

Where Do We Go From Here?

*Where Do We Go When We Die?*

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# At Christ's Table ~ ACTpublications

*"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."*

1 Corinthians 2:13

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# Introduction<sup>1</sup>

## *Where Do We Go When We Die?*

We must begin with a biblical definition of “death”. Death is a state of being which is the result of sin.<sup>2</sup> Scripture presents “death” as “separation” – namely, spiritual death is separation of the human soul from the Spirit of Creator God.<sup>3</sup> And physical death is separation of the human soul from its fleshly body.

*“But where do we go from here?” – specifically, “Where do we go when we die?” “Where are the dead?”* These are questions *many* people ask – questions that will come to mind for *every* human being at least once in their lifetime – often at the time of one’s death, or at the death of a loved one, because we *all* know that we are *all* going to die: “Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27)

## *According to the New Covenant*

There are of course, a variety of answers to the question of *“Where are the dead?”* This article endeavors to answer the

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<sup>1</sup> In an effort to keep the text more comprehensible, I have entered many scripture references as footnotes. Nevertheless, I consider the the footnotes to be very important and strongly suggest looking up the scripture references. Knowing that what we believe about death, resurrection, and the Afterlife is solidly based in Scripture is most important.

<sup>2</sup> Romans 6:23; Cf. Genesis 2:17, 5:5

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 48:4; Romans 5:12, 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; James 1:15; 1 Timothy 5:6; Revelation 21:8

question *according to the New Covenant*. There are various references in Scripture as to where people go after death. We will review these references and sort them out as being either under the Old Covenant or New Covenant, and their connection with both those who have received His Spirit and belong to Christ, as well as those who have not received His Spirit and do not belong to Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Proper treatment of this subject is a bit like fitting together the pieces of a puzzle – that is, accurate exegesis of related passages of Scripture, and accurately categorizing them into Old and New Covenant paradigms. So, we will proceed towards our goal of “accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15b).

## *The Intermediate Place*

The goal of this article is to answer the question “Where?” by identifying “place”. However, while scripture references may include some descriptive information, it is not within the scope of this article to attempt to give a detailed description of the “place”.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Romans 8:9-11

To that end, we must begin by specifying the chronological context we are investigating: The initial place of the dead is commonly referred to as “The Intermediate State” – namely, the state between the day of one’s physical death and the Day of the Lord<sup>5</sup> at which come “The Resurrection of the Dead” and “Eternal Judgment”.<sup>6</sup> It is only *after* the Day of the Lord that we all enter into our eternal destinations – commonly known as “Heaven or Hell”.<sup>7</sup> “No one has ascended into heaven, except He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.”<sup>7</sup> Before the Day of the Lord all the dead are in an Intermediate State – not the eternal states of “Heaven” or Hell. These Intermediate States are identified by various names in both the Old and New Covenants.

## *Dead Bodies ~ Conscious Souls*

It is essential to keep in mind, as we discuss the Intermediate States in both the Old and New Testaments, the **conscious souls**<sup>8</sup> of the dead are there – *not their bodies*. Death is a separation of the spirit from the body. The body “returns to dust”<sup>9</sup> and the soul goes to an Intermediate State. Therefore, between

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<sup>5</sup> Joel 2:1-2; Zephaniah 1:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 6:2

<sup>7</sup> John 3:13

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Luke 16:19-31

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 3:19; Job 10:9, 34:15; Psalms 90:3, 104:29; Ecclesiastes 3:20, 12:7

now and the Resurrection from the Dead for Eternal Judgment, the dead exist only in the form of their souls – not their bodies.<sup>10</sup>

## *Glorified Bodies*

It is at the future Resurrection from the Dead for Eternal Judgment that souls will be united (or reunited) with bodies. And, at least for those who have received His Spirit and belong to Christ, those bodies will not be exactly like their previous fleshly bodies. They will be “glorified” bodies: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who **will transform the body of our lowly condition into conformity with His glorious body**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”<sup>11</sup>

Scripture also gives us the wonderful promise that “there will no longer be any death”: “And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and **there will no longer be any death**; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Jesus taught that the body may die, but the soul will continue to live: Matthew 10:28. Cf. Luke 23:46; Acts 2:31; Revelation 6:9-10

<sup>11</sup> Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:35-54; 2 Corinthians 5:2-5; 1 John 3:2

<sup>12</sup> Revelation 21:4

# Under the Old Covenant

## *Sheol - Hades*

In the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament, we find the term “Sheol”,<sup>13</sup> referring to the underworld, the place of the dead.<sup>14</sup> The Hebrews understood this place to be divided into two compartments: “Paradise” or “Abraham’s Bosom” for the righteous, and Gehenna for the wicked. In the gospels the Greek word, “Hades”<sup>15</sup> is synonymous with Sheol, with the term Valley of the son of Hinnom<sup>16</sup> sometimes replacing Gehenna as the place for the wicked. But whether in the Old Testament or the gospels, the Jews understood this to be an intermediate place, before the Day of Judgment – not the ultimate place of the dead. However, before the Day of Judgment, there is no escaping Sheol.<sup>17</sup>

Jesus’ parable, “The Rich Man and Lazarus”, which fundamentally speaks of the consequences of righteous and unrighteous handling of money, also contains information confirming the Jewish understanding of this intermediate place of the dead. (*Some* scholars assert that this is not a parable and

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<sup>13</sup> Strong’s # H7585. Alternatively referred to as Abaddon, a place of destruction.

<sup>14</sup> The word “hell” is an inaccurate translation of the Hebrew word Sheol.

