

Is There Hope for Those Who Died UNSAVED?

*Bible Truth About People
Who Never Accepted Jesus*



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Preface

Losing someone you love is one of life's deepest sorrows. For many, that pain is made even heavier by questions about their loved one's eternal future. What happens to those who died without accepting Jesus? Are they lost forever? Is there any hope for good people, infants, or those who lived before Christ?

For generations, Christians have wrestled with these questions, often torn between their love for others and their understanding of the Bible. Some have been taught that only a select few will be saved, while the rest face eternal separation from God, or even worse, eternal torment. Others hope for a more merciful answer but struggle to reconcile this hope with certain Scriptures.

This booklet invites you to explore the Bible's message with fresh eyes. You do not have to choose between compassion and faith. The Scriptures reveal a harmonious plan: a future kingdom where every person will have a true opportunity to know God and receive eternal life.

We will journey through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, seeking answers to questions such as:

- What happens to people who died without knowing Jesus?
- Who does God *want* to save?
- Will all people be given a fair chance at salvation?
- What is the purpose of Christ's return and God's kingdom on earth?

As you read, you will find that the Bible's message is more hopeful and inclusive than many have imagined. God's plan is not narrow or exclusive, but broad and merciful—designed to bless all the families of the earth.

Let's set aside fear and tradition and discover together the hope that God's Word offers for all humanity.

Note: All Scripture quotes are from the New King James Version translation unless otherwise indicated.

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I | What happens to people who died without accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior?

Where are those you care deeply about who died without accepting Jesus as their Savior? Have you ever prayed, beyond hope, that someday you might again hug them, hold them, kiss them, or even talk to them?

What about people you never knew or met? How can people who died before Jesus was even born be saved? What happens to those who never heard of Jesus? Do babies who die automatically go to heaven? What if they were never baptized? Are good people who died without accepting Jesus as their Savior now suffering eternal torment?

Many Christians have been taught to expect the worst outcome as answers to these questions. Some have been taught that God works in mysterious ways and there are many questions to which we cannot know the answers. Other Christians hope for a more encouraging answer and struggle with trying to harmonize seemingly conflicting Scriptures. Some attempt to find a way around what they were taught in order to save both babies and morally good atheists.

But if babies and moral atheists are to be saved, how do we explain the Bible verses that plainly state that following Jesus is the only path to salvation?

- **Acts 4:12:** *... there is no other name ... among men by which we must be saved.*
- **John 3:36:** *He who believes in the son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

- **John 14:6:** . . . *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

We understand from these scriptures that God does have a salvation plan for faithful Christians who, saved by faith in Jesus, will join him in heaven (**1 Corinthians 15:40,47-49; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**). However, a more complete understanding of God's plan to save the world is also described in the Bible. We will explore the many scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, which demonstrate God's plan to rescue mankind out of death, including the unbelieving world of mankind (**1 Timothy 4:10**). Let's allow the Bible to speak for itself with only limited commentary.

Key Takeaways

- Many Christians struggle with the fate of those who died as unbelievers, often referred to as "unsaved."
- The Bible states that Jesus is the only way to salvation, and we will seek a fuller understanding of God's plan for all humanity.

Having considered what happens to those who die without accepting Jesus, it's important to ask: Who does God truly desire to save? Understanding God's intentions helps us see the scope and inclusiveness of His plan of salvation.



2 | Who does God *want* to save?

The scriptures clearly state that God's desire is for all people to be saved and to come to repentance, not just a select few. The following verses show God's broader intent and ability to accomplish this purpose.

- **2 Peter 3:9:** (ASV) *The Lord is . . . longsuffering . . . not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

- **1 Timothy 2:4:** (KJV) *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*
- **John 3:17:** *For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.*
- **Isaiah 14:24:** *The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand* (see also **Isaiah 46:9-11; 45:22-23**).

The passages from Isaiah demonstrate that God can accomplish anything He has purposed. If He wants to save everyone, He is powerful enough and wise enough to develop a salvation plan to accomplish it. But can He give all human beings, even those currently unwilling, the best opportunity possible for eternal salvation? Let's find out by continuing our investigation through the questions to follow.

Key Takeaways

- God desires all people to be saved and come to repentance.
- Multiple scriptures affirm God's broader intent and ability to save everyone.

Now that we've seen God's desire for all to be saved, let's explore who is actually included in this plan. The answer will clarify whether salvation is limited to a select group or open to all humanity.



3 | Which people are included in God's salvation plan?

God plans to accomplish His desire to extend an opportunity for salvation to everyone. This is not universal salvation; rather, it is

an opportunity for salvation to everyone, beyond what most of humanity ever experienced in their lifetime. This will become clearer as we proceed through each section.

- **Genesis 22:18:** *In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...* (see also **Genesis 12:3; 18:18-19**)

- **Luke 2:10:** *...the angel said to them, Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.*

- **Hebrews 2:9:** *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels . . . that he . . . might taste death for everyone.*

- **John 12:32:** *And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself.*

- **John 1:9:** *Jesus was the true light, which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

- **Isaiah 40:5:** *The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

The above scriptures indicate that God will accomplish His desire with a salvation plan that is all-encompassing, extending to every nation, all people, and all flesh—no one is excluded from the opportunity to be blessed.

Key Takeaways

- God's plan is all-encompassing, extending to every nation and all people.
- No one is excluded from the opportunity to be blessed.

With the broad scope of God's mercy in view, we must ask: Is the **heavenly hope** of faithful Christians the only salvation, or does the Bible reveal an **earthly restoration** for the rest of the **groaning creation**? Let us examine the scriptural evidence for the distinct roles and rewards found within God's diverse plan.



4 | Can both faithful Christians and the rest of mankind be saved?

The Bible teaches that two groups will be saved: faithful Christians first, and the rest of mankind in God's future kingdom, each with distinct roles and rewards.

- **1 John 2:2:** (Weymouth) *He is an atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

- **1 Timothy 4:10:** . . . God . . . is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

The word “especially” denotes a special reward to faithful believers, above and beyond the rest of mankind.

- **Revelation 22:17:** *And the spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

This is describing a time after the “bride” (i.e. faithful Christians) is in heaven (**Revelation 21:3-6**). As earth's future kings, priests, and judges, the “bride of Christ” will invite mankind to take part in the righteous and peaceful kingdom on earth. More on this in later sections.

- **Romans 8:19-21:** *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God . . . in hope; because the creation itself also (including faithful Christians—sons of God—as well as the rest of creation) **will be delivered** from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

This passage explains that the whole creation has *hope* (verse 20) and has been eagerly waiting for the *sons of God*—the bride of Christ who, with their bridegroom (Jesus), will bring to earth God's righteous and peaceful kingdom and deliver all creation into *the glorious liberty of the children of God*.

• **Genesis 22:17-18:** (KJV) *That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

This promise made to Abraham describes the two classes that will receive blessing from God when His kingdom is established.

