

Is There Hope For The Unsaved?

In the last lesson we examined the reward of the saved, but what about the unsaved? What does God have in store for them? What will be the final reward of an unsaved young child who drowned when their parents turned their backs for a moment?

Or what about the frustrated teenager on the street, a lonely refugee from a brutal home, who after dabbling in drugs and all manner of sin still finds no place in this cruel, lonely world and commits suicide? Where will this person, who has seen none of the joys life can bring and has never had a reason to believe in God or an honest chance at life, end up?

For that matter, what about the cantankerous, bitter old man or old woman whom we have all known? After having lived out their lives in misery and frustration and anger – due to circumstances that might well have put any of us in their shoes – will these hapless creatures die and only *then* discover the true meaning of suffering as they are slowly roasted in hell throughout eternity, spending a billion lifetimes in agony – are those the loving, tender mercies of God?

Yet you have heard this preached, or something similar to it, all of your life. But very few people stop to examine it and think it through. Most simply don't think about it at all, and the few who do primarily use it as a tool to frighten people into joining their church or paying more tithes.

But is this really the way God works? Is it what the Bible reveals as God's plan? Did you ever look for yourself? It's time to examine this question carefully and ask the Bible...

LESSON 7: IS THERE HOPE FOR THE UNSAVED?

Most religions teach boldly that **THIS** is the **ONLY DAY** of salvation. That once Jesus returns, the door is locked and no one will ever be saved again. They often use this as a tool to frighten people into obedience to the church, or to make people feel the urgency of getting everyone saved **NOW**.

But... is that what the Bible teaches? Is God desperately battling Satan for souls? Is God really *trying* to get everyone "saved" today, but being foiled at every turn by the lies of Satan the devil? Is Satan smarter than God? Is that why there are still millions of people on this Earth that **have never even heard God's name??**

Will God allow Satan to "corrupt" all of those souls He wants so badly to save? Is Almighty God really so weak and helpless before the onslaughts of Satan? Really think about this! (And read **Job 1:7-12** to see if Satan is more powerful than God!)

Read this verse to get the crux of the matter: **2 Corinthians 6:2**. And at first glance, it certainly looks like this is the **ONLY** time when you can be saved. And based on this the preacher shouts, "So get

SAVED today, or BURN forever!” ... But if true, this doctrine condemns most of the world, perhaps 98% of all mankind since the creation of Adam, to hellfire with no hope of salvation! And that includes many, if not most of our family and friends, if they’re not saved in this time. So let’s make SURE that we are right, and look deeper than the surface, and make CERTAIN we have the truth.

When Paul was inspired to write **2 Corinthians 6:2**, he did so in the Greek language. And the Greek language has a peculiarity which is a bit hard for us to understand today – it had no such thing as a definite or indefinite article in the language. That means there were no such words as “the” or “a”, in the Greek language.

For example, if I said to you “I want the salad”, meaning THE salad, the ONLY one, in Greek it would convey the same meaning as “I want A salad”, meaning ANY salad, any one of many. In Greek, both “I want a salad” and “I want **the** salad” are written as “I want salad”.

This concept is a bit hard to understand for someone who has always spoken a language as articulate as English, but it is a fact. And so when they translated “now is THE day of salvation”, the word “the” was supplied by the translators, because they thought Paul would have said “THE day of salvation”, *had he been speaking English*. But PAUL didn’t tell us! The language DID NOT PRESERVE whether Paul meant THE day, or A day, of salvation!

This entire doctrine is built on a word that doesn’t exist! Words like “the” and “a” must be added by translators. Usually they do it based on context, but since there is no immediate context for this verse, the translators guessed. But other translators guessed the other way!

2 Corinthians 6:2 (YLT) *for He saith, ‘In AN acceptable time I did hear thee, and in A day of salvation I did help thee, lo, now is A well-accepted time; lo, now, A day of salvation,’*

The Young’s Literal Translation is one I trust more than most because it focuses only on what the words actually say – often at the expense of readability, but it usually helps you to get an accurate understanding better than any other translation. Interestingly, this is a quote from **Isaiah 49:8**, where most versions translate the Hebrew – which similarly has no “the” or “a” as we understand it – as “in A day of salvation”.

However, since both opinions are guesses, we can’t know for sure from this verse alone. The information simply isn’t there – did God mean this is the ONLY day of salvation, or did He mean this is ONE OF the days of salvation? To answer that, we must first ask...

WHAT DOES GOD WANT?

What is God? **1 John 4:8**. Does God want ANY to perish? **2 Peter 3:9**. What was God’s will? **John 3:16-17**. What does He desire? **1 Timothy 2:4** (Be sure to check that verse in at least one version besides the KJV to get a clear meaning).

