

# What Does The Bible Say About King David And Abraham?

For David did not ascend into Heaven ... (Act 2:34)

King David, who was “a man after my heart”, and Abraham, whom God called his friend, must have gone to heaven. Or did not they ever get there? What does the Bible say about it?

Act 2:29 Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and that his tomb is among us to this day.

Act 13:22 ... I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will. – If David did not reach heaven, even though he was a man of God’s favor, who then?

David’s time will come as prophet Jeremias says (Jer 30:9) **but they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up to them.** – David is not in heaven, but resting in his grave. If he were in heaven, he would not have to wake up! Awakening occurs in the first resurrection when Jesus comes.

And again; Eze 37:24 And my servant, David, *shall be King* over them. And there shall be one Shepherd to all of them. And they shall walk in my judgments and keep my statutes, and do them.

Psa 89:4 I will establish Your seed forever, and build up Your throne to all generations. 5 And the heavens shall thank your wonders, O Jehovah; also your faithfulness in the assembly of the saints. – God has sworn to David to build him a throne that will last “from generation to generation”. What about Christ’s throne? Should not he be on the throne of David?

**He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his forefather**

**David.** (Luk 1:32)

David is, therefore, the king of Israel, but what about the apostles? For them, Jesus promised the right to rule with him. The answer can be found in Mat 19:28 where Jesus says: Truly I tell you, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne in the renewed creation, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, governing the twelve tribes of Israel. – The apostles will reign the twelve tribes of Israel under David's kingship.

Also, the resurrected saints will reign as kings and priests, depending on how they have taken care of the 'talents' (or 'minas') entrusted to them. Some 'five cities', others 'ten'. *King* in the Bible language was not the same as King today. During the Bible, each city (a small city, "city-state") had its own king, of course, the big kingdoms. The saints ruling as *kings* are rather "local managers" under Christ's leadership.

**Rom 8:17 Now if we are children, we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if, in fact, we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.**

## **... And Abraham?**

Gal 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his descendant. It doesn't say "descendants," referring to many, but "your descendant," referring to one person, who is Christ. 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise. – These promises may be trusted by Christ's believers.

Rom 15:8 And I say, Jesus Christ has become a servant of circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers, – the fathers are according to Act 3:13: The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—the God of

our ancestors—has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you betrayed and rejected in the presence of Pilate, even though he had decided to let him go.

15:10 Again he says, Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people! – Promises also affect converts.

Gen 12:7 And Jehovah appeared to Abram and said I will give this land to your seed. And he built an altar there to Jehovah, who appeared to him.

Gen 13:15 For all the land which you see I will give to you, and to your seed forever.

2 Chr 20:7 Are You not our God? You have driven out the inhabitants of **this land** from before Your people Israel, and **have given it to the seed of Abraham, your friend forever;** – So land, no access to heaven.

Rom 4:13 For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law, but through the righteousness produced by faith.

Gen 22:17 That blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the shore of the sea. And your Seed shall possess the gate of His enemies.

**18 And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed** because you have obeyed my voice.

God confirmed this promise also to Isaac saying: Gen 26:2 And Jehovah appeared to him and said, Do not go down into Egypt; stay in the land which I shall say to you.

3 Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed I will give all these lands. And I will cause to rise My oath which I swore to your father Abraham.

4 And **I will increase your seed like the stars of the heavens,**

**and I will give to your seed all these lands. And all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves in your seed,**  
5 because Abraham listened to my voice and heeded my charge, my commands, my statutes, and my laws.

Eph 2:12 that at that time you were without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers of the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

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## **Will you go to heaven after you die?**

- Hope to get to heaven
- Which is decisive, faith or deeds?
- Jesus' ascension to heaven
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- The first resurrection and the second coming of Jesus
- After the last judgment
- What are the new heavens?
- Conclusion: Will you go to heaven after you die?

## Hope to get to heaven

2 Cor 5:1 “For we know that if the earthly house of our tent is dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.”

Apostle Paul writes of the hope of the resurrection, combined with the hope of entering God’s kingdom. Two thousand years have passed since the apostles, and the same hope equally animates modern man’s time. “The earthly house of our tent” means the physical body where people spend their time on earth.

## Home to the Lord

2 “For also in this we groan, since we long to put on our heavenly dwelling.”

Paul is confident that believers, at some point, will be allowed to exchange their physical bodies for the “tabernacle in heaven,” that is, the spirit body ... To put on their “heavenly dwelling” means a spiritual body

3 “if so be that being clothed we will not be found naked [be found without a body].

4 “For indeed we who are in this tent do groan, being burdened; not that we desire to be unclothed, but that we desire to be clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.”

5 “Now he who made us for this very thing is **God, who has given us his Spirit as a guarantee.**”

6 “Therefore, we are always confident, and we know that as long as we are at home in this body we are away from the Lord.”

The guarantee brought by the Holy Spirit comforts believers who long to reach the Lord.

7 For we live by faith, not by sight.

8 We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

9 Therefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well pleasing to him.

In Philippians, Paul suggests that he would like to die and thereby be with Christ, but for the sake of the churches, it is more necessary for him to continue to dwell on the earth.

Phl 1:21 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 And if to live in the flesh *is* to me a fruit of work, then what shall I choose? I know not.

23 But I am in a dilemma between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

24 Yet, to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sake."

The Epistle to the Philippians was written 10-15 years later than the Epistle to the Thessalonians. Paul wrote the letter in prison in Rome. Perhaps the longing conveyed by the letter to come home to Christ has been emphasized by prison conditions.

Also 2 Cor 5:8 "We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."

It is at least clear that Paul and the other apostles longed for Christ, to the heavenly home. Is this sure proof that after death, the believer immediately enters heaven? Nothing is said in these verses about the time.

In another verse, 1 Thessalonians 4:17 it is expressed this

way: "Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." Paul rejoices – not in going to heaven – but that Christ will return and that Paul and other believers will be meeting Christ and then always be with the Lord, on earth in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Paul and other believers eagerly awaited the Second Coming of Christ in their lifetime. After all, Jesus said he was coming "soon."

## **No one has ascended into heaven, but Jesus! (Joh 3:13)**

**First, the resurrection and the last judgment**

2 Cor 5:10 "For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what he deserves for what he has done in his body, whether good or evil."

Verse 10 sets out the principle of salvation; if you have done good, you will be saved; if evil, you will be punished.

Joh 5:28-29 "Don't marvel at this, for the hour comes, in which all that are in the tombs will hear his voice, 29 and will come out; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment."

This speaks of the **deeds** on which the judgment is based and not of faith; those who do good will receive the resurrection of life, and the wicked will be have the resurrection of judgment.

James also emphasizes the importance of deeds: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so, faith apart from works is dead."

I have picked out a few verses to show the importance of **faith**

as a decisive factor of salvation:

Act 16:31 "They said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Joh 3:36 One who believes in the Son has eternal life, but one who disobeys the Son won't see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

Joh 6:47 Most assuredly, I tell you, **he who believes in me has eternal life.**"

## **Which is decisive, faith or deeds?**

It all starts with knowing God. John tells in his gospel what is the foundation for eternal life. Joh 17:3 "**This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.**"

– One must know God the Father, who alone is the true God and his Son Jesus Christ, whom God has sent into the world. Indeed, Jesus came into the world to denounce the way to salvation, to the God of heaven. "Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me." (Joh 14:6). – Would I believe more in Jesus than the apostles? In that case, faith in Jesus is more decisive. It just so happens that Jesus has also spoken of the importance of deeds, as in John 5:28-29 above. Could it be that both are accepted? In other words, **with the final judgment, a favorable judgment can be obtained based on either faith or deeds.**

As a general rule, after the resurrection, all people must

appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that every one may receive judgment for what they have done during their time in the physical body. When I wrote that, as a general rule, I mean that everyone except the Saints of the First Resurrection must submit to Christ's judgment. The Saints of the First Resurrection will be tested and trained worthy in their lifetime. They are co-rulers of Christ and also participate in sharing the final judgment.

## Jesus' ascension to heaven

**No one has ascended into heaven, but Jesus! (Joh 3:13)**

What is the basis for the generally accepted belief that good people get to heaven as soon as they die? Let us think about what would happen if that were the case. That would mean that there would not be a final judgment in which all the dead would be raised to participate. Who would qualify them for heaven? St. Peter should interrogate at the gates of heaven? Or should people then descend from heaven to join in the final judgment when its time sometimes comes? What about when Christ establishes the Millennial Kingdom on earth, will the people in heaven take back their physical bodies and descend to earth where Christ reigns?

When the first resurrection of the dead takes place, if God's own, Abraham and King David, and many other Old Testament God-fearing men and women were in heaven, should they descend to earth to participate in the first resurrection and the Millennial Kingdom of Christ? But, after all, they lived in Old Testament times, so that they couldn't be "Christ's own." Such strange situations arise if some of the dead have already ascended to heaven. Everyone must come to the final judgment! 2 Cor 5:10 "For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what he deserves for what he has done in his body, whether good or evil."

**Child baptism** has been defended, mainly because if a child is not baptized and dies, the child will not go to heaven but go to hell. Really? The Bible's clear word reminds us of what Jesus said: "Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." You will find that such old beliefs that are not based on the Bible result in quite a mess. Of course, it is understandable that people seek comfort, especially as death approaches, from the general beliefs about going to heaven.

The Bible describes and thus testifies to Jesus ascending to heaven. At the same time, the angels confirmed his return in the same way he ascended to heaven.

## **Has Jesus come from heaven?**

Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary when God's Holy Spirit had "overshadowed" Mary (Luke 1:35). Why did the Son of God have to be born a baby? Couldn't Jesus have "come from heaven" just as angels came from heaven when God sent them to do a certain mission?

The coming of Jesus from heaven in no way indicates that he had been there before, quite the contrary. If one wanted to show that Jesus had been in heaven before and then came from there to earth, he would probably have come like angels, as a heavenly being. He came as a baby because the biblical account of the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary confirms the birth of Jesus from God the Father through the Holy Spirit.

What does the Bible mean when it says Joh 16:28, "**I came out from the Father** and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father." The Bible says Jesus was born immaculately by the power of the Holy Spirit. It may also mean that Jesus was "born again" after John had baptized him, and God had recognized Jesus as his son (Mat 3:11). Jesus affirmed

that "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30). What did this mean? It means that they were of the same spirit. God is a spirit, and Jesus was given a spirit body after he died.

Reborn people are also one with God and Jesus. 1 Cor 6:17 confirms: "But the person who unites himself with the Lord becomes one spirit with him." – In this way, believers can also claim to be "from heaven". And more: 15:47 "The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven."

John the Baptist also came from God out of heaven and is sent by God as Christ. Joh 1:6 "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came as a witness, that he might testify about the light, that all might believe through him."

John the Baptist, though "sent by God," has never been in heaven. He has been sent from heaven. I interpret the Bible so that as John the Baptist, not even Jesus had been in heaven before coming to earth. Nor did the apostles come from heaven. Does it sound complicated when you hear that Jesus said that "I have given them your word. The world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (Joh 17:14). – It is just a matter of how it is expressed and how it is translated. "From heaven," "from the world," or "sent" are wordings that must be understood correctly and not as theologians and denominations say.

What is certain is that Jesus ascended to heaven as a human being, in the spiritual body. After all, Jesus was on earth, after his resurrection, in the spirit body, but could also take the physical body if he wished.

God gave Jesus eternal life. If Jesus had previously been in heaven as God, it would not have been necessary for God the Father to give his son the gift of eternal life.

Joh 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, even so **he**

**gave to the Son also to have life in himself. 27 He also gave him authority to execute judgment,** because he is a son of man.

**Jesus Christ is also a man in heaven (1 Tim 2: 5).** God has given him, a human, all the judgment. God apparently, in providing judgment to Jesus because he was the son of man, and wanted the sins of men to be examined and explicitly judged by a human, not by God or by angels.

It is claimed that Jesus has been in heaven, the Son of God for ages and ages (John 1). Then why didn't God send 'this' Son to earth? At the beginning of the Gospel of John, he writes: 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God." – These verses have been interpreted as meaning that the 'Word' means the Son of God Jesus. This is a misinterpretation at this point. The 'Word' was only in God's mind, a plan. "The Word was God" is gross incorrect word order. It should read: **God was the word.** The Concordant translation says, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was toward God, and God was the word." Textus Receptus... καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος ,... and God .. Word.

The fact that Jesus was born on earth after having overshadowed Mary, the Holy Spirit of God, shows that in heaven, God did not have a son who could be sent to the world, but the Son was undoubtedly in God's plan. Jesus was born on earth from God through the Virgin Mary. God was the father of Jesus. 'Sending' does not mean that Jesus was sent from heaven, but God gave his Son the task he was born to fulfill on earth. Jesus was the only begotten Son of God.

Joh 6:51 "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. Yes, the bread which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." – Jesus says he is the living bread that has come from heaven. If anyone eats him, he may live forever. First, Jesus uses a figurative expression. "Living bread" and "eating it"

means that whoever hears his word and believes it is true will have eternal life. He promises to give his life for the whole world. Jesus still goes on, and the Jews who heard were horrified to hear: 6:53 “Jesus therefore said to them, Most assuredly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you don’t have life in yourselves.

54 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jesus acted on earth entirely by God’s will. He had a connection to his heavenly father in prayer. As a reward for doing God’s will, God gave him eternal life and gave him all the power that he has, and thus exalted him above all, both in heaven and on earth.

When it is claimed that Jesus was already God when he ascended from heaven, it must be borne in mind that, according to the nature of God, God has eternal life and has always had it. Judgment is also an attribute of God. It does not have to be given by one divine person of heaven to another. However, the Bible testifies that Jesus did not have eternal life until God the Father gave it to him. Nor did he have any authority or power in heaven and on earth until God the Father gave them to him.

Remember that God created man in his image. It is not just a matter of appearance, but that man was created as a co-worker with God, equipped with many divine powers. This is still part of God’s plan and will come true when God descends to earth in New Jerusalem. Therefore, it is not strange that man reigns in heaven on God’s right hand and has been given all the authority in heaven and on earth.

The Bible testifies that **Jesus is a man in heaven**. 1 Tim 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**”. – Jesus is said, and it is thus decided in the Church that Jesus is God. Can a man be God? According to the Church, you can, because the Church has decided that

Jesus was both a perfect man and a perfect God on earth. Did you just read what I wrote about the attributes of God? Although I believe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit form the divine trinity, it is not the same as the traditional conception of the triune God. **God is one, and this one God, is the Father.**

## What is heaven?

Heaven is the kingdom of God. Right now, in heaven there is God, the Son of God Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Further: In the kingdom of God, there are a large number of angels, good angels, and possibly even angels of Satan. This is on the condition that there has not yet been a biblical war in heaven, the result of which Satan and his army will be cast out of heaven.

It is easy to think that Christ, ascending to heaven and receiving all authority from God the Father in heaven and on earth, would have exercised this power and driven Satan and his angels out of heaven. The book of Revelation, which tells of the future, also speaks of this future event and what it involves.

Rev 12:10 "I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night."

When Revelation says "Now is come the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ," then to what time does this statement refer? First, God's kingdom has been valid forever and ever in heaven, so it must mean the coming of God's kingdom on earth. When it is accompanied by "and the power of his Anointed One," that is,

the reign of the Millennial Kingdom led by Christ, it must be said that its time has not yet come. First, our God's kingdom has been valid forever and ever in heaven, so it must mean the coming of the kingdom of God on earth.

Christ will come to earth for the second time shortly and establish the Millennial Kingdom. It is not heaven, although, in addition to Jesus, the kingdom is led by the apostles and many other 'saints' of the first resurrection. Preterists believe that Jesus has already returned around 70 AD and rules over his invisible kingdom.

All those forgiven by Christ in connection with the Last Judgment will enter the actual heavens. They are in the spirit body, receiving God descending on the New Jerusalem. Rev 21:2, "I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband."

21:3 "I heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, Behold, God's dwelling is with people, and **he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**"

God Himself dwells among his own in New Jerusalem.

## **Death according to the Bible**

Psa 90:10 "The days of our years are seventy, Or even by reason of strength eighty years; Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow, For it passes quickly, and we fly away.

Heb 9:27 Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment,

Ecc 9:5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead don't know anything, neither do they have any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

Psa 146:4 His spirit departs, and he returns to the earth. In that very day, his thoughts perish.”

According to the Bible, we must all die. Human age has been prolonged with suitable medication, but it is still deadly. What happens after death? How long must a person lie in a grave before the resurrection takes place?

## Does man have an immortal soul?

Gen 2:7 “Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” – What does this mean? It means in modern language: And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. This is how man became a living being.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are ridiculed for speaking that the human (or animal) soul is in the blood. It is again a question of using the old saying. It would be correct to state that the vitality of man or animal is in the blood. I don’t think animals would even have the kind of soul that humans in the soul comprehend. Gen 9:4 “But flesh with the life of it, the blood of it, you shall not eat.” – The Jews understood that blood was not allowed to be eaten. Therefore, they carefully took care that the animal’s blood was drained. The ban on eating blood is still in force; Paul instructs Act 15:20 “but that we write to them that they abstain from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and **from blood.**” – Here are, in fact, two guidelines for blood. First, avoid meat from which no blood has been drained. Second, abstain from blood. The instruction of Jehovah’s Witnesses on avoiding blood is based on this passage in the Bible. Therefore, for example, they do not accept blood transfusions.

