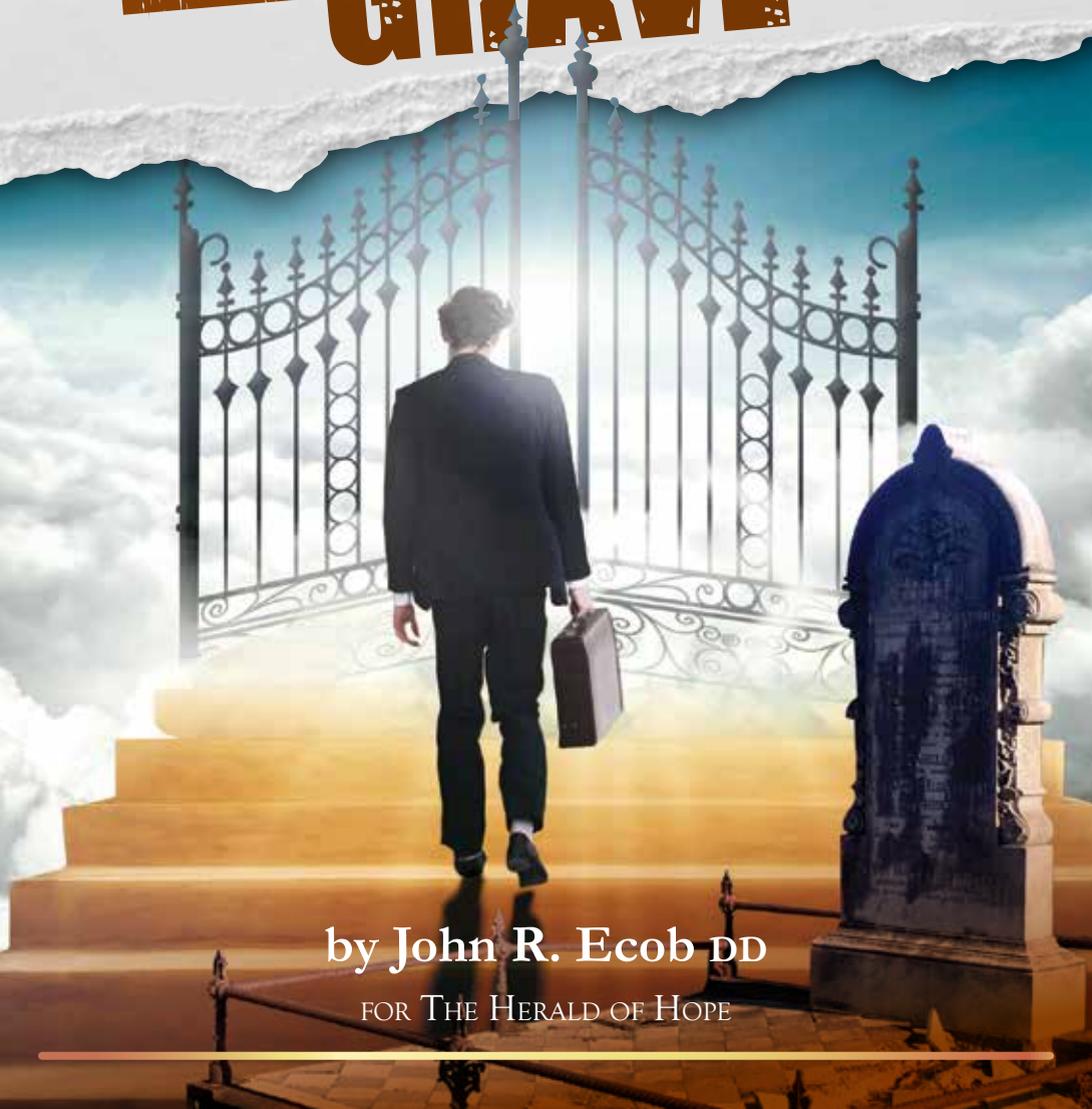


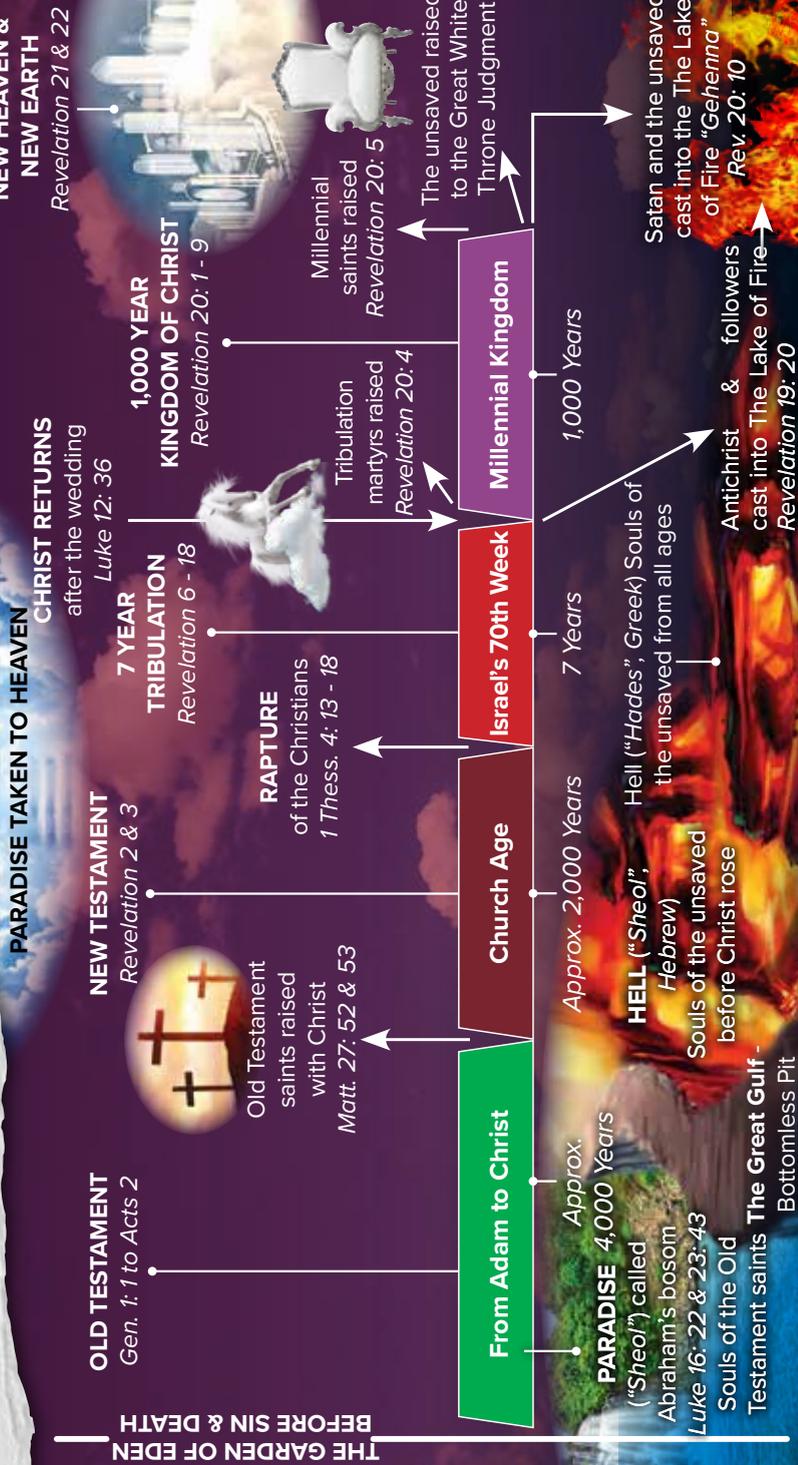
# BEYOND THE — GRAVE —



by John R. Ecob DD

FOR THE HERALD OF HOPE

# WHAT LIES BEYOND THE GRAVES?



# **BEYOND THE — GRAVE —**

by

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## Preface

**T**HIS book briefly traces what men have believed about the unknown, unseen world into which they pass after death. It also examines what individuals in the Bible believed about life after death, beginning with Adam, Enoch, Job, Abraham and David.

Much of Old Testament teaching about the hereafter is obscured, mainly due to an unfortunate treatment of the Hebrew word "*sheol*", which the KJV translates "grave" (30 times), "hell" (32 times) or "pit" (3 times). *Sheol* means "the unseen realm"; the Greek equivalent in the New Testament, "*hades*", meaning "not seen", has also been translated "hell".

The Amplified paraphrase makes no attempt to translate and instead uses the word *sheol*. In some places it inserts after *sheol*, "the place of the dead". The New King James (NKJV) also has chosen not to translate but to insert the words *sheol* in the Old Testament and *hades* in the New Testament.

Saved and unsaved souls went to *sheol* before Jesus died on the cross; the unsaved to the "lowest hell" (lowest *sheol*), and the saved to paradise (Abraham's bosom). Between each section of *sheol* was an impassible gulf which may be the "bottomless pit" or "abys".

It should be noted that another Hebrew word, "*qeber*", was used when a **sepulchre** or **burying place** was intended. From the time of Adam until Christ ALL departed **souls** went to *sheol*, either to torment, or paradise, where they were consciously waiting for the great plan of redemption to unfold at the cross.

### THE LAW OF FIRST MENTION

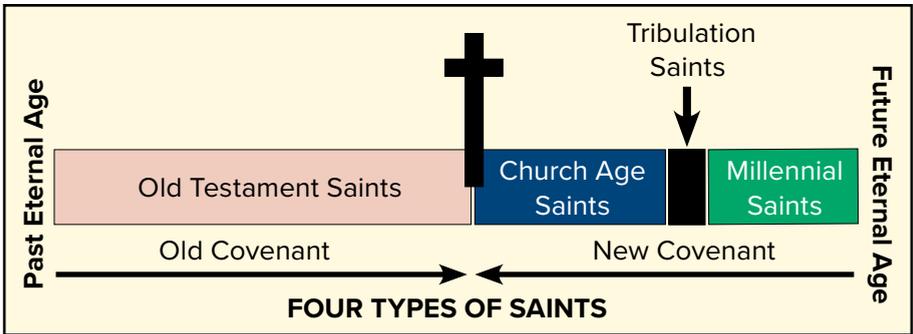
The first mention of any doctrine in Scripture is considered by some commentators to have special significance, and if this is the case, the meaning of *sheol* is clarified.

The first mention of *sheol* is in Genesis 37:35 where Jacob mourned the loss of Joseph and said, "I will go down into the grave (*sheol*) **UNTO MY SON** mourning." The KJV translates *sheol* as "grave", but it is clear Jacob was not referring to the grave, for at that time he thought that Joseph had been eaten by a wild beast! It is also obvious that *sheol* could not be translated "hell", because Jacob was a believer and God had already changed his name to Israel which means a "*prince with God*" (Gen. 32:28 and 35:10). Also, God had promised the land of Canaan to him and his seed after him.

### FOUR TYPES OF SAINTS

To rightly divide the Word of Truth, we must recognize that there are four types of saints.

- a) **Old Testament Saints** lived and died from Adam to Christ and were saved under the Old Testament or Old Covenant.
- b) **New Testament Saints** are partakers of the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant and are “*in Christ*”- in the body of Christ, the Church.
- c) **Tribulation Saints will be** saved under the New Covenant that God will make with Israel after the Rapture of the Church. Many will die as martyrs during the 7-year Tribulation.
- d) **Millennial Saints**, are those who enter the Kingdom after surviving the Tribulation or are born during the 1,000 - year reign of Christ on earth, and enter into the New Covenant experience of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.



Since the position of Old Testament saints changed after Christ died and rose from the grave, it is of the utmost importance to understand what happened,

- when Christ died;
- when Christ rose;
- when Christ ascended;
- when Christ returns.

Understanding *sheol* highlights the greatness of the work of Christ on the cross which **opened heaven** to mankind and made our resurrection possible. The resurrection and ascension of Christ took paradise out of *sheol* and into heaven.

### TWO RESURRECTIONS

All men will experience resurrection, either to life (for the saved), or to damnation (for the unsaved).

The “**first**” resurrection (Rev. 20:5), or “*resurrection of life*” (John 5:29), is likened to Israel’s harvest:

- firstfruits (Christ and the Old Testament saints - Matt. 27:52-53), •-main harvest (the Church at the Rapture - 1 Cor. 15:23,51-54),

- gleanings (Tribulation martyrs and Millennial saints- Rev. 20:4-5).

