again we see that the law, when kept with love and faith, will produce eternal life.

The two summary commandments which the lawyer and Jesus quotes (Deu 6:5 & Lev 19:18) are the commandments of God which Jesus tells His Disciples to keep (John 15:10), plus the new commandment to love one another that Jesus gives (v. 12). These two summary commandments become the plural laws of God that the writer of Hebrews cites when the writer quotes Jeremiah's single law of God (Heb 8:10 & 10:16). Therefore, we can say with certainty these two summary commandments incorporate more than the Decalogue: when the rich young ruler says that he has kept the inscribed Commandments from his youth, Jesus adds one more thing for the rich young ruler to do. Selling all the ruler's possessions would have been for the ruler an act of faith. Then giving all his wealth to the poor would have been an expression of love for the poor, something the ruler was unable to make. The two summary commandments incorporate both faith and love. The entire Book of Deuteronomy is the application of faith unto belief, belief unto obedience, obedience unto observing the com-

mandments of God, while having love for the poor, the alien, and all those without an inheritance within a person's borders. The Book exists as a witness for, or against a drawn disciple (Deu 31:26). And the difference between the Book of Deuteronomy and the Book of Leviticus is found in the two summary commandments: Deuteronomy focuses on love toward God that comes from faith, which will still have the disciple loving his or her neighbor as an aspect of loving God.

When all of the Scripture passages referencing eternal life are fit together as pieces in an easily solved jigsaw puzzle, what's apparent is that eternal life is a gift of God the Father under the terms of the new covenant. Drawn disciples who have pursued righteousness will receive this gift when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. And without this gift, no mortal has any life other than that which comes from breath.

Within the Christian Church, the nearly two millennia old tradition of heaven and hell being the reward of the just and unjust respectively is embracing Platonism. For any human to go either to heaven, or to hell rather than to remain in the person's grave, the person must have an immortal soul. The person must have preexisting eternal life apart from receiving it as the gift of God. The person must call God a liar., not something I am willing to do. Only when a person tells God that the person already has eternal life apart from receiving it as a gift from Him can the person believe that he or she will go to heaven between the person's death and when the person will received a glorified body at Christ's return. If the person believes that he or she has an immortal soul, the person's soul cannot merely lie there in the ground asleep while the body decays. Thus, traditional Christianity believes the serpent's lie rather than the Word of God, believes that humanity won't really die, believes that Eve didn't really die after eating the forbidden fruit, believes that eternal life comes from fornication. For all of the sermons that have been preached from the pulpits about faith, believing God, and confessing with one's mouth, doctrinally, traditional Christianity, since 325 A.D., has openly rejected belief in the Word of God, choosing instead to believe and teach the lie that Eve swallowed. And by rejecting the Word, traditional Christianity has rejected Christ, while making of itself the sword by which the demonic king of the North has waged war against God and competing demons.

Strong claims? They're mild compared to what Christ will say. Many who have done powerful works for Christ will be told, *I never knew you. Get*

away, you *Evildoers*. Then there will be gnashing of teeth as realization comes that the Word of God really means what it says.

In fairness to those who have believed the lie Eve swallowed, we need to examine Scripture passages used to support Hellenistic Platonism, already somewhat modified from what Plato actually taught.

Traditional Christianity's best evidence to counter what Jesus said about no man has ascended into heaven other than the Son of Man, and that even His Disciples couldn't go where He was going when He returned to the Father is found in the Lazarus-Dives story, which isn't a traditional parable. Yes, Scripture says, "Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: / 'I will open my mouth to speak in parables; / I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world'" (Matt 13:34-35). But Jesus' audience for the Lazarus-Dives story wasn't the crowds that followed Him. Rather, His audience was mocking Pharisees, who were well-schooled in Greek thought and traditions.

The entire Lazarus-Dives story is here quoted:

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who

might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may arm them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them." He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31).

Considering the audience Jesus addressed—"Pharisees, who were lovers of money" and who "ridiculed" Jesus (v. 14)—the last sentence contains the essence of what Jesus was trying to communicate: if these Pharisees would mock Christ for saying that they couldn't serve both "God and wealth" (v. 13), Abraham was not their spiritual father; and if they could find no mercy in the writings of Moses, they weren't about to listen to Him even though He would rise from the dead as once again part of Elohim, the creating godhead.