God WANTS everyone to be saved. But as Lessons 1 and 2 made clear, God will not FORCE you to be saved against your will. God has rules to follow in order to protect everyone, and you MUST follow those rules for everyone’s sake, including your own. If you absolutely refuse to do that, then God will give you “the wages of sin” to protect everyone else. But not until after God has given you a solid opportunity to understand the truth! But wait a moment – *has* God given everyone who ever lived this opportunity?

By what name do you have life? **John 20:31**. Is there ANY other name by which you can be saved? **Acts 4:10, 12**. Has EVERYONE even *heard* this name? Has EVERYONE had access to the covenant with God? Has EVERYONE had hope of salvation? **Ephesians 2:11-12**.

Read those verses several times, for on them hinges this question! There is NO OTHER NAME than that of Jesus by which men can be saved. Not one! And yet there are, even today, people in China, Africa, the Amazon and elsewhere who have NEVER HEARD of that name!

In **Ephesians 2:12**, Paul says these Gentiles were, for the first 4,000 years of Man's existence, STRANGERS from the covenant. SEPARATED from Christ! ***Having NO HOPE and WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD!***

Think about that! 98% or more of mankind for the first 4,000 years had absolutely NO HOPE of salvation! Billions more since then have NEVER HEARD of Jesus, even to this day! Much less heard a preacher, or read the Bible! (**Romans 10:14**). And to believe this is the only day of salvation is to believe those BILLIONS of souls were condemned by God to ETERNAL DEATH never having been offered A SINGLE CHANCE at salvation!

What sort of God would do that? Can God, on the one hand, talk about how loving He is, how He wants ALL MEN to be saved, and how He doesn't want ANYONE to perish... then turn around and kill 90% of the world's population since creation SOLELY for the horrendous crime of NEVER HEARING HIS NAME? Can a sane God do that?

And is God so lazy and so uninterested in those other people, that He hasn't found time EVEN TODAY to send a few measly prophets and Bibles into those places? Is that the God you want to serve? Is this the God who said He is "*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*"?

But fortunately, the Bible is clear that it isn't what God has in mind at all. God said plainly that He desires ALL MEN to be saved. And He isn't going to stop until ALL MEN have at least had a CHANCE at salvation. As you'll see in a moment.

The choice here is simple. Did God condemn the vast majority of humanity to death without giving them a single chance to hear His name, much less to really understand His truth?

Or did God not give those people an opportunity at salvation in this life *because He has other plans for their salvation in the future*?

Which of these conclusions does the Bible support? Let's see...

GOD HAS A PLAN!

If there is one scripture that sums up what we've read so far about the unsaved in this life, it is this one:

2 Samuel 14:14 (NLT) *All of us must die eventually. Our lives are like water spilled out on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God does not just sweep life away; instead, HE DEVISES WAYS to bring us back when we have been separated from him.*

When we die – and all must die – we are like water spilled on the ground. You can't pick it up and put it back into the bottle. You can't capture smoke from the air and make it a log again – it just dissipates and is gone forever.

But God doesn't intend for this life to be the last hope these unsaved souls ever have! And so God has "devised ways" to bring us back from death – even when we were separated from Him! He intervenes in the natural course of our death and protects our soul from oblivion *to give those who died unsaved a chance – a real chance, and for most of mankind this will be their FIRST chance, to find God and receive salvation!*

There is yet hope for the unsaved because "*he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him*" (**2 Samuel 14:14, NIV**). Even though you were an outcast – a stranger from the covenant, without hope, without God in this world, God has devised a way that such a person may not REMAIN a stranger!

If this is true, we should find many examples of it in the Bible; and indeed, there are; here are just a few of the scriptures that give us hope for the unsaved dead:

1. The incestuous man of 1 Corinthians 5

In **1 Corinthians 5:1**, we read of a man in the church of God at Corinth who was committing a sin. He was unrepentant, so Paul commanded them to put this man out of the church...

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, **To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, THAT THE SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED** in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Read that carefully, for that verse *by itself* proves this is NOT the only day of salvation! Paul commanded the church to put this man out of the church; put him back into the world and deliver him unto Satan **for the destruction of the flesh!** This man was put out of the church to live out his life apart from God's people and DIE in the hands of the god of this world – just as all of the unsaved do!

Obviously, this man is not saved, for he was committing fornication. Later in this same chapter, Paul instructed them that they should not eat with this man, or keep company with him (**1 Corinthians 5:11, 13**). And in the next chapter Paul specifically says that fornicators will NOT inherit the kingdom of God – will NOT be saved! **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**. Naturally, he meant they will not be saved *unless they repent*. But this man had not repented, and so he was NOT saved!

