

What Is The Reward Of The Saved?

What happens when you die? Where do you go? Will you go immediately to heaven or hell – or to purgatory, there to await the prayers of friends or family to move you on into heaven?

Will you be reincarnated as another physical person or – if your karma is bad – as some lesser creature? Or will your consciousness simply merge with the innate intelligence of the universe and become one with the “Cosmic All”? Or will you simply die and remain dead forever?

Of all these theories, only one can be true. There can be only one truth. Out of all the different things you’ve ever heard about life after death, how can you know which one it is? Or if you’ve even HEARD the true answer yet?

What happens when you die? Where will you spend eternity, and what will you be doing in it? In the moment after death, what will you experience? Where can you go to find the answer to this most important of all questions?

Many of today’s professing Christians suppose that upon death we go directly to heaven or straight to hell, but do we? Is that really what their Bible says? Is it what Jesus taught when He was on the Earth?

Most suppose that when they get to heaven they’ll spend all of their time up there floating on a cloud looking down at the Earth and playing a harp. Is that true? Others carelessly assume men will become angels – but where did they get that idea? Did they ever stop to PROVE ALL THINGS, as the Bible commands? Have YOU?

Why do most never take the time to check up on their preacher and find out for themselves just what the Bible REALLY DOES TEACH? This question is of VITAL importance to you! If you are going to go to all this effort to get “saved”, shouldn’t you know *what “saved” really means?* How do you know you’ll LIKE eternity, if you don’t know *anything* about what you’ll be doing in it?

There is only one place to find detailed, authoritative answers to these questions. Only one Being who really KNOWS what will happen then – have you ever asked HIM what it will be like? Or have you just trusted the traditions you’ve received and blindly accepted the beliefs your church taught you?

Everyone has an OPINION on this subject – Plato, Dante, Milton all had their say... as did John Calvin, Martin Luther, Billy Graham and Benny Hinn – but who really KNOWS the answer? Who has actually BEEN dead for a few days and then come back to tell about it?

Who actually KNOWS where man will spend eternity? Only the Being who created man! And that Being, and the writings He left us, disagree violently with the opinions of ALL those men. But don’t believe me. Ask your Bible...

LESSON 6: WHAT IS THE REWARD OF THE SAVED?

A person can die in only two states; saved or unsaved. Nearly all churches believe that the one goes straight to heaven and the other goes straight to hell. Some teach a brief stop at purgatory along the way. In this lesson, you're going to ask the Bible if this belief is true, and if not just what DOES happen to them at death.

However, because heaven and hell are each a large subject on their own, this lesson will deal strictly with whether the "SAVED" dead go to heaven. The fate of the "unsaved" dead is a glorious truth and their future is much more promising than what you probably believe, but that understanding must wait until the next lesson to fully unfold!

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

Most assume the dead are in heaven right now; but ask the Bible:

Has ANY MAN ascended to heaven *except* Jesus Christ? **John 3:13**. Is David dead and buried? **Acts 2:29**. Has David gone to heaven? **Acts 2:34**. Is David now "asleep" in the grave? **Acts 13:36**. And are all the rest of the dead in the same place? **1 Thessalonians 4:14-15**. ALL of the righteous men in the Bible – men like Moses, Abraham, Noah and David – have THEY ALL DIED and NOT yet received the promises of eternal life? **Hebrews 11:13, 39-40**.

That's pretty shocking, but it's what your Bible says. It says plainly that NO MAN has ascended up to heaven; Jesus PERSONALLY said NO man had been there – except Him. And surely Jesus would have NOTICED if Abraham and Daniel and Noah were wandering around up in heaven someplace!

Surely Jesus is QUALIFIED to tell us NO ONE has died and ascended to heaven! Surely Peter had it on GOOD AUTHORITY that David was IN THE GRAVE – and his soul had NOT YET ascended to the heavens! Do you believe them? If not, why be a Christian?

Think about it! If what Jesus says isn't true, you can't trust Him to answer your prayers, to rescue you from enemies, or do ANYTHING for you. Much less count on Him for salvation! So either believe what He says, or don't call yourself a Christian – you can't do both! (**Luke 6:46**). But if you believe Jesus when He says the dead are not in heaven, *then WHERE are they?*

Are the dead conscious? **Ecclesiastes 9:5**. When you die, do your thoughts continue? **Psalms 146:4**. In the grave, can anyone give God thanks? **Psalms 6:5**. Do the dead have knowledge? Are they wise? Are they doing any sort of work? **Ecclesiastes 9:10**. To what does the Bible compare death? **Psalms 13:3**. Did Jesus also say that death was like sleep? **John 11:11-13**. And did Paul likewise teach the same? **1 Thessalonians 4:14**.

Did God say that when Moses died, he would sleep – like his dead ancestors were doing? **Deuteronomy 31:16**. Did God say the same thing to David? **2 Samuel 7:12**. Was this common knowledge in Israel at the time? **1 Kings 1:21**. Did Job say this "sleep of death" takes place in the grave? **Job 7:21**.

So clearly, the dead are just that – dead. No thoughts, no wisdom, no worshipping, no working, no sitting on a cloud and playing a harp – just a deep, dreamless sleep of oblivion. Rather like the way a computer feels when it's turned off.

Now if God didn't intervene, would this sleep go on forever – that is, a permanent death? **Jeremiah 51:57**. If you cut down a tree, can it come back to life? **Job 14:7-9**. But can a man come back to life

the same way? **Job 14:10-12**. But WILL God intervene and wake those sleeping? **Daniel 12:2**. Does Job ask God to do that for him? And where does Job ask to be “hidden” while he waits for that to happen? **Job 14:13**. And finally Job asks the question on everyone’s mind: **Verse 14**. And does he conclude that he will wait, until a CHANGE comes? (Same verse). And when that happens, how does Job describe the experience? **Verse 15**.