I have offended some Believers when I have told them that there is fiction in the Bible: the story of Lazarus and Dives is a fiction that Christ used to indict these mocking Pharisees, then in his audience, of their false teachings. The parable that causes the Pharisees to taunt Christ is of the dishonest manager, who has been given notice that he is being fired. He wonders what he will do for he is "not strong enough to dig" and too "ashamed to beg" (Luke 16:3), an apt description of the Pharisees. So the manager cuts some under-the-table deals to set himself up financially. His master actually applauds the manager's shenanigans. Then Christ delivers His message about the person faithful in little will be faithful in much. And Christ's message was well enough understood by the Pharisees that they ridiculed Him. But Christ will have the last word. He said, "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped" (v. 17). Now, Christ details the area in which the Pharisees had been compromising the law: "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits

adultery" (v. 18). The Pharisees had been, for a little money, allowing unjustified divorce decrees.

Christ, immediately after naming the specific area in which the Pharisees had been compromising the law, relates the fiction of Lazarus and Dives. Abraham is often mistakenly read as being alive in heaven, but again, Christ said, "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (John 3:13); so Abraham and Lazarus cannot be in heaven. They are not in Hades, for a chasm separates them from Dives. They are in "story," in this *parable*, which fits into the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition of *fortune reversal after death* tales. The *parable* is a Cynic narrative. The Lazarus and Dives story wasn't recent history; that is, it wasn't the literal story of two men who died during Christ's ministry in Judea.

The Pharisees were, collectively, the rich man who showed no mercy to an oppressed laity. They did not believe Moses and the prophets; Christ said none of them were keeping the law Moses gave them (John 7:19). He knew it would be futile to cite Moses or the Writings to them, so He gave them a Greek story to which they could relate. In a very real sense, Christ turned these Pharisees mocking back upon themselves by telling them a Greek story. *He, by His selection of the Lazarus and Dives narrative, said to them both in content and in form that these Pharisees were not of Abraham's seed, the claim they valued most, but that these Pharisees were spiritual aliens.* They might as well have been Greek gentiles.

In the Lazarus-Dives parable Christ was not negating the importance of the resurrections from the dead, but was using a fictional construct to make a point to mocking, money-hungry Pharisees. Paul used a similar strategy on Mars Hill when he quoted lines from Greek poets to the assembled philosophers. In both cases, the text is audience-specific. Both Christ's and Paul's use of Greek poetics conveyed more-encompassing messages to their immediate audience than either's use of Hebraic poetics would have. And in both cases, the strategy loses the additional meanings when read by audiences unfamiliar with Greek poetics.

On other occasions Pharisees tried to match wits with Christ. They lost each time. On this occasion, they not only lost but were humiliated in such a subtle way that generations of scholars haven't fully appreciated how thoroughly Christ bested them. Luke evidently did, for he relates the incident in sufficient richness that a reader can grasp the indictment Christ made of these Pharisees, even to Him citing a specific violation of the law they

were committing (i.e., granting unjustified divorce decrees). The reader can also grasp Christ's reversal of humiliation; for this parable, by its Greek content and form, stands out from all of the other parables recorded. It is no wonder that the Pharisees were determined to kill him. He humiliated them in a way that they understood, but in a way that few others in the audience could grasp. In other words, Christ used the Pharisees' education as the means for the Pharisees to understand what he had done to them. But no audience with less education than the Pharisees, then or since, would have any appreciation for what had been accomplished. It was a "silent" humiliation, in that only the ones upon whom the figurative tables had been turned knew that the humiliation had taken place. These Pharisees couldn't even point to Christ and say to the rest of Christ's audience, *See, he is like us*, for only they knew how badly they had been bested. They and Luke, the educated physician.

The parable of Lazarus and Dives verified already existing mental paradigms of the underworld for Greek-educated scholars in the first few centuries after Christ's crucifixion. These readers of Luke's account did not have to rid themselves of their own understandings of the underworld, of their neoPlatonic beliefs. Rather, they could superimpose their understandings over the Hebraic paradigm of resurrection to create a logically-devoid construct of an immortal soul escaping to heaven at a person's death, then returning with Christ to receive a glorified body when Christ returns to earth, with that good soul's parallel being an evil soul going to Hades to be punished without ever receiving a glorified body.