How to understand Mat 10:28 “Don’t be afraid of those who kill

the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” – Has the same thing been talked about twice here? If you kill the body, then the life force of man will die.

I want to raise another concept related to human life, which is spirit. While Stephen was being stoned to death, he prayed in Acts 7:59, “They stoned Stephen as he called out, saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” – From this, we can conclude that at death, the human spirit ascends to heaven. Thus, the spirit – unlike the power of life – or soul – is not killable. Should Mat 10:28 include “fear him who can drown both spirit and body in hell?” Only God can do that.

1 Tes 5:23 “May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” – The Bible, when talking about the soul, can mean the entire person of a human being, which includes the whole emotional life and the human consciousness of the world around him.

When talking about the immortality of the soul, it might be better to talk about whoever believes in Jesus may live even after death. See John 11:25

## **Purgatory before ascending to heaven**

**Purgatory** (lat. Purgatorium) is a concept belonging to Catholic theology. Catholics believe that a sinful person must submit to the burning of purgatory before reaching heaven. As the name implies, the human soul is cleansed of sins by fire before the dead enter heaven. Protestant churches do not recognize such a doctrine. At the time, the purgatory doctrine had unpleasant additional features connected with its practical application; members of the Church were required to buy indulgences, give alms, and perform good works.

Catholics are not wholly wrong. The Bible does not speak of purgatory, but instead of **God's fire**. God's fire can be **cleansing or consuming**. The difference with purgatory is that immediately after death, each person is individually exposed to purgatory. God's fire cleanses sinners as part of the last resurrection and final judgment of all mankind. All but perhaps a few saints are exposed to this fire. The treatment of God's purifying fire is given to the sinful man, who, at least to some extent, has built his life on the faith of Christ. The full Gentile, therefore, cannot be cleansed.

## **Jehovah's Witnesses' perception of access to heaven**

The view of Jehovah's Witnesses on access to heaven is as follows. God promises most good people eternal life, but not in heaven but on earth. Psa 37:11 "But the humble shall inherit the land, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. 29 The righteous shall inherit the land, And live in it forever. 34 Wait for Jehovah, and keep his way, And he will exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it."

Only selected 144,000 people will have access to heaven. These, of course, are Jehovah's Witnesses. The people who are sure to belong to the elect, the number of which filled decades ago, are also entitled to partake the Lord's Evening Meal or Memorial in the spring on Nisan month on the 14th. Other Jehovah's Witnesses may be present at the event, but they may not taste the Lord's Supper.

The above descriptions of the Psalms are similar to Isaiah's description of Christ's Millennial Kingdom, which will also be on earth:

Isa 65:19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and there shall be heard in her no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying.

20 There shall be no more there an infant of days, nor an old man who has not filled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, and the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

21 They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them.

24 It shall happen that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, says Jehovah.

God-approved people are allowed to fulfill God's original purpose for mankind: they will live forever as perfect people in the land of Paradise. Only a small portion of mankind will go to God in heaven, others will share eternal life on earthly Paradise, but God will call them "their people," "the elect," and "blessed of Jehovah." (Gen 1:28; Psa 115:16; Isa 45:18).

## **The keys of the kingdom of heaven**

Many people imagine they will get to heaven immediately after they die. Many people imagine that St. Peter will hold an interrogation at the gates of heaven. What happens to the person Peter does not let into heaven? Where are they sent?

These people do not understand they cannot get to heaven without a final judgment. Jesus is the one who decides. People

remember from the Bible what Jesus said to the apostles, and especially to Peter: Mat 16:19 “I will give to you [Peter] the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you release on earth will be released in heaven.” Notice that Jesus’ promise is in the future.

Mat 18:18 “Most assuredly I tell you, whatever things you will bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever things you will release on earth will be released in heaven.”

Joh 20:23 “Whoever’s sins you forgive, they are forgiven them. Whoever’s sins you retain, they have been retained.”

When Jesus gave Peter and the apostles power over the “keys of heaven,” an important point must be remembered: the apostles could decide for some man about his future. However, the decision-making power of the apostles was limited to their worldly lives. They could not determine the fate of the people after the apostles themselves had died. Thus, Jesus did not mean to let the apostles decide the lives of men for all humanity’s future, only during the apostles’ lifetime in individual cases.

## **Has anyone got to heaven besides Jesus?**

The Bible says: Joh 3:13 “No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

## **The Apostles. Did Jesus promise the apostles’ access to heaven?**

Surely they will get to heaven? The following Bible verse is presented as evidence: John 14:3 “Joh 14:3 If I go and prepare

a place for you, **I will come again, and will receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be there also.**"

Jesus promises, "**I will come back**" and continues after this: I will come again and receive you to myself. Let us look at the fulfillment of Jesus 'promise in practice. Jesus promises to come back to earth. When Jesus is on earth, what does he promise to do then? He promises to receive his own on earth, that is, where he is. Many misread this promise of Jesus so that Jesus would promise to take his own to heaven. On closer examination, it is clear that this is not the case. Jesus seeks His own to rule the earth with the Millennial Kingdom.

Jesus promised the apostles the right to rule with him. The answer is found in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus says: 19:28 "Jesus said to them, Most assuredly I tell you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."— The apostles will rule over the tribes of Israel under King David. The apostles will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel on earth in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

Other resurrected saints will also reign as kings and priests, depending on how they have cared for their 'loaves.' Some 'five cities', others 'ten.' The 'king' in biblical language did not correspond to the same as the modern king. During the Bible, each city (a small city-state) had its king and the great kingdoms. Instead, reigning saints are "local leaders" as co-heirs with Christ.

Rom 8:17 "Now, if we are [God's] children, we are heirs—**heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ**, if, we share in his sufferings so that that we may also share in his glory."

**Men of God**, according to the Bible. Haven't even biblical heroes like **Abraham, Moses, Job, and David** got to heaven? God called Abraham as his friend, and the Bible says that all the

earth nations will be blessed in him. Moses was the great hero of Israel's people, leading them to the Promised land from Egypt's bondage. Moses passed on the Ten Commandments of God to the people of Israel. God severely tested Job, but Job maintained his faithfulness, and Satan lost.

**Abraham.** Gal 3:29, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise." What would the descendants of Abraham inherit?

Gen 12:7 "Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said, **I will give this land to your seed.**" He built an altar there to Yahweh, who appeared to him. – That is, the earth, not access to heaven.

And even more: Gen 13:14 "Jehovah said to Abram, after Lot was separated from him, Now, lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, 15 for all the land which you see, **I will give to you, and to your offspring forever.**"

2 Cro "20:7 Did not you, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it to the seed of **Abraham your friend** forever?"

Rom 4:13 "For the **promise to Abraham** and to his seed that **he should be heir of the world** wasn't through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

God also confirmed this promise to Isaac, saying: Gen 26:2 "Jehovah appeared to him, and said, Don't go down into Egypt. Dwell in the land which I will tell you of. 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you. For to you, and to your seed, **I will give all these lands**, and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your seed as the stars of the sky, and will give to your seed all these lands. In your seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and

my laws.”

**David.** What does the Bible say about David? Act 2:34 “For **David didn’t ascend into the heavens,** ... Act 2:29 Brothers, I may tell you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.”

Act 13:22 “When he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, to whom he also testified, **I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will.**”

But the time of David will come as the prophet Jeremiah says, Jer 30:9 “And they have served Jehovah their God, And David their king whom I raise up to them.” – King David’s awakening takes place in the first resurrection. Ezekiel says the same thing, Eze 34:23 “I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 24 I, Jehovah, will be their God, and **my servant David prince** among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken it.”

One more; 37:24 “My servant David shall be **king** over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them.”

Did you notice from the previous verses that King David will be resurrected and become King of Israel. On earth, not in heaven. **David is the king of Israel, but Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.**

David was king of Israel. Although he had murdered Bathsheba’s husband to have this beautiful woman to be his own, God thought David was “a man after my heart, who will do all my will” (Act 13:22) Still, nonetheless, David did not ascend into the Heavens... ” (Act 2:34),

**Chosen strangers.** What, then, has God reserved for “chosen strangers” among different nations in the future? 1 Pet 1: 4 “to an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that doesn’t fade away, **reserved in Heaven for you.** – Believers do not have to go to heaven to redeem this indestructible legacy because Christ promises to bring it (wages) with him when he comes the second time. Rev 22:12, “Behold, I come quickly. My reward is with me, to repay to each man according to his work.”

## **Mary, the mother of Jesus.**

Jesus was totally sinless on earth and was taken to heaven by God. Catholics are absolutely certain that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is in heaven because she was declared entirely sinless in 1950 and therefore taken directly to heaven after her death.

Is the Catholic perception of Jesus’ mother at all correct? What do we know about Mary, according to the Bible?

**Catholics have decided that Virgin Mary has maintained her virginity throughout her life** even though the Bible testifies that Jesus had siblings: Matthew 13:55 “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother called Mary, and his Brothers, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?”

– Matthew testifies of the loss of virginity: 1:25 “He did not have marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son; and he named him Jesus.” – Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. According to the Bible, Joseph and Mary did not have sex until after the birth of Jesus. After the four sons, Mary could no longer be a virgin.

Read more in my article.

The following verses also mention Jesus’ brothers or sisters in Matthew 12:46, Mar 6:3, John 7:5.

In support of the Catholic argument, it is stated: "The brethren" of Jesus mentioned in some places in the Gospels therefore refer to the relatives of Jesus in general, not to the other sons of the Virgin Mary... the word 'brothers' was commonly used to refer to relatives. It would also be strange that Jesus showed on the cross John to take care of Mary if she had other sons.

One Catholic site says of Mary: God exalted Mary into a unique relationship with Himself – she is the Father of God's daughter, the mother of the Son of God, and the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Suppose Jesus wanted to be so close to Mary that he shared the same humanity with him. In that case, it is very understandable that Mary also shares with Christ, for example, the status of sinlessness, heavenly glory and kingship, and intercession.

"One of the most important starting points of Catholic Mariology, or Mary's Doctrine, is Mary's innocence. It has long roots in the history of the Church, although it was not confirmed as an official dogma until 1854. According to doctrine, Mary had conceived and given birth without original sin, and she was a virgin all her life. In 1950, the Vatican also reaffirmed that people had lived for centuries that Mary was taken directly to heaven when she died."

The Second Ecumenical Ecclesiastical Council of Constantinople spoke of Mary as the "everlasting virgin" in 553, and the Lateran Council of 649 further defined the doctrine: According to the Ecclesiastical Council, Mary had retained her virginity even after the birth of Christ.

## **Assumption of Mary.**

The Catholic doctrine, defined in 1950, outlined: Finally, the spotless Virgin, whom God had protected from all the stains of original sin, was taken to the glory of heaven with her body

and soul at the end of her earthly journey, and the Lord exalted her as Queen of all to become more and more like her Son, who is Lord of Lords and winner of the sin and death. Virgin Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven upon completing the course of her earthly life was declared a dogma in 1950 by Pope Pius XII in the apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*. The titles "Our Lady of Assumption" and "Queen Assumed Into Heaven" derive from this. The feast of the Assumption of Mary has been celebrated since the Council of Ephesus in 431. Since the 7th century, it has been in the Western Church on August 15th.

Mary was a young girl when she became engaged to Joseph and gave birth to Jesus. She lived a long life as John cared for him according to Jesus' call on the cross. Thus, the apostles had tens of years to bring forth the ideas of Mary's exaltation as Queen of heaven, but nothing like this is recorded in the Bible. Indeed, it took many hundred years before it was noticed to begin to elevate Mary to the divine estate. Now, according to the Catholic view, Mary is the **Queen of Heaven** (Regina Coeli) and the **Mother of Christ** (Theotokos Θεοτόκος, literally "God-bearer") as well as countless other titles. I also read of something like the "God the Father's daughter" and the "Spouse of the Holy Spirit", but I have not found confirmation for these. I understand and accept the Mother of the Son of God, but the other titles just mentioned go beyond my understanding and would be a real sacrilege.

Catholics believe that Mary acts as a mediator between God and men. According to the Bible, if Mary were in heaven, she could not be such a mediator because the Bible affirms: 1 Tim 2:5 **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."**

## The first resurrection and the second coming of Jesus

In 2 Thessalonians, Paul describes the tribulation and persecution experienced by the local church. He believes that Christ when He appears on earth from heaven with his angels in flames of fire, will avenge those who do not know God and do not follow Christ's gospel. The coming of Christ means vengeance and punishment. Punishment is said to be everlasting destruction from the Lord's presence and the glory of his power.

2 The 7 "... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven  
8 in flaming fire, giving vengeance to those not knowing God,  
and to those not obeying the good news of our Lord Jesus  
Christ;

9 Such people will **suffer the punishment of eternal  
destruction by being separated from the Lord's presence and  
from his glorious power,"**

10 "when he comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be  
admired among all those who have believed (because our  
testimony to you was believed) in that day. 11 To this end we  
also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of  
your calling, and fulfill every desire of goodness and work of  
faith, with power."

The Second Coming of Jesus takes place during the Great Tribulation. It is a spectacular event; people mourn in their distress, but many would instead blaspheme Jesus than repent of their sins and ask for forgiveness. While Jesus and the angelic hosts will take vengeance on all worldly people who have chosen Satan's way of life, Christ will also generously have mercy on all who ask for it.

The 1 st Epistle of Thessalonians tells who will receive resurrection.

1 Tes 4:13 "But we don't want you to be ignorant, brothers,

concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you don't grieve like the rest, who have 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left to the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God's trumpet. **The dead in Christ will rise first,** 17 then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever."

When the Lord comes from heaven (v. 16), the trumpet will sound, and those who have died in the faith of Christ will rise first. Then the living of Christ's own will be taken together with the dead against the Lord in the upper air, and so the two groups of ascended may always be together with Christ.

1 Cor 15:51 "Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed,**  
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.  
53 But when **this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality,** then what is written will happen: Death is swallowed up in victory.  
54 But when this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory."  
55 Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?" All change, and will put on immortality. Transformation means **that all who participate in the resurrection will receive the spirit body and become immortal co-rulers with Christ.**

The most significant event in the future is the first resurrection and the accompanying second coming of Christ. Of

this Revelation says: Rev 20: 6 “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him one thousand years.”

There are many misconceptions about the first resurrection. It raises those dead who are Christ's. Second, those who are alive, who belong to Christ, will participate in it. Both of these groups form the “little flock,” which is small compared to the second resurrection later. This small flock gets spirit bodies and ascends into the clouds (not heaven) to receive Christ. This group of ‘saints’ (apostles, King David, those who died for Christ, etc.) will rule with Christ in his Millennial Kingdom until the second resurrection occurs, and the final judgment is given. This Kingdom's leadership is in a blessed position that they do not have to attend the final judgment.

Joh 5:24 “Most assuredly I tell you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and **doesn't come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.**” – This verse says that a believer receives eternal life from God and does not have to be judged. Probably, this means that the born-again ones who are still in faith will partake in the first resurrection and will be co-rulers with Christ.

The ‘saints’ involved in the first resurrection will rule the earthly kingdom. The kingdom they rule is, according to my interpretation, a precursor to the Kingdom of God, though its *subjects* do not belong to it; they, being mortal and in the physical body, unlike the leadership of the kingdom, which is in the spirit body and has attained immortality. The fact that the leaders are in the spirit body does not mean that they could not take a physical body just as Christ did after the resurrection before entering heaven.

The most important thing to understand is that the Millennial Kingdom subjects are not in heaven but on earth.

## After the last judgment

God descends from heaven to earth.

Isa: 65:17 "For, behold, I create **new heavens** and a **new earth**; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

Rev 21:2 "I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband." 3 I heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, **God's dwelling is with people, and he will dwell with them**, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away from them every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more. The first things have passed away." 5 He who sits on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new. He said, "Write, for these words of God are faithful and true." 6 He said to me, It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. **I will give freely to him who is thirsty from the spring of the water of life.** 7 He who overcomes, I will give him these things. I will be his God, and he will be my son."

## What are the new heavens?

Are people there in the physical body or the spirit body?

What are the new heavens? Are people there in the physical body or the spirit body? I have kept it for granted that God descends from heaven to earth; people would be like God, in the spirit body. When people are resurrected from a dream they have awaited to the final judgment, they will be resurrected in the spirit body. At least the first resurrection participants have been in the spirit body as they ascend to Christ. So why wouldn't those involved in the second

resurrection be in the spirit body when they are resurrected?

What would the new world God created be like? Why couldn't it be physical, even if the people living in it were spirits? Believers are said to inherit the land. Could they not inherit the earth even if they were in the spirit body? Could humans be immortal in ordinary physical bodies?

When the new heavens have arrived, should the resurrected and accepted people into God's kingdom return to mortal, earthly bodies? Even though it is impossible for me. Mark sheds light on the matter: 12:25 "For when they will rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." – Angels are spirit beings.