And where will he be brought to life FROM – heaven, or the grave? **John 5:28-29**. Did Jesus say the dead were in heaven, or in graves? Did He teach that those in the graves had ALREADY risen, or that an hour was coming in the FUTURE when they WOULD rise from the graves? Did He say the dead heard His voice *now...* or that the hour was still in the FUTURE when they would hear His voice? (All questions, same verse).

THE RESURRECTION

The Bible speaks EXCLUSIVELY of a resurrection. No verse in the Bible says we will go to heaven when we die. Don’t believe me, look for it yourself – or ask your preacher where it is.

If he turns to the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, request my free booklet about it – and in the meanwhile, notice the word “heaven” is not even used in that parable! **Luke 16:19-31**. Then remember that a dubious interpretation of a parable *cannot* trump clear scripture! And everywhere, the Bible ALWAYS speaks of resurrecting people FROM THE DEAD.

To try and explain this obvious contradiction between their beliefs and the Bible, many people say we go to heaven when we die, then when Jesus returns we are temporarily resurrected, put back into a physical body, and then go to heaven again – but where do they get that idea? From the Bible? Or is it just something they made up because they stubbornly refuse to believe what the Bible clearly says?

Has the resurrection already happened? **2 Timothy 2:18**. When will it happen? **1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**. Will it happen at the same time Jesus returns to rule the world? **Revelation 11:15-18**. So if the dead rise ONLY through a resurrection, and that resurrection hasn’t happened yet, who can argue the fact that the dead are still dead, sleeping in their graves?

What IS this resurrection? Why do we need it? What does it do? Job spoke of a “change” that would happen to him while he was in the grave, when God “will desire the work of His hands” (**Job 14:14-15**). Paul devotes all of **1 Corinthians 15** to explaining this “change” at the resurrection. You might want to read the whole chapter so you have it in context, and then continue with the lesson.

Paul starts in **verses 3-4** by saying Jesus died, was buried, and then rose again, setting up a pattern for what he is going to say later. **Verses 12-17** prove that if there is no resurrection from the dead, we have no Savior. Then in **verses 18-19** we see this is a pattern which applies directly to those who “have fallen asleep in Christ”, that is, the saved dead. Those people would be perished, UNLESS there was a resurrection from the dead (**verse 18**).

Ask yourself WHY would the dead perish UNLESS there is a resurrection from the dead?? If the dead are already in heaven, what possible risk is there of them PERISHING *without* a resurrection? There could be none! But if the dead are unconscious in the graves, then they WILL perish unless there is a resurrection! (**Job 14:12**).

1 Corinthians 15:20-22 talks about how Adam brought death to all men, but Christ brought the resurrection **from the dead**. **Verse 23** tells us again when this resurrection actually happens – at Christ’s second coming. Paul then talks about other subjects, some related, some not so much. Then in

verses 35-44 Paul explains being resurrected is like planting a seed; the original wheat plant has to die before the seed can be planted again, and then when it sprouts it comes up with a new body.

His point is, this process is very similar to our lives; we live, then die, and when we die it is like sleep; then when God resurrects us, we come up with a new body; we start our lives with a physical body, and then we are resurrected with a SPIRITUAL body.

As you may remember from Lesson 1, the point of this life is to be ADOPTED into the family of God; having our bodies changed from flesh into spirit, as we literally become a member of the species of God. Paul says as much in **verse 49**. He explains why this change is necessary in **verses 50-55**. As humans, we cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, so the only way to make this happen is to change us into spirit. Not as a disembodied ghost you might see on TV, but with a spirit BODY. **Verses 38-40, 44**.

2 Corinthians 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Here Paul compares our present body to a tabernacle – a tent. And a tent is temporary, prone to decay. But he says if anything happens to this body, we have a BUILDING – not a tent, but a *house* that is ETERNAL, immortal, made by God, that waits for us in the heavens. This is one of the things Jesus meant in **John 14:2-3**.

Now let's lay out the timeline of the resurrection; most of the righteous dead have died and are buried, sleeping, awaiting their "change" when God will give them their reward.

When do they receive this reward? **Daniel 12:13**. We saw the verses already that said the "last trump", when is that? **Revelation 8:6, 11:15-18**. And at that point, does Jesus return and gather the saved dead, along with those faithful who are still alive? **Matthew 24:30-31**. Does that scripture say He actually sets foot on earth – or only that they SEE Him?

(I know it seems like a moot point, but it is important. Every verse that speaks of this event makes it clear that when Jesus returns to resurrect the saints, every eye SEES Him – but no mention is made *at this time* of Him actually STANDING on the Earth.)

When we are resurrected, where do we meet Jesus? In heaven? On Earth? Or neither? **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**. If they were already in heaven, why would they RISE to meet Him "in the air"? (Same verse). When He returns, is it a secret – or does EVERY eye see Him? **Revelation 1:7**. Is it possible to "miss" His coming? **Matthew 24:27**.

All these verses speak ONLY of Jesus being SEEN, coming "in clouds", and sending angels to gather together all the saints – the saved dead. Then at that resurrection we are changed into spirit **1 Corinthians 15:52**. And when does all this happen? **Job 19:25-27**. Job's Redeemer will stand on the Earth in the LATTER DAYS – at the END TIME, when Jesus returns, as so many other scriptures attest! Then what happens?