<sup>15</sup> Strong’s # G86

<sup>16</sup> Gei Ben-Hinnom, a garbage heap outside of the city of Jerusalem

<sup>17</sup> Job 7:9, 10:21-22; Psalm 89:46; 2 Samuel 12:23

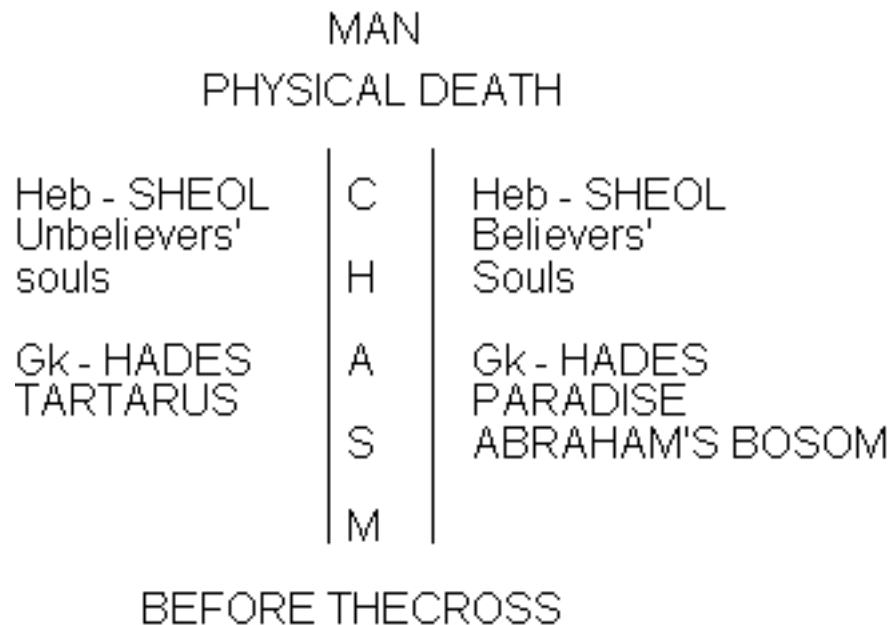


contains vital information about the intermediate state. But *most* scholars understand this to be a parable. Nevertheless, at the very least, it does contain information confirming the Jewish understanding of this intermediate place of the dead.):

<sup>19</sup> “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, enjoying himself in splendor every day. <sup>20</sup>And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup>and longing to be fed from the scraps which fell from the rich man’s table; not only that, the dogs also were coming and licking his sores. <sup>22</sup>Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels **to Abraham’s arms**; and the rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup>And in **Hades** he raised his eyes, being in torment, and saw **Abraham** far away and Lazarus **in his arms**. <sup>24</sup>And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ <sup>25</sup>But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.’ <sup>26</sup>And besides all this, between us and you **a great chasm has been set**, so that those who want to go over from here to you will not be able, nor will any people cross over from there to us.’ <sup>27</sup>And he said, ‘Then I request of you, father, that you send him to my father’s house— <sup>28</sup>for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not come to this place of torment as well.’ <sup>29</sup>But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ <sup>30</sup>But he said, ‘No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ <sup>31</sup>But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and

the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.' ” Luke 16:19-31

Following is a diagram by Don Stewart<sup>18</sup> based on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus depicting Sheol-Hades – **Before the Cross:**



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<sup>18</sup> *Educating Our World* with Don Stewart, <https://educatingourworld.com>

# *Abaddon*

In the Old Testament, Abaddon<sup>19</sup> is a Hebrew word used in association with Sheol. This Hebrew word<sup>20</sup> means “destruction”. Therefore, Abaddon referred to “a place of destruction”. Abaddon is mentioned only once in the New Testament, where it is personified: “... the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek, he has the name Apollyon”.<sup>21</sup> However, throughout the Old Testament, its usage was simply in association with Sheol.

While Sheol is inescapable before the Day of Judgment,<sup>22</sup> there are a number of references in Scripture which contain the promise that God will redeem the righteous out of Sheol.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Job 26:6, 28:22, 31:12; Psalms 88:11; Proverbs 15:11, 27:20; Revelation 9:11

<sup>20</sup> Strong's # H11

<sup>21</sup> Revelation 9:11

<sup>22</sup> There are two notable exceptions recorded in Scripture: Elijah (2 Kings 2:11-12) and Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24).

<sup>23</sup> Job 19:25-26; Psalm 16:10, 49:14-15; Isaiah 26:19; Hosea 13:14

# The Finished Work of Christ

Before going to the New Covenant realities of this subject, we must first consider the fact of Jesus' mediation of the New Covenant<sup>24</sup> which He accomplished in His sacrificial suffering, death, burial, and miraculous resurrection.<sup>25</sup> His finished work made a significant change in the destiny of those who belong to Christ.

We also need to consider that while He was still on the cross and even during the days preceding His ascension Jesus immediately began His ministry as our Advocate.<sup>26</sup> His conversation with a thief as they both hung on crosses at Calvary and His descent into "the lower parts of the earth"<sup>27</sup> are particularly intriguing, revealing for us some insight into the intermediate state:

<sup>42</sup>"And he (the thief) was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" <sup>43</sup>And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 2:42-43

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<sup>24</sup> Hebrews 8:6-13, 9:15.

<sup>25</sup> Hebrews 9:15-28

<sup>26</sup> Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1; Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

<sup>27</sup> Romans 4:9; Cf. Acts 2:31

Note that the man spoke of the Kingdom, but Jesus did not refer to His Kingdom<sup>28</sup> when speaking to the man – He spoke of Paradise. He said, He and the man would be in Paradise that day. We must remember there is an essential difference between the man and Jesus. Jesus is God. Both of their bodies were in graves. After three days, Jesus' body was resurrected by the Spirit. The man's body remained in the grave. At that point, Jesus was a divinely unique life form busy performing some one-of-a-kind miraculous things: As He said, Jesus' soul was in Paradise. But in Spirit, He also “descended into the lowest parts of the earth”<sup>29</sup> to “proclaim to the spirits in prison”.