Romans says 8:10 "If Christ is in you, the **body** is dead because of sin, but the **spirit** is alive because of righteousness." – I interpret this as meaning that body, death and sin belong together, but when a person attains righteousness, his life is a spiritual life.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul considers the relationship between earthly and heavenly bodies:

15:40 "There are also **celestial bodies, and terrestrial bodies**; but the glory of the celestial differs from that of the terrestrial. 41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown **a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body**. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body. 45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual does not come first, but the physical and then the spiritual. 47 The first man came from the dust of the

earth; **the second man came from heaven.** 48 Those who are made of the dust are like the man from the dust, those who are heavenly are like the man who is from heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the likeness of the man who was made from dust, **we will also bear the likeness of the man from heaven.** 50 Brothers, this is what I mean: **Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and what decays cannot inherit what does not decay.**

## **Flesh and blood, or physical man, cannot enter the kingdom of God.**

According to the Bible, the second man, the new man (v. 47), is from heaven, and the new men are images of God, or the heavenly, (v. 49).

If the saved are the heirs of God's kingdom, they cannot be in the carnal body, as verse 50 above says. In the new world, yes, there is talk of a tree of life that bears twelve fruits, that is, new ones every month. Those who "wash their clothes," are born again, are allowed to eat from the tree of life.

Rev 22:2 Between the street of the city and the river there was the tree of life visible from both sides. It produced twelve kinds of fruit, each month having its own fruit. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

22:14 How blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the **tree of life** and may go through the gates into the city!

Eating from the tree of life is a figurative expression, as are the fruits of the twelve annual crops and the washing of clothes. If people in the new world were in the physical body, they would hardly be able to get along with fruit alone. Did you notice the tree of life? The same grew up in Paradise, where Adam and Eve also lived and were allowed to eat from it. I guess they were also in the spirit body until they were

expelled from Paradise. But that's a second reflection.

There were only good angels in God's original heaven. It then appeared that Satan, a beautiful high-ranking angel, changed and began to covet a God-like position. He was attracted to a large crowd, perhaps about a third of the angels of heaven.

There will be left no such satanic angels in the new heaven. Satan has been destroyed, and Satan's helpers, such as the Antichrist and the False prophet, have also been destroyed. Indeed, all the fallen angels have also been judged and all the demons afflicting the people have been destroyed. They have been condemned by the man Jesus Christ.

God's plan was built on man. After all, he created man in his image. What part do angels play in God's plan? The Bible indicates man's future, but the lot of angels is not spoken of in the Bible.

## **In conclusion: Will you go to heaven after you die?**

Can you, my good reader, get to Heaven to God and Jesus when you die? There are hundreds and thousands of sites on the Internet about biblical questions. You will probably find the answers to your question about going to heaven. Most of the sites I read respond positively. And that's what people want. Expecting to enter heaven is a powerful desire for people, no matter their religion.

In my previous post, I did answer the question through different situations. The biblical answer is: no one has ascended into heaven except Jesus Christ! This answer is a couple of thousand years old. What if God and Jesus have changed their minds and allow entering heaven today? Wishful thinking.

It is possible to get to heaven. And it's not hard either. One only has to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It will help even more if, in addition to faith, you strive to live the example set by Jesus and do good deeds in your life for your neighbors. The heaven you can reach, is the God-created New Heaven on earth. There God and Christ dwell and rule on their thrones.

There is another possibility. If Christ, when he comes to earth the second time, would appreciate you so much that he would awaken you to the first resurrection, you would enter the Millennial Kingdom led by Christ as a co-ruler. When that kingdom ends, you will move to the New Heaven as one of God's fellow workers.

Most of Christ's people, after their death, have to wait for the resurrection, sleeping in the grave unaware. The sleep is so deep that when you wake up, you don't think you've slept for more than a moment, even if thousands of years have passed. The options for the believers, those born again, are just good or even better.

Don't long to get past Peter to "Heaven," but trust God's and Christ's promise for eternal life.

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# Salvation by Works and Salvation by Grace

Jesus promised that when he came he would bring a reward with him. The Romans says that the wage is paid of earnings, not of mercy. These works are to my mind the proclamation of the kingdom of God, the works related to the proclamation of the gospel, what Jesus commanded his followers to do. However, not all can do this work for one reason or another; they can be saved from grace through faith.

**Now to someone who works, wages are not considered a gift but an obligation. (Rom 4:4)**

## Pay for work

1 Cor 3:14 If what a person has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

Phl 2:15 so that you may be blameless and innocent, God's children without any faults among a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world.

1 Pet 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is among you, watching over it, not because you must but because you want to, and not greedily but eagerly, as God desires. 5:4 Then, when the Chief Shepherd appears, **you will receive the victor's crown of glory that will never fade away.**

Dan 12:3 *Those who have insight [the instructors] will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those turning many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.*

Mat 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy servant! Since you have been trustworthy with a

small amount, I will put you in charge of a large amount. Come and share your master's joy!

To shepherd the flock of parishioners is a job of a spiritual shepherd. Such shepherds are in the congregation and where there is no congregation, the shepherd can be an itinerant preacher or anyone who works "to lead the many to righteousness" or otherwise cares for his neighbors. Those who do the work given by Christ receive a reward when Jesus arrives for the second time at the same time as the first resurrection takes place. The wages for the resurrected and those on the earth are paid for work, if they are "shepherds of God's flock that is among you, watching over it, not because you must but because you want to, and not greedily but eagerly, as God desires". (1 Pet 5:2)

*The Bible tells that if you "shepherd the flock of God, so that you may be blameless and innocent, God's children without any faults among a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world. (Phl 2:15).*

## **Salvation by Grace**

**– through Fire**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God (Eph 2:8)**

**If his work is burned up, he will suffer loss. However, he himself will be saved, but it will be like going through fire. (1 Cor 3:15)**

**Then we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. (Rom 3:28)**

**Barnes' Notes: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. ... no righteousness of their own will be the ground of their justification. They are**

sinners; and as such can have no claim to be treated as righteous. God has devised a plan by which, they may be pardoned and saved; and that is by faith alone. .. Luther often called this doctrine of justification by faith the article upon which the church stood or fell. .. If this doctrine is held entire, all others will be held with it. If this is abandoned, all others will fall also. It may be remarked here, however, that this doctrine by no means interferes with the doctrine that **good works are to be performed by Christians**. Paul urges this as much as any other writer in the New Testament. His doctrine is, that **they are not to be relied on as a ground of justification**; but that he did not mean to teach that they are not to be performed by Christians is apparent from the connection,

**Rom 4:5 But to someone who does not work, but simply believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.**

Now it is obvious that no one is justified in the sight of God by the law, because the righteous will live by faith. (Gal 3:11)

In the **Old Covenant** (of law) there were more than 600 orders for the people of Israel. Who was able to observe all of these? The New Covenant of Christ changes everything: Ellicott's Commentary says, "For we hold that a man is justified by faith, independently of any work prescribed by law." Even though deeds of the law are no longer solving the salvation (becoming righteous, i.e. proclamation of sinless) we are to, because of faith, strive to continue to do good deeds in life.

With the **New covenant**, the human part has been facilitated; no longer a modern person needs to think about how to treat bulls or how to observe other over 600 orders. Yet, man has a lot to do in his endeavor to carry out the double commandment of Christ-loving God and neighbor.

**Foundation of faith.** 1 Cor 3:11 After all, no one can lay any other foundation than the one that is already laid, and that is Jesus Christ.

12 And if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw,

13 the work of each will be revealed; for the Day [of judgment] will make it known, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire will prove the work of each, what sort it is.

14 If what a person has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [or receive wages]

15 If his work is burned up, he will suffer loss. However, he himself will be saved, but it will be like going through fire. (Read more of this consuming and cleansing fires in the last chapter)

One can only build faith in Jesus. The foundation of my faith can be good (gold, silver, etc.) or it may be weaker, but if your faith (i.e. building) is lasting, you will be paid. If the faith (your 'building') is poorly constructed of wood or straw and cannot withstand, but burns, the builder must suffer the damage and perhaps he will be destroyed in the last days of the tribulation. This 'builder', whose house (faith) has some real elements, will, however, be saved even though he does not receive wages [a leading position in the kingdom or the crown of righteousness] but as if (note: as if) *through the fire*.

This point that speaks of salvation through fire refers in the opinion of Catholics to the Purgatory, in which man is saved after a shorter or longer-lasting, cleansing fire. I would not be so sure that it is a question of Purgatory, anyway not the kind of thing you that you can relieve with money.

In Romans 12:3 it is disclosed that God has given faith to each one of a certain amount: For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, **as God has allotted to each a measure of**

**faith.**

Also Eph 4:7 **Now to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of Christ's gift.** – God's spirit distributes faith and grace to each one as he pleases: 1 Cor 12:11 But one and the same Spirit produces all these results and gives what he wants to each person. – Could it be that the builder of a 'poor house' has had less faith than others, and yet in the final judgment he would be forcibly cleansed and saved as if through the fire?

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## **The Reward in Heaven**

NT speaks in many respects of heaven, but those which I have gone through, do not just exactly say that the resurrected would be there. What does it mean when the Bible says "Your reward is great in Heaven"? Are they going to ascend to heaven to collect it – or does Jesus bring it with Him when he comes to earth for the second time? Remember, Jesus promised to come with the wages when He comes back (Rev 11:18).

Mat 5:11 Blessed are you when they shall reproach *you*, and persecute *you*, and shall say every evil word against you, lying, on account of me.

5:12 Rejoice and be extremely glad, because your reward in heaven is great! For that's how they persecuted the prophets who came before you.

1 Pet 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy, he has given us a new birth to an ever-living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 4 and to **an inheritance kept in heaven**

**for you that can't be destroyed, corrupted, or changed. – The wage is therefore great in the heavens, but it is stored there, and Christ brings it, when it is time to pay!**

In 2 Cor 5 chapter is spoken of 'dwelling from heaven' and about the longing for getting in the 'building from God'. "We" means the participants of the first resurrection. 2 Cor 5:1-2 We know that if the earthly tent we live in is torn down, we have a building in heaven that comes from God, an eternal house not built by human hands. For indeed in this house we groan, since we long to put on our heavenly dwelling.

If our earthly tent is torn down, that is, we die, we have a building from God, eternal in the heavens. In this earthly dwelling, we are longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven. This means having eternal life, not to living in heaven. The Bible speaks of clothing, such as "be clothed with humility" (1 Pet 5:5). 2 Cor 5:4 So while we are still in this tent, we sigh under our burdens, because we do not want to put it off but to put it on, so that our dying bodies may be swallowed up by life.

## **Jesus Brings the Reward with Him**

**The nations were angry, but your wrath has come. It is time for the dead to be judged—to reward your servants, the prophets, the saints, and all who fear your name, both unimportant and important, and to destroy those who destroy the earth. (Rev 11:18)**

Revelation tells:

Rev 11:15 When the seventh angel blew his trumpet, there were loud voices in heaven, saying: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule forever and ever".

16 And the twenty four elders sitting before God on their

thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,

17 They said, We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to rule.

18 The nations were angry, but your wrath has come. It is time for the dead to be judged—to reward your servants, the prophets, the saints, and all who fear your name, both unimportant and important, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.

Rev 20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key to the bottomless pit and a large chain in his hand.

2 He captured the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and tied him up for a thousand years.

3 He threw him into the bottomless pit, locked it, and sealed it over him to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were over. After that he must be set free for a little while.

4 Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or hands. **They came back to life and ruled with Christ for a thousand years.**

5 The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years were over. This is the first resurrection.

6 How blessed and holy are **those who participate in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them.** They will be priests of God and Christ and will rule with him for a thousand years.

For all those who experience the first resurrection, Christ brings the reward with Him. It is confirmed in Rev. 22:12 See! **I am coming soon! My reward is with me to repay everyone according to his work.**

Rom 2:6-8 For he will repay everyone according to what that

person has done: **eternal life to those who strive for glory, honor, and immortality by patiently doing good; but wrath and fury for those who in their selfish pride refuse to believe the truth and practice wickedness instead.**

Mat 5:11-12 How blessed are you whenever people insult you, persecute you, and say all sorts of evil things against you falsely because of me 12 Rejoice and leap for joy, for **your reward is great in Heaven**; for in this way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1 Pet 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he has given us a new birth to an ever-living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

Rev 22:12 **See! I am coming soon! My reward is with me to repay everyone according to his work.**

The Apostles' and other Christians' rewards are still to be kept in heaven. Christ speaks of bringing this pay to each one when he comes for the second time to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Resurrection believers will be "kings and priests" and rule with Jesus for a thousand years.

Luke has recorded **Jesus' parable** of his own self. When a 'nobleman' (Jesus) returns, all the servants are called to him to make an account of their actions. Well-performed receive a good wage and unsuccessful workers get no wage at all. The enemies of Jesus are destroyed.

#### **When a 'nobleman' (Jesus) returns**

Luk 19:12 So he said, "A prince [Christ] went to a distant country to be appointed king and then to return.

13 He called ten of his servants and gave them ten coins. [Gk. minas. A mina was equivalent to about eight months of wages for a laborer.] He said to them, 'Invest this money until I come back.

14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, We do not desire this one to reign over us.

15 After he was appointed king, he came back. He ordered the servants to whom he had given the money to be called so that he could find out what they had made by investing.

16 And the first came, saying, Lord, your mina has gained ten minas.

17 The king said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.

18 The second servant came and said, 'Your coin, sir, has earned five coins.

19 And he said to this one also, And you be over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold your mina which I had kept in a handkerchief.

21 because I was afraid of you. You are a hard man. You withdraw what you didn't deposit and harvest what you didn't plant.

22 The king said to him, 'I will judge you by your own words, you evil servant! You knew, did you, that I was a hard man, and that I withdraw what I didn't deposit and harvest what I didn't plant?

23 Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?'

24 Then he said to the bystanders, take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.

25 And they said to him, Lord, he has already ten minas.

26 I tell you, to everyone who has something, more will be given, but from the person who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.

27 But as for these enemies of mine who didn't want me to be their king—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence!

In addition to the apostles, other participants of the resurrection rule over who "five cities" who "ten cities". This is confirmed in Jesus' parable of the servants above. Then what happens to a servant who does nothing? There are

billions of such people in the real world. The answer may be surprising. V. 26 explains:

**to everyone who has something, more will be given, but from the person who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.** The hardest fate, however, is for those who are completely hostile and do not want him to rule over them at all. Jesus describes their destiny: "slay them in my presence" (v.27). What is the teaching of this parable? Who are these servants or, in fact, 'slaves'? They are the servants of the Church. In any case, people whose job is to proclaim the Word of God and to spread the gospel of Christ to the world. In addition to government duties, you can be honored as a prize.

Dan 12:3 promises: Those who have insight [*or the instructors, are wise*] will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Dan 7:22 until the Ancient of Days came. And judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 7:27 And the kingdom and rulership, and the greatness of the kingdom under all the heavens shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. And **all kingdoms shall serve and obey him**

Rev 2:26 To the person who overcomes and continues to do my works to the end I will give authority over the nations. 27 He will rule them with an iron scepter, as when clay pots are shattered. – Governing of the heathen shows that in the thousand-year reign there are pagans, i.e. people who have not heard and have not even been able to believe the gospel. However, they have survived the great destruction of the Lord's day.

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# Resurrection and New Life

- What does the resurrection of the body mean?
- The resurrection body, physical or spiritual?
- The resurrected are like angels
- The first resurrection
- Who Will Rise Up in Connection With the Coming of Christ?
- The Millennial Kingdom of Christ
- Satan – the god of this world
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- Why has God given people a different measure of faith?
- Who will be saved?
- Universalism
- What happens to those who are not saved?
- What is the new life like in God's New World?

## Aphorism

There are two resurrections, but only one for each person. There are also two deaths: the first death is for all, the second only for those who do not believe.

## What does the resurrection of the body mean?

**Resurrection** means the restoration of the decayed human body and its reunion with the soul into a new eternal life. (Wikipedia)

We all know that there is little left of the human body that has been lying inside the earth for thousands of years. Many have been destroyed, you could say, completely. However, before the resurrection, God is believed to be able to rebuild people to what they were before death. The body is also united by the person's soul and spirit. Everything is possible for God, probably also the rebuilding of man from sometimes even non-existent materials."

The dead are to participate in the final judgment after the resurrection. In his Gospel, John affirms this: 5:28 "Don't be amazed at this, because the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and will come out—those who have done what is good to the resurrection of life, and those who have practiced what is evil to the resurrection of judgment."

God has given all judgment to His Son, Jesus Christ. Judgments will be distributed after the end of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

Such a description of an event is generally accepted by the churches. In one key point, my interpretation of the Bible's description of the resurrection, and the resurrection body in particular, differs from that described above. I will examine and justify it in the following.

The Acts of the Apostles in the Bible tells how Christ was first resurrected.

**The Pentecostal Church** defines the resurrection body as follows: "We believe in the resurrection of the body. The biblical doctrine of bodily resurrection is a special feature

of Christianity that embodies the holistic value of man. The resurrection is not just about reviving the old body. In the resurrection, man gets a new kind of indestructible body that resembles an old body but is formed differently. Paul compares the old temporal body to the seed and the new spiritual body to the plant rising from the seed. A similar transformation takes place in the resurrection. The new body is connected to the old body. The resurrection body of Jesus gives us clues as to what our resurrection body is like. Between the resurrection and ascension to heaven, the body of Jesus was recognizable, physically touchable, and food-consuming, but independent of physical laws. In the new body man is free from the sufferings, imperfections, and needs of the temporal world. In the resurrection body, man is allowed to live eternally and perfectly in connection with God.”