D.W. Robertson, Jr. writes in his "Translator's Introduction" to his translation of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*,

We do not always realize today the extent to which the theology of Christianity was at once a logical outgrowth of late classical thought and, at the same time, an astonishingly brilliant fulfillment of the best traditions of ancient philosophy as they extend from Pythagoras and Plato to Cicero and Varro. Paganism, as [Jerome Carcopino in *De Pythagore aux Apotres*, Paris, 1956, page 80] a great classical scholar has said, "groped and staggered in the pursuit of an ideal concerning which it could have only an

obscure prescience. But when the message of the gospel reached its best thinkers, they believed that they had finally attained it in the flash of certainty which suddenly struck them" (ix-x).

Readings of text that use the parable of Lazarus and Dives to prove an immortal soul are not readings that derived from the community of Christ's disciples. They are, instead, readings descended from those of paganism's best thinkers.

A second passage used to prove that humans have immortal souls is Paul's prayer for good health. The passage is 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "May the God of peace sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I have heard many scholars state that this passage proves that humans are of a tri-part composition of *psuche*, *pneuma*, and *soma*. But both *psuche* and *pneuma* mean breath, with *pneuma* meaning to breathe more deeply than does *psuche*.

If the passage were better translated, it would read, *may your breath and life and body be kept sound*. To me that seems reasonable and understandable. We have an English idiom that is similar: you are flesh and blood. Textually, the life is in the blood: "Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Gen 9:4). So what Paul wrote the Thessalonians was (rearranging the word order), *may your flesh and blood and breath be kept sound*. That is what we humans are, flesh and blood and breath. Paul, in his salutation to his first letter to the Thessalonians, wasn't writing doctrine but a figurative acknowledgment of all that composes a person. We are of tri-part composition: the flesh on our bones, the blood in our bones, and the breath that feeds our bones. Paul was, simply put, praying for their good health and that they be found blameless before Christ, who will have a bone to pick with all that believe the lie Eve swallowed. That bone belongs inside the saint, not being feed to birds when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah.

Plato's concept of soul immortality is easy to believe, and takes faith to reject—but without faith, no one can please God.

Each passage allegedly having saints in heaven awaiting Christ's return has either been poorly translated, or badly misread, especially the passages in the Book of Revelation; i.e., 6:9-11 and 7:9-10. These passages are addressed in the booklet, *Revelation, Unsealed and Revealed*. I encourage newly drawn disciples to request a copy.

An immortal soul requires possessing eternal

life; what else is immortality other than eternal life? All individuals and organizations that hold and teach that humans have immortal souls, or that humans have eternal life apart from receiving it as the gift of God are apostate. All believe the lie Eve swallowed, and all will suffer great pain when genuine disciples are born as glorified heirs of God the Father.

Without an immortal soul, a person goes to his or her grave upon death. There, the person will await his or her change. There is no in-between state, partly alive and partially dead. Jesus said no one goes to heaven. Gehenna fire is the lake of fire, which burns until its fuel is consumed. Worms that don't die are maggots. And hell is a hole in the ground; it is the grave. So there is no in-between place between the grave and resurrection. The Greek concept of an elaborate afterlife comes from the lie Eve swallowed.

If you presently believe you have an immortal soul, repent, and believe the Word of God. If you are a drawn disciple, your destiny rides on you having the faith to believe the Word of God, not the serpent. But maybe you feel lucky.

Paul writes, "Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgressions of Adam" (Rom 5:14). Since Moses, death has continued to exercise dominion over the vast majority of humanity. Between Moses and Jesus Christ, the exceptions were the prophets who were given the Holy Spirit so that God could communicate with them. Since Jesus' resurrection, the exceptions have been only those saints who have been drawn by God the Father and modified spiritually by having their hearts and minds circumcised. Yet even all of the exceptions have died or await death. What makes them the exceptions is that they have received the promise of eternal life; their names are written in a Book of Life. But they await that promise in their graves, just as dead as the person without the promise.