Do the newly resurrected dead go to the marriage supper of the Lamb to become, collectively, the bride of Christ? **Revelation 19:5-9**. Then, once they are officially vested with authority by this marriage, do they return with Christ to the final battle? **Revelation 19:11-16**. Are the "armies of heaven" the same as the "saints" from **verses 5-9**? Compare **verses 8 and 14**.

But when Jesus comes BACK to Earth after the marriage supper, are the saints with him? **Jude 14**. When He returns this time, does He come ALL the way to Earth, with ALL the saints behind Him? And do His feet stand on the Earth? **Zechariah 14:1-5**. And is that when the battle of Armageddon finally

takes place? **Revelation 19:17-21**. Is this final battle the very last thing to happen, just as Jesus returns to Earth with the saints? **Revelation 16:14-21** (especially **verse 17**).

OBJECTIONS

There is a massive weight of scripture proving we do not go to heaven when we die; tons of scriptures which speak of the resurrection *from the dead*. But if you show these scriptures to anyone, they are going to fall back on a few verses which seem to say something else – by now you should know how we go about looking at those.

First we make sure the scripture is really **THERE** – several key scriptures on this subject are conveniently misquoted. Never give, or accept, answers like “oh, I know it’s in there somewhere!”, because more often than not, it isn’t!

When you speak with someone about this subject or any other, remember: you are able to show them the scriptures that prove your position; it’s only fair that they show you theirs. If they can’t do that, ask them why they haven’t “proved all things” as you have (**1 Thessalonians 5:21**), and why they aren’t **READY** to give you an answer (**1 Peter 3:15, 2 Timothy 2:15**).

After establishing that the controversial verse exists, next we read the **CONTEXT** – what is the author talking about at the time? Then we read the scripture carefully and see **EXACTLY** what it says, comparing several different translations to be sure we have a good understanding of it. And then if it’s one, unclear, out of context scripture, ask yourself if it can be used to dismiss the dozens of clear scriptures you’ve read today. Now here are a few practical examples:

1. “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”

I’m sure you’ve heard this one a lot. And if you assume it’s scripture, it does seem to indicate when we die we go to heaven – but do you know where the verse is? If your preacher can’t give you the chapter/verse reference, you need a new preacher! The fact is, this verse is always misquoted – just enough to skew the meaning. This is the original verse:

2 Corinthians 5:8 *We are confident, I say, and willing **RATHER** to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

Now that looks similar, but is it the same as the quote you hear? Paul didn’t say “to be absent from the body, **IS** to be present with the Lord”! He said he would **RATHER** be absent from the body **and** be present with the Lord. There is a difference! Now get the context; back up in **2 Corinthians 5:1-4**. Paul speaks of our **PRESENT**, physical body *contrasted* to our future, **SPIRITUAL** body, so **DEATH** can be overcome by life!

Get that carefully! **Verse 4** says the new body we receive will **OVERCOME DEATH**. That means we have to die to get it! **Verses 5-6** say while we have **THIS** body, we are absent from the Lord. Of course we are! Because flesh and blood **CANNOT** inherit the **KINGDOM** of God (**1 Corinthians 15:50**), nor even **SEE GOD** (**Exodus 33:20**), so with our present body we **CANNOT** be where God is! Now, we walk by **FAITH** in God – not **SEEING** Him! (**2 Corinthians 5:7**).

At this point, having read the context, when the scripture in question comes up in **verse 8** it is easy to see Paul is contrasting the present life in this body, with the life we will have in our **FUTURE** body. But the key question is **WHEN!** Does this scripture **SAY** Paul expected to go **IMMEDIATELY** to heaven on his death? Or does he speak **ONLY** of the life he will have **when** he receives his **NEW** body?

And when did **Paul himself** say to these same **Corinthians** he would receive that new body he speaks of here? The one he'd rather have than his present body? When would that **CHANGE** happen? **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**.

Paul said he would **RATHER** be present with the Lord – but **WHEN** did Paul say he **WOULD** be present with the Lord? At the instant of death? Or **AT JESUS' SECOND COMING?** **1 Thessalonians 2:19**.

2. The thief on the cross

Luke 23:43 *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

This one is a bit more reasonable; the logic obviously being if this man was to be with Jesus **TODAY** in paradise, clearly he was going to go to heaven the instant he died! But again, back up and get the context. **Verses 32-33** speak of these two criminals crucified at the same time He was. Remember that! Their crucifixion began at the **SAME TIME** as His!

Then in **verses 39-41**, one began to mock Jesus and the other to defend Him; then notice carefully exactly what the thief asks Jesus to do in **verse 42** – **and WHEN he asks Him to do it!** He says “remember me **WHEN YOU COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM!**”!

When will Jesus come into His kingdom? **Revelation 11:15**. And what happens at that **EXACT SAME TIME?** **Revelation 11:17-18**. Get that! The dead are resurrected and the saints rewarded, **WHEN JESUS TAKES** to Himself **GREAT POWER**, and rules the nations! His Kingdom is **NOT** a part of this world! **John 18:36**. When His Kingdom comes, it will smash in pieces all nations! **Daniel 2:44**. So **EVEN NOW**, Jesus' Kingdom hasn't come, and so the thief **STILL** has not been resurrected, for he asked “remember me **WHEN thou comest into thy kingdom!**”! (**Verse 42**).

Now remember the thieves began their crucifixion at the same time as Jesus. Crucifixion was a very slow and painful way to die, because it seldom took less than *three days* for the condemned to die – sometimes as long as a week!