The “**second**” resurrection, or “*resurrection of damnation*”, will occur in two phases.

- i) At Christ’s second advent, Antichrist and his followers will go directly to the lake of fire. Since only **resurrected** unsaved souls go to the lake of fire (*gehenna*), he and his followers must receive a resurrection body at that time. See Matt. 25:41; Rev. 19:20-21; Dan. 12:2.
- ii) The “*rest of the dead*” (Rev. 20:5) will be raised at the end of the 1,000 - year reign of Christ, when all the unsaved dead incarcerated in *hades* will appear before the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). Death (the bodies) and *hades* (the unsaved souls) will be reunited, raised, judged, and cast into the lake of fire.

The great white throne judgment is not to determine whether the souls from *hades* will be cast into the lake of fire (*gehenna*), but **the degree of punishment**. Their names were blotted out of the book of life for rejecting God’s mercy, and their eternal destiny has already been determined.

### **GEHENNA, HADES, TARTAROS**

The New Testament speaks of “*hades*”, “*gehenna*”, and “*tartaros*”. *Hades* is the place of torment where **souls** of the unsaved go after death, and *gehenna* equates to the lake of fire for the **body and soul**.

*Hades* is therefore God’s **remand centre** where the souls of the guilty await the day of judgment at the great white throne, when they will receive their **degree** of punishment for the deeds done in the **body**.

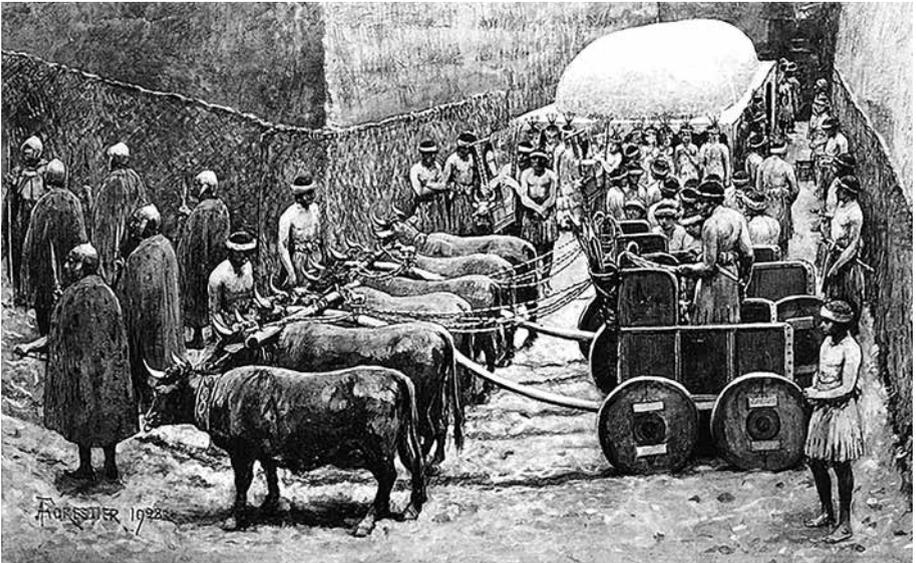
*Tartaros* is where some fallen angels are restrained while they wait to be cast, with Satan, into the lake of fire (*gehenna*). There is only one reference to *tartaros* in the New Testament (2 Pet. 2:4).

The study of the unseen realm will bring us to a clearer understanding of God’s plan of redemption and His purposes for mankind.

# Chapter 1 - Ancient Pagan Concepts

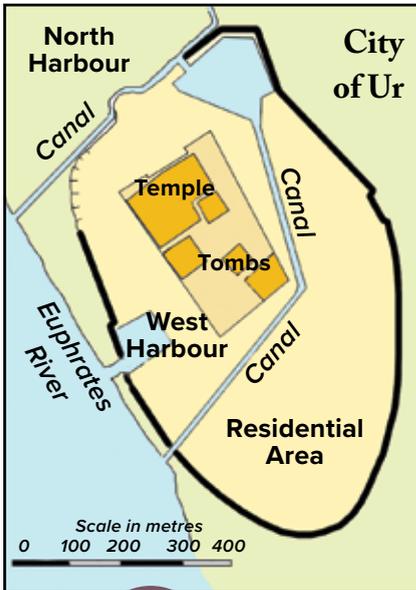
**I**N HIS book *Ancient Times*, Professor J.H. Breasted discusses the beliefs of the ancient Sumerians who lived in the period after the Flood. Excavations by an Anglo-American expedition led by Sir Leonard Woolley at the ancient city of Ur uncovered the tomb of a king, revealing the appalling ignorance of men in Abram's home city, from which he was told to depart. Woolley wrote:

“The dead were often buried in the town... of the next world they had only vague and sombre impressions, as a gloomy place of darkness and dust beneath the earth, to which all men, both good and bad, descended. However, they shared in a widespread belief that when a man died he would need his household in the next world. Provisions were made therefore, that the dead man might not be obliged to live without his servants and animals in the life beyond the grave.



Tombs found at Ur have disclosed the dead man's bodyguard, his servants, male and female, his draft oxen still yoked to the chariot, all lying slain at the door of the burial chamber, that they might accompany their master and serve him after death” (page 150).

The sketch above is an artist's impression of servants and animals standing where they were found slain at the door of the burial chamber. This gruesome practice indicates how far civilization had drifted from the truth within a few hundred years of Noah's flood.



The Egyptians worshipped many gods, but the two main gods were the Sun and the Nile River. Osiris was the lord of the underworld but was associated with the annual flooding of the Nile. Isis was the wife of Osiris and their son Horus was the sun god, usually depicted as a man with a falcon's head. We know that they believed in an afterlife and sought to preserve their lives by having their body mummified and placed in secure tombs or pyramids. After death, they expected to be judged by Osiris. The pyramids were built of limestone blocks each weighing up to 2.5 tons extending for 60 miles, and each had a chapel where it was believed the deceased returned daily to eat food and drink left in the chapel.

### REINCARNATION

Pythagorus, to whom is attributed mathematical theorems, was a Greek philosopher of the sixth century B.C. who founded a school and a philosophical system. The basis of Pythagorus' teaching was ethical and mystical. He believed that the soul passes from one body to another. He taught vegetarianism and rituals of purification which were thought to promote superior reincarnation.

Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism teach reincarnation; that after death the soul may return to live in a lower form of life such as an animal or insect. Spiritism and the occult also believe that the soul proceeds to higher forms of life after death.



Horus,  
Egyptian  
sun god

Image by  
redgreystock on  
Freepix

### *PURGATORY*

The Catholic Church teaches that purgatory is where departed souls go after death to have their venial sins (forgivable sins) expunged; Prayers for the dead are supposed to assist in an early release from purgatory and these prayers come at a price. According to Roman Catholicism, pardon for sins and purification can occur during life through the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. Venial sins can still be purified after death in purgatory. Purgatory is a device to gather revenue for the Roman Catholic Church, and plays on the emotions of the bereaved.



Image of a fiery purgatory by Ludovico Carracci

### *SOUL SLEEP*

Seventh Day Adventists believe in soul sleep; that after death **the soul** is unconscious until the body is raised at a future judgment. They also teach annihilation for the unsaved after the second resurrection. Both of these teachings contradict the plain statements of Scripture.

We will now turn to the only source of truth, the Word of God, and examine many passages of Scripture that will clarify for us what lies beyond the grave.

## Chapter 2 - Death, the King of Terrors

**W**HEN God created man and all the animals there were no predators. Lions did not hunt deer; within the animal kingdom there was peace. Adam did not slaughter sheep or oxen for food; there was harmony between man and the animal world.

From the very outset of civilization God said:

*“Behold, I have given you **every herb bearing seed**, which is upon the face of all the earth, and **every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed**; to you it shall be for meat. And **TO EVERY BEAST of the earth, and TO EVERY FOWL of the air, and to EVERY THING THAT CREEPETH upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat (food): and it was so”** (Gen. 1:29-30).*

There was no exception. Every animal, bird, and reptile ate a **vegetarian diet**. There was no death in the garden of Eden. Adam lived to 930 years and, had he not sinned, would have lived forever.

Adam was to “*have dominion*” or “reign” as a king over subjects. He was the first king to rule on the earth, and his subjects were “*every living thing that moveth upon the earth*” (Gen. 1:28).

Adam was a farmer; to care for the land, but not to slaughter the sheep and cattle. When he was expelled from the garden Adam was to “*till the ground from whence he was taken*” (Gen3:23) but animal **sacrifices** began at this time. For the first 1,656 years men and animals died, but the killing of animals **was only authorized for sacrifice**.

The first death occurred when God made coats of skin to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. The next death occurred when Abel offered “*the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof*”. Sacrifices continued to be offered because Noah offered burnt offerings after the Flood and with these offerings God was well pleased, for we read, “*the LORD smelled a sweet savour*”(Gen. 8:20-21).

After Adam sinned God said, “*Thou shalt eat the herb of the field*” (Gen. 3:18), but eating meat was not authorized until after the Flood; about 1,656 years later. When Noah emerged from the ark, God said:

*“And **the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth... Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat... Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man** (Gen. 9:2-6).*

Things changed; now animals were to **fear men** who were authorized to kill

animals for food. Human life was sacred because man was made in the image of God and judgment was to be executed upon any animal or man that killed a man or woman.

The law of Moses states:

*“If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten”* (Exod. 21:28).

Death however will be abolished after Christ reigns on earth for 1,000 years and the order of events is given by Paul:

*“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. . . For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*** (1 Cor. 15:21-26).

**Death is abolished by resurrection** and the order is given in scripture as follows:

1. **Christ rose from the dead.** He was the *“firstfruits of them that slept”*. Nobody could experience resurrection BEFORE Christ came as the Lamb of God and offered His perfect sacrifice. *“Through death”* He destroyed *“him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”* (Heb. 2:14).

Immediately after Christ rose, **the Old Testament saints rose** (Matt. 27:51-53). Although their graves were opened when Christ died, they could not receive their resurrection bodies before Christ rose; they *“came out of the graves AFTER his resurrection”*.

Christ’s resurrection assures us that we will rise again, and this is seen in type in the *“sheaf of the firstfruits”* (Lev. 23:9-14) which was waved before the LORD in the Temple on the first day of the week after the Passover. Old Testament saints were pictured in the sheaf waved by the Jewish priests at the very time Christ and the Old Testament saints rose! Jesus said:

*“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: **because I live, ye shall live also**”* (John 14:19).

2. *Afterward they that are Christ’s* (His bride, the Church) *at his coming.*” When Christ comes at the Rapture, the bodies of Church-age saints who have died will be reunited with their souls in resurrection and living saints will be changed. These will be caught up together to be with Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Seven years later, the Tribulation **martyrs** will be resurrected at Christ’s second coming (Rev. 20:4; Dan. 12:2).

3. *For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*” Christ will reign over the entire earth for 1,000 years, and at the end of the 1,000 years the final rebellion by Gog and Magog will be put down, and *“death and hell”*,

the **bodies and souls** of the unsaved, will be raised and cast into the lake of fire with Satan. Millennial saints who are alive at that time will be changed, and there will be a new heaven and new earth in which

*“there shall be **no more death**, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for **the former things are passed away**”* (Rev. 21:4).

Isaiah spoke of this day when the LORD

*“**will swallow up death in victory**; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces”* (Isa. 25:7-8).

*“**The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death**”* (1 Cor. 15:26).

4. Death, which God imposed as a sentence in Eden to make **a way back to God**, will be abolished, and the spoils of Christ’s victory will be delivered to the Father. When Adam sinned, God immediately informed him that the “*seed of the woman*” would bruise the serpent’s head and Satan will finally be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

*“Then cometh the end, when he shall have **delivered up the kingdom to God**, even the Father; when he shall have **put down all rule and all authority and power**”* (1 Cor. 15:24).

The future **eternal state** of the redeemed will be on a new earth renovated by fire. There will be no more sea, no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain, “*for the former things are passed away*” (Rev. 21:4). Nor will there be any possibility of the tranquility of that glorious eternal state ever being disturbed by sin, for

*“There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life”* (Rev. 21:27).

In that day, we will look back and sing:

I’ll bless the hand that guided,  
I’ll bless the heart that planned,  
When throned where glory dwelleth,  
In Emmanuel’s land.

## Chapter 3 - Life after Death in the Old Testament Era

**T**HE **knowledge** of death was with Adam and Eve even in the days of their innocence, for when God forbade them to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He warned: *“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Gen. 2:17). Adam would have understood that death meant separation from life and God.