All of humanity will be resurrected, but judgment is only upon the household of God now (1 Peter 4:17). Judgment is required before eternal life will be given: the wages of sin for a drawn disciple is the second death, so judgment is required to determine whether a disciple has earned the wages for sin, or whether the disciple will be resurrected to life (John 5:28-29). No other fate awaits a disciple. All who have the promise of eternal life do not come under judgment beyond

death, but will pass from death to life (v. 24). But those who entered the new covenant, but didn't endure in it until the end, or until their end have lost their promise of eternal life and will be resurrected to condemnation.

For drawn disciples, one of two fates are available to them. Either they will do good (good works) and be resurrected to life, or they will do evil (the works of lawlessness) and be resurrected to condemnation, or into the lake of fire, which is the second death. Life and death has been set before them (Deu 30:15). Christ would have them choose life. In a real way, Christ allows disciples to choose the fate that awaits them. He has set out the choices available, laid out the criteria for each choice, and has done everything for the disciple but make the choice.

No in-between fate is available to disciples. Judgment is in this life or age. By their choices, disciples determine their judgment, and by extension, their fate. They are literally deciding whether they want to live forever or die permanently. But too often, these disciples are misled into thinking that because Christ has done everything for them but make their choice, they are free to practice lawlessness. They have been taught that once saved, they can do nothing to undermined their saved state. That is a lie! They must endure in the covenant relationship in which God the Father placed them when He modified them spiritually. They must do what they know is right as they grow in faith and knowledge. If they know they must not commit adultery, they must not commit adultery. If they know they are not to do murder, they are not to commit murder. If they know they must keep the Sabbath holy, they must keep the Sabbath holy. If they know the Sabbath is the 7th day, not the 8th, they must keep the Sabbath on the 7th day.

Since all judgment belongs to Christ, and since He has set before disciples the choice of life or death, Christ has made a judge of each disciple, in that disciples judge themselves. We know whether we have been faithful, or whether we are a hypocrite. We know how much of the law of God we obey by observing its statutes, commandments and decrees. We can judge ourselves, and we do by our choice of life or death. If we find that it is easier to lie than to tell the truth when we know we must not lie, we know we are guilty of breaking the law and are worthy of death. If we do not repent, we choose death over life, regardless of any other good works we do.

When a person chooses to sin, that incident of lawlessness or sin (1 John 3:4) becomes no big deal to this unrepentant disciple. Doing mighty works for God is more important than obeying God. The person tells the Father that the person will not be ruled by Christ (Luke 19:14, 27), but will determine for him or herself how and when the person will worship God. The person might even continue to do mighty deeds in the name of Christ, even to healing the lame and casting out demons, but the person is no longer known to Christ, for the person has left the covenant relationship. The person has chosen death, rather than life. The person has deceived him or herself. Satan's help wasn't needed, not that Satan wouldn't have helped. Rather, the person could have chosen to do what the person knew was right in every situation, with grace covering the person's failures to live with his or her decision to do right. When the person chose to overlook what was right in order to get that mighty work done in a timely and efficient manner, the person chose death. So yes, judgment belongs to Christ, but in most cases, He has delegated that judgment to the disciple by giving the disciple the choice of life and good, or death and evil.

Because of the importance of this subject, let's back up and take another run at it, so to speak. Judgment is today upon all those who have been drawn by the God the Father. This is a more inclusive statement than has traditionally been taught within the Church of God, which has judgment limited only to those individuals who have endured for some period of time in the faith. The traditional teaching comes from a poor understanding of the new covenant.

When a person is drawn from the world by the Father for the purpose of Him having a relationship with the person, three linguistic absolutes occur at the same time. The person has his or her heart and mind circumcised by the insertion of God's laws into the person's conscience; the person receives the Holy Spirit. The person's sins are forgiven; the person is under grace, which is inviting Jesus to live in the person. And the person knows God., because the believes God by obeying Him No one has to teach the person to know the Lord; the person knows the Lord because of the spiritual modifications made to the person. The person is now a disciple who knows the Lord because the laws of God have been internalized. This disciple is not under the law, but is under grace, which, as a gift of God, really remains outside the person.

Likewise, eternal life, a gift of God, remains outside the person. This disciple has both grace and eternal life as promises that remain promises as long as this disciple endures in faith.