And yet Paul commanded them to put him out of the church SO THAT the spirit COULD be saved *later*, "in the day of the Lord Jesus"! If THIS is the ONLY day of salvation, as most believe, then how is it this man can be put out of the church, have his flesh destroyed (die), and THEN have ANOTHER chance to be saved... in a DIFFERENT day, the "day of the Lord Jesus"?

Unless... this is NOT the only day of salvation!

2. Who will we rule?

For the next point, the Bible says again and again that the saints will be ruling cities in the world to come; they will have thrones, and be "kings and priests". If all of the unsaved dead in that day are in hell (or permanently dead, never to awaken, as some believe), then who will the saved dead – the saints of the first resurrection – be ruling over? For whom will they be priests?

What does a priest do? **Malachi 2:7**. If all the unsaved are dead and all the saved are kings and priests, then who will be seeking the law at the lips of those priests? Who will be seeking the judgments from

the lips of the kings? Who will populate the cities over which the saints will rule? Who will worship at the feet of the saints? (**Revelation 3:9**)

3. The FIRSTfruits?

One of the most common names for the saints of the first resurrection is “the first-fruits”. Why did James say God created us? **James 1:18**. If there are FIRSTfruits... doesn't that strongly imply there will also be SECONDFruits?

If I tell you my FIRST child is 17... doesn't that strongly imply that I have other children, who are younger? Or that I am at the very least, expecting other children?

4. Unconverted people alive after Jesus returns

Zechariah 14 is one of the many chapters in the Bible solely devoted to the return of Jesus Christ to this Earth. In **verse 4**, it speaks of Jesus standing on the Mount of Olives – which as you'll recall, is the same place from which He left (**Acts 1:9-12**). This then, is His second coming. **Zechariah 14:5** reminds us the saints come with Him this time – meaning it is the final return to Earth after the saints are resurrected.

Verse 9 says Jesus will be King over all the Earth – ruling all nations. If the saints are the only ones alive, or the only ones on this Earth, over whom do they rule? But **verse 16** makes it obvious that all of the wicked were not destroyed in that final battle! These were the nations which had fought against Jesus at His return at a place called in Revelation Armageddon – but now we find these very nations going up to Jerusalem to worship this same Jesus against whom they battled!

But even more shocking, **verse 17** says – after Jesus returns – there will be some who are rebellious, who refuse to go up to Jerusalem! Even after Christ returns to rule all nations, those nations still have free will – they can choose to disobey God!

Naturally, as King, Jesus will punish those who disobey. Free will doesn't mean they can sin without being punished! **Verse 18** shows conclusively there *will* still be heathen here on the Earth, **even after the return of Christ!**

So all the unsaved are NOT destroyed at His coming!

Some believe the plagues of Revelation kill all of the people remaining on the Earth; and while they do cause great destruction, read the very last plague described in **Revelation 16:17-20**. Notice in **verse 17** a voice from the temple said “it is done” – meaning this will be the last plague. And after that plague was finished, were men still alive? And some still rebellious? **Verse 21**.

5. Death in the world to come

Read **Isaiah 65:18-20** carefully. God says He will CREATE Jerusalem rejoicing – that there will come a day in Jerusalem where no one cries! But this has never happened! Few cities in the history of the world have seen more weeping than Jerusalem! And that weeping continues to this day, and it will continue until Jesus returns to finally put an end to the fear and hatred that fuels the strife in the Middle East and the rest of the world.

And yet after this joyous return – and the resurrection of the saints – God says there will not be a child who dies at only a few days old, nor an old man who hasn't lived a full life. No, God said the child SHALL DIE an hundred years old – and the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

The details of what all that means will be explained later but for now it's clear that after Jesus returns – after there is no more voice of crying heard in Jerusalem – God promises a full, long life – 100 years – to all. After which men will still DIE. There is still DEATH! Death after Jesus returns! This scripture also speaks of CHILDREN in that day – so the cycle of birth, life and death continues on this earth, even after Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom!

But does this cycle of life and death continue forever? Will there come a time when there is no more death? **Revelation 21:4**. But is that early in the plan – or is it the very LAST thing to happen? **1 Corinthians 15:24-26**.

From this we see that after the first resurrection when Jesus returns, and even after the second resurrection a thousand years later, there will still be children, life, death, and all the things associated with physical life today. But then at some point AFTER all this there will come a time when there will be no more death. We'll get back to that later.

THE SECOND RESURRECTION

So you see, there are many, many reasons to have hope for the unsaved dead, and many more to come; but now let's approach the subject more systematically, and assemble these scattered reasons into one framework that lays out, step by step, just what happens with the unsaved dead – when, and why.