**“Jehovah’s Witnesses** believe in the resurrection, e.g. in accordance with the following principles: God grants Jesus the power to raise the dead (Joh 11:25). Jesus will restore “all those in the memorial tombs” to life, each one with his unique identity, personality, and memories (Joh 5:28, 29). Those resurrected to heaven receive a spirit body, while those resurrected to life on earth receive a healthy physical body, completely sound.” (Isa 33:24; 35:5, 6; 1 Cor 15:42–44, 50).

**Who will receive the resurrection?** The Bible says that “there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” (Act 24:15)

The righteous include faithful people, such as Noah, Sarah, and Abraham (Gen 6:9; Heb 1:11; Jam 2:21). The unrighteous include those who have not followed God’s standards because they have not had the opportunity to learn and follow them.

However, the resurrection is not given to those who have become so evil that they cannot change. When such a person dies, his destruction is final, and he has no hope of resurrection. (Mat 23:33; Heb 10:26, 27)

The Bible foretold that the resurrection to heaven would take place during Christ's presence, which **began in 1914**. (1 Cor 15:21–23). The resurrection to life on earth will occur during the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus Christ, when the earth will be transformed into a paradise. (Luk 23:43; Rev 20:6, 12, 13)."

<https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-the-resurrection/>

## The resurrection body, physical or spiritual?

In Corinthians, Paul speaks of the resurrection:

"How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come back?" (1 Cor 15:35)

1 Cor 15:40 There are also celestial bodies, and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial differs from that of the terrestrial.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

42 So also is **the resurrection of the dead**. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption;

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power;

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and **there is also a spiritual body**.

In verse 44, the physical body and the spiritual body are contrasted. Many believe these mean the same thing. Man has been said to be a soul, a living thing. In Hebrew, the soul is *nephesh*, and as evidenced by it, the Bible describes that man has a soul i.e., life force.

All the dead in their graves have been physical people. However, the churches' doctrine and creeds describe that dead

people are resurrected in the physical bodies they lived on earth. However, their resurrection bodies are as healthy as in the best days of their youth.

However, the Bible describes that we all (verse 52) become like our heavenly image. Verse 50 says that "flesh and blood" cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, which in modern language means that an ascending person cannot enter the Kingdom of God in the physical body.

1 Cor 15:49 As we have borne the image of those made of dust, let's also bear **the image of the heavenly**. 50 Brothers, this is what I mean: **Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**, and what decays cannot inherit what does not decay. 51 **Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.** 52 **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.**

When the last trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ will rise in indestructible body, or spirit bodies. At the end of verse 15:52, it is stated, "we will be changed." We who? This means those believers in Christ who are then alive. This is shown by the following quotation, 1 The 4:15-17. The verses also show that its author, among others, believed he would be still alive when Christ comes the second time.

According to the above, all who have died in Christ will become spirit beings like Christ in his glory. It would be pretty hard to imagine people rising to the clouds being in physical bodies. It would be a pretty cold ride.

All participants in the first resurrection are adults. We can deduce that they are dead in Christ. Not that any young person could be born again of Christ, but the future leaders of the kingdom are hardly young, let alone children. I do not think that the first resurrection involves children, not those who died as infants or mentally handicapped.

The latter must also be allowed to rise, as do criminals and opponents and mockers of Christ. Their resurrection takes place in the resurrection of judgment. I cannot quite say what kind of resurrection children and the mentally handicapped get. Jesus stated that the Kingdom of God is like children. However, do infant deaths be born mentally developed and able to speak? I think so, but we'll see it then.

## **The resurrected are like angels.**

Matthew writes that the resurrected are like angels in heaven. Angels are spirit beings who know neither marriage nor the relationships between men and women. Luke, in turn, states of the resurrected that they have attained immortality, like the angels of heaven, because they are "children of the resurrection." Thus, the resurrection means that the resurrected can be compared to angels, like angels, spirit beings, and immortals.

As a side note, I could say that there were two main religious groups in Israel in the time of Jesus, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection or the angels. The Pharisees acknowledged both. (See Act 23:8)

As I continue to look at the resurrection, a small summary of what has been said so far: In the light of the above, how is the biblical concept of "the resurrection of the body" to be understood? First of all, I am firmly in the belief that the resurrection of the body is going to happen. This is what believe all who draw their Christian faith from the Bible.

A difficult question for many is whether the resurrection body is physical or the resurrected ones instantly transform into spirit bodies? Yes, this is what the Bible says. The ascended man's body is instantly transformed into a spirit body as the resurrected ascend against Christ into the clouds. 1 The 4:17 "Then we who are alive and remain **will be caught up in the**

**clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air** And so we will be with the Lord forever.” – This letter to Thessalonians is about the believers who will be on the earth at the second coming of the Lord Christ. “With them” means those of Christ who are first to be resurrected.

This is how we come to the question of the first resurrection or the rapture. Then comes the second resurrection, sometimes perhaps a thousand years from the first.

## **The first resurrection**

Rev 20:4 “I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as didn’t worship the beast nor his image, and didn’t receive the mark on their forehead and on their hand. **They lived, and reigned with Christ for the thousand years.** 5 The rest of the dead didn’t live until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power, but **they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him one thousand years.**”

Luke describes the set of the first resurrection: 12:32 “Don’t be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

God the Father has chosen this relatively small group of believers as leaders of the Kingdom of Christ to rule under Christ. That is what Luke means when he writes, “give you the kingdom.” The kingdom will be made up of twelve tribes, according to the sons of Jacob. Jesus promised his apostles in Matthew 19:28 “Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly I tell you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

– The Bible also proves that David will be the king of Israel, which means the leader of the apostles. What about the position of Jesus Christ? He is the king of kings in the coming kingdom bearing his name.

The first resurrection is commonly described as the **rapture**. 1 Thessalonians describes the rapture as follows: 4:17 “then we who are alive, who are left, **will be caught up together with them in the clouds**, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever.”

– It’s not said more about the rapture. Is there a rapture in the clouds, or is this also a figurative expression? However, Christ reigns on earth, even if necessary by “iron scepter,” as Rev 19:15 describes, “Out of his mouth proceeds a sharp, double-edged sword, that with it he should strike the nations. He will rule them with **a rod of iron**. He treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty.”

## **Who Will Rise Up in Connection With the Coming of Christ?**

**And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, to everlasting contempt.** (Dan 12:2)

Dan 12:1 “And at that time, Michael shall stand up, the great ruler who stands for the sons of your people. And **there shall be a time of distress, such as has not been from the existence of a nation until that time. And at that time, your people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the Book.**”

Dan 12:2 “Many (NIV: Multitudes) who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”

Traditionally, this translation of Daniel's verse begins with the word "Many."

The Hebrew word 'רבים Rab' has been translated in some translations, such as NIV and YLT, using the word 'multitudes.' A more important question is: are both groups receiving a resurrection simultaneously? When I think about this, it is possible that it does not require the resurrection to take place simultaneously.

Here Daniel 12: 2 deals primarily with the **first resurrection**. This could be called the resurrection of the righteous. There will be the second and last resurrection after the Millennial Kingdom of Christ is over. All the rest will rise then and will receive Christ's judgment.

**The Hebrew word "forever," i.e., 'owlam עולם',** is also not definitely and always *eternal*. I have written a couple of examples in another article. It would seem more evident that all the dead would rise up and that the graves would be empty to be filled again during the millennium reign. If many are the correct translation, there is a problem: who do not get out of the graves. Could it be so that *in the first resurrection, only the righteous will rise?* The rest are sinners who have their turn in the second resurrection.

In the Millennial kingdom, judgments will also be given; this is a clear statement in verse 2 Tim 4:1. Isaiah also refers to this in saying how the sinner is cursed at the age of hundred years. Isa 65:20 "There shall not still be an infant of days, or an old man that has not filled his days. For the youth shall die the son of a hundred years, but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed." Dan 12:3 "And those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and those turning many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

-The group of resurrected is twofold: Those who are wise and

have insight, who love God and Jesus, i.e., obey the will of God and Jesus in their lives, and secondly, those who work to spread God's Word i.e., the gospel, and to bring others to righteousness.

In verse 1, the events are connected with the coming of Christ, the **great tribulation**. Many dead will wake up. The time of great tribulation means that most of mankind will be destroyed. Does this mean that the dead have already been judged if they die during the tribulation time? Jesus condemns humanity both in his coming and during the thousand-year reign of God. 2 Tim 4:1 "Then I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus **Christ, he is about to judge living and dead at his appearance and his kingdom:**" – In connection with his coming and in the kingdom during the millennial administration and at the end of the resurrection of judgment, he will judge the living and the dead.

According to an interpretation, a believer who renounces his faith in Christ is guilty of the mortal sin, the mockery of the Holy Spirit. Such can no longer receive God's forgiveness. Such people may well be those mentioned by Daniel who rise to judgment, which is clear: shame and age-lasting abominations (abomination of desolation).

When Jesus appears, there will be people left on earth, subordinate to the kingdom. These could be saved at the last moment (those who called for Jesus' name) or those who are good pagans whose salvation is based on their conscience. Rom 2:14 "For when nations not having Law do by nature the things of the Law, they not having Law are a law to themselves, 15 They show that what the law requires is written in their hearts, a fact to which their own consciences testify, and their thoughts will either accuse or excuse them."

They are allowed to obtain salvation based on faith adopted in the kingdom. After a thousand years, the second resurrection takes place, and after that, the so-called last judgment, when

all those who lived and died in God's kingdom awake to judgment. Joh 5:28 "Don't be amazed at this, because the **hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice** 29 and will come out—those who have done what is good to the resurrection of life, and those who have practiced what is evil to the resurrection of condemnation."

In verse 24 Jesus says: "Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who hears my word and believes** him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but **has passed out of death into life.**" – This is Jesus' promise of a favorable future judgment provided that, man will "endure to the end." It also includes a lot more.

The chosen ones will not be judged with the rest of the world. God afflicts them and teaches them already during their lives, and they will be prepared to take responsibility for Christ's leadership of the kingdom of God when they are resurrected.

In the second letter to Timothy, Paul writes that when Christ returns, Christ will come to judge the living and the dead. About himself and their kind who love the coming of Jesus, Paul says: 2 Tim 4:8 "**For the rest, the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me in that Day, and not only to me, but also to all the ones loving his appearance.**"

– Christ condemns during his millennial kingdom. Judgments are nevertheless distributed only to those who are in the kingdom. Judgments will, however, be given only to the survivors who are in the kingdom. The new resurrection will have to wait a thousand years.

## **The Millennial Kingdom of Christ**

Christ promised his apostles before he ascended to heaven to come back "soon." The apostles did believe in the quick return

of Christ; after all, Jesus told them that they would not have time to take the gospel of the kingdom to all the cities of Israel when he had already returned. What happened when Christ did not return so soon? I do not know. Preterists, whose faith I have written an article, believe that all Jesus' promises have already been fulfilled by AD 70 at the latest. Thus, Christ has come back and reigns in his invisible kingdom.

Why don't I believe in preterist interpretation? For this reason, for example, when Christ comes a second time, he will capture Satan and his helpers. According to the Bible account, Satan should have been imprisoned for a thousand years. After a thousand years, the rule of the millennial kingdom of Christ has ended, and Satan should have been released.

When Christ comes, he is to capture Satan for a thousand years. If this has happened, the imprisoned Satan is released and then lost in the war against the forces of Christ and thrown into the lake of fire with his helpers. However, Satan seems to be in power even today.

However, we know that Satan is still "king of this world" today and is doing what He wants to shake believers away from faith to sin. Do you agree that the capture of Satan does not seem to have taken place, at least not yet?

Then, when Christ finally arrives and begins to rule his kingdom with his saints, the long (perhaps as much as a thousand years of peace) period of Christ's kingdom begins. In the vision he received, Isaiah described this time for joy, happiness, and peace. People are healthy, living longer, but death has not yet been eliminated.

**Life in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ:** The resurrected are its leaders with Christ. They are in the spirit body but can also take a physical body like Jesus before ascending to heaven. An Apocryphal Book tells, e.g., of an angel called Raphael, who was on earth living with people. The people did

not see any difference between Raphael and the people until Raphael himself admitted that he was a high-ranking angel of God.

People living on earth during the Kingdom of Christ are **in physical bodies and are mortal**, although life expectancy has lengthened.

## **Satan – the god of this world**

Eve took a fruit from the forbidden “tree of good and evil knowledge” enticed by the serpent and offered it to Adam. They acted against God’s express prohibition, and God punished the inhabitants of paradise for the transgression by expelling them from there and depriving them of the gift of eternal life. Mankind became mortal.

How did God punish the serpent, or Satan, who, lying and tempting, caused Adam and Eve to break God’s command? This is hard to believe, but **God gave the world dominance to Satan**. This was confirmed by Jesus while on a long fast in the wilderness. For his part, Satan promised to provide the world’s dominance to Jesus if he bowed down before Satan to worship him. Luk 4:6 “The devil said to him, **I will give you all this authority, and their glory, for it has been delivered to me**; and I give it to whomever I want. 7 If you therefore will worship before me, it will all be yours.”

Under what conditions did God give the world dominance to Satan? We don’t know that, but I may not believe that God would have promised Satan the world forever, without any restrictions. It is noteworthy, however, that Satan has always had access to God. Satan has taken advantage of this and appeared before God, accusing anyone at any time.

In what follows, I consider the war in heaven described in Revelation chapter 12, the war between Satan and his angels

against the angelic hosts of God. The question that should be resolved is when will this war be fought, and when will Satan and his forces be cast to earth? It must be remembered that this is a vision of the future presented to John. Another question related to the previous one is, has the vision already materialized?

As my readers ponder these questions, most come to mind the idea that when Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, and God exalted him as Lord and Christ to sit on the throne to God's right, would have solved the question and driven Satan out of heaven.

How I came to the following conclusion based on few sentences of Revelation?

## War in heaven

Revelation chapter 12 tells of war in heaven. The Archangel Michael and his heavenly angelic hosts fought in this vision against the "dragon" (Satan).

Rev 12:7 "Then a war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels fought back,

8 They didn't prevail, neither was a place found for him any more in heaven.

9 **The great dragon was thrown down**, the old serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him..

10 I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now is come the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 They overcame him because of the Lamb's blood, and because of the word of their testimony. They didn't love their

life, even to death.

12 Therefore rejoice, heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time."

The result of the war was that Satan's forces were lost, and Satan and his angels were cast from heaven to earth. It is clear that in the vision, Satan and his forces will suffer a defeat to the forces led by the Archangel Michael. Note, however, that the vision does not mention Jesus Christ participating in the war in heaven.

Could it be possible that war has taken place and Satan has lost and been cast down to earth? Many scholars date the war to the time Jesus ascended to heaven. It sounds natural, but what does it mean to Satan? Satan had access to heaven to accuse those who he said did wrong, contrary to God's command. Satan is the leader of a great multitude of angels. Satan is forbidden to enter heaven anymore. This is described in the Bible as telling that Satan found himself cast down to earth (Rev. 12:13). If it were that the Archangel Michael (not Jesus) drove Satan away and Satan remained on earth to entice people into sin, then what would that mean? No change to the former. That is what Satan has done for ages.

Was throwing Satan out of heaven the most decisive event in the war? As described in verse 10, I explain why I interpret the time of the war to take place until much later?

Pay attention to verse 10, where John hears the voice saying:

**Now is come the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ;**

My explanation:

This section's important information is that the war has resulted in a) salvation and power b) the kingdom of our God

c) the power of God's anointed one, or Christ. I pay particular attention to points (b) and (c).

What does it mean that the victory of war brings the kingdom of God when it comes? Where has the kingdom of God come to? To heaven or earth? There has been a kingdom of God in heaven forever, it is absolutely sure and there has been no change. But has the kingdom of God come to earth? Answer honestly, do you believe that the kingdom of God reigns on earth? I don't think it prevails yet.

Point c, is there in heaven "the power of the God's anointed, i.e., Christ?" I believe that there is both the kingdom of God in heaven and the dominion of the Anointed One of God. – Satan has never had power in heaven, only the right to come forward with his accusations.

It is not a question of power in heaven! The answer to heaven is clear and undisputed. The question, then, is whether on earth is the kingdom of our God and the power of his Anointed One? That is why the kingdom of God and the second coming of Christ to rule has been long-awaited. So: Is there a kingdom of God on earth? Is there the power of the Son of God on earth? My answer is: NO. This result of the vision has not materialized.

And what conclusion can we draw from that? The decision is that this war has not yet been fought as is generally believed, right after Jesus ascended to heaven and received from God all power in heaven and on earth.

If war were to take place until sometime later, when? I can't tell that, but one option would be close to Christ's return to earth. Then the war in heaven and the war on earth would form one whole.

However, the final incidents and outcome of the war are already known to us. **The result of the war is the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth and the power of the**

**Son of God as well. These have not materialized, so we are still waiting.**

The description of the war in Revelation highlights the war's outcome in the very next verse at 12:10; "Now has come, etc." From verse 10, I get the impression that throwing Satan would happen and very soon (i.e., "now") result in the purification of power described in verse 10 and Satan's elimination from heaven. How soon Satan's inoperative power on earth will be realized depends on how soon Christ and his forces come.