<sup>18</sup>“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; <sup>19</sup>in which **He also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison.**”

1 Peter 3:18-19<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Christ “coming into His Kingdom” is complex: He said, “The kingdom of God is in your midst.” (Luke 17:21) After His resurrection, he said, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matthew 28:18) When He ascended, “He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High”. (Hebrews 1:13) He rules and reigns now. (1 Corinthians 15:25) Yet the fulness of His Kingdom is yet to come.

<sup>29</sup> Ephesians 4:9-10; Cf. Acts 2:31

<sup>30</sup> Although according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the writing of Peter, confirmed by Luke's writing (Acts 2:27, 31) and Paul's writing (Ephesians 4:18-20), Jesus actually did descend, there's no universal agreement on the exact meaning or purpose of Christ's descent and what He accomplished.

In a resurrected body, He was also appearing to His disciples and having meals with them.<sup>31</sup> And He eventually ascended to be with the Father. The thief – and no other human being - did not do that, nor ever will do that. Jesus is the "only begotten Son".<sup>32</sup>

"No one has ascended into heaven, except He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man." John 3:13

Before Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, no one had ever been in Heaven. All the dead were in the Intermediate place called Sheol or Hades.

<sup>27</sup>"For You will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay,' ...

<sup>31</sup>He (David) looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ,<sup>33</sup> that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. <sup>32</sup>It is this Jesus whom God raised up, a fact to which we are all witnesses." Acts 2:27-32

<sup>8</sup>"Therefore, it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives....'<sup>9</sup>(Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)"

Ephesians 4:8-10<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Luke 24:30-43; John 21:1-14

<sup>32</sup> John 3:16

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 16:10

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Psalm 68:18

**“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.” Revelation 1:17-18**

As we continue to survey Scripture, we will see that upon mediating the New Covenant, Jesus **“inaugurated a new and living way into the holy place through the veil which was His flesh”<sup>35</sup>** for those who have received His Spirit and belong to Christ in order that they now would enter directly into the Intermediate State of God’s manifest presence.

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<sup>35</sup> Hebrews 10:19-20

# According to the New Covenant

In his two letters to the Corinthians alone, the apostle Paul gives us a treasury of important information regarding death and resurrection according to the New Covenant.<sup>36</sup> He was given the revelation and understanding of these things by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For those who belong to Christ, this is sound doctrine to be believed and experienced.<sup>37</sup> The Greek word translated “sound” is *hygiaino*,<sup>38</sup> meaning “healthy”, “life-giving”.

## *The Resurrection of the Dead*

In chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians, Paul gives a wealth of information about death, resurrection, and the “Afterlife”. We will look first at the foundational doctrine of “The Resurrection of the Dead”.<sup>39</sup>:

50”Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.** <sup>51</sup>Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, <sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trumpet*; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable**, and we will be changed. <sup>53</sup>For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup>But when this perishable

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:12-26

<sup>37</sup> 2 Timothy 1:13-14; Titus 2:1

<sup>38</sup> Strong’s # G5198

<sup>39</sup> Hebrews 6:2



puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: *'Death<sup>40</sup> has been swallowed up in victory. <sup>55</sup>Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?'* <sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; <sup>57</sup>but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup>Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Jesus had informed us that in order to see and enter the Kingdom of God one **must** be born of the Spirit<sup>41</sup> – because His Kingdom is not of this material realm.<sup>42</sup> And Paul affirms this by writing, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."<sup>43</sup> An essential change is required: "At the last trumpet<sup>44</sup>... the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."<sup>45</sup> This is the "Resurrection of the Dead" cited in Hebrews 6:2.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Greek: *Thanatos*, Strong's # G2288

<sup>41</sup> John 3:3-12

<sup>42</sup> John 18:36; Cf. Luke 17:20-21; John 8:23; Philippians 3:20

<sup>43</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:50

<sup>44</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 11:15

<sup>45</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:52-53

<sup>46</sup> Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

<sup>2</sup>“I know a man in Christ, who fourteen years ago—whether **in the body** I do not know, or **out of the body** I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to **the third heaven**. <sup>3</sup> And I know how such a man—whether **in the body or apart from the body** I do not know, God knows— <sup>4</sup>was caught up into **Paradise** and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.” 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

In Scripture, the Greek word, *ouranos*,<sup>48</sup> translated as “heaven”, is used to name three different places in the universe:

*“The First Heaven”*: The atmosphere, the sky, where there are clouds.<sup>49</sup>

*“The Second Heaven”*: Outer space, where there are the planets and stars.<sup>50</sup>

*“The Third Heaven”*: The dwelling place of God, where there is God’s manifest presence.<sup>51</sup>

Depicting the Third Heaven as a “place,” however, does not mean that God literally dwells somewhere in the physical universe. God is a Spirit<sup>52</sup> - He is not composed of matter, nor does he dwell in a

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<sup>47</sup> Greek: *paradeisos*, Strong’s # G3857. Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:3-4; Revelation 2:7

<sup>48</sup> Strong’s # G3772

<sup>49</sup> Deuteronomy 11:11; Psalm 104:12; Isaiah 55:10

<sup>50</sup> Psalm 8:3; Isaiah 13:10

<sup>51</sup> Psalm 33:13-14; Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 6:9; Hebrews 7:26; Revelation 11:19

<sup>52</sup> John 4:24; Cf. Acts 7:48–50; Romans 1:20–23

physical location composed of matter. The issue is not *where* Heaven is, but *what* Heaven is.