- *Stars of the heaven* (i.e. the spiritual seed of Abraham—body members of Christ)
- *Sand which is upon the sea shore* (beginning with Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, and leading to blessing all the nations of earth.)
- Notice there are two groups, two salvations, one Savior!
- *Thy seed* (the spiritual and natural seed of Abraham—with Jesus as their head)

All these verses combined prove that God has a plan to **save and reward** faithful Christians, but he also has a merciful plan to **save** all the willing of mankind in his future kingdom. Think of it this way: Why does God call the *stars* (the body members of Christ or faithful Christians) first? Not to exclude the world, but to prepare the teachers. Before all families of the earth can be blessed, the seed must be complete. The body members of Christ are the channel through which the blessing flows, not the only group being blessed.

• ***Two groups will be saved: Faithful Christians now, and the world of mankind in God's future kingdom on earth.***

In later sections of this booklet, we will see how the salvation for faithful Christians includes rewards far beyond that of mankind (the majority). We are reminded of the Christian worship song by Brian Doerksen, *Come, Now Is the Time to Worship*.

“One day every
Tongue will confess
You are God
One day every knee will bow
Still the greatest treasure
Remains for those
Who gladly choose You now”

Key Takeaways

- The Bible teaches that two groups will be saved: faithful Christians in this age, and the remainder of mankind in God’s future kingdom.
- Faithful Christians will receive a special reward and responsibility, but salvation will also be available to all.

Understanding who can be saved leads us to another important topic: Who will be resurrected? The promise of resurrection is central to the hope offered in Scripture, and it affects every person who has ever lived.



5 | Who will be raised from the dead?

The Scriptures affirm that everyone—both “the just and the unjust”—will be resurrected, ensuring that all have the opportunity for life and blessing.

- **Acts 24:15:** *I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.*

• **John 5:28-29:** *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth. . .*

• **Romans 5:18:** *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*

How can this *free gift* apply to those who lived before Jesus was born, or those who were raised in religions other than Christianity? Since they never had the opportunity to hear of him, they can only benefit from this gift if they are brought back to life.

• **1 Corinthians 15:21-22:** *For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

These Bible verses clearly indicate that everyone who has ever lived will be raised from the dead and given an opportunity to believe under more favorable conditions.

Remember the promise to Abraham:

• **Acts 3:25:** . . . *the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

Obviously, ALL the families of the earth have not yet been blessed. We see people all around us who suffer a lifetime of oppression and injustice, those who know only hunger and poverty. Many live in war zones in constant fear for themselves and their families, or in uncivilized parts of the world without basic human comforts.

We can be confident the fulfillment of this promise is yet future since we know that God is not a liar (**Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18**), and He is more than capable of fulfilling every promise He makes (**Isaiah 14:24; 55:11**).

Key Takeaways

- Everyone—both the just and the unjust—will be resurrected.
- Resurrection ensures all have the opportunity for life and blessing.

Knowing that all will be resurrected, the next question is one of timing. Does this awakening happen the moment a person dies, or has God set aside a **specific future time** for the world to be restored? Let us examine the scriptural evidence for **God's appointed day** of life and blessing.

6



6 | When will people be raised from the dead?

The resurrection for all humanity is set for God's appointed time, after the current world order is replaced by His righteous kingdom. Consider the following scriptures.

• **1 Timothy 2:3-6 (KJV)** *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

How do other translations render the end of this passage?

Montgomery: *to be attested in due time.*

Webster: *to be testified in due time.*

Tyndale: *to be testified of in due season.*

NAS: *the testimony given at the proper time.*

RVIC: *the testimony to be borne in its own times.*

God's *due time* for the testimony of Christ to reach the world is still future.

What has to happen before mankind can be raised from the dead?

• **Zephaniah 3:8-9: (NASB)** *Therefore wait for Me, declares the LORD, For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My*

indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal. For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.

People cannot *call on the name of the LORD* if they are literally destroyed by fire. Scripturally, fire is a symbol of either destruction (**Matthew 3:11-12**) or purification (**1 Peter 1:7; Malachi 3:2-3**). In a furnace, gold is purified by burning away the impurities, the dross. So the fire described by Zephaniah is for purifying the nations. Following the burning, God gives the people “purified lips.” We must look for a solution to an earth that is destroyed by fire, but the people still exist to serve God.

God’s anger is against the world’s system of evil under the control of Satan (**2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2**.) The existing social order will be *devoured by the fire of God’s zeal*. His indignation is against all unrighteousness, all iniquity, and all falsehood. He will then establish a new earth (**Revelation 21:1**), a new *purified* and righteous social order under His control. The unbelieving world will be raised from the dead and will see their hopes realized by being *delivered from the bondage of corruption* into an opportunity for eternal life.

Romans 8:19-21: *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God . . . in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

Suffering mankind longs for a better future. God promises to raise them from the dead and be restored to health while living in paradise conditions. These passages are hope inspiring and reveal the truly merciful and loving character of God.

God is a God of wisdom and order. He has not failed to save the billions who died in ignorance; rather, He has appointed an orderly schedule for each part of His plan. Today is the due time for the calling of the church—those who now believe. The coming Millennium (the 1000-year reign of Christ) will be the due time for

the rest of the world to hear the gospel. As **1 Timothy 2:6** suggests, this is not a second chance, but the **first and only fair opportunity** for every person to hear and understand the testimony of God's beautiful plan in its proper time.

Key Takeaways

- The resurrection of all humanity will continue after God establishes His righteous kingdom, marking a new era where everyone is given the opportunity for life under ideal conditions.
- This future resurrection ensures that every person, regardless of their past, will have a fair opportunity to learn about God and respond to His offer of salvation.

As we examine the timing and process of resurrection, a natural question that is sometimes asked is, "Why didn't Jesus try to convert everyone during His earthly ministry?" The answer becomes clear when we understand that God has devised two ages of salvation.



7 | Why did Jesus NOT want to convert everyone?

Jesus intentionally spoke in parables and symbolic language that was often difficult to grasp, even for his closest disciples. By using this veiled method of teaching, he deliberately limited the full understanding of his message to a small group of followers. This was not a failure to reach the masses. Jesus was withholding the full revelation and the ultimate conversion of the world for the future kingdom of God. His intent was to call a select group of believers to one day reign with him. For now, the world is still blinded by Satan to God's true gospel message (**2 Corinthians 4:3-4**).

- **Matthew 13:10-11:** *And the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He answered and said to them,*

“Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.”

Jesus spoke in parables so that only his followers would understand. He said that his followers were given the *mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*. As a result, the world was not then or now able to appreciate these mysteries.

Jesus continued in **verses 14 and 15**:

• **Matthew 13:14-15:** *And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.*

Jesus spoke to them in parables, *lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them*. That statement tells us something important! It means that God does not want everyone to be converted (*turned*) now. But, if not now, when? The answer again is, in God's future kingdom on earth. Then, all mankind will be educated in His plan and all who are willing will be converted. For the present age, Jesus veiled his statements so only sincere believers would understand.

It was not God's purpose to convert the world before His future kingdom on earth. But then mankind's blindness will be removed, and they will see clearly.

• **Isaiah 60:1-3:** *Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you (natural Israel). For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.*

Key Takeaways

- Jesus limited the understanding of God's plan to his followers during his earthly ministry.
- Full revelation and conversion of the world is reserved for God's future kingdom.