The Apostle Peter's question, "[W]hat will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God" (I Peter 4:17), addresses the condition of both grace and eternal life as promises of God remaining outside a disciple. Peter's referent for "those who do not obey the gospel of God" isn't people who have never known God, who have never been drawn by the Father, who will be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment. Rather, his referent is restricted to those who know the gospel of God and do not obey it. It is limited to all those who do not endure to the end, or to their end. And about them, Jesus says that we shouldn't be surprised when "those who have done evil [are resurrected] to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29). The promise of eternal life is conditional to enduring to the end in the covenant relationship in which a disciple is placed when spiritually modified by God the Father, and called by Christ Jesus. The covenant is the new covenant, or eternal covenant, which is the second covenant of God mediated now by Christ rather than Moses.

We can answer Peter: the end of those drawn and spiritually modified disciples who do not obey the gospel of God is resurrection to the lake of fire.

If God the Father has circumcised your heart and mind by writing His laws on both, and you through clever arguments, or neglect, or rebellion erase what has been written on your heart and mind, then you have grieved the Holy Spirit. You have reservations for the lake of fire. Judgment is now upon you. Christ will make that judgment. He might accept excuses, but we have His criteria for judging in Matthew 25:31-46. This criteria is summarized in what two great commandments: love God with all your heart and all your might, and love your neighbor as yourself. You love God by obeying Him, by observing His laws and decrees. You love your neighbor as yourself by going beyond what the law requires. The Good Samaritan was under no obligation to pay the expenses of the victim after the Samaritan went on his way the next day. The Samaritan not only showed the victim mercy, but he went beyond what the law requires to apply true love.

Once saved, always saved is a false gospel, an accursed gospel that negates eternal life being the gift of God. As drawn disciples, we have had the

laws of God placed inside us. We remain under grace, which as a gift of God is outside of us. It is like an umbrella that doesn't cover a disciple's neighbors. Its coverage has limits—is limited to only the new covenant. If a drawn disciple, for any reason, walks away from the new covenant, the person is no longer under grace. The person no longer has the promise of eternal life. This person must return to the new covenant and to his or her obligations under the new covenant prior to death. Solomon wrote, concerning what the dead do while they wait resurrection, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol [the grave], to which you are going" (Eccl 9:10). A person cannot repair his or her relationship with God between the person's death and resurrection. There is no conscious in-between state. The dead know nothing; they are not aware of time passing. And a person wouldn't think that they were unless the person has swallowed the same lie Eve swallowed. As a person's brain decomposes, thoughts aren't occurring. We know better than to think that they are.

But for most of humanity, judgment follows death (Heb 9:27):

Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it . . . [and] I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. (Rev 20:11-13)

The dead who will be resurrected in this great White Throne Judgment will be judged according to their works, according to what has been recorded about them in the books; they have not yet been judged. Therefore, the dead in this resurrection are not those who died having the promise of eternal life.

In the great White Throne Judgment, the Book of Life will be open to all those who have been resurrected. This will be, for those who have been resurrected, their first chance to receive the promise of eternal life. This is not a second chance at salvation. No one prior to when the kingdom of the

world becomes the kingdom of the Father and His Messiah (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:9-14) has been able to come to God unless first being drawn by the Father from the world (John 6:44, 65). All of humanity can have wanted a relationship with Christ, but that relationship was only available to Israel, as the firstborn of many nations (Exod 4:22), then to spiritual Israel as the one great nation that was to come from Abraham. Salvation has been available to spiritual Israel, which includes the former and latter prophets. It was also available to physical Israel, if faith and love were added to the second covenant. The promises offered to Israel by the Sinai covenant were for physical blessings. Yes, circumcision of the heart and mind was offered to physical Israel under the second covenant (Deu 30:6), but these circumcised Israelites still had to believe in their hearts that Jesus was the Messiah, and profess the same with their mouths (Rom 10:9). Only then was this physical Israelite saved. And it has remained the same for everyone since: a person must first have a circumcised heart and mind, then believe that Jesus was the Son of God and that He died for the person's sins and confess the same, then the person receives the promise of eternal life. A person only receives a circumcised heart and mind when drawn by God the Father and placed in a covenant relationship with Elohim.