In **Revelation 11:18**, we see the first resurrection taking place; then in **Revelation 20:4-6**, we see those same saints given authority and thrones to rule the nations. This happens just as Jesus returns, as was explained in Lesson 6. But in **verse 5**, it plainly states, “*But the REST of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.*”

This tells us the unsaved dead were *not* resurrected at the same time as the righteous dead. Further, it tells us that after the thousand years are finished, the rest of the dead *will live again!*

A new life! Not a resurrection into hell, or a resurrection just to destroy them as some denominations teach – what sort of a God resurrects a peacefully sleeping dead man, laughs in his face, then tosses him alive into a lake of fire just to kill him again?? I mean, seriously; only a sick, depraved being would get any satisfaction from that!

Many parts of the Bible describe in detail this second resurrection, and what it will be like, and we'll get to those passages in a few moments. Revelation gives only the briefest summary of this period in **Revelation 20:11-15**, but even so there is much to be learned from it. Read it now, before continuing.

Most Christians believe this means God resurrects the wicked dead, brings them before a tribunal court, some angel intones a list of all the crimes each person has committed in this life, God judges them, then promptly kicks them off into hell. And superficially, if you ignore the rest of the Bible as so many do, it appears to say something like that. But let's ask some questions that challenge that idea...

What are the wages of sin? **Romans 6:23** (you should have that verse memorized by now!). When you sin, what do you earn? Death, you say? *How many deaths?* Is the wages of sin TEN deaths? If you sin,

must God kill you, resurrect you, kill you, resurrect you, ten times before the law is satisfied? What does that scripture say? How many deaths? Five? Two? That's right, it says ONE death.

So if you die as all men do... why does God need to resurrect you at all? So He can laugh in your face and say "I told you so!" just to see the look on your face when you realize how horribly you've messed up? Just before He makes you walk the fiery plank?

If you die, you've paid your debt to God and society. If our law says a man who steals deserves five years in prison, and he serves his five years, does the law have any claim over him? Is he out on parole? Is he still on probation? Of course not! He's a free man! And so if you die, you have paid your debt to sin *IN FULL*.

And if God should for any reason resurrect you, then as far as sin is concerned, you are a new person. Sinless and clean. Carefully check my logic on this! If God resurrects an unsaved person, *that person has not committed any crimes that have not been paid for in full! And so God has NOTHING TO READ OUT OF THE BOOKS! There's nothing left to judge!*

They cannot be judged according to their works (**Revelation 20:12-13**) – because since paying for their sins at death, **THEY HAVEN'T DONE ANY WORKS, GOOD OR BAD! (Ecclesiastes 9:10)**. So after being resurrected they must LIVE and *THEN*, after *THAT second life*, be judged according to their works!

This doctrine is contrary to what many believe, but it is right there in the Bible. But because it is so shocking, I know you'll want to see more proof – and here it is:

Revelation 21:8 *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: **which is the second death.***

This scripture describes, unarguably, the place where unrepentant and unsaved sinners end up. But what does it say will happen to them here? What does it call this event? As you can plainly see, it calls this the second DEATH. The *second death*.

Death means... well... not living. Right? When you die... you stop living. That's the whole point of being dead. You can't be killed twice. And yet the Bible clearly speaks of a second death. **For a man to die twice, he has to live twice** – doesn't he? Is there any other way to make sense out of that? For a man to die two deaths, *he has to be alive twice!*

Revelation 20:5 said plainly that the rest of the dead WILL live again after the thousand years – and if you just put that thought together with **Revelation 20:14**, it is obvious that after living their second life, they are judged according to their works – their works in *THAT life* – and *THEN*, if they are still found unworthy, they are sentenced to the lake of fire and brimstone.

To keep things simple, I can't address hell in this lesson – we'll talk about hell and the second death spoken of there at length in the next lesson, and really nail down the final punishment of the wicked. And like this lesson, the answer isn't what you think!

But for now the question doesn't matter; we are not interested in the FINAL judgment, *AFTER* their "second life", which follows the "second resurrection". We are interested in the second life itself. What

is it for? Is there really a chance your unsaved grandmother might someday receive salvation after all? In that coming day of judgment?

To answer, I must first digress and let the Bible explain just how judgment works...

THE JUDGMENT

What is appointed to all men? **Hebrews 9:27**. And what comes after that death? That judgment – when does it take place? **2 Timothy 4:1**. Why must we be judged? **2 Corinthians 5:10**. And will that Day of Judgment be followed by the punishment of the ungodly? **2 Peter 3:7, Revelation 20:13-15**. And are the ungodly being judged now, or is that judgment being RESERVED for them – postponed until a later date? **2 Peter 2:9**. But are the saved judged at the same time as the unsaved? **John 5:28-29**.

The KJV translates **John 5:29** as “*they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*”. This is an accurate, but outdated translation; 400 years ago, “damnation” simply meant “judgment”. Most modern translations do better, Weymouth for instance which says “*they whose actions have been evil to the resurrection of judgement*”.