Physical death involved the destruction of the body and Adam was told:

*“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for **dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”***

**(Gen. 3:19).**

Adam was not immediately struck down in physical death. Death was a **process** which began in his body as a consequence of sin. Adam was separated from God and was *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph. 2:1).

God told Satan that the virgin-born seed of the woman would *“bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”* (Gen. 3:15). The Epistle to the Hebrews states that Christ became man so

*“that **through death he might destroy** (render powerless) **him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;** And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Heb. 2:14-15).

Paul tells us:

*“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death”* (1 Cor. 15:26).

Obviously some period of time would elapse before the *“seed of the woman”* would appear to destroy Satan’s power of death, and in **the intervening years** the soul of Adam, and all mankind, would have to wait in the **unseen realm**. That unseen realm is called *sheol*.

*“For as in Adam **all die**, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits; AFTERWARD** they that are Christ’s at his coming”* (1 Cor. 15:22-23).

At this stage we are not given details of the unseen realm, but it is clear that nobody would have a resurrection body **until** the seed of the woman came and, as the **firstfruits** from the grave, He arose to raise the redeemed to resurrection life.

### **WHAT THE PATRIARCH’S KNEW**

The Bible tells us little about life after death in the early chapters of Genesis. The first hint occurs in the genealogy of Seth, where we are told: *“Enoch walked with*

*God: and he was not; for God took him*" (Gen. 5:24) but where was he taken? We are not told **where** God took him or **how** God took him, but we know from a prophecy recorded by Jude that Enoch, "*the seventh from Adam*", prophesied:

*"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed..."* (Jude 14-15).

Enoch knew there would be a future day of reckoning; that the Lord will come to earth to judge mankind and when He comes, He will bring His saints WITH HIM; by implication the saints must go to be with Him **at some prior time**.

Enoch suddenly disappeared but did not go to heaven as some have supposed, though he was a "type" of those who will one day be suddenly Raptured before the Great Tribulation.

Noah also "*walked with God*" (Gen. 6:9) and had open communication with God, so it is unlikely that he did not have a clear understanding of what lay beyond the grave.

Abram was born 350 years after the flood; in the same year that Noah died. Melchisedec lived at this time and Job made some very clear statements about life after death. His three "friends" also were well aware of the living God, even though they gave poor counsel to Job.

Abram and all the patriarchs "*looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Heb. 11:10). We read:

*"But now they desire a better country, that is, **an heavenly**: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city"* (Heb. 11:16).

The city for which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob looked, was not an earthly city but a heavenly one and **can only refer to the new Jerusalem** in the eternal new heaven and new earth.

God's gift to Abraham of a land, and His instruction to Moses to build a Tabernacle, were in some eternal way linked to the scene in heaven. The pattern which God showed to Moses on Mount Sinai was replicated in the Tabernacle on earth.

There is a Temple in heaven. John saw it opened in Rev. 11:19; filled with the glory of God (Rev. 15:8); he saw an altar of incense and an ark of "*his testament*" (Rev. 11:19); and angels come out of it to announce judgments (Rev. 14:15; 16:1,17). Jerusalem was a shadow of what existed in the heavenly "*mount Sion...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*" (Heb. 12:22).

With the benefit of New Testament revelation, we also know more of that city. Jesus said:

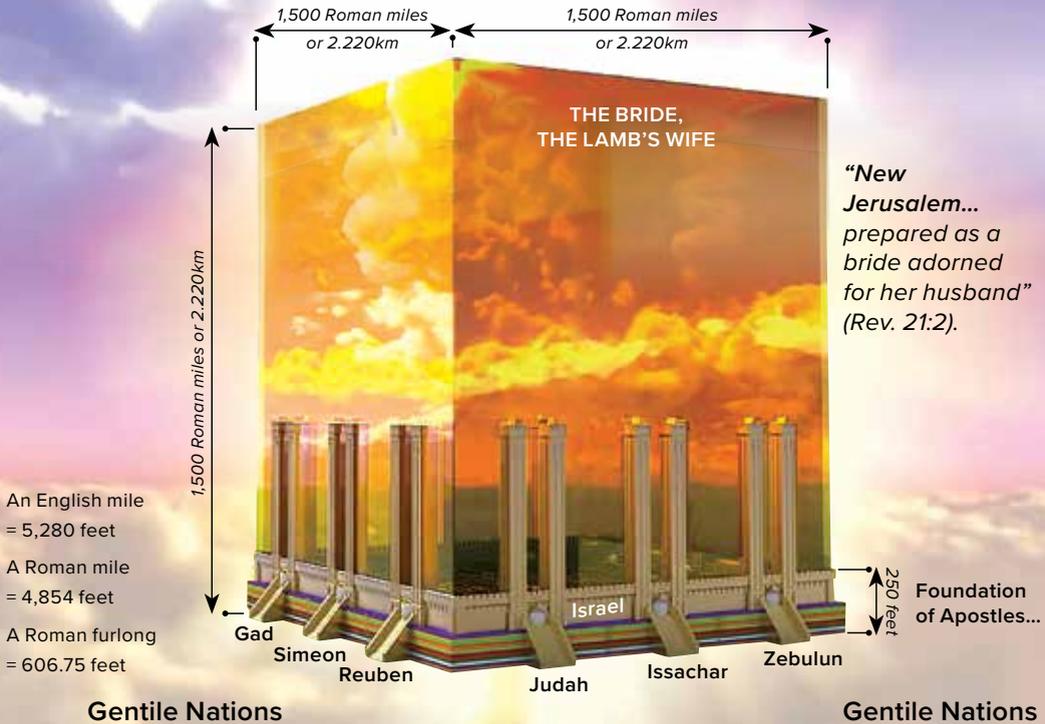
*“In my Father’s house are **many mansions**: if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you**. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:2-3).

John saw the eternal city. He wrote:

*“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And **I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God”* (Rev. 21:1-3).

This is what Abraham looked for about 2,000 years before the Christian era began.

*“Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife... and (he) shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal”* (Rev. 21:9-11).



## *JESUS' TESTIMONY ABOUT ABRAHAM*

About 500 years after Abraham, Moses stood at a burning bush in the desert and God declared Himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All three of these had died, yet God did not say, “I **was** the God of Abraham...” but “*I AM... the God of Abraham...*” (Exod. 3:6). Jesus pointed out to the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection, that God was the God of the living, and therefore **Abraham was still alive**. His body was at Hebron, but his soul was very much alive in the unseen world. Jesus said:

*“Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For **he is not a God of the dead, but of the living:** for **ALL LIVE** unto him”* (Luke 20:37-38).

Therefore, when resurrection takes place, **conscious souls in the unseen world** are reunited with their bodies that have been placed in the grave. In Luke chapter 16 Jesus recorded a conversation between Abraham in Paradise and the rich man who was in the torment of hell (Luke 16:25-31).

## *JOB'S TESTIMONY*

Job lived at the same time as Abraham and was “*the greatest of all the men of the east*” when God allowed Satan to test his faith. He lived 140 years **after** he was tested (Job 42:16) and probably lived for about 335 years. (See chart 4 in *Herald of Hope* book, *Eternity to Eternity*). Job stated:

*“I know that my redeemer liveth, and that **he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:** And though after my skin **worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:** whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me”* (Job 19:25-27).

It is obvious that Job knew he would die and be buried, but in **the latter days** he would be raised from the dead and receive a resurrection body, which would be the **same body** for he said: “*Yet in my flesh shall I see God.*” He also believed that his Redeemer would stand on the earth in the last days.

The implications of Job's statement are wide indeed. God's ultimate purpose is to raise the bodies of the human race; death is not the end; and the earth will be the final location of resurrected saints. The terminus point in history is called the “latter days”. Concerning life immediately after death, Job spoke about the unseen realm called “*sheol*” in the Hebrew language. He said,

*“O that thou wouldst **hide me in the grave (sheol)**, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live [again]? all the days of my appointed time **WILL I WAIT, till my change come**”* (Job 14:13-14).

It might be objected that Job contradicted this thought when he said:

*“As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave (sheol) shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more”* (Job 7:9-10).

But Job was not speaking about coming up from *sheol* at the resurrection, but coming back to life to **occupy his house** and possessions. Job fully expected to come out of *sheol* when the voice of the Son of man was heard, as he indicates in Ch. 19:25-27.

Of the wicked, Job said:

*“They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave (sheol). Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us”* (Job 21:13-14).

*“Drought and heat consume the snow waters : [so doth] the grave (sheol) [those which] have sinned”* (Job 24:19).

### THE TESTIMONY OF SAMUEL

Samuel anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel, but Saul failed under pressure and was told that God had rejected him from being king (1 Sam. 15:23). An evil spirit from the Lord troubled him and as he saw the blessing of God resting on David, he was filled with jealousy and moved further and further away from God, even slaying the priests of the Lord for supplying David with hallowed bread and a weapon when David fled from him.

When the Philistine army came into the land Saul feared and enquired of the Lord, but *“the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets”* (1 Sam. 28:6).

Forsaken by God, Saul sought help from a witch with a familiar spirit who lived at Endor. Saul disguised himself and asked,

*“Divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee”* (1 Sam. 28:8).

When the woman asked who Saul wanted her to bring up, Saul replied, *“Bring me up Samuel”*. However, God intervened, and much to the woman’s amazement, instead of the familiar spirit appearing as an impersonation of Samuel, God permitted Samuel himself to appear and speak to Saul. He said:

*“Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?... Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?... Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me”* (1 Sam. 28:15-19).

## TWO SECTIONS IN SHEOL - THE LOWEST SHEOL

Twice in the following Old Testament Scriptures we read of the “lowest hell”(sheol):

Deut 32:22 - “For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and **shall burn unto the lowest hell** (sheol), and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.”

Psalms 86:13 “For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast **delivered my soul from the lowest hell** (sheol).”

The expression, “the lowest sheol”, indicates that there were different locations in sheol and, from the context, the **lowest sheol** was a place of God’s **wrath** upon the ungodly. Because David was the object of God’s mercy, he knew he had been **delivered** from the torment part of sheol.

When the **rebellious** sons of Korah opposed Moses, they were judged and went to sheol.

“They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into **the pit** (sheol), and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation” (Num. 16:33).

Jesus described sheol in Luke chapter 16 when He spoke about the rich man and the beggar Lazarus:

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into **Abraham’s bosom**: the rich man also died, and was buried; and **in hell (hades) he lift up his eyes, being in torments**, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, **between us and you there is a great gulf fixed**: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence” (Luke 16:22-26).

We learn a number of things from the Lord’s description of the unseen world of sheol.

- First, that sheol has a place of blessing and also a place of torment and remorse.
- Second, that the **souls** of the deceased are conscious and can communicate with each other.
- Third, that paradise and torment were far apart. The rich man saw Abraham “afar off”. There was “a great gulf” between these two locations.
- Fourth, that there is no possibility of escape from the torment section and

no possibility that any saved person could be lost from paradise. The Roman Catholic concept of purgatory is entirely foreign to Scripture; once death comes, the soul is eternally consigned to blessing or torment.

Scripture speaks of communication between *sheol's* inhabitants. God told the king of Babylon, through Isaiah, that he would be brought down to *sheol* where the heathen kings of the earth had gone. He was also told of the reception he would get from the kings whom he had slain.

*“Hell (sheol) from beneath is moved (quiver with violent emotion) for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, [even] all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave (sheol) (Isa. 14:9-11).*

It is clear that there is **recognition and emotion** in the unseen realms beyond the grave. This surely answers the false teaching of the Seventh Day Adventists who would have us believe that the souls of the deceased have no consciousness.

### ***DID JESUS GO TO HELL?***

Some teach that after Christ died He descended into hell where He suffered the torments of hell for our sin. The *Church of England Common Book of Prayer (1662)* quotes the Apostles Creed as follows: “I believe...Jesus Christ...descended **into hell**”. This was amended in the *Book of Common Worship (2000)* to, “I believe in Jesus Christ...he descended **to the dead**”. The Presbyterians and Lutherans continue to use the 1662 edition, according to *Encyclopedia Wikipedia*. However, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ bore our sins “*in his own body ON THE TREE*” (1 Peter 2:24). He did not suffer the wrath of God in hell.

When Jesus cried, “*It is finished,*” He had finished the work of redemption; nothing more could be added. It was during the three hours of darkness, when God shut from human view His beloved Son, that the Father forsook Christ as He “*who knew no sin*” was **made sin for us** ( 2 Cor. 5:21).