If conversion was not the immediate goal of Jesus' earthly ministry, what does the future hold? In the following section, we will see how God's kingdom will provide the actual time and place where every person will finally have the opportunity to learn, understand, and embrace the gospel if they so choose.

8



8 | Will all mankind eventually learn and accept the gospel?

In God's future kingdom, after spiritual blindness is removed, all people will have the opportunity to learn and embrace the gospel and God's righteous ways.

- **Revelation 20:2, 3:** *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more . . .*

One important change that will occur in God's kingdom is that Satan will be bound, unable to "deceive the nations." Mankind's blindness will be removed, and all people will have the opportunity to learn and embrace the gospel message and God's righteous ways.

- **John 1:9:** (NASB) *This was the true Light (Jesus) that, coming into the world, enlightens every person.*

Once the veil of blindness, ignorance, superstition, and deception is removed, mankind will be ready and eager to learn God's righteous principles.

- **Isaiah 29:18, 24:** *In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who complained will learn doctrine.*

- **Isaiah 26:9:** . . . *For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

- **Isaiah 11:9-10:** *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse (Jesus), who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek him, and his resting place shall be glorious.*

- **Micah 4:1-2:** *Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; **and peoples shall flow to it.** Many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

- **Isaiah 35:8:** (ESV) *And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.*

The truth on this *Way of Holiness* will be so clear that even fools will not go astray.

Key Takeaways

- In God's kingdom, blindness will be removed.
- All people will have the opportunity to learn and embrace the gospel.

Once all have learned the gospel, will everyone truly worship and serve God? This next section explores the ultimate outcome of God's plan for humanity.

9



9 | Will all people really worship and serve God?

All who learn and accept the gospel and acknowledge, worship, and serve God, giving Him universal recognition and praise.

- **Philippians 2:9-11:** *Therefore God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus **every** knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.*

Those under the earth include those asleep in the grave who will worship God when resurrected back to life in the kingdom.

- **Revelation 15:4:** *Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For **all nations** shall come and worship before You. . .*

- **Daniel 7:14,27:** *Then to him (Christ) was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that **all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him . . . his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.***

Notice it says, *his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*. The people on earth will continue to serve Christ forever.

- **Isaiah 66:23:** (ASV) . . . ***all flesh** come to worship before me, saith Jehovah.*

• **Psalm 22:27:** *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and **all the families of the nations** shall worship before You.*

• **Psalm 138:4:** *All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD, when they hear the words of Your mouth.*

• **Psalms 72:8, 11, 17:** *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Yes, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. His name shall endure forever; his name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in him; **all nations shall call him blessed.***

Key Takeaways

- Ultimately, every person will be given the opportunity to worship and serve God.
- Universal recognition and praise for God is clearly foretold in Scripture.

With the destiny of all people in view, what role will faithful Christians play in God's kingdom? Understanding their mission helps us see how God's plan will be carried out.



10 | What is the future mission of faithful Christians?

Faithful Christians are being prepared to assist Jesus in rehabilitating and guiding resurrected humanity toward moral and spiritual perfection in God's kingdom.

As a perfect human being Jesus was the only man who could save and redeem mankind by his death on the cross (see Section 15). However, when mankind is raised from the dead, they will still possess sinful tendencies. Most will never have learned

otherwise in this life. And so, the work of God's kingdom will be rehabilitation, to bring mankind to a sinless and righteous life, in favor with God. Faithful Christians of this age will help guide and teach the world, much as they were guided in their own earthly lives. Peter described the purpose of a Christians' faith.

What is the purpose of this mission?

- **1 Peter 1:9:** (YLT) *receiving the end of your faith—salvation of souls.*

The amazing purpose God has designed for today's believers is the *salvation of souls*—the souls of the human race in the coming kingdom!

The essence of the Christian life today then is to be trained to support Jesus' future work of bringing mankind back to moral, spiritual and physical perfection here on earth. God's divine plan supersedes all traditions and creeds of men that limit God's love for mankind. We must not make God's love too narrow by false restrictions not supported by the Bible.

Who carries out the mission?

- **Obadiah 1:21:** *Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion . . .*

The word *saviors* here is plural. The prophet Obadiah is prophetically referring to Jesus and his glorified followers, his body members working under his direction to save and restore mankind. The *saviors* are on *Mount Zion*. **Revelation 14:1-5** tells us the *redeemed . . . firstfruits* are on *Mount Zion*. These *redeemed* (**Ephesians 1:7**) *firstfruits* (**James 1:18**) are the faithful followers of Christ being developed in this present age.

Jesus' redemptive sacrifice will enable all mankind to be resurrected from the dead. But they will then need training to learn the true meaning of righteous behavior. This is how Christians can participate in helping to save mankind. The Apostle Paul reiterates the purpose God has called faithful believers. Their assigned work will be to help the now dead world back to life.

- **1 Corinthians 15:29:** *Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?*

Romans 12:1-2 tells us our hearts and heads must be morally and spiritually transformed. Our Christian baptism, accepted by God, indicates our willingness to be transformed by following Christ. Following in Jesus' footsteps trains us in moral and spiritual righteousness for the purpose of helping the world of mankind, who are *dead in (their) sins* (**Colossians 2:13**). For this reason, then, we are *baptized for the dead*.

God's promise to Abraham indicated long ago that it was God's plan to bless the world.

- **Acts 3:25:** . . . *the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

This is repeated by the Apostle Paul in **Galatians 3**.

Galatians 3:29: *If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

1. So, Christ Jesus and his footstep followers are *heirs according to the promise*.
2. The promise to Abraham said, *In your seed* (i.e. your descendants) *all the families of the earth shall be blessed*.
3. Therefore, Jesus and his church (faithful Christians) will soon bless all the families of the earth—they are Abraham's spiritual seed.

What will be their titles and responsibilities?

In their work with Jesus to bless all the families of the earth, the faithful followers of Jesus will reign in a subordinate role under their master Jesus, the *King of kings and Lord of lords* (**Revelation 17:14; 19:16**).

- **2 Timothy 2:12:** *If we endure, we shall also reign with him...*
- **Revelation 1:6:** *and has made us kings and priests to his God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.*
- **Revelation 20:6:** *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years.*
- **1 Corinthians 6:2:** *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? . . .*
- **1 Corinthians 6:3:** *Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*
- **Matthew 19:28:** *So Jesus said to them (the apostles), Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- **Daniel 7:27:** (NIV) *Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.*

In the last passage the prophet Daniel says that “kingdoms” will be given to the saints. What kingdoms are these? *The kingdoms under the whole heaven* including their people who have been resurrected from the dead. For how long? *His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom.* In roles subordinate to Jesus, these will be the judges, priests and kings over mankind in God’s future kingdom on earth.

To summarize, here’s what we have learned from the scriptural evidence presented in this section:

- 1. What**—there is to be a rescue mission to bring mankind back from the dead.
- 2. Who**—Jesus the head and his followers (his body members, his saints) will work together.

3. **Why**—though resurrected, mankind will come back not knowing how to live righteously. They will need education to learn how to do this.

4. **How**—Jesus, as the supreme Judge, Priest and King, is given power by his Father to judge, guide and righteously rule mankind and angels. In a subordinate role of judges, priests and kings, Jesus' body members will support his work to rehabilitate mankind back to moral, spiritual and physical perfection in the future paradise kingdom on earth.