So this second resurrection after the thousand years have passed is the resurrection of *judgment*. But what is that judgment? And how is it done? We can answer that very easily after we answer another question – exactly how is it that WE (presuming ourselves to be among the saved) are to be judged?

When are we to be judged? **1 Peter 4:17**. Who judges us, and based on what? **1 Peter 1:17**. How do we know we are being judged by God? **2 Thessalonians 1:4-5**. When we are judged, and God finds we are not good enough, what does He do? **Hebrews 12:5-11**. But if you judged yourself, now, would God need to judge you? **1 Corinthians 11:31**.

But when you DON'T judge yourself, what happens? **Verse 32**. If you don't judge yourself, and without repenting of your sins “eat of that bread, and drink of that cup”, something only a pure-hearted servant of God is entitled to do – do you invite the judgment of God on yourself? **Verses 28-29**. And what does that bring on many people in the church of God? **Verse 30**.

There is a lot there; let's start with the passage in **Hebrews 12**. Notice once again the two categories of people. Those whom God punishes with the occasional spanking, and those whom God ignores; those He punishes are His sons (the saints). Those whom He does not punish are illegitimate (the unsaved). When your physical father judged you for stealing, he did so for your good – so you wouldn't grow up to be a thief. And along with that judgment came an appropriate punishment, designed to teach you not to do that again – if not because you understood WHY stealing was wrong, then because you feared his punishment.

But now suppose that you had been able to see, right up front, that stealing was wrong – and choose not to do it. Why, you judged yourself! And by judging yourself, you didn't need judged by your dad! So he didn't need to ground you or spank you, for you had already done what was necessary to ensure it wouldn't happen again!

God judges us “*that we should not be condemned with the world*” (**1 Corinthians 11:32**), and “*that we might be partakers of His holiness*” (**Hebrews 12:10**). And to do that, God **must interactively judge us NOW!** Which is why judgment must BEGIN with the house of God – those following God today! And interactively, day by day, we are judged. Re-read the scriptures about judgment quoted above once more if necessary to firmly grasp that WE are being judged TODAY.

Read **1 Corinthians 11:32** again. Does it say we WILL be judged – later, in the future – or that we ARE judged – now, today? And does it say that AFTER we are judged, we *will be* punished – or that WHEN we are judged, now, today, we ARE punished, *so that* we are not punished with the WORLD – when THEY are judged LATER? We are judged and punished now, (as the BBE translates it) “*so that we may be safe when the world is judged*” – we’ll be safe because on the resurrected saints, the second death has no power! (**Revelation 20:6**)

So the Bible CLEARLY states we are judged NOW – judgment must BEGIN at the house, or church of God – but the rest of mankind, the WORLD, is judged LATER! When the world is judged, we will be safe because at that time, our judgment is PAST! Because we were resurrected at the resurrection of *life*, while they will be resurrected at the resurrection of *judgment* (**John 5:29**).

Does this mean we escape judgment altogether? **Ecclesiastes 12:14**. Are EVERY man’s works judged? **1 Peter 1:17**. Do we ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ? **2 Corinthians 5:10**. But WHEN do we appear before that judgment seat? **Revelation 12:10**.

The accuser (past tense) of the brethren (the saints) is cast down at the beginning of the millennium after the resurrection of the saints (**Revelation 20:1-3**). The context makes it plain this accuser is the devil. Who accused us before God day and night – accusing us in what capacity? As a prosecuting attorney, IN OUR JUDGMENT!

A judgment which takes place “before our God”, in His throne room – His judgment seat! And when did he accuse us? If it is PAST tense just after our resurrection, then it can only be in THIS life that he accuses us before the throne!

But do we also have an advocate – a defense attorney – before that throne? **1 John 2:1**. What does that advocate do? **Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25**. And since we are judged now, in this life, being condemned by Satan and defended by Jesus, if we pass this judgment without condemnation, we don’t NEED judged again!

It is appointed unto men to die once (**Hebrews 9:27**), and THEN be judged – but not all men! For some shall escape this life without literal death! **1 Corinthians 15:51**. To be made spirit, **they must already be judged worthy of eternal life** – and hence have no need for a later judgment when the world is judged!

So let’s summarize this segment; if God gives you understanding of His truth in this life, offers you a chance at salvation, you will be judged *today*. Your sins will be brought to your understanding and you will be expected to repent of them, day by day, as they are revealed to you.

In the judgment room of God, Satan will be condemning you during this process and Jesus will be defending you – offering up excuses based on mitigating circumstances because only He “*has been tempted in all points like as we are*” (**Hebrews 4:15**), so He can have compassion on our weaknesses (**Hebrews 5:2**).