*“For Christ also hath **once suffered for sins**, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being **put to death in the flesh**, but **quickened by the Spirit: By which (Spirit)** also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:18-20).*

*“My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave **my soul** in hell (sheol); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Ps. 16:9-10).*

Peter explained this prophecy on the day of Pentecost.

*“He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that **his soul was not left in hell** (hades/sheol) (Acts 2:31).*

**Jesus did NOT go to the place of torment with the lost souls.** After He died, Jesus went to paradise (Abraham’s bosom) with the repentant thief where all the Old Testament saints were waiting for Him to accomplish a perfect salvation by His death on the cross. Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross: *“Today shalt thou be with me **in paradise**”* (Luke 23:43).

Nor did Jesus, after He died, preach to *“spirits in prison”* **who were disobedient** in the days of Noah. We should note that Jesus preached to the disobedient world **in the days of Noah by His Spirit**. When Noah preached, the Holy Spirit convicted men of sin, and we read that God said:

*“**My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years**”* (Gen. 6:3).

Peter simply said that Christ was *“quicken<sup>d</sup> by the Spirit”* of God when He was raised, and that this was **the same Holy Spirit** who strove with the evil world of Noah’s day, who were **now** imprisoned in *hades/sheol*. It was by the third person of the Godhead **in the days of Noah** that Christ preached. No doubt it was **possible** for those in paradise to communicate with the lost in the torment section of *sheol*, because Abraham spoke to the rich man in torment (Luke 16:22-31). Jesus could have done likewise, but this Scripture does not say that He did. He had already endured the wrath of God on the cross.

### ***SHEOL IS FOR THE SOUL, THE GRAVE IS FOR THE BODY***

In Psalm 6:5 David said:

*“For **in death** (the body) there is no remembrance of thee: **in the grave** (sheol) who shall give thee thanks”?*

The **opportunity for service and worship** for Old Testament saints was here on earth. *Sheol* was a place where the souls of Old Testament saints waited consciously in the unseen realm after death for the day of resurrection when opportunity for worship would be available in the presence of God. When John was caught up through the open door into **heaven** (Rev. 4:1-4) he saw twenty-four elders worshipping before the throne. We will discuss these worshippers later.

Isaiah reinforces **this Old Testament truth**:

*“For **the grave** (the soul in sheol) cannot praise thee, **death** (the body in the grave) can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth”* (Isa. 38:18 ).

The rich man and Lazarus; both died, and both went to the unseen realm but

Lazarus went to “*Abraham’s bosom*” where he was comforted, and the rich man to a place of fire and torment. An impassable gulf separated the two places in the unseen realm. The souls of Old Testament saints in paradise were **conscious**, were **comforted**, and could **communicate**, but they were **captive** until Christ led them to heaven (Eph. 4:8).

When David spoke of the “*lowest hell*” (lowest *sheol*) as a place of judgment he was referring to the place of torment, where the soul of the rich man went after death.

### ***THE WICKED WENT TO SHEOL***

Unsaved souls went to *sheol*; to the torment section. We read that the king of Babylon went to *sheol*. To the king of Babylon, God said:

*“Thy pomp is brought down to the grave” (sheol) (Isa. 14:11).*

Pharaoh was reminded in 586B.C. (Ezek. 31:1) that the king of Assyria went to *sheol* when “*the mighty one of the heathen*” (Babylonians) had destroyed Nineveh (612B.C. - Ezek. 31:11). “***When I cast him down to hell (sheol)...***” (Ezek. 31:16). Other heathen kings went to *sheol*: kings of Asshur (Assyria), Elam, Meshech and Tubal (Scythians), Edom, and Zidon. Pharaoh was told that he would soon see them all in *sheol* (Ezek. 32:21-22, 24, 26, 29-31).

### ***SHEOL WAS NOT A PERMANENT LOCATION***

David looked **beyond** *sheol* to the time when his soul would leave and go into the presence of God. He said:

*“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave (sheol): for he shall receive me. Selah” (Ps. 49:15).*

We know this happened when Christ rose from the dead and took the Old Testament saints from *sheol* into heaven (Matt. 27:52-53; Eph. 4:8-10).

Someone may object, as the Jehovah’s Witnesses do, that David has not been taken to heaven because Peter said:

***“For David IS NOT ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool”***  
(Acts 2:34-35).

However, the tense of the words in this passage makes it clear that Peter was NOT saying that David had not been taken to heaven. David was **not already in heaven** **WHEN HE SPOKE THE WORDS**, “*The Lord said unto my Lord...*” He therefore could not be speaking about himself, but his words must be a **prophecy** of Christ. Peter was proving to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, and that **He had risen from the dead** and was now seated at the Father’s right hand on the throne of heaven.

## **SHEOL SHOULD NEVER BE TRANSLATED GRAVE**

A different Hebrew word “*Qeber*”, is used for a grave, as Dr. Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary indicates:

“*qeber*; a sepulchre: — burying place, grave, sepulchre.”

When Sarah died, Abraham asked the sons of Heth for land to bury her body:

*“I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace (*qeber*) with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight”* (Gen. 23:4).

Nowhere in Scripture is *qeber* translated any other way than “grave, buryingplace, or sepulchre.” The body is spoken of as going into death, and **the soul into sheol**, as seen in Ps. 6:5 and Ps. 89:48.

*“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his SOUL from the hand of the grave (*sheol*)? Selah”* (Ps. 89:48).

God had preserved David from dying physically and he was grateful his soul had not gone down to *sheol*. Both aspects of death are covered in these verses.

*“O LORD, thou hast brought up MY SOUL from the grave (*sheol*): thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit”* (“pit” is from a Hebrew word, bore meaning grave, or a hole in the ground) (Ps. 30:3).

We have already noted that David spoke prophetically of Christ.

*“My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*sheol*); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption* (Ps. 16:9-10).

Peter explained this prophecy on the day of Pentecost.

*“He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (*hades/sheol*), neither his flesh did see corruption (in the grave)”* (Acts 2:31).

Paul takes up the same prophecy in the synagogue at Antioch.

*“Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: BUT HE, WHOM GOD RAISED AGAIN, SAW NO CORRUPTION. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins”* (Acts 13:35-38).

In Old Testament times it was understood that the body, in death, went to the burial place described as “the pit”, “grave” or “sepulchre”(qeber), but **the soul** went to the “unseen realm” (*sheol*) **to await resurrection; either the first resurrection for the saved, or the second resurrection for the lost.** The Jews understood this, and when 72 Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament in the Greek Septuagint version, they translated “*sheol*” as “*hades*”.

### WHEN DID OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS GO TO HEAVEN?

No Old Testament saint could go to heaven until Christ had come and offered the perfect sacrifice, of which all the Jewish sacrifices were but a type. Christ is the *“firstfruits of them that slept (died)”* (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). The **paradise section** of *sheol* was the waiting place in the unseen realm for the souls of the Old Testament saints. They had been saved by faith and looked forward to the day when atonement would be perfected. This was evident on the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elias appeared and spoke with the Lord. Luke records:

*“And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem”* (Luke 9:29-31).

Moses and Elijah had been waiting in *sheol* for hundreds of years, and now at last God’s plan of redemption was about to be fulfilled. Their great interest lay in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, *“which he should accomplish at Jerusalem”*. For them, it would mean release from the captivity of *sheol* into the glorious liberty of God’s presence.

The Old Testament sacrifices were inadequate. They had been ordained by God to point to the true sacrificial lamb, Jesus Christ. They were a *“shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things”* (Heb. 10:1). They were repeated again and again and could never make the offerers perfect. Christ was the perfect Lamb of God who, by one sacrifice, would take away the sin of the world. His coming was to **open heaven** to redeemed men and women.

*“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh”* (Heb. 10:19-20).

*“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent”* (Matt. 27:50-51).

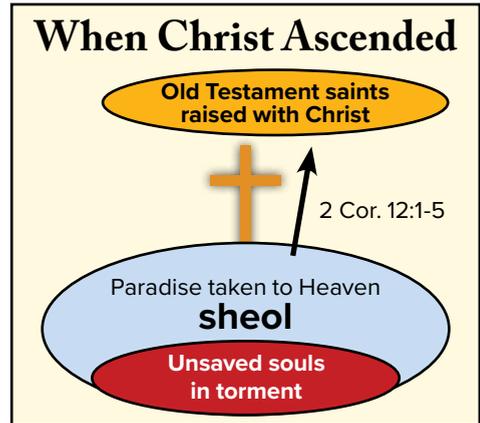
We read that the veil was rent; the way into the holy place was opened and when Christ rose, the Old Testament saints were raised. Their graves were opened by the earthquake which shook the earth when Christ finished the work of redemption on the cross, but **three days later,**

*“many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many”* (Matt. 27:52-53).

The rending of the veil from top to bottom therefore signified that *“the way into the holiest of all”* (Heb. 9:8) i.e. into heaven itself, was **now possible**. **At death, saints need no longer to go to sheol, but immediately into the presence of God.**

The death of Christ opened the way into heaven on the grounds of a better sacrifice, releasing their **souls from sheol**. Christ’s resurrection released the Old Testament saints **bodies from the grave**, and forty days later they were released from this world when the Lord Jesus, as the captain of our salvation, led *“many sons to glory”* (Heb. 2:10).

*“Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)”*... (Eph. 4:8-11).



The ascension of Christ, just ten days before the Church was formed at Pentecost, saw **the beginning of a new era** which we call the Church age. In this age a Gentile bride is being won to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 15:14). The Church of Jesus Christ is being built upon *“the foundation of the apostles and prophets”* (Eph. 2:20), and hence we find that the ascension of Christ is **linked to the gifts** of *“apostles”* and *“prophets”*, *“evangelists”*, *“pastor and teachers”*. The apostles and prophets were **foundational** to the Church, but evangelists, pastors and teachers continue. These have replaced the Jewish priestly system until the Rapture, when Israel will again become God’s witness on earth.

### **WHERE ARE THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS NOW?**

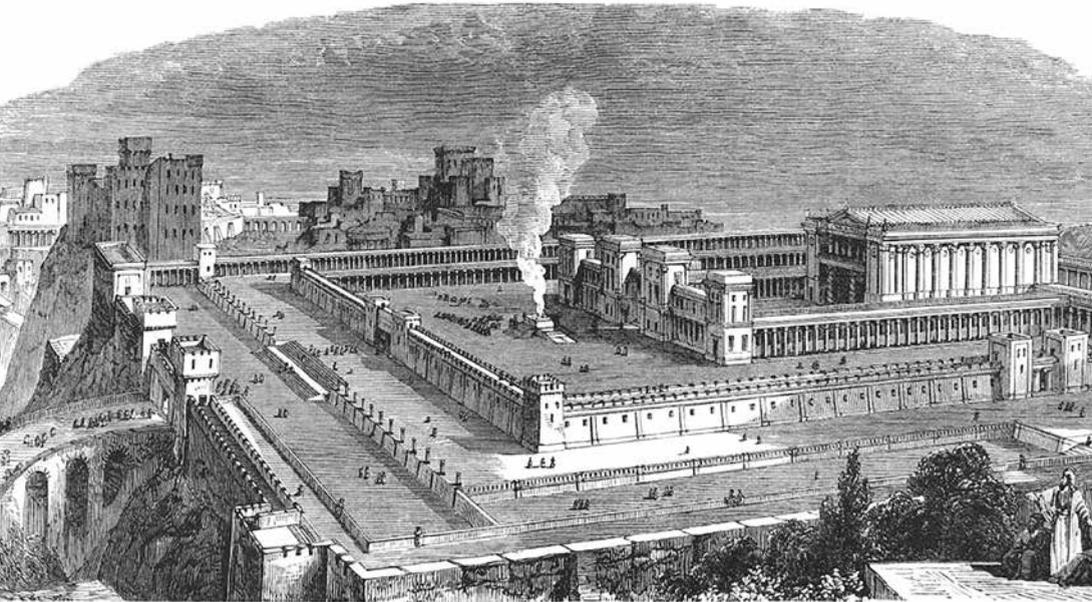
The answer is obvious. They have been taken to heaven in **resurrection power** and are worshipping in heaven around the throne. Now in His presence they have *“fulness of joy”* and *“pleasures for evermore”* (Ps. 16:11).