Key Takeaways

- Faithful Christians will assist Jesus in rehabilitating resurrected humanity toward moral and spiritual perfection, serving as mentors and leaders in God's kingdom.
- Their work will help restore humanity to a state of harmony with God, fulfilling the purpose of the future kingdom.

Having seen the future mission of faithful Christians, we must now ask: When does this great work of blessing the world begin? To understand the future role of the Body of Christ, we must look at the timeline for the resurrection and the 1,000-year period of education and restoration—the Millennium.



II | When does the resurrection and judgment of mankind take place?

The resurrection and judgment process begins at Christ's return and continues throughout the 1,000 years, offering all people the opportunity for repentance and life. This question is important because many Christian churches teach that mankind's resurrection and judgment will occur in a 24-hour period, at the end of the 1,000 years. The judgment is considered simply a

formality, since the sinner will have already been judged, then sent to hell and eternal torment based on their behavior before they died. They are brought back simply to be formally condemned but are not permitted any further opportunity to repent and be saved.

A common hurdle for many is **Hebrews 9:27**, which states, *'it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.'* Because this verse is so deeply ingrained in traditional thought, it is helpful to look at it through a tiered approach that considers both a simple application for the individual and the deeper insights of God's plan.

The First Tier: A Message for All Humanity On its most direct level, the one death mentioned here is the universal sentence of death that passed upon the entire human race through Adam's original disobedience (**Romans 5:12, 18**). The judgment that follows is not a sentence of immediate condemnation at the moment of death, but the world's individual trial for life during the 1,000-year 'Day of Judgment' (**2 Peter 3:8; John 5:28-29; Isaiah 26:9**). Today, death is the result of Adam's failure, but the subsequent judgment is a merciful period of education and restoration under the leadership of Christ.

The Second Tier: A Deeper Insight for the Church For those seeking a deeper insight, the Bible provides a secondary application of this verse found in the symbolism of the ancient Tabernacle. In this prophetic picture, the men represent Israel's ancient High Priests of Israel. Their death was pictured when they passed under the second veil into the Most Holy—a symbolic death to the earthly condition to enter the presence of God. The judgment followed as God decided if their sacrifice was accepted. This was ultimately fulfilled by Jesus, our Great High Priest, who entered heaven itself to appear before God for us. His judgment was the Father's acceptance of his ransom sacrifice, which legally secured the blessing of life for the entire human race.

To truly dismantle the fear of eternal suffering, one must look at the original Bible words translated hell. In the Old Testament,

the Hebrew word is Sheol, and in the New Testament, the Greek word is Hades. These words do not describe a place of fire or even consciousness, but simply the grave—a state of oblivion and sleep where both the good and the bad go at death (**Ecclesiastes 9:10**). This is why the Bible can say that even Jesus went to hell (Hades) and was raised from it (**Acts 2:31**). Understanding that the “hell” of the Bible is the silent grave ensures that the character of God remains one of love and justice, rather than one of vindictive cruelty.

Revelation 20:1 indicates that Jesus returns at the beginning of the 1,000 years, at which time he begins to bind Satan (**verses 1-3**). The resurrection and judgment process begins at Christ’s return and continues throughout the 1,000 years, offering all people the opportunity for repentance and life.

The difficulty for some is the wording of Revelation 20:5. *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

However, it appears that the first sentence of verse 5 was not part of the original text. The Sinaitic manuscript, the oldest complete copy of the New Testament written over 1,600 years ago, omits it. The verse should simply read, *“This is the first resurrection.”* Note then the connection to the previous verse. It describes those who have not worshipped the beast or his image or received his mark. These individuals were not part of the great antichrist system of this age—identified by many Reformation-era scholars as the institutional religious-political powers of the time—but proved faithful to Christ. Consequently, they will reign with him during the 1,000 years.

Compare with:

• **2 Timothy 4:1**: *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.*

Judgment of the living and the dead starts with the faithful Christians (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**) after Christ returns *at his appearing*, which is at the beginning of the 1,000 years.

- **1 Peter 2:12:** (ESV) *Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God in the day of visitation.*

This means that the offending *Gentiles* can *glorify God in the day of visitation*. This would only be possible if they are raised from the dead. Here we have an example of people repenting (they *glorify God*) after being resurrected back to life in the kingdom. This is a real hope for those who died unsaved.

- **2 Thessalonians 1:10:** . . . *He comes . . . to be glorified in his saints and to be admired among all those who believe. . . .*

Two distinct groups are identified after Jesus' return. The *saints* are faithful Christians, and the remainder of mankind are described as *all those who believe* and will accept and admire Jesus after he returns. The latter group includes all of humanity except the saints, who would have already been raised. Clearly, mankind will be given a full opportunity to repent after they are resurrected from the dead.

The resurrection begins early in the 1,000 years at Christ's return starting with faithful Christians (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**) and followed by all mankind (**Acts 24:15**).

It is important to note that the "judgment" the saints participate in is not a terrifying sentencing to doom. In the Bible, a "judge" was often a deliverer (like the Book of Judges). This future judgment is a 1,000-year "day" of education, where mankind will be judged based on their progress toward righteousness under perfect conditions.

Key Takeaways

- By identifying the first sentence of Revelation 20:5 as a later addition (absent in the Codex Sinaiticus), we remove the primary scriptural hurdle to understanding that the resurrection of the world begins during the Millennium, not after it, providing a clear and scriptural alternative to the traditional interpretation of **Hebrews 9:27** that the world receives an immediate condemnation.

- Resurrection and judgment are a 1,000-year process, a “day” of education and trial, not a 24-hour sentencing. All people will have the opportunity for repentance and life during this period.

The promise of a future resurrection leads us to the often-misunderstood topic of the great white throne. Rather than a moment of immediate condemnation, let us see how the Bible describes this as a **period of guidance and transformation** for all who have lived.



12 | What is the great white throne judgment of the world?

- **Revelation 20:11, 12:** *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

The great white throne judgment is a period during which resurrected humanity will be evaluated and guided toward righteousness, with Christ and his followers serving as judges and mentors.

The Bible’s testimony reveals that resurrection and judgment are not confined to a single 24-hour period, but instead unfold throughout the 1,000-year reign of Christ. In a prophetic sense, this entire Millennium constitutes a “day” of judgment (**2 Peter 3:8**). **Revelation 20** describes this era as a time during which Christ and his saints reign and Satan is bound. This will allow the

world to be evaluated according to their works after they return to life (**Revelation 20:4, 12**) and are taught God's truth (**Isaiah 26:9**). This follows the divine sequence of "every man in his own order" (**1 Corinthians 15:23**)—beginning with the faithful followers of Christ and followed by the remainder of the human race as they are gradually brought back to life.

Isaiah 65:20 and **Isaiah 26:9** depict a time when people will learn righteousness and have opportunity for growth and correction, not instant condemnation. This aligns with Jesus' words in **John 5:28–29**, where all in the graves *hear his voice* and come forth, but the eventual outcome depends on their response during the judgment age.