Repetition is a stylistic taboo, but the importance of salvation encourages me to repeat the above: only the person who has the laws of God written on his or her heart and mind will believe that Christ is the Messiah—that belief unto obedience—and can profess the same. Only this person has received the Holy Spirit. Only this person has been offered salvation. Everyone else can believe and can profess, and will await the time of his or her calling without receiving the promise of eternal life. It is all of these persons who will be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment.

God is not a respecter of persons. Everyone will be offered salvation. No exceptions. But until the fields that are now ripening are ready to be harvested, God the Father is hiring a limited number of laborers. That is what being drawn from the world means: God the Father has offered employment through an out-of-season relationship with Him to those individuals He has deemed necessary for both harvesting humanity just prior to Christ's return as the Messiah, and in the great White Throne Judgment. I cannot relate to a person who lived in the 4th-Century A.D. as well as can

someone who also lived in the 4th-Century. When all of those individuals that lived in the 4th-Century and who never heard of Christ or who were not drawn by the Father are resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment, someone hired by the Father from that century will be there as a glorified heir of God to work with these individuals. If a person were in the middle of a battle and about ready to hack an enemy in-two when killed, this person will still be ready to hack someone in-two when resurrected. Although the person won't have the means of committing murder, the mindset is still to kill (not that killing in war is murder). Therefore, this person and the tens of thousands of others just like him will require someone who can relate to them to reassure them that they don't need to look for a weapon. God the Father already hired whom He wanted for this job. We will find out whom He hired when all drawn disciples who endured to their end are glorified at Christ's return as the all powerful Messiah.

There is, prior to Christ's return as the all powerful Messiah, an exception to salvation being only offered to individuals personally drawn by God the Father from the world. At this time, all of humanity belongs to Satan as the king of Babylon. Following both houses of Israel's national captivity and spiritual divorce, the time of the Gentiles began, that time symbolically portrayed by the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's vision (Dan 2:31-47). When God sent Israel into captivity, He literally gave all of humanity, even that portion He had reserved for Himself (i.e., the physical nation of Israel), over to Satan. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar, "You, O king, king of kings—to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory, into whose hand he has given human beings, wherever they live, the wild animals of the field, and the birds of the air, and whom he has established as ruler over them all—you are the head of gold" (vs. 37-38). Isaiah records a taunt against the king of Babylon (14:1-23) which Israel will be take up after Christ returns as the Messiah. In this taunt, Satan is identified as the king. Satan is, and has been the spiritual king of Babylon since God gave him authority over humans wherever they lived. Nebuchadnezzar didn't exercise dominion over the Chinese, yet they were given into the hand of the king of Babylon. Satan, however, as the spiritual king of Babylon, does exercise power over all of humanity.

But 1260 days before Christ returns as the all

powerful Messiah, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of [the Most High God] / and of his Messiah, / and he will reign forever and ever" (Rev 11:15). It is on this day when Michael stands up for Israel (Dan 12:1), and when war breaks out in heaven, when "Michael and his angels [fight] against the dragon" (Rev 12:7) and Satan is cast to the earth, where Christ, as on a day (Zech 14:3 — note the indefinite article), fights and destroys the armies of the king of the North, the fourth beast of Daniel 7, that Satan sends after the 144,000 saints by splitting the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4). It is the split Mount of Olives that is the stone cut not by human hands (Dan 2:34, 44-45) that ends the time of the Gentiles; it is the Mount of Olives coming together again that swallows the flood Satan sends after the 144,000 saints (Rev 12:16 & Exod 15:12). And humanity has been liberated. The reign of the king of Babylon has ended. His slaves are free to choose a new master, or a new sovereign. And this begins the great endtime harvest, 1260 days before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah.