When God revealed to John *“things which must shortly (quickly) come to pass”*, he foresaw his own Rapture through the open door of heaven (Rev. 4:1-2), and there, round about the throne were 24 seats (thrones) on which sat 24 elders who were leading the worship. These were the leaders of the 24 courses of priests from Israel who led Old Testament worship in the Temple at Jerusalem. Now in resurrection bodies, they continue their work in the heavenly Temple. The **original 24 elders**

are named: Jehoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim, Malchijah, Mijamin, Hakkoz, Abijah, Jeshua, Shecaniah, Eliashib, Jakim, Huppah, Jeshebeab, Bilgah, Immer, Hezir, Aphses, Pethahiah, Jehezkel, Jachin, Gamul, Delaiah, and Maaziah (1 Chron. 24:7-18).

In Old Testament times, when Gentiles were saved they were called “*strangers*” in Israel. They joined Israel and worshipped the God of Israel, but Divine worship was led by the Jewish priests ordained of God for service in the earthly Temple. In Solomon’s day the number of these believing Gentiles (“*strangers*”) was 153,600 (2 Chron. 2:17).

Thus, in the Temple **there were 24 courses of priests** (1 Chron. 24 and 25) leading the worship of the redeemed from “*every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation*”, and since the Old Testament saints have already been resurrected to heaven, the 24 Jewish elders continue to lead the worship in heaven (Rev. 5:9-10). Each of the 24 courses consisted of 12 priests, so there was a total of 288 priests (1 Chron. 25:9-31) of the sons of Aaron who were responsible for the offerings. In addition to the sons of Aaron, David appointed the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun as musicians to “*prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals*” (1 Chron. 25:1-31). **There were 24 courses of singers.** With their brethren, 12 per course, the total number of singers and musicians was 288. We read of the 24 elders in Rev. 5:8 that they too have “*harps, and golden vials full of odours* (incense)”.



In Jesus' day, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was said to be a priest of "*the course of Abia*" (Luke 1:5) serving in the Temple. The course of Abia was the 8th of the 24 courses, which places its period of service each year in the last two weeks of the fourth month of the Jewish year, the month Tammuz.

Whether it was offerings of incense, offerings of animals, or the offering of praise, it was orderly under the leadership of these elders. Finally, there were **24 porters** who daily served at the gates of the Temple (1 Chron. 26:13-19). **No doubt the 24 elders around the throne in heaven are leading the worship of Old Testament saints who were raised from the dead with Christ** (Rev. 4:4).

### *THE THREE COMPANIES IN HEAVEN*

To the Hebrews, Paul wrote:

*"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel"* (Heb. 12:22-24).

In **this dispensation** of the Church age, believers come into the presence of God with no need of an earthly Temple located in an earthly city of Jerusalem, but by faith they come to the heavenly Jerusalem where, we are informed, there are three companies.

- 1) An innumerable company of angels.
- 2) The general assembly and **church of the firstborn**. On earth Christians are located in local assemblies, but in heaven the souls of all Church-age saints are gathered in a general assembly.
- 3) The spirits of **justified men, perfected** in resurrection. These are the Old Testament saints who have already received their perfect resurrection bodies when Christ rose from the dead.

### *WHERE WILL THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS BE IN THE FUTURE?*

When Christ returns to the earth He comes **WITH ALL His resurrected saints** (Zech. 14:5). The saints who are with Him **at that time** will be the Old Testament and New Testament saints. We read about both Old and New Testament saints in Revelation chapter 19:

*"And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne,*

saying, *Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great... Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for **the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are **they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.** And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God (Rev. 19:4-9).*

Here are **two companies** of saints represented in the same passage; the **four and twenty elders** and the **wife of the Lamb**. Paul said to the Church at Corinth:

*“I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have **espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ**” (2 Cor. 11:2).*

To the Ephesian Church, Paul wrote:

*“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it... **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.** So ought men to love their wives... **even as the Lord the church...** For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church**” (Eph. 5:25-32).*

Following the Second Advent there will be the **marriage supper** of the Lamb, and guests will be invited to attend. John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and he said:

*“I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease**” (John 3:28-30).*

Old Testament saints are the **friends of the Bridegroom**, our Lord Jesus Christ, and they, together with Tribulation saints, will be guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The Church, the bride, will be attired in wedding garments, “*clean and white*” (Rev. 19:8).

Guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb will be **those who are found watching when Christ returns** so it must occur AFTER the Lord returns to earth. Jesus said to Israel:

*“Blessed are **THOSE SERVANTS, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching:** verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make **THEM sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve THEM**” (Luke 12:37).*

Heaven will rejoice in anticipation:

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb*

is (has) come, and **his wife** hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness(es) of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:7-9).

### **ISRAEL’S THREE INVITATIONS TO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB**

Jesus told a parable in Matthew 22:1-14 about a king who prepared a marriage supper for his son. Three invitations were given, and it was not until the third invitation that the wedding was furnished with **guests**. The application is as follows:

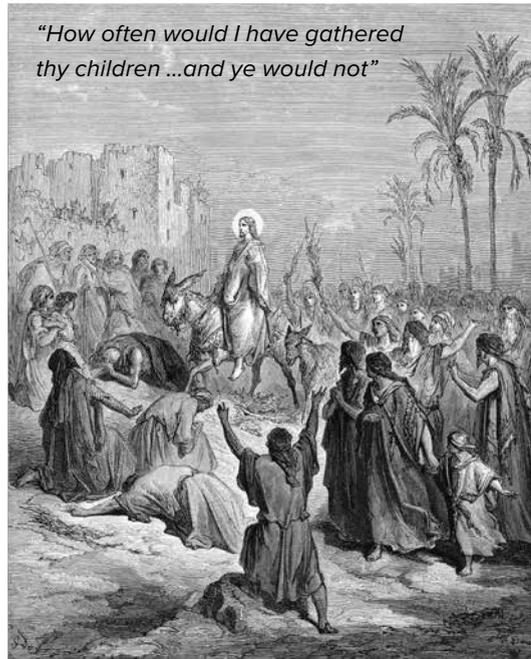
The **first invitation** was given to Israel by the Lord during His earthly ministry, but they **would not come**.

*“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come”*  
(Matt. 22:2-3).

The **second invitation** was given by the Apostles in the early Church period, but the Jews *“entreated them spitefully and slew them”* (Matt. 22:6). Peter reminded the Jews that the Gospel had to go to Israel **FIRST** in Acts 3:26 and Paul and Barnabas told the Jews: *“It was necessary that the word of God should **first have been spoken to you**: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles”* (Acts 13:46). The parable says: *“They which were bidden were not worthy”* (Matt. 22:8).

The king in the parable is the Father who responded and *“destroyed those murderers, and **burned up their city**.”* In A.D. 70. God sent the Romans to besiege Jerusalem for five months, slaughtering or enslaving its inhabitants. The city and Temple were burned.

The **third invitation** to attend the marriage supper of the Lamb **as guests** will be given by 144,000 Jewish witnesses in the first half of the Tribulation, and



*“How often would I have gathered thy children ...and ye would not”*

at that time *“all Israel shall be saved”* (Rom. 11:26; Ezek. 39:22-29). In the third invitation the servants went *“into the highways”* and *“gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good”* (Matt. 22:10). This suggests that the 144,000 will preach the *“gospel of the kingdom... in all the world”* (Matt. 24:14) and that converted Gentiles will be among the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb just as converted Gentiles were numbered among Old Testament saints.

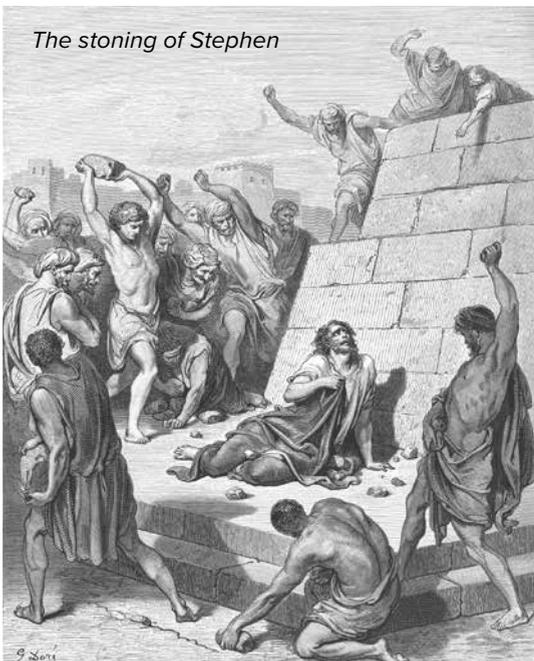
A solemn **warning** is given that those invited must have a wedding garment, and any that come without a wedding garment will be cast *“into outer darkness”* where there is *“weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matt. 22:13). **Only the**

**redeemed from the Tribulation period will qualify as guests.** *“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”* (Rev. 19:9).

The marriage supper of the Lamb will be **on earth after Christ returns**, as indicated in Luke 12:36-37. The bride will have *“made herself ready”*, having received her rewards at the *bema* seat in heaven (Rev. 19:7-8). If the marriage **supper** was in heaven then how did the man without a wedding garment get there? It can only be on earth. The order of events in Luke 12:36-37 is as follows:

- 1) Israel is to “wait for their Lord”.
- 2) When the Lord comes to earth He will *“return from the wedding”* in heaven. So the second advent is **AFTER the wedding** of Christ and His Church **in heaven**, which means the Rapture must take place **BEFORE** the Tribulation. There can't be a wedding without a bride.
- 3) When the Lamb returns to the earth **with His wife** after the wedding in heaven, He will **prepare a feast** and *“make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them”*. When John described the return of Christ, he wrote: **“BLESSED** are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Rev. 19:9). Jesus will say to the *“sheep”* (saved Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation) *“Come, YE BLESSED of my Father, inherit the kingdom...”* (Matt. 25:34). Daniel, addressing those who enter the

The stoning of Stephen



kingdom, wrote, "**BLESSED** is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (Dan. 12:12).

In the millennial kingdom, the Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs will **serve in resurrection bodies** together with Israel and the living nations that survive the Great Tribulation in **natural** bodies.

### *A JEWISH WEDDING*

The story of Eliezer Ben Yehudah, who, almost single-handedly revived the Hebrew language, illustrates the simplicity of the Jewish **marriage ceremony**. At Cairo the young lovers stood before a Rabbi and two witnesses. Eliezer took Deborah's hand and, looking straight into her eyes, said: "Harei at Mekudeshet lee."

One of the two witnesses asked, "What do the words mean?" The Rabbi explained, "The words mean, **You are herewith betrothed to me**. This alone is sufficient to unite two young people in marriage if spoken in the presence of two witnesses."

The Lord's own words will be sufficient to assure us that we will eternally share with Him the throne of heaven (Rev. 3:21) and reign with Him as His Church, the "wife" of the Lamb of God.



## Chapter 4 - Life After Death for New Testament Saints

THE “New Testament saints” are all the saved persons on earth who live between Pentecost and the Rapture. The death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ was essential before the Church could be formed. Jesus said: “*If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you*” (John 16:7). The distinguishing characteristic of the Church age is the **indwelling Holy Spirit**. When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, He not only filled the disciples, but also baptized them into the Body of Christ which is His Church. The Body of Christ could not exist before Pentecost.

We have already seen that when Christ rose from the dead, He opened heaven. The veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom signifying that the way was now made open into the holy of holies; into heaven itself, where Christ appears as our great high priest on the throne of heaven (Heb. 9:11-12, 24).

*“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh”* (Heb. 10:19-20).

So if *sheol* has been emptied of the saved from the Old Testament era, where do New Testament believers go after death? There is no need for New Testament believers to go to any waiting place in the unseen realm because access into the immediate presence of God is **now available** to all who believe.

Paul says:

*“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better”* (Phil. 1:23).

*“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we*



*may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:6-10).*

These verses make it clear that the soul of the believer is immediately transported into the presence of Christ in heaven at the moment of death. It may be that the angels have the task of ushering the saints into Christ’s presence. We know that Lazarus was “*carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom*” (paradise) (Luke 16:22), and that now the angels are “*ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*” (Heb. 1:14).

Paul said:

*“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the THIRD HEAVEN**. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was **caught up into PARADISE**, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities” (2 Cor. 12:2-5).*

Paul is obviously speaking of himself in the third person, and identifies the **third heaven with paradise**. He was caught up to heaven where God dwells and he calls it paradise. The first heaven is the atmosphere, the second is the starry space, and the third is where God dwells. This Scripture confirms that paradise is now in heaven, and we know the Old Testament saints are there already.