In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul's gave a testimony as to having been momentarily "caught up" into The Third Heaven, which Paul synonymously referred to as "**Paradise**" – God's dwelling place, **where there is God's manifest presence.**

Earlier in 2 Corinthians, Paul instructed us on a number of things having to do with death, resurrection, and the Afterlife under the New Covenant.

### *"At Home With" the Lord*

"But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire **to depart and be with Christ**, for that is very much better."

Philippians 1:23

<sup>6</sup>"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that *while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*— <sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight— <sup>8</sup>but we are of good courage and prefer rather **to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.**" 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

Under the New Covenant, when those who belong to Christ die – are "absent from the body" – we enter into God's manifest

presence, the place where He dwells, the Third Heaven, Paradise, which Paul also referred to as “being at home with the Lord”.

## *Hades*<sup>53</sup>

The Intermediate State for those who do not belong to Christ is Hades - a place of conscious torment and separation from God — where they remain until the Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment,<sup>54</sup> after which they are cast into the Lake of Fire<sup>55</sup> along with Hades itself.<sup>56</sup>

## *Tartarus*

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, held for judgment.” 2 Peter 2:4<sup>57</sup>

The phrase, “cast them into hell”, is the English translation of the Greek verb, *Tattaroo*.<sup>58</sup> Tartarus was the name given to the

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<sup>53</sup> See “*Sheol – Hades*”, pp.6-7

<sup>54</sup> Revelation 1:18, 6:8, 20:13

<sup>55</sup> Also referred to as Gehenna

<sup>56</sup> Revelation 20:14

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Genesis 6:1-4

<sup>58</sup> Strong’s # G5020

deepest dungeon of Hades<sup>59</sup> known as “The Abyss”, which was reserved for spirits (fallen angels) until the final judgment.<sup>60</sup>

## *Day of Judgment*

<sup>9</sup>Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before **the judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may receive compensation for his deeds done through the body, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad.”

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Here Paul references what the writer to the Hebrews referred to as “Eternal Judgment” in Hebrews 6:2. Scripture refers to this foundational doctrine also using other terms such as “The Great White Throne Judgment”,<sup>61</sup> “The Day of Judgment”,<sup>62</sup> and others.

“It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes **judgment.**”<sup>63</sup> At this final judgment all the dead appear before His throne and are judged according to their deeds done in this life. Anyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life is thrown into the “lake of fire” along with the Antichrist Beast and

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<sup>59</sup> The Netherworld or Underworld

<sup>60</sup> Tartarus, along with Death and Hades will give up its dead and be judged on the Day of the Lord. Revelation 20:13. Cf. Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:1-3

<sup>61</sup> Revelation 20:11-15

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 10:15; 1 John 4:17

<sup>63</sup> Hebrews 9:27

False Prophet,<sup>64</sup> Satan,<sup>65</sup> Death and Hades,<sup>66</sup> and anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life.<sup>67</sup> The righteous enter the New Jerusalem which descends upon the new earth – God’s ultimate dwelling place with those who belong to Christ.<sup>68</sup>

## *Glorified Bodies*

The Resurrection of the Dead is a physical reality. After His resurrection, Jesus ate food<sup>69</sup> and could be touched.<sup>70</sup> He is the “First Fruits”<sup>71</sup> of the future resurrection of all who have received His Spirit belong to Christ. While “it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him”.<sup>72</sup> Our resurrected, glorified bodies will be something like the resurrected body of Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>1</sup>“For we know that if our earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have **a building from God, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens.** <sup>2</sup>For indeed, in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with **our dwelling from heaven,** <sup>3</sup>since in fact after putting it on, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For indeed, we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that *what is mortal will*

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<sup>64</sup> Revelation 19:20

<sup>65</sup> Revelation 20:10

<sup>66</sup> Revelation 20:14

<sup>67</sup> Revelation 20:15

<sup>68</sup> Revelation 21:2

<sup>69</sup> Luke 24:42–43

<sup>70</sup> John 20:17, 27

<sup>71</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20

<sup>72</sup> 1 John 3:2 *NKJV*

*be swallowed up by life.* <sup>5</sup>Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a pledge.”

2 Corinthians 5:1-5

We see here in 2 Corinthians 5 that Paul gives some instruction about the glorified bodies that await those who belong to Christ. He refers to a glorified body as an eternal building, or house, or tent made by God. He also disclosed an amazing truth: All that is fleshly, including our material bodies, will not simply be ‘done away with’, but will be “swallowed up by life”. The Greek word translated, “swallowed up”, is *katapino*.<sup>73</sup> *A Topical Lexicon*<sup>74</sup> gives us the sense of its core imagery and concept: “*Strong’s 2666 depicts the forceful act of “swallowing down” or “drinking in.” In Scripture it conveys anything from literal engulfing by water or earth to the figurative overpowering of sorrow, evil, or death itself. The verb therefore paints a vivid picture of something being consumed so completely that it disappears from view—whether for judgment, danger, or victory.*”

Paul had given even more information about our glorified bodies in his first letter to the Corinthians:

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<sup>73</sup> Strong’s # G2666