And if we fail this judgment, we are punished (**Job 5:17-18**). This punishment can take many forms, it might be loneliness, poverty, illness, or all of them along with whatever else God feels is best suited to correcting us. This metaphorical spanking is to bring us back in line with what God expects of us. If we do, we are forgiven and the judgment moves on to some other weakness we must conquer.

But in the world, men are not being judged. Sometimes good things happen to the wicked, and bad things happen to the good (**Ecclesiastes 9:11**). Time and chance – random fortune – by and large governs their destinies, except in cases where God must intervene to guide world events or set up situations for those being saved in this life. And so when they are resurrected in the second resurrection, they are being judged for the **FIRST TIME!**

Now how are we judged in this life? Day by day, God watches our works and rewards us accordingly – then, when we die, if we die “in faith” – having lived by every word of God – we receive the reward. If we die rebellious, we receive the reward of the ungodly – death.

And so if this is how we are judged in **THIS** life... why would it be different for those in the *second life*? The rest of the dead **LIVE AGAIN**, the Bible distinctly says. And the rest of the dead are **JUDGED**, according to their works, just as *we* are judged according to *our* works. And we know that any works they committed in this life are paid for by their own deaths. And that means they must **LIVE AGAIN**, experience sin, repentance, faith, trials, and have a life full of **WORKS** to be **JUDGED!**

And if they fail **THAT** judgment – in most cases, their **FIRST** judgment – and **STILL** don’t manage to get their names in the book of life – then they are cast in the lake of fire and experience the second **DEATH**.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

This is one of the most magnificent passages in the Bible. It alone proves, beyond any doubt, that God intends to resurrect the unsaved dead and offer them salvation. Not only does it say that, it goes into great detail about the process of their resurrection!

Few theologians even acknowledge the existence of this chapter, as it’s much easier just to ignore it; and those few who are forced to look at it dismiss it as an obscure metaphor, something to be spiritualized away so they can continue to believe what they’ve always believed. But as you will see for yourself, this clear word of God needs no interpretation. It, like the rest of the Bible, needs only to be believed!

Start reading in **Ezekiel 37:1-2**. We’ll be going through this chapter in some detail, so keep your thumb here as you read other verses. In **verse 2**, Ezekiel comments that the bones were *very* dry. Bones get very dry only after a *very long time*. So these bones didn’t *just die*, they had been dead many years. God asked Ezekiel a simple question in **verse 3**, yet a question to which most modern preachers would give the wrong answer! Ezekiel answered wisely!

Then God prophesied, through Ezekiel, to these dry bones in **verses 4-6**. He promised that they would live again. Not only that! But He promised that after they lived again – in that “second life” we mentioned earlier – that these bones “shall know that I am the Lord” – that is salvation!

So in **verses 7-8**, Ezekiel did as he was told, then witnessed the bodies coming back together – but with no life in them. No soul, no spirit! Remember from the previous lesson the dead are sleeping; God has stored that spirit somewhere in His library, asleep, rather like a computer disk can rest for years without consciousness but with all the information intact.

And now through Ezekiel God describes the process of putting those spirits back into new bodies, “living again”! He puts the breath – the same Hebrew word usually translated “spirit” – back into them, and they live again, in **verses 9-10**. A great **many** people, Ezekiel says.

But who are these bones? **Verse 11** answers. And those dead bones said to God “our hope is lost!” – why? If they died saved, surely their hope was not lost! But they died UNSAVED, as nearly all of Israel did. And so they had no hope! But remember **2 Samuel 14:14!** “*Yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.*” – God has a plan for them! Read on!

To remove any doubt as to where these dry bones have been kept – and what period of time is being discussed in this chapter – read **Ezekiel 37:12-14**. Do you SEE what God has promised these unsaved, hopeless Israelites – and in symbol, promised to the world as well? That He would bring them UP from their graves and PUT HIS SPIRIT IN THEM!

Putting the spirit of God in someone is the very DEFINITION of offering them salvation! (**Romans 8:9, 14**). So God prophesied that all of these dry bones who had no hope would LIVE. That His spirit would be placed in them, and they would know that HE is the Lord!

Ezekiel 37:16-22 speaks of the joining of the houses of Israel and Judah, split in approximately 1000 B.C., after the death of Solomon. Since then they have been two separate kingdoms, but after Jesus returns they will be reunited. **Verse 23** says they – these resurrected houses then offered salvation – will no longer defile themselves with idols, but that God will forgive their sins, and cleanse them – again, **this is salvation! The salvation of the presently unsaved dead!**

Verse 24 makes the time frame clear because David – King David, after being resurrected in the first resurrection – will be their king – king OVER these *second* resurrection Israelites! **Verses 25-27** say they will learn and OBEY God’s laws, and God will make a NEW COVENANT with them! This same “new covenant” He speaks of in **Hebrews 8:8-12**.