Paul was not permitted to speak of those things which he saw, and he said:

*“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us **by his Spirit**: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:9-10).*

If it were not for the Holy Spirit’s revelation in Scripture of some of the glory that awaits the believer, we would be entirely in the dark about our future. However, God has revealed much to us by His Spirit.

### **OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS ARE CONSCIOUS AFTER DEATH**

The Seventh Day Adventist teaching of “soul sleep” contends that only the body exists after death; put simply, it **denies the immortality of the soul or that the deceased are conscious**.

Just as in Old Testament times, the souls of the deceased in *sheol* were conscious, so the departed souls in New Testament times are conscious. On the mount of transfiguration Moses and Elias appeared from *sheol* and “*spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem*” (Luke 9:31).

When Saul wanted to enquire of the Lord about the approaching battle with the Philistines, the Lord would not answer him, so he went to the witch of Endor in the hope that he would be able to contact Samuel who had died. God intervened, and instead of a demon impersonation, Samuel appeared and spoke the Word of the Lord to him. The witch was afraid, because she expected her “familiar spirit” to appear but instead it was Samuel.

Samuel did not appear in a resurrection body, because Christ had not risen at that time and Christ had to be the firstfruits of them that slept!

### ***TRIBULATION SAINTS CONSCIOUS AFTER DEATH***

The souls of Tribulation martyrs will be conscious in heaven and will raise their voices crying out for vengeance. We read:

*“When he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar **THE SOULS of them that were slain** for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and **they cried with a loud voice**, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”* (Rev. 6:9-10).

Throughout the Book of Revelation there are many indications that the redeemed in heaven are conscious (Rev. 5:9; 7:9-10; 12:10-12; 14:3; 18:20). Before their resurrection John saw

*“a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and **palms in their hands; and CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb**”* (Rev. 7:9-10).

When John was asked, “*What are these?*” he was told:

*“These are they which came out of (the) great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and **serve him day and night in his temple**”* (Rev. 7:14-15).

This great multitude of Tribulation martyrs are conscious **immortal souls** serving the Lord in heaven. They await their resurrection bodies at the end of the Tribulation when Christ returns (Rev. 20:4).

### ***NEWTESTAMENT SAINTS CONSCIOUS AFTER DEATH***

In the great passage of Scripture which describes the Rapture of the Church, we read:

*“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so **them also which sleep (have died) in Jesus WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM**. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep (have died)”* (1 Thess. 4:14-15).

If man does not have an immortal soul, how will God bring with Christ those Christians who have died? The purpose of this coming is **to give a resurrection body to all who are “in Christ”**. The deceased believers must be raised first, “*then we which are alive and remain*” will be caught up in resurrection power, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air.

The expression, “*them also which sleep in Jesus*”, refers to Christians who have died. It is the **body that sleeps in the grave awaiting the resurrection**. At the resurrection (Rapture) of the Church the same body is raised and reunited with the soul.

When the Old Testament saints were raised, their souls came from *sheol* to be reunited with their bodies in resurrection. At death, the souls of New Testament saints were “*absent from the body and present with the Lord*” therefore they must **come with Him** at the Rapture to be reunited with their resurrected bodies.

The Church is not yet complete for there are still some who will be saved before the Rapture as Paul wrote in Romans 11:25. “*Blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*”.

Those who are saved in this Church age are

*“sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (guarantee) of our inheritance UNTIL the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory”* (Eph. 1:13-14).

The **body of the believer** is the “*purchased possession*” which has yet to be redeemed. The **souls** of deceased believers are already in the heavenly Mount Sion and come **with Him** at the Rapture.

### REWARDS FOR BELIEVERS

After the Rapture, Church-age believers will appear before the judgment seat (bema) of Christ. The purpose of this judgment is not to determine whether we are saved, nor to receive punishment for failure, because all of our sin has been once and for ever dealt with at the cross when Christ “*bare our sins in his own body on the tree*” (1 Peter 2:24). Our debt has been paid, and at the moment of our salvation we were “*justified freely by his grace*” (Rom. 3:24). Furthermore, we had imputed to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The judgment seat of Christ is therefore **not judicial**, but for the purpose of assessing **rewards for service** for the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have built with gold, silver, or precious stones, then our works will abide and we will receive reward, but if we have built wood, hay and stubble, we will suffer the loss of reward to our great sorrow.

Paul gives a solemn warning to Christians:

*“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as **a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.***

*...If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, **he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire**” (1 Cor. 3:10-17).*

The rewards of believers are spoken of as **crowns, and there are two types of crowns in Scripture.** There are **kingly crowns** (*diadema*) which are worn by Christ at His appearing (Rev. 19:12), but also worn by the dragon (Satan) (Rev. 12:3) and by the beast (Antichrist) (Rev. 13:1).

The crowns that are given to the saints from Old Testament (Rev. 4:4; 12:1) and New Testament times (James 1:12; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; Phil. 4:1; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Cor. 9:25; Rev. 2:10) are the **victor’s wreath** (*stephanos*), such as are awarded at the Olympic Games. They are awarded for running with patience the race that is set before us (Heb. 12:1).

When Paul came to the end of his earthly journey, he could say:

*“The time of my departure is at hand. **I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:** Henceforth there is laid up for me **a crown of righteousness,** which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”*  
(2 Tim. 4:6-8).



**There are a number of crowns for which Christians may strive:**

- 1) Faithful elders (shepherds) in the Church of God will receive from the Chief Shepherd, **“a crown of glory that fadeth not away”** (1 Peter 5:4).
- 2) Those who are **“faithful unto death”**, and those who endure testings and persecution will receive the **“crown of life”** (Rev. 2:10; James 1:12).
- 3) Those who love the **“appearing”** of the Lord Jesus will receive a **“crown of righteousness”** (2 Tim. 4:8). The Blessed Hope is a purifying hope **producing righteousness** which will be commended by the Lord (1 John 3:2-3). This is a special crown for those who **keep the Word of God’s patience** i.e. the truth of the Lord’s return; patiently waiting for His coming and continuing to confess His name (Rev. 3:8-11). The **“word of my patience”** is the message of the Lord’s return for which the Church at Philadelphia was commended. James wrote:

*“Be **patient** therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord... Be ye also **patient**; stablish your hearts; for **the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**”* (James 5:7-8).

The letter to the Church at Sardis (the Reformation Church) warns that Church about its failure to watch, and the Church at Philadelphia is warned to *“hold that fast which thou hast”* lest someone else takes their crown.

- 4) Soul-winners will receive a *“crown of rejoicing”* (1 Thess. 2:19; Phil. 4:1). Every soul won to Christ will be the cause of great joy in the presence of Christ. It will include those we know about, and those we don't know about.
- 5) Faithful saints who boldly stand for Christ will receive an *“incorruptible crown”*.

*“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? **So run, that ye may obtain.** And every man that striveth for the mastery is **temperate in all things.** Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, **not as uncertainly**; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But **I keep under my body**, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”* (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

**Crowns can be lost if we fail to serve as we ought.** God will give the service to which we were appointed, to others, who will receive our reward. We recall the words of Mordecai to Queen Esther:

*“For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there **enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place**; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom **for such a time as this?**”* (Esther 4:14).

*“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive **a full reward**”* (2 John 1:8).

“Stephanos” (the victor's wreath) is used in relation to the Lord Jesus because He was made a *“little lower than the angels for the suffering of death”*. **His death on the cross won Him the victor's crown** therefore

*“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow”* (Phil. 2:9-10).

The crown (stephanos) of thorns pressed into the brow of the Lord Jesus, was done in mockery but the victor's wreath has replaced the crown of thorns, the emblem of the curse (Matt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2,5). In heaven the 24 elders wear **crowns (stephanos) of gold** which they cast before the eternal throne (Rev. 4:4,10).

### WHEN ARE REWARDS RECEIVED?

Rewards are given at the end of the race. At the Olympic games only three medals are given as each race is finalized. Many who have striven lawfully and well are greatly disappointed. Paul noted this fact:

*“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but **one receiveth the prize?** So run, that ye may obtain”* (1 Cor. 9:24).

However, Paul did not say that only winners would be rewarded in the race of life. He said that we are to “*so run*” **as though** there was only one prize. Every effort should be expended, every weight laid aside and every rule observed as we “*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling (upward call) of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:14).

*“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and **every man shall receive his own reward** according to his own labour”* (1 Cor. 3:8).

Unlike the Olympic games, **every believer** will receive rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. The grace of God which has worked in each believer from the day of our salvation will find some devotion, some service, some sacrifice, some victory, and some labour for the Lord to commend.

*“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and **then shall every (saved) man have praise of God**”* (1 Cor. 4:5).

*“For **God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love**, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end”* (Heb. 6:10-11).

After the Rapture of the Church, the wedding will take place in heaven and all rewards will be distributed. Then Christ will appear in glory and we read: “*his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness(es) of the saints.*” (Rev. 19:7-8).

The fine linen is the **righteous acts** of the saints. The rewards of the saints will be the cause of much praise to the Lord at His glorious appearing. Paul wrote of that future day:

*“When he shall come to be **glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe** (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day”*  
(2 Thess. 1:10).

Rewards will all be “*to the praise of his glory*” (Eph. 1:12,14).

## **THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAVED**

The first resurrection is **like any harvest**. It has its **firstfruits** (Christ and the Old Testament saints), the **harvest** (the Church at the Rapture), and the **gleanings** (the Tribulation and Millennial saints).

The resurrection of the Church-age saints will occur at the Rapture when the “*dead in Christ*” are raised (1 Thess. 4:14, and 16). The expression “*in Christ*” is peculiar to the Church, for since Pentecost, believers are baptized by the Spirit **into the Body of Christ** at conversion. This was not true of Old Testament saints, who were members of Israel.

Only in the Church Epistles do we find believers being addressed as “*the saints in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 1:1). It was a term applied to ALL New Testament believers, for Paul says:

*“Therefore if **any man be IN CHRIST**, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (2 Cor. 5:17).

Jesus forewarned the disciples that this change would occur. He told them that the Spirit who was WITH them, would be IN them **after** He had been taken from them:

*“**At that day** ye shall know that I am in my Father, and **YE IN ME**, and I in you”* (John 14:20).

Being “*in Christ*” means to be placed into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Body of Christ (the Church, Col. 1:24) did not exist in the Old Testament, for Jesus indicated it was still future during His earthly ministry. He said:

*“**I will** (future tense) **build my church**”* (Matt. 16:18).

At Pentecost 3,000 souls were saved, and we read:

*“The Lord **added to the church daily** such as should be (were being) saved”* (Acts 2:47).

So those who are raised in the Rapture are those who “*sleep IN JESUS*”; exclusively those of this present age.

Jesus did NOT teach a general Resurrection. He said,

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The hour is coming, and now is (Old Testament saints)**, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live ...for **the hour is coming**, in the which **all** that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto **the resurrection of life**; and they that have done evil, unto **the resurrection of damnation**”* (John 5:25-28).

When Jesus stated that **the the hour “now is”**, He indicated the resurrection of Old Testament saints was imminent, but in the future there will be other

resurrections. The fact that only the Old Testament **saints** rose with Christ makes it plain that there can be no such thing as a general resurrection at the end of the age.

It is important to note that the Rapture includes living saints **as well as those who have died**. This was not true of the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. At that time the living saints remained to establish the Church, and after Pentecost they became part of the Body of Christ.

The Tribulation saints who die, will be raised when Christ returns **to reign**. John wrote:

*“I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and **which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**” (Rev. 20:4).*

Church-age saints won't be here for the Tribulation to receive the mark of the Beast so these cannot be part of the Church.

The **living saints** who survive the Tribulation will not be changed for **they go alive into the kingdom**. When Christ returns He will sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him will be gathered all surviving nations. Then the Lord will separate the sheep (saved Gentiles) from the goats (unsaved Gentiles). The goats go away into “*everlasting fire*”, but Jesus will say to the sheep, “*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom*”. The sheep go alive into the “*kingdom*” (Matt. 25:31-46).

*Zechariah states that “every one that is left of all the nations” after the Tribulation “shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zech. 14:16).*

When the age of Law finished, Old Testament saints **who were living** became New Testament saints, and when the Tribulation comes to an end, **the surviving saints** will become millennial saints. However, when the Church age ends, **ALL Christians will be Raptured**.