<sup>74</sup> BibleHub.com

## Sowing an Earthly Body & Reaping a Heavenly Body

<sup>35</sup>“But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with *what kind of body* do they come?” <sup>36</sup>You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; <sup>37</sup>and that which you sow, you do not sow the body, which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. <sup>38</sup>But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. <sup>39</sup>All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of mankind, another flesh of animals, another flesh of birds, and another of fish. <sup>40</sup>There are also **heavenly bodies and earthly bodies**, but *the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another*. <sup>41</sup>There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. <sup>42</sup>So also is **the resurrection of the dead**. It is *sown a perishable body*, it is **raised an imperishable body**; <sup>43</sup>it is *sown in dishonor*, it is **raised in glory**; it is *sown in weakness*, it is **raised in power**; <sup>44</sup>it is *sown a natural body*, it is **raised a spiritual body**. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup>So also it is written: ‘The first man, Adam, became a living person.’ The last Adam was **a life-giving spirit**. <sup>46</sup>However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup>The first man is *from the earth*, earthy; the second Man is **from heaven**. <sup>48</sup>As is the earthy one, so also are those who are *earthy*; and as is the heavenly One, so also are those who are **heavenly**. <sup>49</sup>Just as we have borne the image of the *earthy*, we will also bear the image of the **heavenly**.”

1 Corinthians 15:35-49



The biblical concept of the Afterlife including “glorified bodies”<sup>75</sup> is different to the Platonic afterlife concepts of Greek philosophy. Our glorified bodies will be raised as “spiritual bodies” – **but not as disembodied spirits**. The “spirituality” of our glorified bodies is that they will be raised – resurrected – by the power of the life-giving Last Adam.

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:35-54; 2 Corinthians 5:2-5; 1 John 3:2

# The Eternal States

After the Intermediate States, and following the Day of Judgment, all souls go to one of two Eternal States – Heaven or Hell.

Following are two descriptions of Eternal Judgment, Heaven, and Hell – firstly by Jesus, followed by what the Risen Spirit of Jesus revealed to John the apostle:

**<sup>31</sup>“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. <sup>32</sup>And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; <sup>33</sup>and He will put the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...**

**<sup>41</sup>“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you accursed people, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...**

**<sup>46</sup>These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Matthew 25:31-34, 41,46**

## *Gehenna<sup>76</sup>~ Hell ~ The Lake of Fire*

The Greek word Gehenna, translated as “Hell”, derives from the Hebrew Ge-ben-Hinnom, Valley of the son of Hinnom, and Ge-Hinnom, the Valley of Hinnom. Old Testament kings of Israel, Ahaz and Manasseh, both committed child sacrifice in that valley.<sup>77</sup>

Bible scholars believe that during the time of Jesus, Hinnom was used as the garbage dump for the City of Jerusalem. Concerning this association of Hell with a garbage dump: We were “created in the image and likeness of God”<sup>78</sup> to be His “image bearers” on the earth. Of course, with the fall into sin, we not only “tarnished” that image and likeness, but with regards to those who fail to accept God’s redemption through the Cross of Christ, those lives in the body also fail to fulfill God’s purpose for their creation. I’ve been “knowing and understanding”<sup>79</sup> the Lord for more than fifty years, but I may be entirely wrong, however, I have come to understand the possibility of our Creator God reckoning flesh that does not fulfill His purpose in creation to be useless and

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<sup>76</sup> Greek: *geenna*, Strong’s # G1067

<sup>77</sup> 2 Chronicles 28:3 and 33:6 respectively

<sup>78</sup> Genesis 1:26

<sup>79</sup> Jeremiah 9:23-24

disposable.<sup>80</sup>

Interestingly, all statements on Hell in the epistles are obviously written to believers – not unbelievers. And except for one statement to the Pharisees, Jesus’ other eleven references on Hell are all addressed to His disciples.

According to the teaching of Jesus, it seems there will be more people in Hell than in Heaven: ““13Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14For the gate is narrow, and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:13-14 ““Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.” Luke13:24

There are different views of the nature, purpose, and duration of Hell,<sup>81</sup> but it is clear in Scripture that Gehenna or Hell is a place of punishment where there is suffering, weeping, torment, and destruction.

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<sup>80</sup> I am not wanting to be “over-the-top”. I honestly think this to be the case. However, I may be wrong. Genesis 6:3, 5-7

<sup>81</sup> There are three major views on Hell. It is not within the scope of this article to even give an overview of each view. For further study, I would recommend “*All You Ever Wanted to Know About Hell: Three Christians Views of God’s Final Solution to the Problem of Sin*” by Steve Gregg, and “*Four Views on Hell*” [Counterpoints] (There are only three views on Hell – the fourth presentation is on “The Principle of Purgatory”).

In the Book of Revelation, Hell is referred to as “The Lake of Fire”, which is spoken of in Revelation 20:

<sup>11</sup>“Then I saw **a great white throne and Him who sat upon it**, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and **the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.** <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and **they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds.** <sup>14</sup>Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:11-15<sup>82</sup>

## *Heaven ~ The New Jerusalem*<sup>83</sup>

Heaven will be the Kingdom of God - the Kingdom of Heaven – fully manifested. According to New Testament Scripture, Heaven is not a “restored” or “renewed” earth.<sup>84</sup> In fact, there will be a new

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<sup>82</sup> Cf Revelation 21:8

<sup>83</sup> This is the city Abraham was looking forward to. Hebrews 11:10

<sup>84</sup> 2 Peter 3 describes the Day of the Lord bringing a complete destruction and a passing away of the present creation. I am aware of the controversy regarding the alternate translation of the end of v. 10: "... and its works will be discovered" instead of "... and its works will be burned up." Since only two out of many manuscripts suggest this reading, and since this reading is quite inconsistent and therefore very problematic to the meaning of the passage, like the majority of Greek scholars, I do not see the necessity for over-spiritualizing the passage to mean that there will be a "renewed" earth instead of a literal "new" earth.