This 1,000-year Millennium is a "school of Christ," where all are taught, tested, and given the opportunity to choose life. Judgment is a process of education and transformation, culminating in final decisions at the close of the age.

Note the symbolism of Revelation 20:11-12: *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth (the world's system of evil) and the heaven (old government, economic and religious authorities) fled away (destroyed in 2 Peter 3:10 NAS). And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead (mankind raised from the dead initially in a morally and spiritually dead condition), small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged (during the 1,000-year period of God setting up his kingdom on earth) according to their works, by the things which were written in the books (the books of the Old and New Testaments).*

The passage says that John *saw the dead . . . standing before God*. The meaning of *dead* is found in **Matthew 8:21-22**: *Then another of his disciples said to him, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. But Jesus said to him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.*

In the biblical sense, those awakened from the dead in the kingdom are still "reckoned dead" (**Romans 6:11**). They are not considered "alive" until they progress to moral, spiritual and physical

perfection, and are judged as either worthy or unworthy of life. They will be judged according to their works *by the things which were written in the books*—the moral and spiritual standards of the books of the Bible, in the Old and New Testament. Corrections and testing experiences will be provided to people bringing them to repentance, righteousness and everlasting life. Under God's guidance and authority, the apostles and glorified body members of Christ will share in the work of mentoring, teaching, guiding, and correcting sinful mankind to help bring them back into full harmony with God—their Creator.

This is the clear scriptural teaching. It is reasonable and reflects the loving and wise character of God. Mankind will be able to appreciate that this new heavenly government is comprised of people who suffered many of the same painful experiences in their earthly lives as did they. Hence people will see that the members of the heavenly government can truly sympathize with and understand them.

Will Anyone Reject God's Kingdom?

- **Revelation 20:7-9:** *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

At the end of the 1,000-year kingdom, Satan will be released from his prison and allowed to interact with mankind once again. This will be the world's final test. Despite the wonderful conditions existing in God's kingdom, some will follow him. It is hard to imagine why they will do that, but their end is assured. Along with Satan they will be cast into the lake of fire, which the Revelator explains is *the second death* (verse 14). It will be a death from which no resurrection will be possible. But for the remainder of mankind, the test will be complete and everlasting life will be granted to all

who accepted the terms of obedience and grew to love and serve God.

Key Takeaways

- **Judgment as a Transformative Process:** The great white throne is not a singular moment of condemnation, but a 1,000-year “school of Christ” designed to educate, test, and guide resurrected humanity toward moral and physical perfection.
- **A Government of Empathy:** Christ and his glorified followers serve as judges and mentors who, having experienced human suffering themselves, provide sympathetic guidance to help mankind return to harmony with God.

Understanding the nature of judgment helps us see how people will be evaluated and guided in the future kingdom. This next question explains the standards and process by which all will be judged.



13 | How will mankind be judged in God’s kingdom?

In the future kingdom, people will be judged by their actions and choices after resurrection, according to the moral and spiritual standards of the Bible.

We know Christians are justified by faith in God (**Romans 3:28; 5:1**) and that salvation from the Adamic curse (the ransom) is a gift from Christ (**Romans 5:18**).

Many Christians believe that all people are eternally judged based on whether they accepted Jesus “by faith” before they die. As we have seen, the Bible actually teaches that non-Christians will be

judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books (**Revelation 20:12; Matthew 25:31-46**), based on their behavior and progress after they are resurrected during the 1,000-year Millennium.

God's judgment is not about punishing people for mistakes made in ignorance or weakness in their previous life. Instead, everyone will have a full opportunity to learn, grow, and make better choices in a world without the pervasive influence of Satan and sin. Their past experiences will help them understand the difference between good and evil, but their final judgment will depend on how they respond to their education in God's kingdom.

John 12:47-48: *And if anyone hears my words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*

This is basically the same concept as **Revelation 20:12**, *the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books*. In God's kingdom on earth, mankind will be judged by the moral and spiritual standards written in the *books* of the Bible, especially those things Jesus spoke. Today, Christians are not able to perform perfect works (**Romans 3:11-12,20; 8:3; Hebrews 7:19**). However, in the future kingdom, people will be brought back to the human perfection lost by Adam and they will eventually be capable of perfect works.

- **Matthew 12:32:** *Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

Personal judgment occurs in two ages and among two classes, first on Christians who have received the holy spirit since Pentecost, then later on all mankind after God *pours His spirit on ALL flesh* (**Acts 2:17**). But, apparently, there will be those who speak against the holy spirit. These are certainly not faithful Christians who will then be in heaven. Consequently, it refers to some individuals who,

after being raised from the dead, will still choose to rebel against that divine influence. Ultimately, a persistent, willful rejection of God's spirit—devoid of any desire for moral or spiritual progress—cannot be forgiven, as it represents a final choice to reject the very source of life.

• **Revelation 22:14-15:** *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*

Since no one is currently eating from the “tree of life,” this prophecy refers to a future time. Outside the city (God's kingdom on earth) are sinners who reject God's righteous standards. At that time, people must make the choice to follow God's commandments and live or reject it and eventually die. But it stands to reason that these will be very few.

• **Isaiah 26:9:** . . . *For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

Isaiah describes the people of earth learning righteousness during the judgment period in God's future kingdom on earth.

Key Takeaways

- People will be judged by their actions and choices after resurrection, according to the Bible's moral and spiritual standards.
- Judgment is based on behavior and character growth during the Millennium.

If judgment is an educational process, what does this mean for those who lived truly wicked lives? Does God's plan of restoration include **even the most rebellious**, or is there a limit to His mercy? The answer reveals the perfect harmony of **divine justice and love**.



14 | What is the fate of the wicked during God's kingdom?

Even those who have lived wickedly in this life will be resurrected and granted a fair, merciful opportunity to repent and learn righteousness; however, divine justice will determine that those who then persistently choose to reject God's grace will face eternal destruction.

- **Matthew 11:20-22:** *Then he began to rebuke the cities in which most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.*

- **Luke 11:32:** *The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.*

In **Matthew 11:20-24** and **Luke 11:32**, Jesus reveals a startling truth: had he performed his miracles in Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, they would have repented, and Sodom would have remained to his day. This raises a critical question: how could the judgment of Sodom be *more tolerable* than the cities in Israel if both faced a fate of unending agony? If the doctrine of eternal torment were true, it would be equally intolerable for everyone; there are no degrees of “tolerable” in an eternity of suffering. This comparison only makes sense if judgment involves man's progress during a measurable period of education and correction rather than varying degrees of torture.

We must remember two things:

First, like all of humanity, the residents of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom were already condemned to death because of Adam's sin. Their trial for eternal life will be in the kingdom.

Second, people are responsible for the level of knowledge they have about God. Jesus was telling the Jews that because they had the advantage of the Law and the prophets and a relationship with God, they had a greater responsibility to recognize him as God's son and the Messiah. Their heart condition, as indicated by their rejection of Jesus, meant that they would have a more difficult time in the kingdom than even Sodom, which sinned in ignorance.

• **Ezekiel 16:55, 61, 62:** *When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you (Jerusalem) and your daughters will return to your former state. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed . . . And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.*

Even wicked people will be raised from the dead, (i.e., *return to your former state*) and have an opportunity for everlasting life. That's what the scriptures say!