Suppose the outcome of the war had been such that the fruits of Michael's victory would not be realized until at least two millennia. Could the description of Revelation not have stated that "in due time Christ will return to the earth where Satan has been ravaged for a long time..." explaining that there is a long period between the two verses. But to jump at least two millennia feels amazing. However, the war timing does not change anything about the outcome of the war and its impact on events.

It, therefore, appears that there has been a long delay in the timetable told to John in the book of Revelation.

After much thought, I admit that it is possible that war could have been fought in heaven and, led by Michael, Satan's forces had been defeated and cast upon the earth if this had happened, as many believe, already soon after Christ ascended to heaven. What would that mean?

## **Interpretation 2.**

The war was fought, and Satan's forces were defeated. Satan and his great flock of angels were cast down to earth when Christ ascended into heaven and was given all power. Satan became enraged and began to fight more fiercely against the supporters of Christ. According to this interpretation, war was fought almost 2,000 years ago.

That would mean that Jesus 'promise to return to the earth "soon" has been delayed. The delay has lasted for nearly two thousand years, and the victory told John in the vision has not been utilized; Satan is allowed on earth to entice people and nations to war and unrest, away from the worship of the true God. In this interpretation, the interpretation about the kingdom of God and the power of Christ is reduced to authority in heaven. The power of Christ, and with it the power of God on earth, will then be realized in the future when Christ and his angelic hosts, commanded by Archangel Michael, arrive on earth, and a great battle begins.

If so, God has, for some reason, considered it best to delay the return of Christ and the commencement of his kingdom. Satan has been given extra time and will undoubtedly take advantage of it.

These wars and the confusion of faith are described in the following chapters of Revelation chapter 12. I think it is clear that if war has not yet taken place in the time described in chapter 12, the war will be waged during the following chapters of Revelation: the events described in chapters 13-19 bring out so strongly that I believe Satan and his closest helpers and assistants are on earth, as these chapters describe.

## **Satan is bound**

Satan and his angels (spirit beings) cast on the earth are waiting anxiously for the next round of war; Jesus Christ, with the Archangel Michael and the heavenly angelic powers, comes to earth and destroys the forces of Satan. (I remind you that events are not always presented in the order in which they occur; Satan has not yet been bound, and his assistants have not been captured. Revelation may use the imperfect tense to describe future events)

Satan's capture and bondage is not described until Revelation 20:1 "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

2 He captured the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and tied him up for a thousand years.

3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, **until the thousand years were finished. After this, he must be freed for a short time.**"

Rev 19:20 "The **beast** [Anichrist] was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked the signs in his sight, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire** that burns with sulfur."

20:2 "He [the angel with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand] seized the **dragon**, the old serpent, which is the **devil and Satan**, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and **bound him for a thousand years**, 3 and cast him into the bottomless pit, locked it, and sealed it over him to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were over. After that he must be set free for a little while."

Satan was only captured, but two helpers, the Antichrist and the false prophet, were thrown alive into the lake of fire. The old notion is that a fiery lake is a punishment that brings the pain of hell, which has been interpreted literally until recently.

## **Satan is set free**

When the time of Christ's kingdom is coming to an end, Satan will be released. It tests humanity: who are faithful servants of God and who go out to follow Satan?

Satan is therefore released. Why didn't Christ destroy Satan when he came to earth for the second time under the leadership of a mighty army of angels? Satan's helpers, The Antichrist, and the false prophet, are sent to suffer their punishment, but Satan is only imprisoned. What is the plan of God and Christ? Wouldn't it make more sense to destroy Satan as soon as Satan is defeated? Destroy Satan and all his angels so that they will never be able to entice mankind to sin. But no, the plan of God and Christ is different.

20:7 "And after the thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison.

8 and he will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up over the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints, and the beloved city. **Fire came down out of heaven from God, and devoured them."**

– The translation I use from 1938 is bold and translates the forms of warfare involve "space-to-earth" operations in the coming war. I checked many English translations but found no other proactive and forward-looking translations except in this Finnish translation. When we know the tools of modern warfare, the idea of warfare across space does not sound today impossible at all but somewhat credible to the greatest extent possible.

Satan begins to mobilize the great masses with him in the struggle for world domination. The battle will end, and Satan's forces will be destroyed when the fire of God falls from heaven upon them. According to the Bible, Satan is thrown into the fiery lake (a metaphor), where his assistants Antichrist and the false prophet are already waiting.

10 "The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the **beast** [Anttichrist] and the **false**

**prophet** are also. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

## The second resurrection

Rev 20:5 "The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years were over. This is the first resurrection. 6 How blessed and holy are those who participate in the first resurrection! The **second death has no power over them**. They will be priests of God and Christ, and will rule with him for a thousand years.”

The “other dead” are thus those dead who were not raised in the first resurrection. The second resurrection will take place after the end of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom.

Now the world is free from all distractions; Satan and his angels will no longer be able to interfere with the execution of God’s plan. Now begins the epilogue, from which I could say that it is, in fact, also the first chapter of God’s New World. Its main content is

- – The resurrection of judgment
- – Enforcement of the judgment
- – The beginning of God’s New World
- – God descends to earth
- – People are God’s co-workers in the New World

The first resurrection is the resurrection of the few and chosen. They are Christ’s own and will rule with him the Millennial Kingdom. Nor do they have to attend the final judgment following the Second Resurrection. The Saints of the First Resurrection are in the spirit body as they ascend and change, as I pointed out in the words of the Bible above. Jesus was also in the spirit body when he was resurrected but could take the physical body if he wanted to. Perhaps the risen saints are similar to Christ in this respect.

All those who remained in their graves in the first resurrection will now rise so that no one will stay in the tomb anymore. All ascenders are now gathered before the judgment seat of Christ.

I have interpreted the resurrection body to be a spiritual body. When the traditional interpretation has been a physical body, there was behind it the idea of punishment; those who went to hell had to be in a physical body to suffer the fiery lake's torture forever. If we are willing to give up the idea of such punishment of eternal torture, we can at the same time give up the idea that the resurrection body is a physical body.

Mat 22:30 "For in the **resurrection** they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but **are like God's angels in heaven.**"

Luk 20:35 "But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the **resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.** 36 For **they can't die** any more, for they are like the angels, and are children of God, being **children of the resurrection.**

Joh 11:25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** He who believes in me, though he die, yet will he live.

Act 26:23 how the Christ must suffer, and how, by the resurrection of the dead, he would be **first to proclaim light both to these people and to the Gentiles.**

1 Cor 15:21 For since death came through a man, the **resurrection of the dead also came through a man.**

2 Tim 2:18 They have abandoned the truth by **claiming that the resurrection has already taken place,** and so they destroy the faith of others.

Luk 14:14 and you will be blessed, because they don't have the resources to repay you. For you will be repaid in the

**resurrection of the righteous."**

Act 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess all of these."

## **Last judgment**

**What saves a person at the last judgment?**

For the final judgment, people will be raised from their graves in the bosom of the earth as well as in the depths of the sea. Rev 20:13 "The **sea gave up** the dead who were in it. **Death and Hades gave up** the dead who were in them. They were **judged, each one according to his works."**

Did you notice that the Book of Revelation says his works will judge everyone? Which is decisive, faith in God and Christ and the grace of God and Christ, or deeds of faith? In the Middle Ages, there was a heated controversy over this, with Luther being a solid supporter of grace as opposed to Catholics. Romans reconciles the words diplomatically: Rom 4:16" Therefore, the promise is **based on faith**, so that it may be a **matter of grace** and may be guaranteed for all his descendants—not only for those who were given the law, but also for those who share Abraham's faith, who is the Father of us all."

Is the decisive factor in salvation the faith of man, involving God's grace as a complementary factor or the works of faith? Ephesians seems certain:

2:8 "For you are **saved by grace, through faith**; and this not of yourselves; it is God's gift: 9 **not on the principle of works**, that no one might boast.

The Act also agrees: Rev 20:13 "The **sea gave up** the dead who were in it. **Death and Hades gave up** the dead who were in them.

They were **judged, each one according to his works.**"

– Paul cares for Old Testament believers, such as Abraham, who was promised that all tribes would be blessed in Abraham's seed. Gen 12:3 " I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. **In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed.**

28:14 Your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed will **all the families of the earth be blessed.**"

The Epistle to the Romans brings out the essentials of faith; how much faith is bestowed on each?

Gen 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. **In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed.**

28:14 Your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed will **all the families of the earth be blessed.**"

**Let us first look at verses that emphasize faith.**

Joh 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Joh 7:38 He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water.

Act 16:31 they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.

Rom 5:1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Rom 10:9 that if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the

dead, you will be saved.

Rom 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mat 10:32 Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven.

1 Cor 1:21 For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom didn't know God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe,

2 Tim 3:15 From infancy, you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Pet 1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God.

2:6 Because it is contained in Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen, and precious: He who believes in him will never be ashamed.

1 Joh 3:23 This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he commanded.

The Bible emphasizes the importance of believing the gospel. The gospel is the power of God, for the salvation of the believer. Believers will receive the seal of the Holy Ghost.

Mar 1:15 He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near! Repent, and keep believing in the gospel!"

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek.

Eph 1:13 You, too, have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed in him you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,”

The verses above contain a wide variety of references to belief. However, the main message is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” – Do we have to believe everything the Gospels say or all the Bible passages where the name of Jesus is mentioned?

When the Bible says, believe in Jesus, it means that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, our Lord, that Jesus will come the second time and give judgment with the power God has given him.

## **Strive to enter in**

Jesus also encouraged believers to strive for salvation: Luk 13:24 **“Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in, and will not be able.”**

Why strive if salvation can happen simply by believing in Jesus? Why does Jesus say the door is narrow? Why do only a few manage to get inside? Inside, but where? I will tell you my interpretation.

Salvation is easy; when anxiety is at its worst, death is near. He who cries out to God or Jesus Christ for help will be saved. Salvation here means preserving your own life. It does not yet guarantee eternal life in the kingdom of God. To enter the kingdom of God, one must strive as Jesus put it. If a man fails in the race, he will not enter the first resurrection and the kingdom of God. To enter the kingdom of God, one does not have to strive for heaven, but to compete to enter the earthly government of the Kingdom of God or the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, to rule the world together with the Saints.

## Why has God given people a different measure of faith?

Rom 12:3 "For I say, through the **grace** that was given me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think reasonably, **as God has apportioned to each person a measure of faith.**"

What does it mean that **God has given each person a different amount of faith**? Who could explain the basis on which God has chosen certain people even before the beginning of time? Eph 1:4 "even as he [God] chose us in him [Christ] **before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love;"

Room 8:29 "For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers; 30 Whom he predestined, those he also called. Whom he called, those he also justified. Whom he justified, those he also glorified."

According to his plan, God has known those who will become like Jesus in the future from time to time. These elect God also calls and justifies and glorifies like Jesus.

However, not everything is predetermined to the end. The Bible states that even the elect may be mistaken for Satan (Mat 24:24).

## Who will be saved?

**God promises to save everyone.**

"For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because **we have set our trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.**" (1 Tim 4:10)

This Bible verse states that God is the Savior of all men. That is clear, but it is complemented by the saying 'especially of believers.' This seemed exceptional, and at first reading, I could not quite say how the salvation of 'especially believers' views all salvation. I interpret it to mean that, above all, God primarily saves believers. However, God is the Savior of all people, even non-believers, the Savior of all. Once this is clear, one only has to decide how all people will be saved, even those who do not believe.

As I write about universalism and annihilation in the future, the promise of God told in this verse will rise above all principles. The principle of universalism is that everyone is saved. On the other hand, annihilation is the most extreme punishment; punishment is for them an eternal difference from God; they cease to exist as if they had never lived.

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ **all** will be made alive." (1 Cor 15:22)

"My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you might not sin. Yet if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, one who is righteous. It is he who is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the **whole world's.**" (1 Joh 2:1-2)

Jer 32:27 "Behold, I am Yahweh, the God of all flesh: **is there anything too hard for me?**"

Mat 19:26 "Looking at them, Jesus said, "With men this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible.**" – it is impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18). **God can't be tempted by evil**, and he himself tempts no one. (Jam 1:13). If we are faithless, He remains faithful. **He can't deny himself.** (2 Tim 2:13). – The saying 'denying oneself' means, I think, that God's promises are kept. He doesn't undo his promises. In particular, God's people Israel is the subject of its commitment.

Num 23:19 "God is not a man, that he should lie, Neither the son of man, that he should repent: Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not make it good?"

## Universalism

More than 100 billion people have lived on earth over time. Can they all be saved?

Universalism is generally defined to mean the salvation of all human beings. My understanding is that it is possible to believe in all Christians' salvation based on the Bible. All Christians have at least some, perhaps weak, yet some connection to Christianity. Pagans, that is, those who do not believe a drop in Christianity's content, often have no relationship with Christianity. How could we believe in the salvation of such godless people, even if the Bible reads that God is the savior of all?

Biblical phrases such as "So are **all** made alive in Christ" can be interpreted universally; "All men are made alive in Christ." However, my interpretation of such verses requires that the person has a slight conception of God or Christ. No matter how small, one on whom the fire of God can take action to burn out the Christian faith from within all the earthly slag.

Thus, **Christian universalism** means that all people who have ever lived will eventually recognize Jesus as Lord.

The salvation of all the world's people, **pluralistic universalism** says that all religious paths bring salvation. Defined in this way, both forms of universalism lead to the same. The principle of Christian universalism that all people who have ever lived will eventually recognize Jesus as Lord leads to pluralistic (unitarian) universalism, according to which all religions lead to salvation. By definition, no one

is left out of salvation. – Thus far, I don't think the word of the Bible meant stretching.

This doctrine comes from the Greek word **Apokatastasis**, which has its roots in the Bible. The ancient Greek concept of *Apokatastasis panton* (Αποκατάστασις πάντων)

means “*the restoration of all things*,” to which Peter refers when speaking of the ascension and return of Jesus to heaven: “whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God spoke long ago by the mouth of his holy prophets.” (Act 3:21). This verse has been interpreted in the early church that Christ God restores all mankind to a fixed, paradisiacal state.

If God and Christ want “all” to be saved, provided God Jehovah and His Son recognize them, then how is that possible?

The following idea, completely unbiblical, occurred my mind: Before pronouncing the judgment in annihilation, Christ asks those who claim to have never heard of Christ: “Are you ready to take a basic course in Christianity, taught with a new teaching technique and learned in half a second?” Those who agree will be taught about the God of the Bible and His Son and the foundations of Christianity. After the course, they will all be asked, “Do you now believe in Jehovah God and His Son, Jesus Christ?” All who answer positively are saved.

All those “course participants” who say they do not believe will be sentenced to **annihilation** despite the course. Annihilation means **the complete and immediate cessation of life and consciousness** after the judgment's proclamation –no right of appeal.

It has been said that God does not share the gift of faith to a certain extent, but he does in his own time. And also Rom 12:3, “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think reasonably, as **God has apportioned to each person a measure of faith.**”

Rom 14:10 "For we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live,' says the Lord, 'to me every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess to God. 12 So then each one of us will give account of himself to God."

– I understand that all Christians will be saved, but what about the 100 billion Gentiles who lived at different times?

There are passages in the Bible that, based on the translation, can be **interpreted as an endless and irreversible condemnation**. One must choose which one he considers correct and decisive, the Bible passages that offer universal hope or eternal torture quotes after the last judgment.

The Bible does not speak in the original languages of "eternal destruction." It is a question of a time-limited penalty. However, the translation of the Bible I use is still in its old positions:

Mat 25:41"Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; 25:46 These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

"For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him [Christ]; and **through him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, whether things on the earth, or things in the heavens**, having made peace through the blood of his cross. (Kol 1:19 – 20).

– All the fullness of God dwells in Christ, who has made peace through his cross and is ready to reconcile all things through himself, both on earth and in heaven. Reconciliation is not compelling reconciliation, but requires that one voluntarily wants it.

Mat 25:41 " Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; 25:46 These will go

away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The above verses could be understood as meaning that the path to salvation is also open to the Gentiles if only they will receive Christ; turn so you may live.

1 Pet 3:20 "who before were disobedient, when **God waited patiently** in the days of Noah, while the ark was being built. In it, few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.”

## **What happens to those who are not saved?**

When God cannot lie, is Bible speech of the hell a lie, or misinterpreted or misunderstood?

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life..**

17 For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that **the world should be saved through him..**

18 **He who believes in him is not judged. He who doesn't believe has been judged already,** because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.”

Through the centuries, humanity has believed in the existence of hell. Hell was deep underground inmost beliefs, and people got deeper down the more horrible deeds they had done. Maintaining such a belief was a great way for the clergy to keep the parishioners under control. When the Bible had not even been translated into the people's vernacular until the 16th century, the ordinary people had no opportunity to verify the priests' fierce sermons' validity. When the first vernacular translations became available, another problem arose; were the biblical sayings of eternal, never-ending torment translated correctly?