We know Jesus died at about 3 PM (**Mark 15:34-37** – “the ninth hour”, in Roman time, was 3 PM our time), **after only about six hours on the cross**. He was buried just before sundown, very late in the day (**Mark 15:42-43**). When the family went to get the body from Pilate, what did Pilate say? **Mark 15:44-45**.

Do you see the importance of that! It was **UNHEARD OF** for someone to die after only six hours! Jesus was obviously a rare exception – and Jesus definitely died before the thieves! (**John 19:32-33**). Is it plausible then, that Jesus (who certainly knew all of this) would tell the thief, **who would still be suffering for several DAYS before he eventually died**, that he would be with Him in heaven (and therefore, dead) **THIS SAME DAY????**

For one more proof of this point, **EVEN JESUS** didn't go to heaven that day! So the thief couldn't **POSSIBLY** have been “with Him in paradise” **BECAUSE JESUS WASN'T THERE ON THAT DAY!** And didn't go there for **THREE MORE DAYS!** (**Mark 8:31**). Not until after His resurrection – see for yourself: **John 20:17**.

Then why did Jesus answer “to day you shall be with me in paradise”? To answer that, remember God inspired this part of the Bible to be written in Greek; and Greek has no spacing or punctuation. All punctuation was added by **uninspired men** in the past 2000 years. Most of the time they've done a

pretty good job, but sometimes because they didn't understand the very Bible they were punctuating, they put the comma in the wrong spot. This is one of those times.

The entire phrase changes meaning when you move the comma from *before* the word "today" to AFTER it! Because the meaning shifts from "I say to **you, TODAY** you will be with me..." (which supports going to heaven at death) to "I say to you **TODAY, you** will be with me..." (which agrees with all the other scriptures)! Rotherham correctly translates this verse:

Luke 23:43 *And he said unto him—Verily, I say unto thee this day: With me, shalt thou be in Paradise.*

Remember, you have HUNDREDS of scriptures that show Jesus gives the righteous dead their reward WHEN HE RETURNS. Others that say the dead know not ANY THING, and that NO MAN has ascended to heaven. A vast assortment of CLEAR scriptures, some in the immediate context, show this man CANNOT be with Jesus TODAY in paradise! And the many clear scriptures must ALWAYS be used to interpret a single unclear scripture!

3. What about Elijah?

To deal with the next two subjects properly requires more space than I want to devote here; it properly belongs in a booklet. However, we'll briefly summarize the facts here. The first question begins with this scripture: **2 Kings 2:11**. This says Elijah went up into heaven. The context supports this, as do the other translations. But this verse says that is impossible: **John 3:13**. So which one is right? Does the Bible disagree with itself? **John 10:35**.

So both are true; so what did God mean when He said Elijah went to HEAVEN? To find out, we must see where the word "heaven" is used in the Bible, and see if there is only ONE heaven mentioned – or MORE than one!

Are there stars in heaven? **Genesis 1:15**. Are there ALSO birds in heaven? **Genesis 1:20**. When God finished the creation, did He say there was only ONE heaven... or MORE than one? **Genesis 2:1**. So is there one heaven where the birds fly, and another where the stars are? Is there a THIRD heaven mentioned anywhere? **2 Corinthians 12:2-4**.

Repeatedly throughout the Bible it speaks of birds and rain and manna falling out of the "heaven". And elsewhere it speaks of the stars of heaven; and it speaks of the angels of heaven, and the throne of God in heaven. And without CONTEXT it is impossible to know WHICH of these three heavens is meant!

1. The first heaven, where the birds and rain are, is our atmosphere.
2. The second heaven is where the stars and galaxies are.
3. The third heaven is where the throne room of God is.

So when it says Elijah was taken into HEAVEN, we must ask *WHICH heaven?* We know he didn't go to the third heaven, since Jesus was there and yet 900 years later He explicitly said that NO MAN – not Elijah, NO ONE – had ascended to heaven! Can a whirlwind, made of WIND, and AIR, have any power BEYOND the atmosphere? So he wasn't in the third or second heavens – and if he wasn't beyond the Earth's atmosphere, WHERE DID HE GO?

And we find the answer! Because FOUR YEARS LATER, Elijah sent a LETTER to the king of Judah! **2 Chronicles 21:12**. By reading that carefully, it is clear the letter was written AFTER the events took

place, events which happened after Elijah was taken up in the whirlwind! He speaks of all the events as PAST, and the disease as FUTURE.

Now if Elijah had been taken to heaven and was now a spirit, surely he would have come personally, or else appeared as a dream! For a spirit doesn't need to bother with sending physical letters! (**John 3:8**).

But if Elijah had NOT ascended up to the THIRD heaven, had not been made spirit, but only had ascended to the *FIRST* heaven – if he was still a physical man, but was simply MOVED around in the atmosphere by the whirlwind – moved to somewhere else ON THE EARTH – then he would have had to send a LETTER! Doesn't that make ALL the scriptures agree, and do violence to none of them?

4. Where Is Enoch?

A similar argument is made for Enoch; it is a bit more complicated, but all the same rules apply. Here the verses in question are **Genesis 5:24** and **Hebrews 11:5**.

Now we KNOW he isn't in heaven, because Jesus said so; further, he couldn't have been "born again" as a spirit being, because JESUS was the BEGINNING of the CREATION of God (**Revelation 3:14**) – and we know the creation of God is the SPIRITUAL FAMILY of God! If Enoch was placed into that family FIRST, then Jesus wasn't the BEGINNING of that creation!