In this future kingdom, the people who did not follow Jesus during this present life—including the wicked and non-Christians—will then have the opportunity to repent from their former evil and choose to serve and obey God and Jesus.

Key Takeaways

- Even the wicked will be resurrected and given a fair opportunity to repent.
- Only those who persistently reject God will face eternal destruction, described in **Revelation 20:14** as *the second death*.

The hope of salvation and restoration hinges on a pivotal event: the death of Jesus. Understanding why Jesus had to die reveals the foundation of God's plan for all humanity.



15 | Why did Jesus have to die? The Ransom and Divine Justice.

We read in the Gospels about Jesus' earthly ministry, how he proclaimed God's love and kingdom, teaching and healing, demonstrating compassion, purity, and courage. His exemplary ministry was cut short, when he was unjustly accused, tortured and executed on the cross. After he proved his faithfulness and ultimate love, an example to be cherished for eternity, he was raised and given all power in heaven and earth. We consider why the sinless Son of God acquiesced to the situation and died without resisting or calling angels to the rescue.

Jesus lived as a man and willingly died in order to provide a redemption and future liberation of the whole world from the bondage of sin. He died to provide the perfect, corresponding "ransom" for Adam's sin, satisfying divine justice and opening the way for all humanity to receive life.

The Apostle Paul explains the reason Jesus had to die:

- **Romans 5:12:** *Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

The Apostle Paul explains that we die because Adam sinned by disobeying God. As a result, and ALL of his children (all of mankind) inherited sin and its result, death. Paul then presents the solution.

- **Romans 5:16:** *... For the judgment which came from one (Adam's) offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift (from Jesus) which came from many offenses resulted in justification.*

Jesus died in order to provide the *free gift* of *justification*, which Jesus' followers have enjoyed since Pentecost. Justification is a special relationship with God where our sins are covered and forgiven (**Romans 4:5-8**). However, as we have seen, there is hope for those who have not yet accepted Jesus.

Remember at Jesus' birth what the angel said to the shepherds:

- **Luke 2:10-11:** (NASB) *And so the angel said to them, Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for **all the people**; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a **Savior**, who is Christ the Lord.*

Later, John the Baptist would say of Jesus:

- **John 1:29:** . . . *Behold! The Lamb of God who **takes away the sin of the world!***

The Scriptures clearly state that Jesus came into the world to atone for the sin that Adam passed down to the human race. Jesus did not die only for faithful Christians, but for all of Adam's posterity, eventually giving mankind the opportunity to accept Jesus as Lord in the future kingdom of God on earth.

In the Old Testament, under the Law of Moses, we find a divine principle that reveals God's perfect standard of divine justice:

- **Leviticus 24:20-21:** (KJV) *Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again. And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death.*

God's justice requires *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*. If a man murdered someone, he must pay with his own life: a life for a life (also see **Exodus 21:23-25; Deuteronomy 19:21**).

The ransom we described above is the "corresponding price"—Jesus' perfect life given for Adam's—making possible the redemption and restoration of all people.

The Apostle Paul uses the word *ransom* in **1 Timothy 2:5-6** . . . *the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a **ransom** for all, to be testified in due time.*

The word ransom is a translation of the Greek word *antilutron* which means “corresponding price.” When father Adam sinned, death passed upon him and the prospective human race yet to be born from him. Adam then lost the right to life—and everyone who came from him lost the right to life as well. Under our current laws, if a man owns property, then becomes delinquent on his payments and loses the right to that property, his children would also lose the right to it. Similarly, Adam lost “life-rights” for himself and all of his progeny. All were condemned to death for the sin of Adam.

A future deliverance from death (i.e. a resurrection), required the payment of a “corresponding price,” for the perfect man Adam. The price required was the death of another perfect man. No member of the sinful, human race could pay this price.

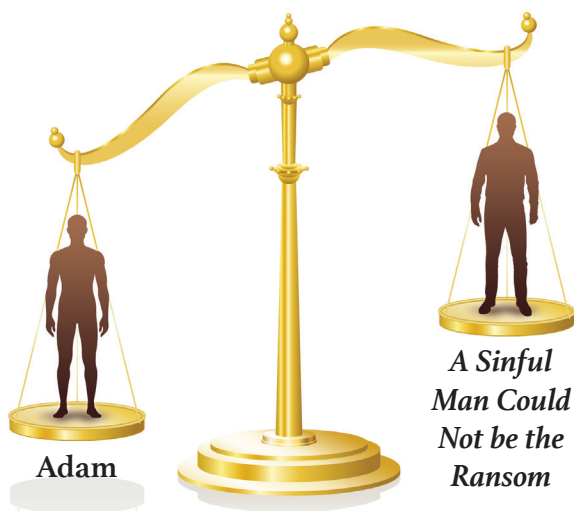
Only Jesus, who was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners* (**Hebrews 7:26**) could provide a ransom, a corresponding price—a perfect human life for a perfect human life—Jesus for Adam—to bring the scales of justice back into balance.

This is why Jesus had to die. It was the only solution to save mankind.

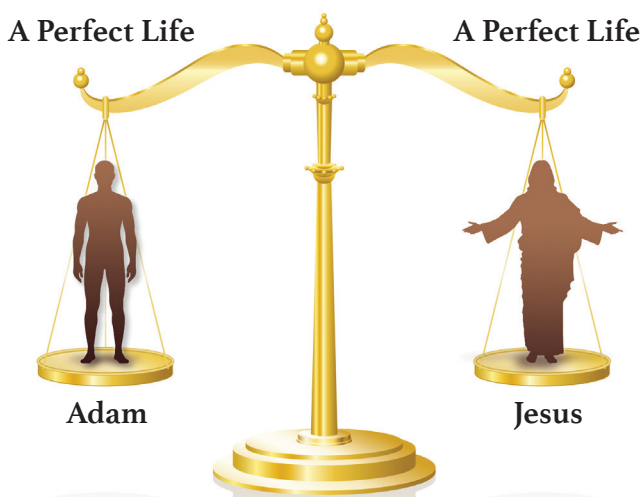
According to **Psalms 49:7-9**, no other human could pay the ransom price. (ESV) *Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit.*

Adam was perfect before he sinned. Therefore a sinful man could not be a ransom (a corresponding price) for Adam. This can be illustrated by a balance scale that is out of balance. (See opposite page.) With Adam on one side of the scale and any sinful man on the other side of the scale, the scales of justice would not be satisfied, it would remain out of balance.

In order to atone for the sin of the perfect man Adam, an equal price, or weight, was required in payment. A perfect human life for a perfect human life would bring the scales back into balance—*life for life* (**Exodus 21:23**). However, no one on earth was perfect and therefore no one on earth could be an equal price or weight to atone for Adam’s perfect life that he lost through sin (**Psalms 49:7-9**).



Therefore, God sent His son into the world, the perfect man Jesus, to give his life as the ransom price in place of the fallen—formerly perfect man—Adam. He thereby redeemed Adam and his children, the entire world of mankind. This brings the scales of justice into balance. Only the perfect man Jesus could balance the scales against the once perfect Adam. A perfect 100 percent human life (Jesus) for a perfect 100 percent human life (Adam).