# The First Resurrection or the Resurrection of Life – John 5:25-29

## FIRST FRUITS

All the Old Testament Saints rose with Christ. Paradise was taken to Heaven (Matt. 27:52-53)



Bema Seat and Marriage of the Lamb (2 Cor. 5:10)

## HARVEST

The Rapture of the Church. Dead "In Christ" Raised and Living Saints changed (1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-54)



2ND COMING  
Christ comes  
"from the wedding"  
(Luke 12:36)

## GLEANINGS

Tribulation Martyrs (Rev. 11:12, Rev. 20:4)

## GLEANINGS

The "rest of the dead" Living Saints and dead raised and changed (Rev. 20:5)

Earth burned and the New Heaven and New Earth for the saved (Rev. 21 & 22)



**Age of Law**  
Israel "Salvations is of the Jews" (John 2:11)

**The Church Age**  
(Eph. 3:1-10)  
"The fullness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25)

**7 Years Tribulation**  
(Matt. 24:7-28)  
Israel "The time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7)

**1,000 Year Reign of Christ on Earth** (Rev. 20:1-10)  
Israel & Gentiles "I will pour out my spirit upon ALL flesh" (Joel 2:28)

The Resurrection to Damnation at the Great White Throne (Rev. 11-25)



Living Old Testament Saints NOT Raptured but became New Testament Saints (Acts 1:8)  
Paradise where the Old Testament Saints waited for Christ to rise.  
(Luke: 24:7-28)

Marriage Supper (Rev. 19:9)

Living Tribulation Saints NOT Raptured but became Millennial Saints (Zech. 14:16, Matt. 25:34)

The bodies of the unsaved dead in the grave await resurrection to the Great White Throne.

Hell ("Hades") - a place of torment where unsaved souls await the Resurrection to Damnation at the Great White Throne.

The everlasting Lake of Fire "Gehennah"



The Great Gulf



## Chapter 5 - Life after Death for the Unsaved?

**T**HUS far we have seen that when Christ died His sacrifice opened heaven to redeemed souls. When He rose, He made it possible for bodies to be raised from the dead, and when He ascended, He took the Old Testament saints into heaven, leading the first of many sons to glory. All who have been saved since then will follow in their train.

Peter expressed the joy which the Christian enjoys in anticipation of our ultimate triumph:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the **resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation** READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME”* (1 Peter 1:3-6).

### **HADES, GOD’S REMAND CENTRE**

The unsaved dead, however, enjoy no such comfort. Ever since the beginning of time unsaved **souls** have languished in the “*lowest hell*” (lowest *sheol*); in the torment section of *sheol*. When Christ rose, paradise was removed from *sheol* and taken to heaven, but *sheol* **continued as the place of departed unsaved spirits** of men. The Hebrew word *sheol* is equivalent to the New Testament Greek word *hades*, which is best described as God’s remand centre.

When a person is arrested for a crime, our legal system places the guilty party in remand until brought before **the judge** to receive an appropriate sentence. Remand centres are similar to gaols, but the degree of punishment is not determined until a day appointed, when the evidence is read out in court and the prisoner stands before the judge. Our legal system assumes the person is innocent until proved guilty in court, but God has perfect knowledge and only the guilty are remanded to await the great white throne judgment.

God’s remand centre, *hades*, has only unsaved sinners in it, and these are detained in *hades* (*sheol* in the Old Testament Hebrew) until the day when Christ will sit upon the “*great white throne*” of judgment to pass sentence. There are **only two occasions when Christ sits upon the throne of judgment**; first when He returns, and later when His 1,000-year reign on earth has ended. The books of works will be opened, and the book of life will be opened. At the first judgment **living** nations are judged, while at the great white throne only **resurrected** unsaved are judged.

Just as the first resurrection is in several stages, **the second resurrection is in two**

**stages.** There will be a resurrection of “*some*” of the dead when Christ returns to the earth, but the “*rest of the dead*” (Rev. 20:5) are not raised until the end of the 1,000 years.

### WHO WILL BE RAISED AT THE SECOND COMING?

Daniel wrote:

*“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation . . . And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, **SOME to everlasting life, and SOME to shame and everlasting contempt**”* (Dan. 12:1-3).

These verses undoubtedly refer to the **Great Tribulation and the coming of the Lord** to rescue repentant Israel. The “*time of trouble*” is what Jesus called “*great tribulation*” (Matt. 24:21), and it is at “*that time*” that many that “*sleep in the dust*” will be raised, “*some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt*”.

Words could not be plainer. There will be **SOME saved and unsaved** who receive resurrection bodies at the end of the Tribulation, but it is **NOT a general resurrection** because John states that “*the rest of the dead lived not again UNTIL the thousand years were finished*” (Rev. 20:5).

Those raised to eternal **life** are the **Tribulation martyrs** (Rev. 20:4), and those raised to everlasting **shame** are the Antichrist, his false prophet, and those who followed them, described by the Lord as “*goats*” (Matt. 25:33). Isaiah described the Tribulation in Isaiah chapters 24 to 28 in what is known as the “*little apocalypse*”. He told the remnant of Tribulation saints to “*hide thyself as it were for a little moment*”. This applies to the second half of the Tribulation, when Israel will be preserved by God in “*the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God*” for “*a thousand two hundred and threescore days*” (Rev. 12:6). The resurrection of the **Tribulation martyrs** is promised in Isaiah 26:19:

*“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body (Christ’s body) shall they arise . . . and the earth shall cast out the dead (i.e. in resurrection). Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, **the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth**”* (Isa. 26:19-21).

The context is unmistakably the Tribulation and the coming of the Lord to judge the nations. God will protect repentant Israel in a wilderness place which He has prepared (Rev. 12:6) for the last half of the Tribulation, but there will be a resurrection of Tribulation martyrs, while those who followed Antichrist will be slain and given resurrection bodies to be cast into the “*everlasting fire*” of the “*lake of fire*”.

When John described the judgment of Antichrist, he wrote:

*“The **beast** was taken, and with him **the false prophet** that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. **These both** were **cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone**” (Rev. 19:20).*

Daniel described the judgment of Antichrist (the beast) as follows:

*“I beheld even till **the beast was slain, and his body destroyed**, and given to **the burning flame**...the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end” (Dan. 7:11, 26).*

*“He shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Dan. 11:45).*

We are told two things: first, that Antichrist is cast “*alive*” into a lake of fire, and second, that he is “*slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*” **The lake of fire is only for resurrected persons. The soul of the unsaved goes to hades, but body and soul of unsaved are consigned to gehenna which is the lake of fire,** as we shall see later.

Those who follow Antichrist and survive the Tribulation are described by the Lord as “*goats*”, and are gathered before the “*throne of his glory*” after Christ returns. Sentence is passed by the Lord, and Scripture records:

*“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, **into everlasting fire, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS**” (Matt. 25:41).*

These followers of Antichrist go to the place where the Devil and his angels (demons) will later be consigned, and that will be the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). *Hades (sheol)* is only the remand centre **for the SOULS of the unsaved** and not where the Devil is cast.

It becomes quite clear from these Scriptures that the “*everlasting fire*” into which the “*goats*” are banished when Christ returns, is **the same place** into which the Devil is cast at the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, and since the **lake of fire requires a resurrection body** for sentence, these receive their resurrection body when Christ returns to sit upon the throne of His glory.

Since Antichrist does not go to *hades* but directly to the **lake of fire**, he too must receive a resurrection body, and Daniel chapter 12 therefore describes a part of the second resurrection for Antichrist and his followers. However, the “*rest of the dead*” will not rise till the 1,000 years are finished.

### ***WHO ARE RAISED AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM?***

John saw “*death and hell*” deliver up the dead which were in them, and these stood before the great white throne. “*Death and hell*” (*hades*) refer to the body and soul of the unsaved. *Sheol*, or *hades*, will finally be emptied of all remaining unsaved

souls, who will be reunited with their bodies in the **final stage** of the second resurrection, which the Bible calls "*the second death*". Jesus referred to it as "*the resurrection of damnation*" (John 5:29).

The unsavd dead will be judged "*according to their works*" (Rev. 20:13). We read: "*Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And **death and hell were cast into the lake of fire**. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*" (Rev. 20. 13-15).

At the great white throne there is justice, but no mercy. The dead will be judged according to **their works**.

*"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with **many stripes**. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with **few stripes**. For **unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required**: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more"* (Luke12:47-48).

Perfect justice will be administered at that throne, but there can be no mercy, for "*whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*". Only the souls from hell (*hades*) will stand before the great white throne.

When John saw his own entry through the door of heaven at the Rapture (Rev. 4:1-3), there was a "*rainbow **round about the throne***" of God, signifying the mercy of God on the grounds of a covenant relationship (Gen. 9:13). However, there is **no rainbow at the great white throne**, and the One who occupies it will not appear precious "*as a jasper and a sardine stone*" (Rev. 4:3) but fearsome, for we read: "*from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away*" (Rev. 20:11).

A full circle rainbow cannot be observed while standing on earth. The writer observed a full circle rainbow while flying over rain clouds in the north of Queensland. As the shadow of the plane moved across the clouds below, a rainbow completely encircled the shadow, which may be a parable to teach us that we can never fully appreciate God's mercy while on earth, but when we are heaven-borne at the Rapture the fulness of His love and mercy will be apparent.

### **THE BOOK OF LIFE**

It is evident from a number of Scriptures that God keeps a record of the deeds of men. For the believer, that record is not imputed because Christ has obtained eternal redemption for us (Rom. 4:4-8); but for the Christ rejector, the record stands, and the factor which determines the **destiny** of the unbeliever is **not** the degree of sin, but whether his name remains in the book of life.

*"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"* (Rev. 20:15).

The book of life is also called the book of the living. **Every soul born into the world was recorded in the book of life before the foundation of the world.** Throughout each life, opportunity is given by God to repent and turn to God. If a soul refuses to turn from sin to God, that name is blotted out.

When Moses offered to have his name blotted out of the book in order to atone for Israel's sin, God replied, *"Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book"*(Exod. 32:33) and to the saved in the Church at Sardis, the Lord says:

*"He that **overcometh**, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will **not blot out his name out of the book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels* (Rev. 3:5).

The **overcomers** in the seven Churches of Asia are not victorious Christians but true believers in a professing Church. All true believers are "*overcomers*". John wrote:

*"Whatsoever is born of God **overcometh** the world: and this is the victory that **overcometh** the world, even our faith"* (1 John 5:4).

*"Who is he that **overcometh** the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"* (1 John 5:5).

Throughout time, the book of life has contained the names of all souls that will be born. However, at the end of time, all unsaved will have made their choice and been blotted out. All destinies will then be determined, and only the redeemed who have trusted in the Lamb of God for salvation will remain in the book of life. Thus the book of life it is finally called "*the Lamb's book of life*".

The fact that all names were written in the book of life in eternity past is evidence that God "*is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9).

The fact that names are blotted out is evidence that the choice was man's. No individual will ever be able to say, "I didn't have a chance to be saved." God's law is written in every human heart and every man has a conscience (Rom. 2:14-16) while the "*invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*" (Rom. 1:20).

**Footnote:** Rev. 13: 8 and 17:8 may appear to indicate that some names **were not written** or **are not written**, in the book of life from the foundation of the world, however, in the original Greek language both Scriptures are **the same and in the perfect tense**. The perfect tense does not have an exact equivalent in English, but indicates "a present condition resultant upon a past action". Thus the translators have used the past tense in Rev. 17:8, and the present tense in Rev. 13:8. **All names were written in the book of life** from the foundation of the world and the perfect tense indicates that **IN THAT FUTURE DAY, only some names will remain because of a past action; their names were not blotted out as a consequence of accepting God's mercy.**

## Chapter 6 - The Future Eternal State

**B**YOND the millennial kingdom there is an eternal state, described in Revelation chapters 21 and 22, about which we do not have a great deal of information. It is called the new heaven and new earth, and into this scene there comes a new Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven.

In this new heaven and new earth, all the saved dwell in resurrection bodies. If it were not for 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and what we observe about our Lord's risen ministry, we would have little concept of the nature of our eternal bodies or how we will operate in the new environment.

The future eternal state is on earth for we read:

*"The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be **WITH THEM**, and be their God"* (Rev. 21:3).

David wrote:

*"The LORD's throne is in heaven"* (Ps. 11:4), but in the eternal state *"the throne of God and of the Lamb"* will be in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 22:3).

Scripture indicates that many of the distinctions which have existed throughout past ages will continue in the new heaven and new earth. Some have assumed that in eternity believers of all ages will merge into one homogeneous mass of saints but this is not so.