Further, Jesus is the **FIRSTBORN** from the dead (**Colossians 1:18**), so that He would have the **PREEMINENCE in all things!** He had to be the FIRST ONE to gain immortality, **otherwise ENOCH would have the preeminence!**

With that said, what do those admittedly strange verses mean? Where do we start? You should know where I'm going to go first – the CONTEXT! Not to sound like a broken record, but literally 90% of false doctrines would fall apart by themselves if people only did that one simple thing – READ THE CONTEXT!

In **Genesis 5:21**, it says Enoch lived 65 years and then had a son. It does *not* say he lived 70 years, or that he lived SOME years, it says he lived 65 years and THAT YEAR had a son. **Verse 22** says he walked with God for 300 years after that. Not for 301 years, nor for eternity, but SPECIFICALLY for ONLY 300 years.

Verse 23 then says that ALL THE DAYS of Enoch were 365 years. How many days did Enoch have, then? Did he continue to live for 400 years? Some would say he is still alive today, never having died! But they must believe the Bible is a lie, for it clearly said **ALL OF THE DAYS THAT ENOCH HAD were contained in those 365 years!**

Finally, **verse 24** says, (Douay translation) "*And he walked with God, and was seen no more: because God took him.*"

Think carefully about that. Does the Bible say Enoch is STILL walking with God? OR does it say, past tense, "he WALKED with God"? And how long does **Verse 23** say Enoch walked with God? Does it say Enoch NEVER DIED? Or does it JUST say that at some point, DURING those 300 years, WHILE he was walking with God, God "took him", and he was seen no more?

So why would he "be seen no more"?

Does the world like hearing the truth? **John 3:20**. Have prophets and other men of God been well liked by the unconverted? **Acts 7:52**. Does Jesus prophesy that we will also be hated by the world? **Luke**

21:17. Is it to be expected that if you obey God, those not obeying God will persecute you? **2 Timothy 3:12.** If they hate God, will they like you if you serve God? **John 15:18, Matthew 10:22-25.**

These men of faith in **Hebrews 11**, a list which explicitly includes Enoch, were they loved by the world – or persecuted? **Hebrews 11:33-38.** And did those very men, like Enoch, who had these things happen to them, RECEIVE the promises? Did they INHERIT the Kingdom of God? **Verse 39.** Have they been perfected yet? Are they waiting for US, so that they can be perfected, until the same time that WE are perfected? **Verse 40.**

Now read **Hebrews 11:5.** Here there is no context about Enoch, it's all contained in this one verse. So what is it saying? The crux of the matter is the word “translated”. People carelessly assume that “translated” refers to the same event Paul calls the “change” in **1 Corinthians 15:51-52.** But is it? Only the Bible can tell us.

The word “translated” comes from the Greek word *metathesis* and its root word, *metatithemi*. Both of which in modern English mean, NOT *translate*, but rather **TRANSFER! As in TRANSPORT from one place to another! Just as we discovered Elijah was transported elsewhere on Earth!**

Strong's Bible concordance says this word *metatithemi* means “to transfer, i.e. (LITERALLY) TRANSPORT, (by implication) exchange (reflexively) change sides, or (figuratively) pervert – carry over, change, remove, translate, turn.”

Now look at this scripture again, without the preconceived ideas you've been taught but with the things you've read in your Bible today as your guide; which makes more sense? That Enoch was the ONLY one who defied Jesus' statement that NO ONE ascended to heaven? That Enoch was so special he was saved and went to heaven and was made spirit BEFORE Jesus, thus robbing Him of the preeminence?

Or does it make more sense to believe that Enoch was, like all preachers of truth, persecuted by those who rejected God? That he was unpopular with the wicked around him? And that as reward for his obedience and his faith, he was **MOVED someplace SAFE so he would not see death AT THAT TIME!**

And by being moved, those wicked men who were out to kill him SAW HIM NO MORE! So he “was not found” by those who sought his life! And in due time Enoch died the death of all men and now sleeps, awaiting the change that will happen when Christ receives His Kingdom!

Or would you find it easier to believe that Enoch found a trick, some lawyerish way to get around this verse: **Hebrews 9:27.** Which answer makes more sense to YOU, in light of ALL the evidence?

5. The transfiguration

This is very easy. **Matthew 17:1-8** is the story. Read it, then ask yourself: Does this mean that Elijah (who died) and Moses (who died) were now resurrected, before Jesus was even dead? Then to get the answer, read **verse 9** – the context. It says tell the VISION to no man! A vision is something you SEE – not something that really happens, but something that is only APPARENTLY happening!

A vision is like a dream (**Job 33:15**). Did Ananias have a vision in **Acts 9:10**? And did Paul (then Saul) have a vision at the same time? **Verse 12.** Did God say that Paul had ALREADY seen Ananias coming IN A VISION? Before Ananias had even been sent?

So then it's easy to see, visions show things that *are not YET REAL!* But things which WILL be real one day! Perhaps in a few minutes, perhaps a few millennia, but a vision is a thing NOT REALLY HAPPENING! And Moses and Elijah were not being resurrected and glorified with Christ YET!

AFTER THE RESURRECTION

Back to the main topic now, once we die and are resurrected with a spirit body, immortal, what will we be like? **1 John 3:2**. Can God be tempted to sin? **James 1:13**. If we're like Him when we are resurrected (born of God), will it be possible for US to be tempted to sin? **1 John 1:9**. Why is that? **2 Peter 1:4**. At that point when we are filled with the divine nature, will this scripture finally be fulfilled? **Ephesians 4:13**. And finally we will be made perfect? **Hebrews 12:23**.