Only Jesus as a Sinless Equivalent could be the Ransom

The Apostle Paul explains it this way:

- **Romans 5:18:** *Therefore, as through one man's (Adam's) offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one man's (Jesus) righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*

The principle of “a perfect life for a perfect life” was involved. So, the reason Jesus had to die was:

- to give his life as a corresponding price for Adam
- to satisfy God's divine law of justice

These were each needed in order to save mankind from the sin and death inherited from Adam—and to provide the world with justification to life. For mankind it is the first step in the future opportunity for eternal life.

Key Takeaways

- **The Corresponding Price:** Divine Justice is like a pair of scales requiring a “life for a life.” Because one perfect man (Adam) lost life for the race, it required the death of one perfect man (Jesus)—an *antilutron*—to legally balance the scales.
- **A Universal Purchase:** Because Jesus purchased Adam, he legally purchased everyone who died in Adam. This ensures that every person—including the unsaved, the ignorant, and the young—is released from the Adamic condemnation and guaranteed a fair opportunity for life in the kingdom.

Understanding why Jesus had to die is only the first step. We must now ask: How does a single sacrifice from 2,000 years ago legally apply to the billions who died without ever knowing him? Let us explore the power of the corresponding price that clears the debt for the entire human race.



16 | What is the purpose of God's kingdom on earth?

God's kingdom will restore all creation to harmony with Him, teaching humanity love, peace, and righteousness under Christ's leadership.

The Scriptures paint a wonderful and heart-assuring picture!

- **Daniel 7:14, 27:** *Then to him (Christ) was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that ALL peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him . . . His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.*

- **Isaiah 2:2-4:** *Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house (God's government) shall be established on the top of the mountains (earth's subordinate governments) and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion (heavenly government) shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (center of God's earthly government). He shall judge between the nations and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*

- **Ephesians 1:9, 10:** (Weymouth) . . . *he made known to us . . . God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it—the PURPOSE which He has cherished in His own mind of RESTORING THE WHOLE CREATION to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one head in him.*

The purpose of God's future kingdom on earth is to restore the whole creation to harmony and fellowship with God. Under the rule and authority of Jesus and his body members—earth's future judges, priests, and kings—mankind will be taught love, peace, and righteousness. This will establish a society devoted to the service and obedience of God.

Key Takeaways

- God's kingdom will bring all creation into harmony with Him.
- Humanity will be fully developed in the pure heart condition desired by God, under Christ's leadership.

Some may ask if this means the wicked will escape justice. However, it is essential to understand how God's justice and mercy work in perfect harmony to achieve the restoration of the human race.



17 | Is God giving wicked people a free pass?

God's justice ensures that everyone is held accountable for their actions; discipline and consequences serve to teach righteousness, not to excuse evil. Is it fair that the wicked will be resurrected from the dead with the opportunity for repentance and eternal life? Are they getting a free pass and thereby avoiding God's justice? The answer is, NO.

- **1 Timothy 5:24:** *Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.*

Some men's sins have immediate consequences. These may experience personal suffering, self-inflicted misery, or human imposed justice. However, for others who are not held accountable today, their judgment will come after the resurrection. That judgment may consist of certain personal

punishments and/or recompense made to those who were wronged. But it will not be eternal torment. The consequences will be intended as a learning experience.

Whatever those specific consequences will be, the ultimate purpose is repentance and recovery of sinners to the righteous and sinless condition that Adam possessed as he fellowshiped with God in the Garden of Eden. There is a basic principle that no one can avoid; we reap what we sow! (**Galatians 6:7-8**) The principle of “reaping what we sow” finds its most profound application in the state of one’s character at the moment of resurrection. Divine justice is manifested in the fact that while all are awakened, they do not all begin at the same moral starting point. A person who spent a lifetime practicing cruelty will face a much more difficult climb toward perfection than one who merely struggled with weakness. There will be disciplines in Christ’s kingdom. (**Luke 12:47-48**) In this way, the punishment is not an arbitrary sentence, but the tangible, remedial effort required to overcome a deeply ingrained history of sin. The unrepentant, and wicked who refuse to grow morally and spiritually will be eternally destroyed (**Revelation 20:14-15; Matthew 25:41; 1 John 5:12; Psalm 149:9; Jeremiah 31:29-30**).

It is a mistake to view this future opportunity as a “free pass” or a simple dismissal of past sins. The 1,000-year Millennium is a disciplined educational process—a school of christ—where the goal is nothing less than total character transformation. While the ransom paid by Jesus provides the legal right to live again, the individual must still perform the hard work of overcoming sinful habits. Divine justice is maintained through remedial punishments. These are not vindictive tortures, but necessary stripes or corrections designed to teach the individual the consequences of unrighteousness. Those who practiced cruelty in this life will face a much more difficult and disciplined climb toward perfection than those who merely struggled with human weakness. In God’s kingdom, everyone is held strictly accountable, and only those who willingly choose to develop a righteous character will ultimately receive eternal life.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32: (Weymouth) *But if we took time to look into our hearts first, then we would not be punished. When we are punished, the Lord is teaching us to do right, so that we will not be punished with the rest of the people of the world.*

This verse clarifies that the purpose for punishment is for *instruction in righteousness* and that the same will be true for the remainder of mankind in the future kingdom on earth.

- **Ecclesiastes 12:14:** (NASB) . . . *God will bring every act to judgment. . .*

- **Revelation 20:12:** *the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*

During the 1,000-year Millennium people will be held accountable for their actions, either sins committed in the past or for those committed after the resurrection, based on the perfect moral and spiritual standards of the Bible. They will be required to make amends for the harm they caused (**Isaiah 60:14; Revelation 3:9**). For many, the work will be considerable.

- **Matthew 12:36:** (KJV) *But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

Furthermore, part of the disciplinary process includes the sobering “shame and contempt” (**Daniel 12:2**) of seeing one’s past actions in the clear light of God’s truth. This awakening of the conscience serves as a powerful catalyst for genuine repentance, as individuals come to realize the true impact of their former choices on both themselves and others.

These verses that speak of consequences and punishment are clarified when considered in light of God’s plan for the restoration of the human family. The ultimate purpose of the punishment of evil behavior will be to bring about repentance, leading to a righteous transformation of character.

Key Takeaways

- **Divine Accountability via the School of Christ:** God's kingdom offers no "free pass" for past sins; instead, it functions as a disciplined school of Christ where justice is maintained through remedial punishment and "stripes" designed to teach righteousness and hold every individual strictly accountable for their choices.
- **The Requirement of Character Transformation:** Eternal life is a gift that also requires total character transformation. Consequently, those who practiced cruelty in this life will face a much more difficult climb toward perfection than those who merely struggled with human weakness. The cruel will have a climb with disciplining "stripes."

If God's discipline is a tool for growth rather than a sentence of torture, how does this process actually change a person's heart? Let us look at how the perfect environment of the kingdom will help every individual transition from a life of sin to a life of peace and righteousness.



18 | How will mankind experience a moral and spiritual transformation? In God's future kingdom of peace, most people will transition from being seekers of personal gain to practitioners of love, mercy, truth, and justice—gradually helping one another toward moral and spiritual perfection as the path to righteousness is made clear for all.