Many Bible readers and scholars believe the punishment of the “lake of fire” is eternal even today. The Greek words *aion*, *aionos* do not mean, according to current knowledge, infinite eternity. Nor is the Hebrew word *owlam*. The enlightened Bible reader himself may have inferred this by using common sense. For example, when God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with eternal fire. The so-called ‘eternal fire’ has been extinguished long ago.

Today, it may be argued that hell does exist, but it is only lasting for a certain period. The Jewish notion of punishment lasting up to a year may be invoked.

I have written about the fire of God, by which I mean a bit like a Catholic purgatory. There is at least such a difference that Catholics believe they will be caught in purgatory as soon as they die before entering heaven. God’s **purifying fire**, as the Bible means, does not purify man until the final judgment is at hand. This cleansing fire may well be painful and may be the cause of these hell perceptions.

Is it possible to even preach Christianity as a testimony to all people of all nations? Preach so that they understand what is at stake. At the final judgment, someone may say; hey, what are you talking about? Who is this Jesus? Oh, that Jesus, from whom a man once in the marketplace shouted, “Jesus saves”?

God also has at his disposal a different kind of fire that is **consuming**. Satan’s army is destroyed in such a fire that consumes by falling from heaven. (Rev 20:9)

## **What about the Gentiles?**

The fence of salvation is low – for Christians. The problematic question is: what about the one hundred billion Gentiles? I explored the question of the number of humanity calculated over time. According to demographers, the answer to

this was also found on the internet, and it was over 100 billion. Today's population is just under 8 billion. Of that, Christians make up about a couple of billion. The largest Church is Catholic, about 1.2 billion, divided into Roman Catholic and Orthodox Catholic.

How could one hundred billion Gentiles live on earth? Well, sometimes in the Middle Ages, said my teacher of religion at school, scholars wondered how many angels would fit to stand at the head of a pin. Wouldn't there be enough space with this principle?

What about the Gentiles? That is, those who a) have not heard of our God Jehovah and Christ Jesus, or b) who have heard, but only by mention, and have been in faith in another god all their lives. Then there is point c), which includes those who have renounced Christianity and perhaps knew God and Jesus very closely. How are these?

"I believe it follows from God's love that man can choose eternal separation from him. What will result from the final rejection of God? Annihilationist interpretation of the Bible is convincing to me. I believe that the eternal separation from God is equal to the eternal separation from life and existence. But how many people end up turning their backs on God completely?" I read these thoughts on a website while gathering material for this article.

In my blog post <https://salatturaamattu.fi/miksi-uskovat-ihmiset-eivat-usko-raamattua/> I reflect on annihilation and the problem of the second death under the title "Christ did not die the second death."

1 John says that love is of God; and whosoever loves, is born of God, and knows God. 4:8 "The person who does not love does not know God, because **God is love.**"

It is impossible to think that a loving God would allow

torture, let alone eternal. Or that God would order such a destiny for some. I understand and accept annihilation because it removes a person from existence; he has sometimes been but is no more. Even his memory is no longer remembered.

Do I believe this message? Or do I believe the biblical accounts of how God allowed the pagans to be treated?

## Is God Almighty?

Behind the word, almighty used in the New Testament is the Greek word παντοκράτωρ pantokratōr. Strong's gives the word definition, e.g., omnipotent, the ruler of all, almighty, God.

Is the correct meaning 'almighty' or 'almighty of all.' In my previous writing, I pondered God's omnipotence; no man can see the face of God without dying. God told this to Moses, who wanted to see God's face. God hid Moses in the rock crevice and allowed him to see God from behind. I asked; could not Almighty God come up with any solution that Moses could have seen the face of God without dying? While the meaning of the *pantocrator* is also omnipotent, the ruler of all, then the relevant question is whether God is almighty in every sense.

**"In The first chapter of the book of Judges, there is a funny example of a description in which the power of God is presented as limited. It tells how God helped the tribe of Judah to win the wars. However, the men of Judah did not defeat the inhabitants of the plain because they had reinforced chariots (Judg 1:19). Is God stronger than wooden chariots but not quite as strong with iron ones? 1:2 "Yahweh said, Judah shall go up: behold, **I have delivered the land into his hand.**" 1:19 "Yahweh was with Judah; and drove out *the inhabitants of* the hill-country; for **he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.**"**

The Bible proves that God is good. The Bible says that only God is good. Therefore, one may ask, why is there so much evil in the world if God is good and love and yet omnipotent?

Even regarding the above, I cannot believe that the loving God could accept eternal torture as punishment for his creatures. Even the pagans are created in the image of God. That is why, earlier in this writing, before the final judgment of annihilation was pronounced, I proposed a “quick course of Christianity” for the convicts, after which no man could say, “I did not know” or “I did not understand.”

After taking the course, if a person on judgment still says defiantly, “let your judgment come,” he can rightly be condemned to annihilation, that is, eternal separation from God and life and existence.

## **What is the new life like in God's New World?**

### **What is the goal of the resurrection?**

I dare claim that 99.9% of Christians who believe they will be saved believe they will get to heaven. Personally, I don't think the goal of salvation is in heaven. I prove it with explicit Bible promises. When the promise is fulfilled, each saved person wonders why they ever dreamed of going to heaven.

**The promise:** “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will go out from there no more. I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name.”

**The promise is fulfilled:** The last book of the Bible testifies how John sees what is happening in the vision: The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, will descend from heaven to earth. God's dwelling is in the midst of the saved people in New

Jerusalem. God dwells among them.

Why on earth do people seek access to heaven when God Himself dwells on earth in their midst?

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## Who will receive the Crown of Righteousness?

- Isn't heaven the prize for Christians?
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## Isn't heaven the prize for Christians?

If we ask believing Christians, what is the top prize for a believer, the most popular answer would probably be "going to heaven." Or 'God's paradise.' Someone says, 'eternal life' or 'immortality.'

The correct answer, according to the Bible and Paul, is **The Crown of Righteousness.**

It is a figurative expression, as are many of the phrases used in the Bible. In this article, I will go into more detail on this issue. What is this wreath of righteousness, of which the English translations call the crown of righteousness? Who in ancient times received a wreath for the prize? The winners of the sports competitions were crowned with a laurel wreath. Paul says of this highest prize:

2 Tim 4:6-7 "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure has come." – Having said this, Paul sees his earthly journey coming to an end, he states:

**"From now on, there is stored up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved his appearing." (2 Tim 4:8)**

Before I go into more detail about this issue of the highest prize for believers, I say a few words about the writer of the above Bible verse.

His name was Saulus. He was an ardent Pharisee whose activities took place after Jesus' death. He was tasked with capturing Christians and bringing them in captivity to Jerusalem. Once he was on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians there. While traveling with his comrades on the road to Damascus, suddenly, a huge bright flash occurred, and Saul became blind. He heard a loud voice calling out. "Who are you," he asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Saul's

comrades led the blind Saulus to Damascus. There, for three days, he was blind, pondering what had happened. Then Saulus was directed to other Christians and made a complete conversion; the fierce Pharisee became a fiery Christian, called the apostle of the nations, Paul.

Many, perhaps even the majority, of Christians believe and earnestly expect to reach heaven after they die. What does the Bible say about it?

Apt 2:34 "For David didn't ascend into the heavens, but he says himself, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit by my right hand," Even though David was a man of God, David could not enter heaven. John testifies: "**No one has ascended into heaven**, but he who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven." (Joh 3:13).

This is difficult for Christians to accept. Throughout the ages, heaven has been believed to be the ultimate prize for Christians. If, for example, the father or mother of a young child dies, the child is comforted by telling her that she is in heaven and watching you from there. Similarly, the parent is comforted by assuring that the dead child is naturally in heaven with the angels.

Such faith in heaven is not based in any way on the word of the Bible. And then, after the resurrection, will we then get to heaven? What if heaven, the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, comes down to earth? Even the book of Revelation says: 21:2 "**I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God**, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. (also 3:12 ja 21:10).

God also promised Abraham: Act 3:25 "You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'In your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.'" God has promised that "The righteous shall inherit the land and live in it forever" (Psa

37:29).

## What is this prize, the Crown of Righteousness?

2 Tim 4:8 "From now on, there is **stored up** for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not to me only, but also **to all those who have loved his appearing.**"

*Strong's defines the Greek word **Stephanos**; (engl. crown)*

1. a mark of royal or (in general) *exalted rank*
  1. the wreath or garland which was given as a prize to victors in public games
2. the eternal blessedness which will be given as a prize to the genuine servants of God and Christ: the crown (wreath) which is the reward of the righteousness
3. that which is an ornament and honour to one

**στέφανος** stéphanos, a prize in the public games. – In ancient Greece, the winner of the competition was decorated with a laurel wreath, so 'wreath' is also a right translation.

In this Bible verse, Paul promises this reward to all who **love the idea of the second coming of Christ Jesus**. There are other expressions used in the Bible for the same goal. A believer whose great desire is to see Jesus come is, by all means, a good Christian, who believes in God and strives to do his will. He is born again from above. He believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who, through his death, has redeemed all mankind from the power of sin.

There are thus many ways to describe the award. If you do according to the will of God, if you are born again from above, if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, if you are lovingly waiting for the appearance of Jesus ...

Did you notice the word "in store" in 2 Timothy 4:8. The NIV

translation says “there is in store for me.”

## Why does the Bible say ‘in store’?

In heaven, there is an assessment made of people’s faith and behavior. Believers and those who act in the manner required by faith are recorded in the Book of Life. There, their behavior is deposited for the payment of prize (or wages). The Crown of Righteousness and the Book of Life are both figurative expressions. How do they relate to each other?

The names of those who are worthy of eternal life at the last judgment, are written in the Book of Life. Names are added to the Book of Life as new people come to faith. The name is removed if one gives up his faith. However, the Book of Life will not be considered until it is time for a final judgment.

So the names of those who are saved are stored in the Book of Life.

However, there is an important aspect to the deposited Crown of Righteousness; a number of Crowns of righteousness are distributed long before the final judgment. They will be given to those who are partakers of the first resurrection. They are the Saints of the Bible who reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom, and they act as judges at Christ’s last judgment.

What about “that day?” The next title tells you what it means; When Christ comes to earth the second time, he will bring his reward. This is when people get paid for the first time.

## Christ brings the reward when he comes

Luk 6:23 “Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did the same thing to the prophets.”

You can, of course, think that wages are kept in store in heaven and paid when you get there in due course. But why then does Jesus say this: Rev 22:12 “Behold, I come quickly. My reward is with me, to repay to each man according to his work.”

Not only does Jesus promise to come from heaven to earth, but he also gives each man a reward, according to what good or evil each has done. Another point to note is, wouldn't it be strange if the people who went to heaven stayed in heaven and Jesus came from there down on earth, leaving the resurrected in heaven? Only after Jesus has come the second time and reigned for a thousand years does the second resurrection take place, and each one is given a final judgment.

## Who deserve the Crown of Righteousness?

### Those who do the will of God

Mar 3:35 “For **whoever does the will of God**, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”

1 Joh 2:17 “The world is passing away with its lusts, but **he who does God's will** remains forever.”

Jesus promises to acknowledge his brothers or sisters who believe in God and are doing the will of God. When you consider this in greater detail, it states that it is the greatest promise; you are Jesus' brother and a Son of God. John aptly compares the transience of the earthly world to its opposite, the eternal life. So very often, people seek this short-lived and fleeting enjoyment of the world instead of

building their lives on Christ.

Is it easy for a man to live his life according to God's will?  
Is it possible at all?

Joh 6:37-40 *"All those who the Father gives me will come to me. Him who comes to me I will in no way throw out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 39 This is the will of my Father who sent me, that of all he has given to me I should lose nothing, but should raise him up at the last day. 40 For this is my Father's will, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes in him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

Jesus confirms that he has been sent into the world to do the will of God: when a man seeks to do the will of God in his life, he believes in the Son of God and receives the promise that Jesus Christ will raise him at the last day of eternal life.

However, Jesus' greatest commandment is: "So Jesus said to him (Mat 22:37): "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." It follows from love for God that one wants to do according to God's will. 1 Joh 5:3 "For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not difficult."

As we live this way, we can create the same kind of relationship with God as once Abraham or King David. Abraham was called "a friend" by God. Who would be more heart-warming, be a friend of God, or be a brother of Jesus? How would it sound like if God spoke of you as he said of King David; he is the man of my liking. This is what God said, even though King David had murdered a man, but David later repented and became a completely different person.

Mat 11:29 "Take my [Christ's] yoke upon you, and learn from

me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls.”

## Who will be the first to be rewarded?

### The little flock

The first to receive the reward or ‘wages’ are the most faithful servants of God. They are called a “little flock” by the Bible. Jesus says in Luk 12:32 “Don’t be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

How big or how small is this little herd? A few dozen? A couple of hundreds? In my last article, I referred to the calculations of demographers that over 100 billion people have lived in the world so far. Few of these are potential candidates. In today’s world, there are no more than a few billion Christians. Again, only a fraction of these are God’s elect. Still, I would imagine that there would be reborn believers, not a few hundred, but perhaps a few hundred million. Still, it is a relatively small group compared to the huge population of over one hundred billion who have to face the last judgment.

The book of Revelation says figuratively that the little group comprises 12,000 of each Israeli tribe or a total of 144,000. Is this a ‘little’ group anymore? Sometimes in the 1960s, I wondered about the problem of overpopulation in the world; I thought that all the people in the world would be able to stand on the ice of a Lake in Lapland if four people were put to stand in every square meter. Medieval scientists quarreled about how many angels could stand at the end of a pin. Just as crazy a thought as my calculations! Such calculations are absurd when we remember that the people of the future world live in the spirit body.

The number of rulers with Jesus could be quite large; in his metaphor, Jesus promised one to come to rule ten cities and another to rule five cities. Perhaps there are several levels of government; the supreme king is, in any case, Christ himself. King David rules all Israel. Each apostle rules over each tribe of Israel. With billions of residents in the Millennial kingdom, long before, there will be a huge need for local leaders and teachers. A large portion of the population is Gentiles, some of whom have never even heard of Christ.

Isa 66:18 "For I know their works and their thoughts: the time comes, that I will gather all nations and languages; and they shall come, and shall see my glory. 19 I will set a sign among them, and I will send such as escape of them to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, **who have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory;** and they shall declare my glory among the nations."

John describes the Second Coming of Christ: Rev 1:7 "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, including those who pierced him. All the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. Even so, Amen."

Mat 24:30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. Act 1:11 who also said, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who was received up from you into the sky will come back in the same way as you saw him going into the sky."

Paul describes this little flock as follows:

1 Tes 4:15 "For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left to the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel, and with God's trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, 17 then we who are alive, who are left, will be **caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever.**"

When Christ comes with His heavenly host for the second time, God's elect will be the first to rise from the dead. This is the **first resurrection**. Paul goes on to describe how the living elect, together with the resurrected dead, are caught up against Christ in the clouds.

**Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him one thousand years.**

In his first Corinthian epistle, Paul describes the first resurrection.

1 Cor 15:51 **"Let me tell you a secret. Not all of us will die, but all of us will be changed,**

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

All those who resurrect will change: they change into the spirit body. When it comes to "the resurrection of the body" as in the creed, it is precisely the conversion of the physical body into the spiritual body. In many cases, there is nothing left of the dead body. The body has completely disappeared over the millennia. The bodies of the deceased may have disappeared, for example, in a fire or explosion. The

dead body is not needed at all in the resurrection. From where the resurrection takes place, is the human spirit which, when the person has died, has ascended to heaven. The Bible says: When Stephen was stoned, he begged: Act 7:59, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!

The spirits of all the dead are "stored" in heaven. There have been over a hundred billion people who have lived and died so far, and their spirits are all in heaven. Are these spirits in a conscious or unconscious state? I have not given much thought to it, but referring to the Bible, I would say that the spirits are completely unconscious. Ecc 9:5 "For the living know that they will die, but **the dead don't know anything,**"

1 Cor 15:44 "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body.

At the same time, they get immortality, that is, as the Bible says in the old language, "the mortal shall have put on immortality." According to 15:51, these people are an exception to the Biblical rule that everyone must die.

They also enter the kingdom of God and meet Christ. Not only do the first resurrected, elected by God, receive immortality, and their appearance change; **they will become like Christ.** 1 Joh 3:2 "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But **we know that, when he is revealed, we will be like him;** for we will see him just as he is."

Christ is described in Rev 1:14 "His head and his hair were white as white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace. His voice was like the voice of many waters." Rev 2:18 "... The Son of God, whose eyes are like flaming fire and whose feet are like glowing bronze, says

this:

Rev 14:1 "Then I looked, and there was the lamb standing on Mount Zion! With him were 144,000 people who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

Rev 14:3 "They were singing a new song in front of the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth."

The twelve sons of Jacob, the **ancestors of the tribes of Israel**:

Mother Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun

Mother Zilpah (concubine): Dan, Naphtali

Mother Bilhah (concubine): Gad, Asher

Mother Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin

Rev 7:5 "Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, Of the tribe of **Manasseh** twelve thousand,

7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Manasseh is included in the above group of sons of Jacob. Manasseh was one of Joseph's sons, and Jacob was his grandfather. Why Joseph and Manasseh are both listed, but for some reason, the list does not include Jacob's son Dan. Manasseh's younger brother Ephraim is also missing. The Levites did not receive their own land when the land was given

to the tribes of Israel, because they were priestly tribes. However, they received a number of cities. All in all, the list based on the sons of Jacob is problematic, not least because ten of the tribes of Israel are missing.