Read that carefully and compare it with what you’ve read in Ezekiel! A new covenant of putting his LAWS in their hearts and FORGIVING their iniquities! The same covenant you are being offered today, will one day be offered to all of unsaved Israel and indeed, all of mankind!

Ezekiel 37:28 concludes the chapter and underscores once more that during ALL of this time – while ALL of these things are taking place – there are still unsaved heathen on the Earth!

Paul says many of these same things in **Romans 10:19-21, Romans 11:7-11, 25-27**. Read those passages and you’ll see that God blinded Israel **so they would not be saved, so that** the Gentiles COULD be saved – and so that in turn, ISRAEL could be saved – LATER, in the future! **Romans 11:32 (BBE version)** says, “*For God has let them all go against his orders, so that he might have mercy on them all.*”

God has allowed them to be wicked, like He has allowed Chinese warlords and Shaka Zulu and Middle Eastern terrorists, so that ONE day He can have mercy on them! Because one day the dried bones of all these men and women who died unsaved will have HOPE of salvation!

Isaiah 29:23-24 *But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also THAT ERRED IN SPIRIT shall come to UNDERSTANDING, and they that murmured shall LEARN DOCTRINE.*

They who ERRED in their spirit in this life will one day UNDERSTAND! And those who griped and grumbled against God will learn the truth! Those who were never converted because they wouldn’t believe in a God who tortured Chinese babies in hell without ever giving them a chance; those who

hated God for some of the things recorded in the Old Testament; those who hated God for a million reasons will have a chance to learn the TRUE doctrine! With no more lies being told, they can finally sort out the TRUTH! Even though they erred in spirit today!

And now let's have a peek at what the world will be like in that glorious world to come! Start in **Isaiah 11:1-5**. These verses are prophecies of Christ – speaking of His birth as a descendent of Jesse (father of King David), His life on this Earth (**verses 2-3**) and then His return as King of Kings (**verses 4-5**).

Then it shifts to describing the world as it will be governed by Him, **verses 6-9**. In these verses we see that there are still “little children”! And that various animals continue to have offspring as well! And in that day, “*the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea*” (**verse 9**). Compare that verse with the prophecy in **Jeremiah 31:33-34**, speaking of this same time. Then compare them both to **Hosea 2:18-22**.

See how wonderfully all these verses from around the Bible fit together if you just believe each one of them! And then see what God goes on to promise in **Hosea 2:23**! People who were unsaved, who “*had not obtained mercy*”, and who “*were not God's people*”, will find mercy, and find God!

And now go back to **Isaiah 11:9-10**! Has that day arrived yet? Can the child play on the hole of the snake, and the lion and lamb play together? No! But in that day when it IS possible, THEN the Gentiles – not just the literal Gentiles of today, but all the SPIRITUAL Gentiles who didn't find God in this life – then those Gentiles will SEEK after God!

Verse 11 says God will “*set His hand again **the second time** to recover the remnant of his people*”! The second time – in the SECOND day of salvation! When they live their SECOND LIFE! He recovered some of His people today, and then will set His hand to do it THE SECOND TIME! But recover them from what? **Verse 12** – recover them from being outcast! Because *He has devised a way to recover those who were banished from Him by their sins in this life!*

Now skipping down to **Isaiah 12:1-2**, speaking to these people who are saved in that future day of salvation, God prophesies they will say, “God has BECOME my salvation” – He wasn't their salvation today; He was very angry with them, but then He will BECOME their salvation!

Then in **verse 3** we find the most amazing verse so far! In that day after the return of Christ, these people who had no hope for salvation in this life, who erred in spirit and with whom God was angry will return to God and draw water out of the WELLS OF SALVATION!

NASB translates it “...*you will joyously draw water from the **springs** of salvation*”, while YLT says they will get that water “*Out of the **fountains** of salvation*”. What are these wells, springs, or fountains of salvation?

Remember the end of Lesson 6 – the FIRST RESURRECTION SAINTS will have RIVERS or FOUNTAINS of living WATER flowing out of them! (**John 7:38-39**). That is their reward! And because that living water, the spirit of God, flows out of them, they can bring salvation to OTHERS!

But those rivers of living water are not the reward for the second resurrection people! After counting the saints in the first resurrection in **Revelation 7:1-8**, the scene shifts in **verses 9-10** to talk about a “*great multitude which no man could number*”! A great multitude **saved** of ALL nations, ALL tongues! ***But they don't receive rivers of living water IN themselves!***

In **verses 16-17** it is clear they are also made immortal without physical needs, but it is also clear that Jesus **LEADS** them to fountains of living water! They are led to those “wells of salvation” spoken of in **Isaiah 12:3**! They are led to those “*pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding*” (**Jeremiah 3:15**).