earth - a new creation – a distinctly new place, as “the first things will have passed away”.<sup>85</sup> “Behold, I am making all things new.”<sup>86</sup>

There will be a physicality to Heaven, but it will be a resurrected and “glorified” physicality, as with our resurrected and “glorified bodies”.<sup>87</sup> It will be the “perfection” which God originally intended for His creation.<sup>88</sup>

In the Book of Revelation, Heaven is referred to as “The New Jerusalem” (also “The Bride, the Wife of the Lamb”), which is described in Revelation 21-22. John’s descriptions are highly symbolic, grounded in Old Testament imagery which would be meaningful to Jews in the first century. It is not within the scope of this article to interpret the typology here. My main point is to say that “Heaven” is the New Jerusalem. Beyond that, the reader can reflect on the symbolism John uses to describe it. However, I have highlighted certain aspects which serve to give some definition of Heaven:

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<sup>85</sup> Revelation 21:4

<sup>86</sup> Revelation 21:5. Greek: *kainos*, Strong’s # G2537, “*New as to form or quality, of a different nature from what is contrasted as old.*”, Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

<sup>87</sup> 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Genesis 1:31

## Revelation 21:1-27

<sup>1</sup>“Then I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup>And I saw **the holy city, new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared **as a bride adorned for her husband**. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, **the tabernacle of God is among the people**, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup>and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and **there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain**; the first things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup>And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making **all things new**.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” <sup>6</sup>Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give water to the one who thirsts from **the spring of the water of life**, without cost. <sup>7</sup>The one who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son. <sup>8</sup>But for the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral persons, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” <sup>9</sup>Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb**.” <sup>10</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me **the holy city, Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup>**having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very valuable stone, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper**. <sup>12</sup>**It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels;**

and names were written on the gates, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. <sup>13</sup>There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. <sup>14</sup>And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. <sup>16</sup>The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, twelve thousand stadia; its length, width, and height are equal. <sup>17</sup>And he measured its wall, 144 cubits, by human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. <sup>18</sup>The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup>The foundation stones of the city wall were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; <sup>20</sup>the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. <sup>21</sup>And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. <sup>22</sup>I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup>The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. <sup>25</sup>In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; <sup>26</sup>and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; <sup>27</sup>and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."



## Revelation 22:1-5

<sup>1</sup>”And he showed me a **river of the water of life**, clear as crystal, **coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb**, <sup>2</sup>in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was **the tree of life**,<sup>89</sup> bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>There will no longer be any curse; and **the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it**, and His bondservants will serve Him; <sup>4</sup>**they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.** <sup>5</sup>And there will **no longer be any night**; and they **will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun**, because the Lord God will illuminate them; and **they will reign forever and ever.”**

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<sup>89</sup> Which is in the Paradise of God. Revelation 2:7

# Addendum

## *What About “Soul Sleep”*

“Soul Sleep” is the belief that the souls of the dead are literally asleep – unconscious, mentally and emotionally inactive and silent - in the grave in a type of suspended animation from the time of death until The Resurrection of the Dead at the end of the age.<sup>90</sup> The doctrine of Soul Sleep makes the wrong assumption that a physical body is necessary for consciousness. However, God and angels do not have physical bodies yet have consciousness. This concept of Soul Sleep is clearly not a biblical doctrine.<sup>91</sup> Scripture teaches the opposite – after death, the souls of both those in Hades and those in Paradise are conscious.<sup>92</sup> But before surveying the relevant scriptures passages, it would be helpful to remember the definition of death: Death is the departure of the life of the spirit and soul from the body. Therefore, much confusion can be avoided by keeping the earthly physical body's inanimate state after death completely separate from the soul's spiritual life and location apart from the body. The body, which is “returning to

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<sup>90</sup> Following are some of the scripture passages which proponents of Soul Sleep refer to: Psalm 6:5, 17:15, 115:17; Ecclesiastes 3:19-20, 9:10; Acts 7:60

<sup>91</sup> A doctrine of the following denominations: Christadelphians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists

<sup>92</sup> Following are some of the scripture passages which support Soul Consciousness after death: Psalm 16:11; Luke 16:19-31; 1 Peter 3:18-19; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 6:10, 14:13

dust”, can be referred to as being “asleep” while waiting for The Resurrection of the Dead. But the soul is in one of two Intermediate places – Hades or Paradise. And there, according to Scripture, the soul is not “asleep”, but rather, it is definitely conscious.

There are references in Scripture referring to death as “sleep”.<sup>93</sup> Sleep is a metaphor for death and “awakening” is a metaphor for The Resurrection of the Dead. But we must ask: *“What is sleeping?”* It is the body, not the soul. There are also references in Scripture demonstrating that the dead are not literally asleep: Moses and Elijah were not asleep but rather, were talking with Jesus when they appeared to Him .<sup>94</sup> The souls of the martyrs underneath the altar before God’s throne were not asleep, but rather, were “crying out with a loud voice for God’s avenging judgment to come”, and they were told to continue to “rest a little while longer”.<sup>95</sup>

A primary scripture reference used to suggest the concept of “Soul Sleep” is Ecclesiastes 9:5:  
“For the living know that they will die;  
but the dead do not know anything,

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<sup>93</sup> Daniel 12:2; Luke 8:52; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18,20

<sup>94</sup> Matthew 17:3; Luke 9:30-31

<sup>95</sup> Revelation 6:9-11

nor do they have a reward any longer,  
for their memory is forgotten.”