Do old tribal lists have anything to do with defining the composition of the little flock? After all, these Jews knew nothing about Christ. **Faith in Christ as the Son of God is central to choosing the saints of God's kingdom.**

Joh 20:31 "but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that *believing you may have life in his name.*" Plus: 1 Joh 5:12 "**He who has the Son has the life. He who doesn't have God's Son doesn't have the life.**" – Of the Jews, the whole family of the sons of Jacob are pure Jews who have not even had the opportunity in their lives to believe in Christ as the Son of God. The New Testament conveys the image of entering God's kingdom; **the first set i.e., the little flock, as Jesus called it, is based on faith in Jesus as the Son of God and the redeemer of those who believe in him.** Another verse of John confirms this notion:

Joh 14:6 "Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father, except through me.**"

Therefore, I tend to regard this list of Revelation based on the sons of Jacob as figurative. Symbolism stems from Abraham, his numerous descendants who are promised to inherit the earth; Josh 24:3 "I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac." Act 3:25 "You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, **In your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.**" – All nations in the earth – not just Jews – are blessed, and there are no restrictions on access to the little flock.

Will all receive this blessing promised to Abraham, even the Jews who do not recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God?

Israel is God's chosen people, although it does not obey God's will in recognizing Jesus as God's own Son. However, God always saves a small remnant of his people. Paul wrote: Romans 9:27 "Isaiah cries concerning Israel, "If the number of the children of Israel are as the sand of the sea, **it is the remnant who will be saved**. Jesus rebuked the high priests and the pharisees, saying in Matthew 21:43 "Therefore I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and will be given to a nation bringing forth its fruits."

– The kingdom of God will be taken from you! And to whom is the kingdom of God given? To those who believe in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The Jews still do not believe, except for a small group.

Paul, the Jewish Pharisee, who then converted to Christianity, the apostle of nations, redefined Judaism: Rom 2:29 "but **he is a Jew who is one inwardly**, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten\\_Lost\\_Tribes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Lost_Tribes)

Later the wages will be paid to the **great multitude**:

Rev 7:9 " After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. 10 They cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation be to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Who are these people who belong to this great multitude? It is

told to John shortly after the little flock is first explained:

Rev 7:13 "One of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are arrayed in white robes, who are they, and from where did they come?"

14 I told him, "My lord, you know." He said to me, "These are those who came out of the **great tribulation**. They washed their robes, and made them white in the Lamb's blood.

15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, they serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

16 They will never be hungry, neither thirsty any more; neither will the sun beat on them, nor any heat;

17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shepherds them, and leads them to springs of waters of life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Waiting for Jesus' second coming (manifestation) means believing:

Joh 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**"

1 Joh 5:11 "The testimony is this, that God gave to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has the [eternal] life. He who doesn't have God's Son doesn't have the life. 13 These things I have written to **you who believe in the name of the Son of God**, that you may know that **you have eternal life**, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Luk 18:8 "But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" – Jesus was pessimistic about whether there would be believers on earth at the time of his Second Coming.

As we watch the world go by today and what kind of 'believers' there are in the world, we can only say that Jesus' guess is

right. He would not find true faith, but God has seen this happen. That's why he wanted to make salvation easy.

Indeed. It is easy to be rescued in this great multitude; all you have to do is shout one word, Jesus. After all, the Bible promises that anyone who calls on the Lord's name will be saved. I am sure both Jesus and Jehovah will qualify as the Lord's name.

These people who form the great multitude form the population of the Millennial Kingdom led by Christ and the Saints. They have not yet reached immortality, but they are still living in a kingdom of peace, in a state of paradise. They have a good chance of attaining the victory prize described by Paul when they are once raised for the Second Resurrection at the end of the Millennium.

## The second resurrection

The Crown of Righteousness has not yet been distributed to all those who deserve it; 2 Tim 4: 8 promises: **"which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved his appearing."** The rest of the recipients of the prize will receive it when the second resurrection has taken place; then every man's deeds will be examined, and God's purifying fire will burn wrong deeds. It is described in 1 Cor 3: "But if anyone builds [his life, his faith] on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or stubble;

13 each man's work will be revealed. For the Day will declare it, because **it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself will test what sort of work each man's work is.**

14 If what a person has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [Or receive wages]

15 If any man's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but **he**

**himself will be saved, but as only as through fire."**

I interpret these verses in 1 Corinthians as meaning that if one's faith is even based in Christ in some way, he will be saved "only as through fire." This is how God shows his mercy to his creations.

Christ's promise (Rev 22:12) "My reward is with me, to repay each man according to his work" is fulfilled either by recognizing man's faith and the good deeds made on that basis and then man is saved. If man's faith in Jesus Christ has been only nominal, and there are no or few deeds, God's purifying fire will burn him, but he may endure the trial and be saved. Where does the borderline go in terms of who is saved and who is destroyed after God's fiery treatment? It is defined by Christ, to whom all power of judgment has been given.

## **The glory of God and Christ**

The Bible describes the conversion of the resurrected to the likeness of Christ; "We know we will become like him when he appears." The English translation speaks of the 'glory' of God and Christ. What does this glory mean? To what extent do the resurrected people receive this glory and power of God and Christ?

1 Cor 15:39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds..

40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of those in heaven is of one kind, and that of those on earth is of another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.

43 **It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.**

NASB There is one **glory of the sun**, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. – “Glory of the sun” as well as “glory of the stars,” mean brightness. The celestial bodies have no “glory” (honor), but different degrees of brightness.

Verses 42 and 43 describe what happens to the resurrection body in the resurrection. The physical body is born and died ‘in corruption’, just as it belongs to man. In the resurrection, the elect will rise in ‘immortality’ and ‘glory’. Verse 44 testifies: **“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body.”**

There was a physical body, but now the spiritual body is rising. Further: After the physical, fleshly body, the resurrected will have a spiritual body. This is also described as saying that the first body was from the earth, but the second man is from heaven from which he was raised. Remember that Stephen begged, “Jesus Christ receive my spirit.” Human spirits have been “stored” in heaven.

45 So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However that which is spiritual isn’t first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The *second man* is the Lord *from heaven*.

48 As is the one made of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And, according as we did bear the image of the earthy, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly.

According to 1 Corinthians, we who are to resurrect, have had a worldly image, but now we have the image of Christ and are like him. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" means that members of the kingdom of God, its leaders, cannot be [only] in the flesh, that is, in the physical body. Therefore, as verse 1 Corinthians 15:52 states all resurrected change instantly from the flesh to the spirit body. They "dress in immortality."

So, this is what happens to the participants of the first resurrection. They will be members of God's kingdom, spirits, immortals. They are an exception to the rule that everyone must take part in the final judgment. They do not have to, because "they do not need to be condemned with the world." They reign with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom, which is part of God's kingdom. Above, I wrote that they are in the spirit body, and again the inhabitants of the kingdom are normal people in the flesh. The rulers with Christ are immortal spirits, but I suppose they can also appear in the flesh, as Christ did after his resurrection before ascending to heaven.

50 Now I say this, brothers, that **flesh and blood can't inherit the Kingdom of God**; neither does corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed,**

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this corruptible will have put on incorruption,

and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

## What does 'δόξα' Mean?

### G1391 δόξα doxa (Glory)

1. opinion, judgment, view
2. opinion, estimate, whether good or bad concerning someone
  1. in the NT always a good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honour, and glory
3. splendour, brightness
  1. of the moon, sun, stars
  2. magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace
  3. majesty
    1. a thing belonging to God
      1. the kingly majesty which belongs to him as supreme ruler, majesty in the sense of the absolute perfection of the deity
    2. a thing belonging to Christ
      1. the kingly majesty of the Messiah
      2. the absolutely perfect inward or personal excellency of Christ; the majesty
    3. of the angels
      1. as apparent in their exterior brightness
    4. a most glorious condition, most exalted state
      1. of that condition with God the Father in heaven to which Christ was raised after he had achieved his work on earth

2. the glorious condition of blessedness into which is appointed and shall enter after their Saviour's return from heaven

## **How does the nature of people reflect the glory of change?**

Phl 3:21 He will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorious body through the power that enables him to bring everything under his authority.

Col 3:4 When Christ, our life, is revealed, then **you will also be revealed with him in glory.**

Dan 12:3 And those teaching do shine as the brightness of the expanse, and **those justifying the multitude as stars to the age and for ever.**

Mat 17:2 He [Jesus] was transfigured before them. **His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as white as the light.**

The Bible mainly talks about the glory of God and Christ. Also, the outward appearance of the resurrected people becomes glorified. It may involve honor and glory, but clearly, it is also brightness, about changing the way you look. Mat 13:43 **Then [after the last judgment] the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.**

2 Cor 4:17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, works for us more and more exceedingly **an eternal weight of glory;**

Rom 8:21 that the creation itself would also be set free from slavery to decay in order to share the **glorious freedom of**

## God's children.

Rom 8:30 Whom he **predestined**, those he also **called**. Whom he called, those he also **justified**. Whom he justified, those he also **glorified**.

1 Cor 15:40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the **splendor of those in heaven** is of one kind, **and that of those on earth** is of another.

## Access to the Kingdom of God.

All who enter the kingdom of God have received the Crown of Righteousness, but not all who receive the Crown of Righteousness are among the first to enter the kingdom of God.

Luk 13:24 "Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in, and will not be able." – Here Jesus answered the question of entering the kingdom of God. Many would like to enter the kingdom of God, but the door is narrow, and only a "little flock" of the entire large population can enter it among the first. But the game is not lost yet. This does not mean that man cannot be saved and have eternal life, even if he is not among the first to enter the kingdom of God. Read on to see what I mean.

Joh 17:24 "Father, I desire that **they also whom you have given me be with me where I am**, that they may see my glory, which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world." – Jesus refers here to God's advance plan that God made before the foundation of the world. God had foretold the role of Jesus, his own son, in saving the world. He had also seen and selected Jesus' helpers before the foundation of the world. Jesus means here his assistants God gave to Jesus. These assistants were primarily the twelve apostles. And other believers close to him. Likewise, God has chosen many other helpers from different eras associated with the Church of

Christ. Many of them have lost their lives following Christ. Many of them still follow him today, telling the truth of the Bible, even though they must fight for the teaching of the great churches for the truth.

Joh 3:3 Jesus replied to him, "Truly, truly I tell you, unless a person is born from above [Or born again] he cannot see the kingdom of God."

3:7 Don't be astonished that I said to you, 'All of you must be born from above.'

Jesus told this to Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel. Nicodemus had no idea how he could be born again. Joh 3:4 "Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" – Being born again is not dependent on age. Even on his deathbed, man can be born again.

1 Pet 1:23 "For you have been born again, not by a seed that perishes but by one that cannot perish—by the living and everlasting word of God." – Born anew occurs through the word of God. When I just said that one could be born again at the deathbed, so did Emperor Constantine, who ordered Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire and took baptism just before he died. Could it have been baptism based on true faith, I don't know. The one on the deathbed is probably not thoroughly acquainted with the doctrine of Christ. Maybe then it is enough for a person to say, "I believe." Indeed, the Bible says that in the day of the Lord, one will be saved just by calling upon the name of the Lord. Act 2:21 **"It will be, that whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."** – The name Jehovah and his son's name Jesus are both valid.

**Being born again** simply means becoming a believer and receiving Jesus as your Savior. In rebirth, man receives the seal of God on his forehead. "Forehead" is again a figurative expression. It means that one begins to think and act

differently. Rev 7:3 “Don’t harm the land, the sea, or the trees until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads.” – No actual seal or invisible stamp is pressed on the new believer’s forehead. It is just a figurative expression that man has made his choice between God and the world or between God and Satan. A similar expression is found in the Bible when referring to Satan and the mark of the beast ‘666’, which is also to be interpreted figuratively, not a microchip in a human hand or forehead.

## **God’s co-workers: The new man and the new earth**

**“For we are God’s co-workers. You are God’s farming, God’s building.”** (1 Cor 3:9).

God works all the time. Shouldn’t people also be working and not just being lazy in paradise? Joh 5:17 NIV “My Father **is always at his work** to this very day, and I too am working.” – This John’s report brought to my mind a question: Will God never finish the world? Why does he have to work all the time? I thought God could have made a plan that would cover the whole world now and in the future. Then he just snaps his fingers and says, “let the world be ready right away!” Does God need to rest? In one Apocrypha story, God is said to rest in the third heaven.

Does God need people to help? Is it God’s purpose to shape the whole world, the whole universe?

## **The new man and the new earth**

**“He who sits on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.”** (Rev 21:5)

In fact, the Bible tells quite a lot about the world to come. When the final judgment is given, only the **children of God**, whom Jesus calls his brothers and sisters, remain.

They are now **images of God**; “God created man in his own image. In God’s image he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). After the Fall, man began to degenerate; Man became mortal, and his life-span began to decline. Mortality brought disease. Now people have received from God the gift of eternal life, immortality. God and Christ are spirits, and so are men.

There is a flowing river in Paradise. Rev 22:2 “in the middle of its street. On this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Rev 2:7 To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of my God.”

It must be clear that the tree of life is symbolism; those in the spirit bodies need not eat fruit. In Paradise, according to Revelation, a fresh stream is flowing. Rev 22: 1 states that it is a “river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,” The water of the stream represents the word of God. Verse 22:14 adds: “How blessed are those who wash their robes [who do his commandments] so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city!”

Blessed are those who **wash their clothes** to have the permission to eat from the tree of life and enter the gates of the city!” – Washing clothes is a figurative expression of giving up sinful life. When a person has repented and forgiven his sins, according to the Bible, he “washed his clothes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” and in this way he became worthy to “eat of the tree of life,” that is, to receive eternal life.

**Divine nature.** 2 Pet 1:4 “Through these he has given us his precious and wonderful promises, so that through them **you may participate in the divine nature**, seeing that you have escaped the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires. ”

**The kingdom of God is on earth.** They all live in the kingdom of God on earth, not in heaven. The heavens have descended to earth, and God Himself lives with them. A God who is not distant and enigmatic responds to all who approach Him.

**God's co-workers.** Humans are God's co-workers. They, as spirit beings, as co-workers with God, possess great powers.

**Satan is no longer king of this world.** Why did God once give the world dominance to Satan? However, Christ fought against Satan and his troops when Satan was released after a thousand years in prison. According to the figurative expression of the Bible, Satan and his closest aides, the Antichrist and the False prophet, have been thrown into the lake of fire. The world is now ruled by God the Father and Christ.

In this way, the Bible describes the future world without Satan or sin. The language of the Bible is very illustrative in describing this Paradise. But who would love a city of pure gold and diamonds?

The advance plan of God is finally completed. A New time – 'the eighth day' – begins in the kingdom of God.

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**Who Will Rise Up in**

# Connection With the Coming of Christ?

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, to everlasting contempt. (Dan 12:2)

Dan 12:1 And at that time, Michael shall stand up, the great ruler who stands for the sons of your people. And there shall be a time of distress, such as has not been from the existence of a nation until that time. And at that time, your people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the Book.

Dan 12:2 Many (NIV: Multitudes) who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”

Traditionally, this translation of Daniel’s verse begins with the word “Many”.

The Hebrew word ‘רבים Rab’ has been translated in some translations, such as NIV and YLT, using the word ‘multitudes’. A more important question is: are both groups receiving a resurrection at the same time? When I think about this, I say that it is possible that it does not require the resurrection to take place simultaneously.

Here Daniel 12: 2 deals primarily with the *first resurrection*. This could be called the resurrection of the righteous. There will be the second and last resurrection after the Millennial Kingdom of Christ is over. All the rest will rise up then and will receive Christ’s judgment.

The remainder of the verse “Others to shame and everlasting contempt” may refer to the coming second resurrection [or resurrection of judgment], which takes place at the end of the

millennial kingdom. Rev 20:4-5 Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or hands. They came back to life and ruled with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years were over. This is the first resurrection.

– This Revelation verse describes the first resurrection, the same event Daniel describes in verse 12:2. At the end of the description, it is further clarified in Rev 20:5: the others, those who did not participate in the first resurrection, they “did not come to life until the thousand years were completed”.

Daniel’s description of resurrection divides time into two parts, with a timetable of a thousand years. It is confirmed by chapter 20 of Revelation. From the Bible, we know that the first resurrection participants are not so many. Not at all if this “little flock” is compared with the second resurrection, to which all who are in the graves are awakened (John 5:28). The beginning of the verse Daniel 12:2 may well be just ‘many’ and not ‘multitudes’ unless Daniel means to speak of all who are awakened to be condemned.