### ***THE JEW, THE GENTILE, AND THE CHURCH***

What we do know, is that the earth will be renovated by fire, there will be *"no more sea"*, and *"the former things are passed away"* (Rev. 21:4). The new Jerusalem comes down from heaven, and when the angel showed John the "bride, the Lamb's wife", he showed him the new Jerusalem which has *"the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"* in its foundations (Rev. 21:14).

Paul wrote that the Church is *"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets"* (Eph. 2:20), and stated, *"I have laid the foundation"* (1 Cor. 3:10). The Church is espoused to Christ *"as a chaste virgin"* (2 Cor. 11:2) and is identified with the new Jerusalem.

The twelve gates of the new Jerusalem will be inscribed with *"the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel"* (Rev. 21:12), and through those gates *"the kings of the earth"* will eternally *"bring their glory and honour into it"*. ***"The nations (Gentiles) of them which are saved shall walk in the light"*** of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24-26).

There is absolutely no doubt that **the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church** will still

be remembered and identified in the new heaven and earth, and that there will be well-ordered activity. We read: "*his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face*" (Rev. 22:3-4).

### *ETERNAL RELATIONSHIPS*

Some relationships will change. All three synoptic Gospels recall the hypothetical case which the Sadducees put to the Lord about a woman who married seven brothers. They asked,

*"In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife"* (Mark 12:23).

Jesus replied:

*"When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven"* (Mark 12:25).

### *AN ETERNAL ENVIRONMENT*

Peter compares the destruction of the earth in Noah's day with the earth's destruction by fire at the end of the millennial kingdom:

*"Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"* (2 Peter 3:6-7).

The world of Noah's day did not disappear but was cleansed by water, and the new heaven and earth will likewise be renewed. The **oceans will disappear** and all of the former things will pass away. There will be no animals in the new earth. All natural life forms will perish in the conflagration. If we can believe that the entire world was once covered by water, we should have no problem believing that the day will come when there will be no more sea!

Scripture states:

*"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but **the earth abideth for ever**"* (Eccles. 1:4).

Will we eat in the eternal city? Jesus said He would not "*drink of the fruit of the vine, UNTIL the kingdom of God shall come*" (Luke 22:18), and He ate after He rose from the dead. It is therefore not inconsistent for those who have been raised in His likeness to partake of food.

*"And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them"* (Luke 24:42-43).

In the new earth there will be the tree of life which will

*"bare twelve manner of fruits...every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing (benefit) of the nations"* (Rev. 22:2).

If there is no more death and no more pain, one wonders why the leaves would be necessary for the *“healing of the nations”*. The Greek word translated healing is *“therapia”* and may imply “well being” or “health” rather than a cure for sickness. They will be for the **benefit** of the nations.

In the eternal state there will be no more death, sorrow, crying or pain, and no more curse. There shall *“in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie”* (Rev. 21:27).

The sun and the moon will continue to shine on the new Jerusalem, but there will be **no need** of them because *“the glory of God”* will lighten it and *“the Lamb is the light thereof”* (Rev. 21:23).

### WHERE ARE THE ANGELS?

The **new earth** will be the dwelling place of the redeemed from all ages, but what of the millions of angels? Only 12 angels stand at the gates to the New Jerusalem.

It would appear that **heaven, where God now dwells, will continue** to be the dwelling place of the angelic hosts. If the new Jerusalem comes down from God **out of heaven**, we can assume that heaven continues to exist. The *“throne of God and of the Lamb”* will be in the new Jerusalem on earth, (Rev. 22:3). We are reminded:

*“The tabernacle of God is **with men**, and he will dwell **with them**, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be **with them**, and be their God”* (Rev. 21:3).

Some details are revealed about the new Jerusalem that leave us wondering in amazement. The magnitude of the new Jerusalem staggers our imagination. The city is 1,500 miles square and is bounded by a wall which is 6,000 miles in circumference. The city is a square and the four sides each have three gates.

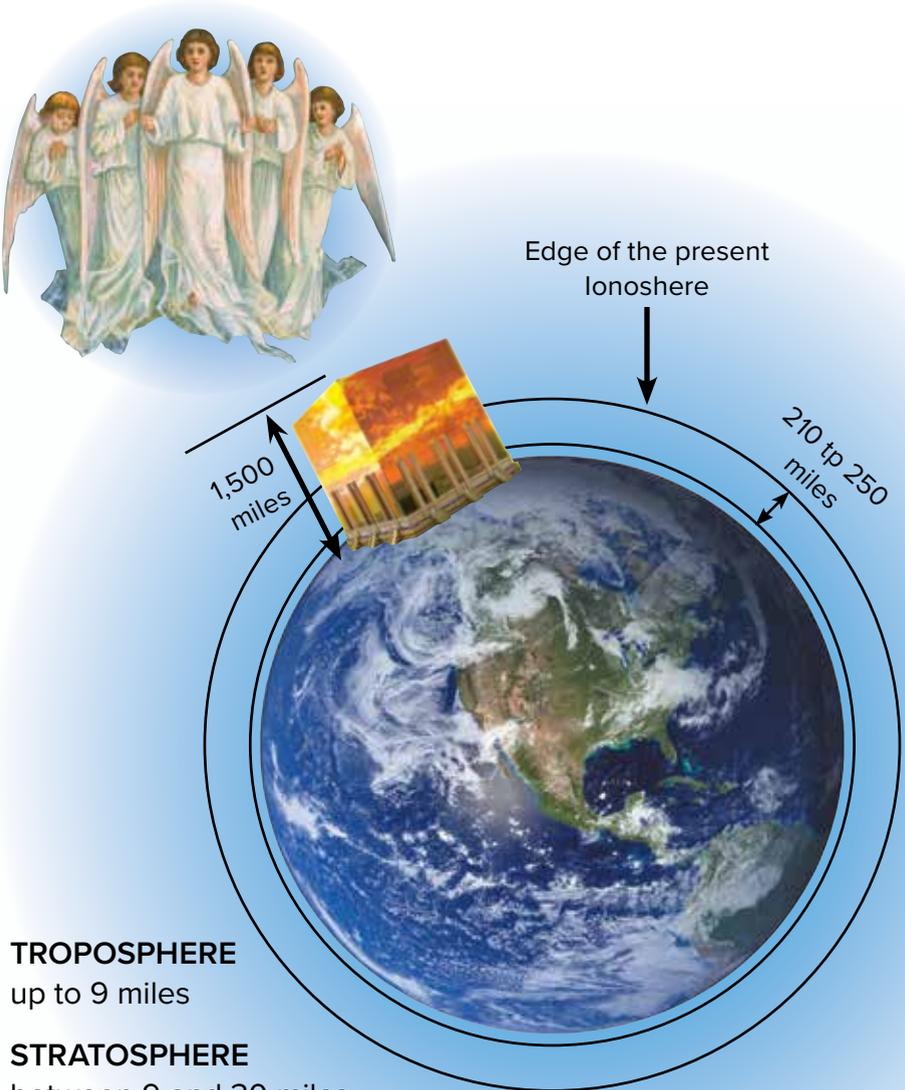
The height of the city is as great as its breadth; 1,500 miles. Scientists tell us that the earth’s Ionosphere reaches to 250 miles (400km km), so the new Jerusalem will stretch far into the space of the new heavens. Earth’s diameter is 7,600 miles, so the new Jerusalem will be one fifth of the diameter of the earth.

If located centrally over the present location of Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem would be bounded by Greece on the west, the Persian Gulf on the east, the southern border of Egypt to the south, and the Black Sea to the north. Since there will be *“no more sea”*, that will not be a problem.

Perhaps the angels of God will continue to occupy heaven, the Church the new Jerusalem, Israel around the new Jerusalem, and the saved Gentiles of other ages, the new earth. Those unseen angels who silently ministered to us in the days of our earthly pilgrimage will no doubt be known to us in that day.

With all the limitations imposed by sinful humanity, we can only gain a mere

glimpse of all that God has prepared for them that love Him, but in that day the mysteries that puzzled us in this life will be perfectly understood as we stand in the light of His glorious presence, where the Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land.



## Can We be Sure of Heaven?

**T**HE Bible is the Word of God given to prophets and apostles to show us the way of salvation and to give us assurance of eternal life. Many verses make this clear. There are *“given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature”* (2 Peter 1:4).

Salvation is **by faith** in Christ alone. Neither **our good deeds or the church can save**. Our good deeds are the product of salvation. God rewards faithful service to Christ but salvation is by faith alone in Christ:

*“For by grace (undeserved favour) are ye saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the **gift** of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**”* (Ephesians 2:8-10).

### **CHRIST HAS DONE IT ALL**

All the work necessary for us to be sure of heaven was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ when He came from heaven to die an atoning death on the cross. The Bible says *“He bare our sins in His own body on the tree (cross)”* (1 Peter 2:24). A full atonement was made by Christ as the Lamb of God who laid down His life and shed His blood for the sins of **the whole world**. God now **offers pardon and mercy to all** who rest their faith in Christ alone. My good deeds can never atone for my sin.

Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe,  
Sin had left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow.

Our personal salvation from sin and hell does not depend upon me but upon Him and the mercy which He freely offers to repentant sinners who place their trust in Christ.

*“For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should **not perish, but have everlasting life**”* (John 3:16).

How can I be sure that eternal life is mine the moment I believe in Christ? It is because God never breaks His promises. **It is not presumption to believe that God will do what He promised**. The Bible gives many promises to those who truly believe in Christ. Jesus said:

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life**”* (John 5:24).

Can I lose my salvation once I trust in Christ? No! My salvation depends on Him; upon His perfect work of redemption and not on me. Christ has promised to keep me safe. Jesus said:

*“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and **they follow me**: And I give unto them eternal life; and **they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand**”* (John 10:27-30).

Once we become a child of God we are secure and nothing can separate us from the love of our heavenly Father. Paul wrote:

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels... nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:35-39).

Not only do I receive eternal life the moment I believe in Christ but God also gives me the gift of His Holy Spirit. He comes to dwell in my heart and He changes my thinking and behaviour.

**Heaven becomes my home** when I become a child of God. We no longer fear death. At death we are ushered into the presence of Christ:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you**”* (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Death is not the end. God has promised a glorious resurrection for all true believers in Christ:

*“**The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord**”* (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

The question remains: Have you turned from sin and self to Christ and placed your faith in His atoning work at the cross? If you have, then all the promises of God are yours. If you haven't; do it now.

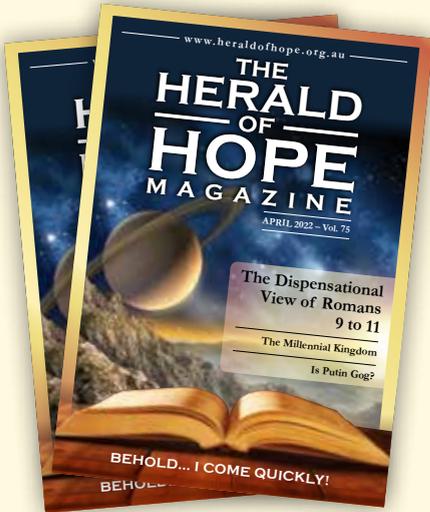
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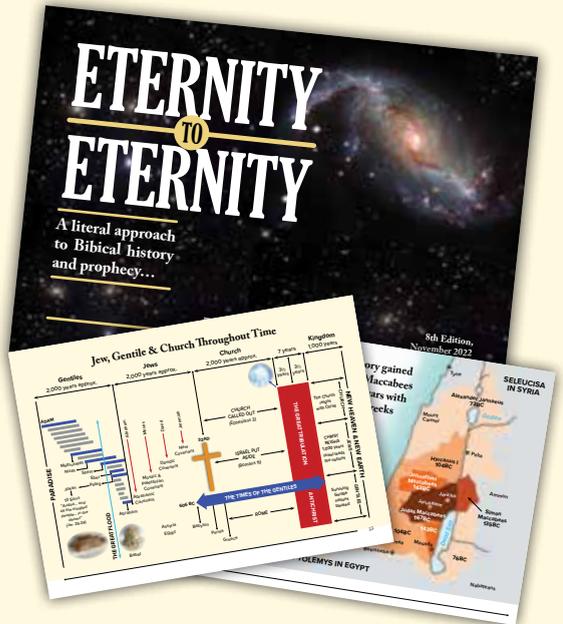


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Every person that has ever lived faces the fact that their life will come to an end some day. Sadly few people in our society have a correct understanding of life beyond the grave. This book briefly traces what men have believed about the unknown, unseen world into which they pass after death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.  
(Philippians 1. 21)

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