Isaiah 2:3: Many people shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. . .

What is true for natural Israel will also be true for all mankind, they will seek to know God and His law. “Many people” will then recognize their need to be taught “His ways” and “His paths.”:

• **Jeremiah 31:33-34:** *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*

God will expect the inhabitants of the kingdom to demonstrate the love and righteousness they are learning by actively assisting others on their journey toward perfection.

• **Matthew 25:34-36,40:** *Then the King will say to those on his right hand . . . for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me. And the King will answer and say to them, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.*

While these deeds will be performed literally—bringing immediate relief to those in need—their deeper purpose is to facilitate a total transformation of the heart. The words of Jesus also represent the healing of moral sickness and the clothing of those in spiritual nakedness. As the King explains in the parable of the sheep and goats, these practical expressions of mercy are the standard by which our devotion to God is measured:

• **Isaiah 35:8-10:** (ESV) *And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean (wicked) shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it (no evil governments, institutions or authorities); they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall*

walk there. And the ransomed [mankind raised from the dead] of the LORD shall return and come to Zion (God's kingdom on earth ruled from heaven) with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The path to righteousness will be so clear and simple to understand that even fools will not go astray in God's kingdom.

The Role of Free Will in God's Plan

While God's plan provides every person with a full, fair, and informed opportunity for salvation, the Bible also teaches that God does not force anyone to accept the terms required for eternal life. Free will is a central principle of God's dealings with humanity. He desires willing, intelligent obedience rather than coerced loyalty. In the kingdom, every individual will be fully enlightened and able to choose, without the deceptions and limitations of the present time. Those who freely choose to accept God's offer will receive eternal life. Those who persistently and knowingly reject it, even after fully understanding the requirements, will ultimately be destroyed (See **Deuteronomy 30:19**; **Revelation 20:15**).

This is not universal salvation, but universal opportunity. God's love and justice ensure that every person's choice will be respected, and no one will be able to claim they were denied a fair opportunity for life.

Key Takeaways

- In God's kingdom, people will learn and practice God's standards, helping one another toward moral and spiritual perfection.
- The path to righteousness will be clear for all.
- The free will of every individual will be fully honored.

Having explored God's **Divine Plan** from every angle, we return to our central question: Is there hope for those who die unsaved? As we pull together the threads of Scripture, we see a **brighter result for humanity** than tradition has ever dared to hope—one that fully honors the character of our **loving Creator**.



19 | Is there hope for those who died without accepting Jesus?

From the carefully considered weight of the Bible's testimony on the topics of salvation and restoration, there can be no doubt to the honest student of Scripture that the judgment of unbelievers is yet future, at which time they will have the opportunity to accept Jesus as their Savior. In His love and mercy, God will accomplish His desire to save everyone who is willing to serve and worship Him. In His patience, God will give even the wicked every opportunity to repent. He will make certain they fully understand the consequences of disobedience and evil. In the future ages of eternity, no person will be able to accuse God of not providing a full, fair, and informed opportunity for eternal salvation.

Ultimately, the most powerful evidence for this hope is found in the very character of God. The doctrine of eternal torment is a blasphemy against the divine name, portraying our Heavenly Father as more cruel than any human parent could ever be. A God of love could not possibly design a plan that includes the useless, eternal torture of His own creation. True divine justice requires a corresponding price for sin—which Jesus fully paid—but divine love ensures that the result of that payment is a “merciful purpose” for the restoration of the whole creation. When we reconcile our deepest emotions with the Bible's testimony, we find a Creator whose wisdom and power are always directed by an unchanging, boundless love that seeks to bless, not to terrorize, the “groaning creation.”

Many religious teachings promote a harsh and distorted view of a vindictive God who eternally torments billions of His own creation. However, the Bible reveals a brighter time for the

transition from this “present evil world” (**Galatians 1:4**) to God’s glorious kingdom. This plan portrays God as the *Savior of all men*, who uses the current age to train faithful Christians, to one day serve as a government of empathy in lovingly helping the world of mankind return to perfection.

As you consider these teachings, it is important to honestly examine the influences that may shape your beliefs. For many, long-standing traditions and denominational teachings can be barriers to accepting the plain testimony of Scripture. Recognizing and thoughtfully questioning these influences is not always easy, but it is essential for anyone who seeks to understand God’s plan without the filter of human authority or tradition. Only by doing so can we fully appreciate the depth of God’s love and mercy as revealed in His Word.

- **2 Peter 3:9:** (ESV) *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

Key Takeaways

- The Bible’s testimony shows that the trial and judgment of unbelievers is future, giving everyone a full, fair, and informed opportunity for eternal life.
- God’s love and mercy will ensure that all who are willing can be saved.



20 | Where can I find more information?

Thank you for considering the foregoing questions and answers about the future of those who never accepted Jesus and passed away “unsaved.” We trust that the verses and concepts shared here have provided you with a genuine sense of hope. This study of the Bible’s testimony reveals the loving character of our Creator, whose wisdom and power are always directed by His desire for *all people to be saved*, and for His *groaning creation* to ultimately be blessed. His magnificent design is not based on exclusion or fear, but provides one harmonious salvation plan in two distinct phases for the entire human race.

If you would like to explore these beautiful truths in greater depth, we encourage you to visit

ChicagoBible.org/hope-for-unsaved

This special page offers additional resources, including an expanded version of this booklet. That comprehensive edition provides additional scriptural support and examines broader themes and will be of interest to those seeking a more thorough study (see the inside back cover for more details). We also invite you to order a free copy of the book **God’s Grand Plan of the Ages**, which contains an organized topical review of God’s plan, with over 1,600 Bible texts.

We welcome your comments and questions; please email us at

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*“Is There Hope for Those
Who Died Unsaved?”*

This comprehensive edition includes additional Scriptures for each section and is designed for serious students of the Bible who wish to examine deeper theological themes — such as why a loving God permits evil, how the divine blueprints of redemption are pictured in the ancient Tabernacle, and why God has not yet destroyed Satan.

We warmly encourage you to read this expanded version for a fuller understanding.

God's Plan to Bless You and All People

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Prophecies indicate that this kingdom is near at hand.

We are at the threshold of the most glorious epoch Earth has ever seen — the blessing of Christ's Millennial Kingdom! This will be the "Golden Age" mankind has cherished in their hopes and aspirations since the dawn of history. The results will be more wonderful, more glorious, more all encompassing than even the dreams of philosophers, poets and sages. The best which noble men and women have dared imagine will be surpassed by the wonders God has planned.



- *There will be world peace* (Psalm 46:9).
- *All defects of humanity will be healed* (Isaiah 35:5-6).
- *Moral integrity will be planted in every heart* (Jeremiah 31:33).
- *Sorrow, pain, tears and death itself will cease* (Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 11:9).
- *Even the dead of past ages will be raised to life again* (Acts 24:15).

God's Grand Plan of the Ages

This Christian Classic contains over 1600 Bible texts which clearly delineate God's plan from paradise lost to paradise restored. *Each of its 16 fascinating chapters are like keys which unlock the Bible's treasures.*

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