So we will be trustworthy, untemptable, incorruptible, immortal; but what will we be DOING? Daniel picks up the story at the battle of Armageddon, and tells us what the "Ancient of Days" (God) will do after His return: **Daniel 7:21-22**. After Jesus returns to Earth and takes over its government, what does He do with it? **Daniel 7:27**. And how long will they rule in the kingdom? **Daniel 7:18**.

What does He promise to the individual saints? **Revelation 2:26-27**. Just after the battle of Armageddon in **Revelation 19**, what happens? **Revelation 20:1-3**. Then what does John see happening next? **Revelation 20:4-6**.

There is so much in those verses that we will return to them often. Notice there is nothing in **Revelation 20** about resurrecting the righteous dead! No, that already happened in **Revelation 11:15!** Here, we see God giving them their OFFICE – giving them what will be their jobs for the next thousand years!

While we're here, is there ANY mention made in these verses of resurrecting ANYONE *besides* the righteous dead? Does **verse 5** specifically say that the OTHER dead, the unsaved dead, do NOT live again (are *not* resurrected) until after a thousand years have passed? Does **verse 6** give us a BIBLE NAME for this event, this resurrection of the righteous dead?

It is always best to let the Bible name its own events; always shy away from names not in scripture in favor of names that are; this event, the resurrection of the righteous dead, is called the FIRST resurrection, and those in it are blessed and holy, and the second death has NO POWER over them. That is, they are immortal.

The rest of the dead, which "live again" after the thousand years are over, are a part of the NEXT resurrection – and if the righteous dead were a part of the first resurrection, then we must call the next resurrection the *second resurrection*, even though the Bible doesn't specifically use that term.

The second resurrection will be the topic of the next lesson, so I won't talk more about it here. Here, it's time to focus on just what we'll be DOING after we're resurrected and given those thrones!

WE HAVE A JOB TO DO

When Jesus rides out of heaven, followed by the resurrected saints, and puts down the war Satan has stirred up and takes possession of the kingdom, after that battle the very first thing we see being done is God giving "thrones" to those righteous who had been resurrected **Revelation 20:4-6**. And God gives JUDGMENT to them – they are given AUTHORITY! And as Daniel was told, the *saints* then possess the kingdom! They now rule the universe – under Jesus and the Father of course, **who gave them this kingdom!**

Did Jesus promise to give us these thrones? **Revelation 3:21**. What did He promise our enemies would do, after we were resurrected and put on these thrones? **Revelation 3:9**. Did He promise thrones to the twelve apostles? **Matthew 19:28**. And what will we be ruling over, specifically? **Luke 19:17**. Will this authority place us even over the angels? **1 Corinthians 6:3**.

So what will our job be, specifically? **Revelation 1:5-6**. And where will we, these “kings and priests” be reigning – will we be in heaven? **Revelation 5:10**. What do the meek inherit – heaven? **Matthew 5:5**.

We have already covered many scriptures in these pages showing NO man has gone to heaven, and the dead know not anything; and now we see not only are the dead not *now* in heaven, but they are NOT GOING to spend eternity in heaven even when they **DO** awake!

Clearly, they go there for the wedding supper and it certainly appears they can go back and forth at will after that, but the Bible plainly says they will reign ON THE EARTH! They’re coming HERE! This Earth is the center of the entire plan of God. Why would we want to leave it and go off to heaven someplace?

The Father Himself is one day coming here to literally dwell with Man! Just as soon as we get the Earth (and Man) properly prepared! (**Revelation 21:1-4**, **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**). So there is no REASON for us to go off into heaven and strum on a harp and think happy thoughts! We have a JOB to do *here!*

YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN

But then why does Jesus say “great is your reward in heaven” (**Matthew 5:12**)? Doesn’t that mean our reward is to go to heaven to be with Him?

What does Jesus promise to the persecuted? **Matthew 5:10-12**. And the poor in spirit? **Matthew 5:3**. What did Jesus come to preach? **Matthew 4:17**. Where are you to store treasures for your future? **Matthew 6:20**. So Jesus said our reward and our treasures are in heaven... but what are we to inherit? **Matthew 5:5**.

All these verses speak of having a REWARD in heaven, and storing TREASURES in heaven. Not one says that we GO to heaven and get it! If I have a present for you, I might keep it in my closet; but to get that present, must you go live in that closet? Or can I bring it out and give it to you?

Did Jesus go to prepare a place for you? **John 14:2**. And after that place IS prepared, will Jesus TAKE us to it – or COME to us? **Verse 3**. Did Paul say that his reward – his crown – was laid up in heaven? **2 Timothy 4:8**. And WHEN does he expect to receive it? (Same verse). When are we made alive? **1 Corinthians 15:22-23**.

We receive it “at His COMING”! When He comes to US, as opposed to the popular belief which is that we receive our reward “at our GOING to Him”.

Does God say that your inheritance – your reward – is being reserved (or stored) in heaven for you? **1 Peter 1:3-4**. But do we have to GO to heaven to get that reward? **Revelation 22:12**. Will we GO to Jesus to be judged – or will He come to us? **Matthew 25:31-33**. And the righteous dead inherit what? **Verse 34**.

The righteous inherit the KINGDOM. A kingdom which has been PREPARED – preparations for which began before the creation of Adam! And it has been prepared IN heaven. But when Jesus returns,

what office – what job – does He give us? You just read that He makes the saints “kings and priests” – why? Because they inherit the KINGDOM!