The third and the fourth phrases of this passage must be interpreted equally with the second phrase – “the dead do not know anything”. Then logically speaking, “they have no reward, and they are forgotten.” But that contradicts all other scripture verses which speak of The Resurrection of the Dead (who are not “forgotten”) and the reward of “an inheritance reserved in Heaven”.<sup>96</sup> So, for Scripture to be consistent, we need more information, which is given in the next verse: “<sup>6</sup>Indeed their love, their hate, and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done **under the sun**.”<sup>97</sup> The writer is referring to the context of life “under the sun” – that is, here on the earth – not the afterlife in an Intermediate state.

Another scripture reference used to suggest the concept of Soul Sleep is Psalm 115:17: <sup>17</sup>“The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any who go down into silence.” The writer of this psalm is referring to dead bodies, not dead souls. This is made clear in the next verse: <sup>18</sup>“But as for us, we will bless the Lord **from this time and forever**. Praise the Lord!” If this blessing the Lord is “from this time”, he is referring to bodies which are alive in contrast to

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<sup>96</sup> 1 Peter 1:4; Cf. Romans 8:24-25; Colossians 1:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 6:19

<sup>97</sup> Ecclesiastes 9:6

dead bodies. And if the blessing of the Lord goes on “forever”, it must be done by souls in an Intermediate State and then glorified (resurrected, not dead) bodies in an Eternal State.

We have seen in His Luke 16 parable that Jesus presents Abraham, the Rich Man in Hades, and Lazarus in Abraham’s Bosom as quite conscious - aware of their surroundings, thinking, feeling, and communicating with one another.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Luke 16:19-31

## Other Questions

### ***“Is there such a place as Purgatory?”***

According to the Bible, the answer is “No.” Purgatory is primarily a doctrine of the Catholic Church. This is what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says in defining Purgatory:

*“All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.”*

And this is what the *Catholic Encyclopedia* says in defining Purgatory:

*“A place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God’s grace, are not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions.”*

This doctrine of Purgatory is not a biblical doctrine. Rather it is most likely based on a passage from the *Apocrypha*<sup>99</sup> - specifically, 2 Maccabees 12:45, in which is written: “Therefore

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. “What is the Apocrypha?”, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-apocrypha>

*[Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin."*

Now from that statement, the Catholic Church infers that not only should you pray for the dead, but the dead have sins from which they must be delivered, which leads them to postulate purgatory. Whereas biblical doctrine according to the New Covenant is clear that **no further atonement is needed other than Christ's "once for all" sacrifice:**

<sup>26</sup>"For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens; <sup>27</sup>who has no daily need, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because **He did this once for all time when He offered up Himself.** <sup>28</sup>For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, who has been made perfect forever."

Hebrews 7:26-28

Our High priest, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has been made perfect (complete) – unlike Judas Maccabeus; and His sacrifice was perfect (complete) – unlike any other sacrifice that we can ever offer in this life or the next.

<sup>10</sup>"By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all time.** <sup>11</sup>Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which

can never take away sins; <sup>12</sup>but He, **having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time**, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup>waiting from that time onward until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. <sup>14</sup>**For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**”

“He then says, <sup>17</sup>‘And their sins and their lawless deeds I will no longer remember.’ <sup>18</sup>Now where there is forgiveness of these things, **an offering for sin is no longer required.**

<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brothers and sisters, since **we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus**, <sup>20</sup>by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, through His flesh, <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let’s **approach God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Hebrews 10:10-14, 17-22

### ***“Should we pray for the dead?”***

Again, the idea of praying for the dead is based in the Apocrypha – 2 Maccabees 12:43-46:

<sup>43</sup>“Then he took up a collection from all of his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this, he acted in a suitable and honorable way, guided by his belief in the resurrection. <sup>44</sup>For if he had not expected those who had fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. <sup>45</sup>However, if he was focusing on the splendid reward reserved for those whose death was marked by



*godliness, his thought was holy and devout. <sup>46</sup> Therefore, he had this expiatory sacrifice offered for the dead so that they might be delivered from their sin."*

Like the doctrine of Purgatory, the concept of praying for the dead is contrary to Jesus' teaching. Let's look once again at a few verses in the Parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus:

<sup>23</sup>And in Hades he (The Rich Man) raised his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his arms. <sup>24</sup>And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' <sup>25</sup>**But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.'** <sup>26</sup>**And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set, so that those who want to go over from here to you will not be able, nor will any people cross over from there to us.'"** Luke 16:23-26

We can see in Jesus' parable that the state of souls after death is fixed and unchangeable. The "great chasm" in Hades depicted in the parable speaks of the impossibility of anyone moving from judgment to salvation after death. And there is no mention in this parable or anywhere else in the New Testament of interceding for the dead with hopes of changing their place in eternity.

“And just as it is destined for people to die once, and after this comes judgment.” Hebrews 9:27

### ***“Why were Corinthian believers baptized for the dead?”***

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul teaches a number of important things about the resurrection in chapter 15. And in verse 29, he writes:

“For otherwise, what will those do who are **baptized for<sup>100</sup> the dead**? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?”

Bible scholars consider this to be one of the most difficult verses to interpret in Scripture. There are a number of interpretations: Some think the apostle Paul may have been referring to a pagan practice or a heretical practice among some Christians in Corinth. But why would he mention this, yet not condemn this practice in his epistle? The idea of believers being baptized *“on behalf of”* the dead is not widely accepted. Some interpret the verse as believers being baptized *“because of the dead”* – that is, being motivated by their hope of resurrection and reuniting with deceased Christians. And some interpret these baptisms *“for the dead”* as simply a metaphor of death and resurrection,<sup>101</sup> but not

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<sup>100</sup> Greek: *hyper*, Strong’s # G5228, for the sake of, on behalf of (the dead)

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Romans 6:3-4

“for the dead” in the sense of a believer being a proxy for the dead. The apostle Paul did not teach baptism as a requirement for salvation. He taught that salvation is “by grace, through faith”.<sup>102</sup> Paul did not baptize any Corinthians except Crispus and Gaius.<sup>103</sup> It is highly unlikely that Paul was *advocating* here that believers should be “baptized for the dead”. He simply referred to this practice, not to support it, but rather to use it as another example of belief in the resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of the Dead, as this was clearly his theme in 1 Corinthians 15.