Those pastors are those who are saved in **THIS** life, and those led to them are those **UNSAVED** in this life, who after being resurrected in the second resurrection are **LED** during their second life to those rivers of living water, offered a chance to draw out water from the wells of salvation, a chance to be fed with knowledge and understanding by the spirits of just men made perfect! (**Hebrews 12:3**).

THE REWARD OF THE SECOND RESURRECTION SAINTS

What do they deserve? These scriptures all make it clear that some, perhaps many, will receive salvation in that world to come – but will they be the same as those saved in this life? Should they be?

This world is a challenge; God intended it to be one. The purpose of this life is to learn to make right choices in a challenging environment where all the world conspires against you to encourage you to sin. Pressures from your family, society, the devil, all make this life a bigger challenge – and means those who overcome that challenge deserve a greater reward, and more responsibility.

On the other hand, it is *hard* to overcome all those pressures in this life. It is a narrow, difficult road to travel. And God makes it clear it is the **MANY** who will fail to follow that road, not the few (**Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23**). Not everyone will make it. And as the last lesson said, not everyone would like the reward if they **DID** make it!

The next life will be vastly easier. Why? Who will be running the world? **Revelation 19:15**. And who will be ruling under Him? **Daniel 7:27**. Will the devil be able to deceive the world? **Revelation 20:10**.

Note this is **BEFORE** the “great white throne” second resurrection (**Revelation 20:11-15**)! The devil will be out of the picture for the second resurrection, not able to deceive the nations again!

Without the devil and his minions to deceive the world, without a false church spreading a lie on nearly every corner, without a government of corrupt, self-serving politicians, the world will be quite different!

Is the first resurrection better? **Hebrews 11:35**. Is our reward called an inheritance? **1 Peter 1:4**. Are we called the firstborn sons of God? **Hebrews 12:23**. How much more inheritance does the firstborn deserve? **Deuteronomy 21:15-17**. Does that principle still apply today, to the “elders”? **1 Timothy 5:17**.

They will still be the children of God. They will still have immortality. They will still be entitled to the love of God and the inheritance of God. An inheritance that is not a thousand times, nor ten times, less glorious – but exactly half. That is the principle God laid down for our human inheritances, and is He going to do any less?

But while they will be the sons of God, they will never be the firstborn sons of God. That honor will forever belong to those who overcame in this difficult life. We are called to a better reward – to a better resurrection. But the offer is available for a limited time only!

Read **Hebrews 12:16-17** carefully. It describes the REWARD that Esau WOULD have inherited from his father! But Esau sold that for a morsel of food, and though he repented bitterly and begged his father to give it to him, his birthright as the elder son was gone! Never to return!

Those precious few – like you – who have been given a chance at salvation now are offered a ground-floor opportunity to become one of the elder, firstborn sons of God! If you squander this reward on fast money, fast cars and fast women, it will never be offered again!

If you throw your birthright away and die unsaved, then like the man in **1 Corinthians 5** “*the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus*” – but the reward you’re offered today will be gone for good.

But the second resurrection reward won’t be so bad – Esau was still loved by his father. He still received a good inheritance. And so will all the unsaved in this life who, in that easier time, manage to overcome and receive salvation then. Perhaps you will be there to help them!

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

THERE IS HOPE! All of this means there is hope – REAL, SOLID HOPE for your unsaved grandparents; your child who died a few days old; your brother who just never quite saw the truth and preferred to live out his life in sin. They aren’t even now basking in the fires of hell, nor are they gone forever. Because God has devised a way to bring them back!

This age is about saving the best of the best, those who will be leaders in the world to come; those who overcame temptation in the worst times in human history and can be trusted to resist deception and sin for all eternity. So when we are there to help the rest of the world find salvation, we will understand their weaknesses. Collectively, we will have seen and felt the results of nearly every sin imaginable, and know exactly what it will bring. And so we will be in a position to teach the world “the exceeding sinfulness of sin”.

With a world run by unbribable, incorruptible, “just men made perfect”, it will be a LOT easier to obey God! When the “earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”, and there is no devil to deceive the nations, no false churches to tempt them away, it will be EASIER to bring salvation to the nations. The only enemy left will be the human heart – but don’t underestimate that enemy!

Some might argue that in such a world, EVERYONE would surely choose salvation. But the Bible simply doesn’t teach that – see **Revelation 20:15**. The human heart is stubborn and “*desperately wicked*” (**Jeremiah 17:9**), and there will be some who, in spite of the best efforts of God and His saints, flatly refuse to repent.

God will never force a person to choose His way, never possess someone and MAKE them obey. Not now, not then. And so those who absolutely will not obey, who will not accept God as their King, will end up in... well, if you want the answer to that question, you’ll have to study Lesson 8!

NOTES

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold;** "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

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