What kingdom will these poor in spirit inherit? **Matthew 5:3**. Where will the persecuted and righteous who have done the will of the Father end up? **Verses 10, 19-20**, and **Matthew 7:21**.

The scriptures above speak of the KINGDOM of Heaven – where is that? Is it IN heaven, or OF heaven, FROM heaven? If we’ve inherited that kingdom, and are made kings and priests in it, where will we be reigning? **Revelation 5:10**. Is the kingdom OVER heaven, or UNDER heaven? **Daniel 7:27**. And will that heavenly kingdom rule the whole Earth, and stand forever? **Daniel 2:44**. Will the holy city stay in heaven, as it is now – or is even that great city literally coming TO Earth? **Revelation 21:2**.

The REWARD is being prepared for you in heaven; the CROWN that God is going to give you awaits you there. And Jesus will bring that crown WITH Him when He comes, and set up the kingdom of Heaven here, on the Earth; and for now, GREAT is your reward in heaven. But that doesn’t mean that your reward is *going* to heaven! If you want to be where Jesus is, then you’ll be on Earth – because He is coming HERE!

WHAT IS OUR JOB?

So we know that the reward is on the Earth, and the reward is to be a king and a priest; but what IS it, really? What will we be DOING? Too many people – everyone, really – seem to think the first resurrection, or as it’s known in most circles, “getting saved” – is about spending eternity in paradise doing nothing – or perhaps staring blissfully into the face of God for eternity. But let’s face it, God’s beauty notwithstanding, that would be boring.

But God has not offered you an eternity of boredom in heaven thinking happy thoughts; no, God has called you to do a job. It involves hard work, heavy responsibility, and will be at times a thankless job – and not everyone would like it.

This is not to say there won’t be ample rewards, and great joys to go along with it. But if you sign up for this expecting to become... well, like one of the Greek gods out of Homer, you’re going to be sorely disappointed. People’s idea of the future of the saved seems to range between a blank-faced drooling God-groupie and being like “Q” from Star Trek. And neither of those – nor anything in between – are the truth.

This first resurrection is not a trophy; it isn’t about status, and it isn’t going to be a joyride. The future will not have you being surrounded by seventy beautiful women peeling grapes and dropping them into your mouth like some Arabian sultan. The first resurrection is a JOB. Jesus gives us an idea of what this job is like in **Mark 10:42-44**.

Jesus plans to make you kings; priests; place you in authority over CITIES full of people. The unconverted imagine this to be rather like being a Roman Emperor – living in a palace full of jewels and expensive foods while the “little people” live in squalor. But Jesus, “King of Kings”, didn’t come to have us serve Him – but to serve us (**Mark 10:45**). And He told us to do the same thing (**Matthew 20:27**).

“Serving” them doesn’t necessarily mean you help them get dressed in the morning or you “leave the word of God and wait tables” (**Acts 6:2**). But it does mean that just as a servant’s time and effort belong to his master, so the time and effort of “the greatest among you” is consumed entirely with

caring for, and improving the lives of, his subjects – those he serves. A proper king should do what Solomon did in **2 Chronicles 9:5-8** (especially **verse 7**).

Are you the servant of God? **Ephesians 6:6**, **1 Peter 2:16**. If you are a part of the First Resurrection, will you be given a throne ruling the nations under God? **Revelation 20:4**. So is God going to exalt you and make you great? **1 Peter 5:6**. On what condition? (Same verse). And since God is going to make you great, what will you be doing? **Luke 22:26**.

What is the job of the saved? **Revelation 1:6**. What does a priest do? **Malachi 2:7**. Is there a more detailed example? **Nehemiah 8:2-8**. So that's what a priest does – what does a king do? **1 Chronicles 11:2-3**. So a king feeds the people what? **Jeremiah 3:15**. Isn't that the same as what a priest does?

Yes! They do the same thing in general – lead the people to God, show them the truth, help them understand the law... but with one key difference! A priest TEACHES – a king ENFORCES!

Was Moses the leader of the Israelites? **Isaiah 63:12**. What did Moses do with most of his time? **Exodus 18:13-16**. Does God plan to do the same thing? **Psalms 67:4**. Was Moses a shepherd? **Isaiah 63:11**. Is God going to raise up a new shepherd to do this job after His return? **Ezekiel 34:22-24**. And this shepherd will also be a king? **Ezekiel 37:24**. But isn't Jesus the shepherd? **John 10:11**. How then can David and Jesus BOTH be the “one shepherd”? **1 Peter 5:4**.

Note that! Jesus is the CHIEF SHEPHERD! After all, is God going to lead all of Israel by Himself, or is He going to have men HELPING Him lead them? **Jeremiah 23:4**.

Understand! Those who are a part of the First Resurrection will be those very pastors that God prophesied so long ago, who are to lead His people into righteousness! They are those shepherds who will care for the flock (and not themselves), because they are the spirits of just men made perfect! And these men will be the leaders of the new government of God – does that sound like a job where you'll have much time to loaf around?

Moses' father-in-law saw clearly that Moses couldn't do this by himself for very long in **Exodus 18:13-16**. Why not? **Exodus 18:17-18**. What did he recommend Moses to do instead? **Verses 19-23**. Did this seem like a good plan to Moses? **Verses 24**. So was Moses – the greatest among them – the servant of all? And is it possible to get weary being the servant of all? **Galatians 6:9**.

And to help ease the burden, apparently with God's consent (**Exodus 18:23**), did Moses spread out the burden among many *chosen, able men*? **Verses 25-26**. And is that not the SAME PATTERN God has set up for the First Resurrection? Carefully handpicked people, thoroughly **tested and proven trustworthy**, to be kings and priests? To RULE, and to JUDGE, and to TEACH righteousness?