### ***“What about infants and those who are I.D.D.?”<sup>104</sup>***

All human beings have inherited a sinful nature through Adam’s original act of disobedience. This sinful nature is even evident in infants and intellectually disabled people. And because of this, all human beings are subject to death.<sup>105</sup> However, in faith we can choose to embrace the atoning and redeeming sacrifice of the Cross of Christ for the forgiveness of sin and inheritance of eternal life. But what about infants and those who are intellectually disabled who die never having the ability to understand the gospel and make the choice to receive salvation

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<sup>102</sup> Ephesians 2:8

<sup>103</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:14

<sup>104</sup> I.D.D. Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled

<sup>105</sup> Romans 5:12; Cf. Ephesians 2:1-3

by grace through faith? Are they doomed to perdition at the Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment? I believe the answer is “No”. I also believe this is supported in Scripture:

Firstly, Scripture acknowledges there are those who are too young to “know enough to refuse evil and choose good.”<sup>106</sup> Infants are too young, and the intellectually and developmentally disabled (I.D.D.) are incapable of “knowing enough to refuse evil and choose good.” They are innocent in God’s eyes.

Further, Jesus made a statement in John’s gospel which makes their innocence clear and certain: In John 9, we read where Jesus had healed a blind man. The unbelieving Pharisees commenced harassing the man and making opposition towards Jesus.<sup>39</sup> And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.’<sup>40</sup> Those who were with Him from the Pharisees heard these things and said to Him, ‘We are not blind too, are we?’<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, ‘**If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now that you maintain, ‘We see,’ your sin remains”**’. The lesson for the Pharisees was: Because they did not recognize their spiritual blindness and maintained spiritual pride, **they chose to not believe**. As the apostle Paul wrote: “They chose to suppress the truth in unrighteousness and chose not to

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<sup>106</sup> Isaiah 7:16; Cf. 8:4

acknowledge what has been clearly perceived.”<sup>107</sup> **Therefore, they remained in the state of sin.** But the lesson for us here is that Jesus said *those who are disabled and are incapable of understanding and making choices*, are without sin, as He does not hold them responsible for something they haven’t chosen. Infants and those who are I.D.D. fall into that category. God doesn’t condemn people for things they are not able to do.<sup>108</sup> The granting of the saving grace of Christ’s atonement to infants and those who are I.D.D. is consistent with God’s love and mercy.<sup>109</sup>

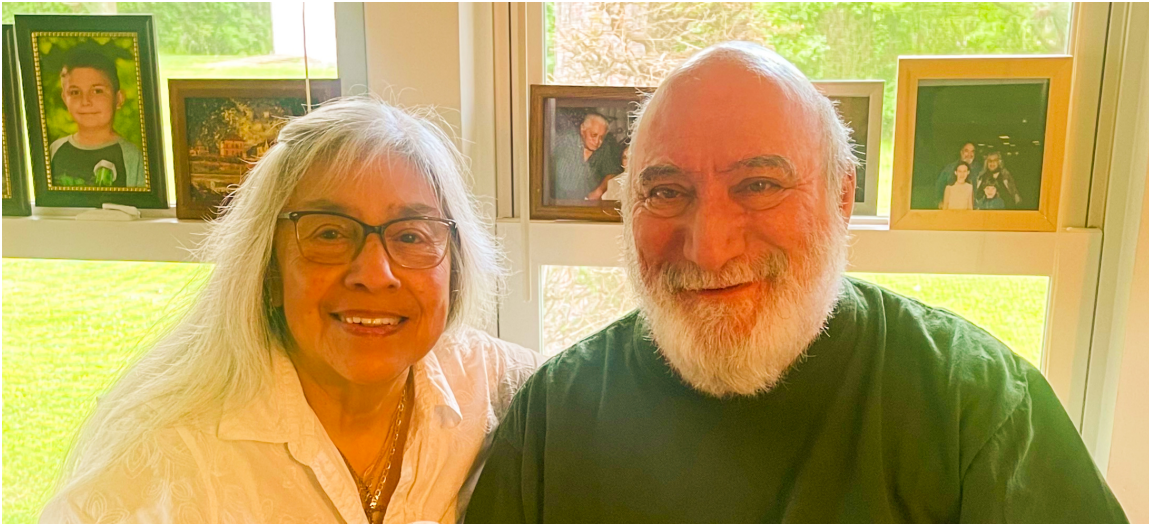
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<sup>107</sup> Romans 1:18-20

<sup>108</sup> “*Sin is measured by the capacities or ability of people, and by their opportunities of knowing the truth. If people had no ability to do the will of God, they could incur no blame. If they have all proper ability, and no disposition, God holds them to be guilty*” (Albert Barnes, *New Testament Notes: Explanatory and Practical*, ed. by Robert Frew, Baker Book House, Vol. 1, “John 9:41”, 1983, p. 285).

<sup>109</sup> In the narrative in 2 Samuel 12, in which David mourns over his deceased infant, David says, “I am going to him, but he will not return to me” (v. 23), indicating that he believed the child was in God’s presence as he would also be someday. Cf. Psalm 17:15

Bill & Frances Furioso  
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... [www.AtChristsTable.org](http://www.AtChristsTable.org)

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