The logic for requiring humanity to bear the mark of the beast (*Chi xi stigma*, or the tattoo of Xx, the Cross of Calvary) comes from Christ having liberated all of Satan's slaves by casting Satan out from heaven and destroying the armies of the king of the North and the king of the South. In order for Satan to continue reigning over a people, he must require them to accept his slave mark, which is the tattoo of the Cross. For all of Christianity's protests to the contrary, the Cross of Calvary, the means by which Satan had Christ killed, exists as a symbol of Christianity to mock Christ. Jesus' great trial weren't when He defeated Satan; His victory over Satan was relatively easy. Jesus' great trial was that last day of His physical life. He didn't like being mocked by what He had created. We see this in the Lazarus-Dives parable, and when Aaron casts the golden calf. And for one very long day, Jesus had to endure being mocked—and He did. He didn't not sin. He didn't give in to His flesh, to His ego. Everything was at stake, including our salvation today. And Jesus, tempted as all of us are, didn't sin. Nevertheless, Satan, knowing where the only soft spot in Christ's character was, continues to mock Christ by inserting the symbol of Jesus' death and humiliation as the icon of Christianity. Jesus didn't rise to the bait before, and He hasn't for the intervening two millennia, but when those individuals He liberates halfway through the

Tribulation choose to accept the tattoo of how He has been mocked over the liberty He has obtained for them, God the Father intervenes. God the Father's wrath is poured out over all who bear the mark of the beast. By this time, God the Father has had enough. Vengeance belongs to Him, and He intends to execute that vengeance (Rev 14:9-12).

Christ, however, calls all of humanity. Until a person accepts Satan's slave mark—the tattoo of the Cross—the person is free to choose Christ as the person's sovereign. This call to all of humanity is already given: "Come out of her [Babylon], my people, / so that you do not take part in her sins, / and so that you do not share in her plagues" (Rev 18:4).

The person who refuses to worship the antiChrist or the beast, who refuses the tattoo of the Cross and comes of Babylon is offered eternal life, but may well have to give his or her physical life to receive salvation. All of these individuals compose the great endtime harvest. So everyone who survives the trumpet plagues that leave the world in ruin and a third of humanity dead will be liberated. All can come to Christ. All are offered a part in the resurrection of firstfruits. But many will choose to be ruled by Satan, will accept his slave mark, and will live to curse God.

Satan's ministers of righteousness are right now sowing the lie Eve swallowed, the lie that will cause those who believe that have immortal souls to tell God that they would rather keep what they have than accept eternal life. And someone is sure to ask, *what about the person's soul?*

Even a token amount of Bible study will reveal that humans are souls; they don't have souls. In Hebrew, the icon translated into English as "soul" is *naphesh*. It is used equally for humans and for beasts. It should be translated as "a living creature," or "a breathing creature." In Greek, the icon is *pneuma*, which can be translated as "life," but should usually be translated as "breath," or "breath of life."

Death is the enemy of life, *enemy* used in a figurative sense. It is the last enemy that Christ will defeat: "Then [following the great White Throne Judgment] Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:14). Once all of humanity has been resurrected, then death will have been defeated. Where is it sting? its curse? But all of humanity, when resurrected, doesn't have eternal life. Rather, as shown in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1-14), except for the elect, humanity will be resurrected physical. Bone will be

joined to bone, and breath will return to these reconstructed corpses. The dead will live again as physical, air-breathing human beings, who, because their deaths paid the ultimate penalty for their sins, will be sin free, but still facing judgment according to what has been recorded about them in the books of remembrance. They will not escape judgment. Hitler will be judged for what he did. Yes, a death penalty has been paid. Yes, he will have the opportunity to know God, and to accept Christ as his savior and king. But there will be an accounting for everything he did in this life, as there will be for everyone. It might be that his conscience is seared to where he cannot repent and accept Christ as his king. If that becomes the case, he will remain physical, and will go into the lake of fire as a physical human being. He will last about as long as a person would expect someone to last in a fiery inferno. The test of faith for his victims will be if he does repent, and accepts judgment.

All judging will be done by Christ (John 5:27), even when the elect judge themselves worthy of death. Christ's judgment of the elect was given when He as God the Logos agreed to be born as a man prior to the formation of the earth. The elect will live because God the Logos was willing to die for us.

A person mocks Christ by believing that the person has life in the form of an immortal soul. He will show you just how mortal you are. If He will destroy Satan by bringing fire out from Satan's belly—it is bad theology to believe that God cannot or will not destroy what He has created—He will put an end to you believing you have an immortal soul by having you thrown into the lake of fire, from which there is no resurrection. But then, maybe you still feel lucky.

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