TESTED AND PROVEN HOW?

First note the old versions of the Bible used the words “try” and “prove” to mean the same thing as our modern word “test”.

That said, does God test us in this life? What does He test, specifically? **1 Thessalonians 2:4**, **Psalms 17:3**. How does He test us? **Psalms 105:19**. So He uses His word – the Bible – to test which part of us? **Proverbs 17:3**. Is this testing to purify us and get rid of the evil? **Daniel 12:10**.

This “trying” process; how is it done exactly? **James 1:12**. Is there a specific example of such a temptation? **Hebrews 11:17**. What is a temptation? **James 1:14**. Is this testing process at times unpleasant? **Revelation 2:10**.

From the early lessons you will recall this life is about learning to make good choices; learning to experience sin, and learning to hate it. As the old saying goes, “Good decisions come from experience, and experience comes from bad decisions”. You are here to have temptations thrown at you, by other people, the devil, and just life in general; those temptations test you and see what you’re made of. Some of us need more rigorous testing than others because we’re closer to the “reject” line. And God has to be sure of us.

But there is a line beyond which no temptation can cross. **1 Corinthians 10:13**. God will ALWAYS leave you a way out – He always has, and always will. You may not have found it, but there always IS a perfect, right thing to do.

Was Jesus likewise tested in this way? **Isaiah 28:16**. Is Jesus that “corner stone”? **Ephesians 2:20**. Are there examples of specific temptations He resisted? **Luke 4:2-13**. But Jesus overcame that, and all the other temptations, and passed the “test”? **John 16:33**. And does Jesus promise to give us something IF we overcome temptation? **Revelation 3:21**. Anything else? **Revelation 21:7**.

This life is merely the entrance exam for that job promised to us throughout the Bible! A practice run, a dress rehearsal, to make sure the characters can play their parts! A place to work out the kinks in the system, to ensure that when opening night gets here things will go off without a hitch!

Your job in the next life will be to lead others to righteousness; your job in this life is to make sure you are QUALIFIED to do that by first leading YOURSELF to righteousness! For now, our job is summed up in these verses: **2 Corinthians 10:5-6**.

And WHEN your obedience is filled – when you have PASSED all the tests God feels you need, and overcome the world, and are resurrected, that isn’t the end! That isn’t the goal! It’s only the *beginning*! It only means you passed the entrance exam and the background check and the drug test! The real job starts THEN!

LIVING WATERS

What does God promise “those who believe on Him” will receive? **John 7:37-38**. What do rivers or fountains of “living water” represent? **John 7:39**. So water symbolically represents the spirit of God? **Jeremiah 17:13**. What gave life to Adam? **Genesis 2:7**. That breath of God – is that the spirit of God? **Job 33:4**. Some might say those verses are not clear – can we be CERTAIN it is the spirit of God that made Adam alive? **John 6:63**.

BBE translates that last verse “the spirit is the life giver”; it must be acknowledged this was not the immediate context, but it applies directly to making people alive who were dead, we need only refer to **Revelation 11:7-11** (be sure to read the last verse in several different translations, particularly the KJV, to get the full meaning).

So these living fountains of waters – resurrected people filled with the spirit of God – give life? Can just *anyone* give life? **John 5:25-27**. So when the Father gave the Son AUTHORITY, He gave Him “life in Himself” at the same time? **John 17:1-3**. And what does that “life in Himself” mean? **Psalms 36:9**. So after receiving “life in Himself” from His Father, was He then able to resurrect the dead? **Revelation 1:18**. So can Jesus give someone these living waters which give life? **John 4:10-14**.

Now let’s make some real sense of all this! The Father has immortality and the power of life and death; Jesus had this also, before He became a man (**John 1:1**). But Jesus gave up His Godhood and all its

power to become a man (**Philippians 2:5-9**). Then, because He lived a perfect life, the Father resurrected Him, and again gave Him this power to give life (**Philippians 2:10-11**).

This ability to give life, called in symbol “living water” is in reality simply the holy spirit of God (**John 7:37-39**). And Jesus promised in that same passage to give this water to everyone who believed Him! That means, the immortality which the Father possessed and then gave to Jesus, Jesus is planning to pass on to us! Then WE will be a fountain of living water! Then WE will have the power to create life!

I know how shocking this is, but you’ve read the scriptures for yourself! As we studied in the very first lesson, God is building a family with whom to share His Kingdom and His power! And WE are that family, if we fulfill His conditions and make it into the First Resurrection!

Galatians 4:6-7 *And BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, BUT A SON; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

If you are a son of God, then you are an HEIR OF GOD just as JESUS is an heir of God! You stand to inherit the Kingdom of God alongside Jesus! He is your elder brother and as such will always outrank you, but nonetheless you will share in the same inheritance God has given Him! When adopted into the Family of God you will have His royal blood in your spiritual veins and as such will be destined to rule as a part of the Family of God for all eternity!

This is a promise made NOW, available only to those who hear God today, in this crooked and perverse world! The First Resurrection is a great reward, and a *better* resurrection **Hebrews 11:35** – but not the ONLY resurrection!

Don’t think God has gone to all this trouble JUST for you – those saved in this life will be only a tiny fraction of the billions who have lived and died on this Earth! Many of whom never had a chance to know God. What will become of them?

After all, if the First Resurrection is kings and priests... if they rule over ten cities... where do the thousands come from who populate those cities? The answer will be in the next lesson.

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