**The Hebrew word “forever”, i.e. ‘owlam ׀׀׀׀׀׀’, is also not definitely and always *eternal*. I have written a couple of examples in Chapter Last Judgment. It would seem clearer that all the dead would rise up and that the graves would be empty so that they would be filled again during the reign of the millennium. If many is the correct translation, there is a problem to be solved: who do not get out of the graves. Could it be so that in the first resurrection only the righteous will rise up? The rest are sinners who have their turn in the second resurrection. In the time of the Millennial kingdom, judgments will also be given; this is a clear statement in**

verse 2 Tim 4:1. Isaiah also refers to this in saying how the sinner is cursed at the age of hundred years. Isa 65:20 There shall not still be an infant of days, or an old man that has not filled his days. For the youth shall die the son of a hundred years, but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. Dan 12:3 And those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and those turning many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

–The group of resurrected ascenders is twofold: Those who are wise and have insight, who love God and Jesus, i.e. obey the will of God and Jesus in their lives, and secondly, those who work to spread God's Word i.e. the gospel, and to bring others to righteousness.

In verse 1, the events are connected with the coming of Christ, the great tribulation. Many dead will wake up. The time of great tribulation means that most of mankind will be destroyed. Does this mean that the dead have already been judged if they die during the tribulation time? Jesus condemns humanity both in his coming and during the thousand-year reign of God. 2 Tim 4:1 Then I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus **Christ, he is about to judge living and dead at his appearance and his kingdom:** – Jesus will judge the living and the dead, in connection with his coming and in the kingdom during the millennial administration and at the end of the resurrection of judgment.

## **The saved will change in a blink of an eye.**

... the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed  
(1 Cor 15:52)

1 Cor 15:50 And I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood is not able to inherit *the* kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I speak a mystery to you: we shall not all fall

asleep, but we shall all be changed.

52 in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet. Indeed, that trumpet will sound, and then the dead will be raised never to decay, and we will be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

54 But when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then will take place the word that has been written, "Death was swallowed up in victory.

–Death is swallowed up concerning the saints of the first resurrection. Death has been won; those resurrected can no longer die because they have received eternal life (immortality). The *second death* does not have any power over them.

**He will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorious body...** (Phl 3:21)

Phl 3:20-21 Our citizenship, however, is in heaven, and it is from there that we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorious body through the power that enables him to bring everything under his authority.

The book of Revelation describes Jesus' appearance; the resurrected will be like Jesus!

Rev 1:14 *His head and his hair were white like wool, in fact, as white as snow. His eyes were like flames of fire,* In 1 Cor 15:49 Paul says they have borne the image of the earthy, but that one day (meaning resurrection day) they will also bear the image of the heavenly. – Who else could this heavenly man be other than Jesus? Rev. 1:14 is therefore a description of the resurrected people as well.

## How do the resurrected change?

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Are the tombs left empty when Jesus has come and the resurrection has taken place? No, because, as Daniel said, *many* are rising. Who are those who do not rise, but remain in their graves? Unrighteous Christians, yes. But there is another group of people that we often forget: Rom 4:15 says ... “where there is no law, there is also no violation”. – What then happens to those dead who have not heard of God or the gospel of Christ, but whose conscience is bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them? (Rom 2:15) *They cannot be condemned because they have no law.* If they are to wait for the final judgment, they could not be condemned, and on the other hand, they could not be saved because they were not born again. May Christ solve this.

These people were the ones who did good in their life, though

they did not know the gospel. What about those who did not even know the gospel but were bad. Psa 49:21 "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." Such people are compared to animals: they are "Strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" as Eph. 2:12 indicates. The Bible says what will happen to animals when they die; their spirits simply go into the ground and that's all. Would it be so that such people would experience their destiny as animals. They would have no resurrection at all, unlike the good pagans. According to this interpretation, since not all rise from their graves when Christ comes, the graves are left to the bad dead in addition to those who die during the great tribulation and God's day.

Those who will be resurrected, receive a judgment, either of life (the saints) or damnation, or eternal desolation. The above I was thinking of a solution that only the righteous would participate in the first resurrection. Only in the second resurrection followed by the judgment of all, there would be harsh judgments. Those who have either abandoned their faith or have not even believed and received the gospel that they heard may have a judgment of destruction.

According to an interpretation, a believer who renounces his faith in Christ is guilty of the mortal sin, the mockery of the Holy Spirit. Such can no longer receive God's forgiveness. Such people may well be those mentioned by Daniel who rise to judgment, which is clear: shame and age-lasting abominations (abomination of desolation).

When Jesus appears, there will be people left on earth, subordinate to the kingdom. These could be saved at the last moment (those who called for Jesus' name) or those who are good pagans whose salvation is based on their conscience. Rom 2:14 For when nations not having Law do by nature the things of the Law, they not having Law are a law to themselves, 15 They show that what the law requires is written in their hearts, a fact to which their own consciences testify, and

their thoughts will either accuse or excuse them.

They are given an opportunity to obtain salvation on the basis of faith adopted in the kingdom. After a thousand years, the second resurrection takes place, and after that the so-called last judgment, when all those who lived and died in God's kingdom awake to judgment. Jhn 5:28 Don't be amazed at this, because the **hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice** 29 and will come out—those who have done what is good to the resurrection of life, and those who have practiced what is evil to the resurrection of condemnation.

In verse 24 Jesus says: Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who hears my word and believes** him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but **has passed out of death into life**. – This is Jesus' promise of a positive future judgment, provided that, man will "endure to the end". It also includes a lot more.

In the last chapter I will tell you more, but now briefly: the chosen ones will not be judged with the rest of the world. God afflicts them and teaches them already during their lives and they will be prepared to take responsibility for Christ's leadership of the kingdom of God when they are resurrected.

In the second letter to Timothy, Paul writes that when Christ returns, Christ will come to judge the living and the dead. About himself and their kind who love the coming of Jesus, Paul says: 2 Tim 4:8 **For the rest, the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me in that Day, and not only to me, but also to all the ones loving his appearance.**

– Christ condemns during his millennial kingdom. Judgments are nevertheless distributed only to those who are in the kingdom. Judgments will, however, be given only to the survivors who are in the kingdom. The new resurrection will have to wait a thousand years.

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# The Book of Life

He who overcomes will wear white clothes, and I will never erase his name from the Book of Life. I will acknowledge his name in the presence of my Father and his angels. (Rev 3:5)

We could think of the Book of Life that originally there were all the names. The question is, whose name is removed from this book. And perhaps also who gets their name restored to the Book of Life. A celestial book with the names of those who will reach salvation is spoken in the following verses of Revelation:

13:8 All those living on earth will worship it, everyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life belonging to the lamb that was slaughtered from the foundation of the world.

17:8 The beast that you saw once was, is no longer, and is going to come from the bottomless pit and go to its destruction. Those living on earth, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, will be surprised when they see the beast because it was, is no longer, and will come again.

20:12 And I saw the dead, the small and the great, standing before God. And books were opened. And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. **And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works.**

20:15 **Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.**

21: Nothing unclean, or anyone who does anything detestable, and no one who tells lies will ever enter it. **Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will enter it.**

– A person's name is wiped out of the book of life if he cannot endure – stay faithful- to the end. In the last days people, even believers, are being tested so that ... “God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false” (2 Tes 2:11). Also, false Christs and false prophets will arise and these will show great signs and wonders, in order to mislead even the elect, tells the bible (Mat 24:24)

Rev 7:14 ...These are those coming out of the great tribulation; and they washed their robes and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb.

12:11 They conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their life even in the face of death.

14:10 will drink the wine of God's wrath, which has been poured unmixed into the cup of his anger. He will be tortured with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the lamb.

19:7 Let us rejoice, be glad, and give him glory, because the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride [church, congregation] has made herself ready.

19:9 Then the angel said to me, Write this: How blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb! He also told me: These are the true words of God.

21:27 ... **only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will enter it.**

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# Other Issues Related To Obtaining the Seal of God

... having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph 1:13)

The Bible tells you how God's angel is sealing righteous in the last days. It is clear from the Ephesians that **the seal can be obtained much earlier in each person's life.** Eph 1:13 In him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—**having also believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise.**

The seal of the Holy Spirit is given to a person once he has **heard the truth**, the gospel, and **become a believer.** Hearing the truth also means calling of God and becoming a believer means to be chosen.

Eph 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption.

How does obtaining the seal be related to the so-called great multitude? Rev 7:9 After these things I looked, and there was a large crowd that no one was able to count! They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They were standing in front of the throne and the lamb and were wearing white robes, with palm branches in their hands. 7:14 I said to him, My lord, you know. And he said to me: these are those coming out of the great tribulation; and they washed their robes and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb.

In the great tribulation and in the Lord's day of the last days most of mankind will be destroyed. However, there will be a great many survivors. They may have come to repentance and

faith in the very end. According to Jesus' parable, He pays everyone the same pay regardless of whether the employee has been working all day or just a short while before the end of the day. Similarly, man can be saved at the very last moment by calling the Lord's name. In my own interpretation, this way, they will be saved, but they save only their lives, and only after they have proved to be true believers and righteous, they receive eternal life in the final judgment. Salvation can happen in the same way as the Ephesian letter tells of receiving the seal of God.

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# Little Flock and Great Multitude

Fear not, little flock, for it has been the good pleasure of your Father to give you the kingdom. (Luk 12:32)

## Little flock

Jesus said the above to the twelve apostles and added: Luk 22:29 and just as my Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you.

Rev 5:9-10 They sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals: For you [Christ] were killed, and bought us for God with your blood, out of every tribe, language, people, and nation, And made them kings and priests to our God, and they reign on earth."

These verses tell two most important things about the kingdom

of God: 1) Christ has bought "men from every tribe and tongue and people and the nation". They are not natural Israel and Jacob's tribes, but around the world! 2) They form the kingdom of God; "To be a kingdom and priests to our God" and they will reign upon the earth.

There is to be a small group that rules with Christ as kings and priests. In addition to the apostles, there are other righteous people. Many scholars believe that this small group is numbered 144,000. Interpretative disputes are whether the figure is accurate or symbolic. It turned out that the redeemed people of Christ include humans from all over the world. The group does not come from the so-called natural Israel, but from 'God's Israel'. Israel is in this figurative sense presented as God's people. Perhaps also the number of 144,000 is figurative.

Finally, there is only one fold and one shepherd. Jhn 10:16 have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must lead these also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd. – This is realized after the last conviction when God is all in all.

Paul, on his own, says this: and behold, a great crowd which no one was able to number them, out of every nation, even tribes and peoples and tongues standing in front of the throne, and before the Lamb, having been clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

**... the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me in that Day, and not only to me, but also to all the ones loving His appearance. (2 Tim. 4:8)**

Paul also clarifies that this crown of righteousness is given to all who are lovingly awaiting the coming of Christ. The crown refers to the royal power, that is, to the leadership of the kingdom of God. Some people say that this is not to be

promised to all of them, but the wreath of righteousness means 'only' eternal life.

## Great Multitude

**... a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, ... (Rev 7:9)**

I wrote above that people will be saved; a small crowd ('flock') will lead the kingdom of God with Christ, and a great crowd ('multitude') will be saved. After these things I saw, and behold, a great crowd which no one was able to number them, out of every nation, even tribes and peoples and tongues standing in front of the throne, and before the Lamb, having been clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. (Rev 7:9).

Rev 7:13 Then one of the elders said to me, "Who are these people wearing white robes, and where did they come from? 14 ... And he said to me, These are those coming out of the great tribulation; and they washed their robes and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb. 15 .. They are in front of the throne of God and worship him night and day in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them.

16 They will never be hungry or thirsty again. Neither the sun nor any burning heat will ever strike them, 17 Because the Lamb in the midst of the throne will shepherd them, and will lead them on the living fountains of waters; and God will wipe off every tear from their eyes.

So what do we know from the Bible about this great crowd? It is so great that no one could count it. Millions or hundreds of millions? Maybe as many as a billion people will get into this group. Most of humanity, however, is destroyed. We also know that these people who have been saved who have bleached their clothes and now go to long white clothes. "Bleaching" in the blood of the lamb, is figurative language telling that

they have repented of their sins and resorted to the saving power of Christ's blood i.e. they have found faith, perhaps at the very last moment. Jesus told (Mat Chapter 20) a parable of a man who hired workers to his field.

For those who were first hired, was promised a denarius per day. Those who came later were promised the same salary, even for those who came so late that they worked for just a little while. Everyone was given the same pay, no matter how much work had been done. Those who had been working all day dumbfounded that the employer paid the same salary to those who just started working a few moments ago. From the point of view of salvation, this is exactly the case; all are equal regardless of how long each has been in faith. The big crowd can also come to the last minute, that is to say, to have the same grace as those who have been long in the faith. Jesus promises to pay the wage for everyone upon earth. However, these wages are different; one can get control over five cities, one of the ten cities. Everlasting life is, however, a gift for all.

In Rev 7:17 is promised, that "the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes". *Springs of the water of life* mean of course eternal life (i.e immortality).

There is a small group that acts as 'managers' in the kingdom, kings and priests, and then there is a very large crowd that I interpret as subjects of the kingdom. This great crowd can be, except that they come from all peoples and languages, including a very different level of knowledge of the Bible. A small crowd has to teach them under Christ's command.

– In addition, there can be people who saved their lives who have not even heard of the God of the Bible or Christ. This is evident from Isa 66:19 I will set a sign among them and will send survivors from them to the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud,

Meshech, Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have neither heard my fame nor seen my glory. And they will declare my glory among the nations.”

Jhn 3:9 Who knows? He may turn, and God may have pity and turn away from the glow of His anger, that we do not perish. 10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their evil way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

It is clear that in the last days, during the great tribulation, much of humanity is destroyed. But not all people. If people repent and turn to God, calling for Jesus' (or God's) name. Act 4:12 There is no salvation by anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved. Perhaps God will change his mind as He did after first condemning the destruction of Nineveh's great city.

The message of God transmitted by the prophets of the Old Testament is much darker than in the New Testament. NT brings forth a great number of people who are saved, so great that nobody could count their number.

**Rev 7:9** After these things I looked, and there was a large crowd that no one was able to count! They were from *every nation, tribe, people, and language*. They were standing in front of the throne and the lamb and were wearing white robes, with palm branches in their hands.

**Joe 2:32** For it shall be, all who shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved. For salvation shall be in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, as Jehovah has said, and among the saved whom Jehovah shall call.

**Oba 1:17** But the ones who escaped shall be on Mount Zion, and it shall be holy. And the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions.

**Heb 12:22** But you have drawn near Mount Zion, even *the city* of the living God, to a heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

**Luk 10:20** But stop rejoicing in this, that the *evil* spirits submit to you. But rather rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.

## **Who Are The 144 000 Sealed by the Angel?**

Then I looked, and there was the lamb standing on Mount Zion! With him were 144,000 people who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. (Rev 14:1)

**Revelation chapter 7 speaks of the seal that marks the servants of God**

The Revelation speaks of a well-defined (144,000) group of righteous believers on whose forehead is written the names of Jesus and God. Here is, in my interpretation, the group sealed by the angels who are part of the first resurrection and who receive immortality as they ascend in spirit body up to the sky (clouds, not heaven). Luke 10:20 refers to the same rationale that their names are written (in the Book of Life) in the heavens.

– The 144,000 righteous people marked with a seal meet with Jesus on Mount Zion in front of Christ's throne. Verse 14: 3 proves that **they have come from the earth**. Rev 7:3 says Don't harm the land, the sea, or the trees until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads. – From this, we can conclude that the sealed ones are righteous and alive at that moment of sealing.

7:4 I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000. Those who were sealed were from every tribe of Israel.

I've been under the impression that 144,000 is a symbolic

number. It is supported by the fact that the ascending mass of the first resurrection and the righteous living on earth at the moment together form a significantly larger number than 144,000. How much do they total, the Bible does not tell. These sealed and righteous rising form a group that outright forms the leadership of the kingdom of God, the kings and priests. The sealed 144,000 sealed on earth, however, appear in verse 14:3 without the group of righteous resurrected from the dead. Why are not they involved? Is the sealed 144,000 still a precise figure, and if so, what is their relationship with the others of resurrection? The following verse 14:4 says, among other things, .. and they follow the lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed from among humanity as the first fruits for God and the lamb. 144,000 are in a special position; they have been bought for the first fruits to God and Christ and they follow Christ wherever He goes.

The seventh chapter of Revelation tells us about the seals printed on the foreheads of God's servants:

7:2 And I saw another angel coming up from the rising of the sun, having a seal of the living God. And he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to them to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 3 Do not harm the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads. – From this, we can conclude that the sealed ones are righteous and alive at that moment of sealing.

Rev 14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion! And with Him were a hundred and forty-four thousands, with the name of His Father having been written on their foreheads. 3 And they sing as a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders. And no one was able to learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousands, those having been redeemed from the earth.

The 144,000 righteous humans marked with a seal meet with Jesus on Mount Zion in front of Christ's throne. Verse 14:3

proves that they have come from the earth. Rev 7:3 says: Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. – From this, we can conclude that **the sealed ones are righteous and alive at that moment of sealing.**

Another argument of at least the same weight is shown in verse Rev. 5: 9: ... You were slain, and purchased for God with your blood men **from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

–If Jesus has with his death bought to God people of all possible languages, and nations, which consists of the Israel of God, surely this group also includes those saints who have received the seal of God and are worthy of the first resurrection, and thus will be selected to lead the kingdom of God. I think these 144,000 are the future leaders of the coming kingdom. How then is it possible that the Bible says they are from the twelve tribes of Israel, not from all the peoples and languages of the earth?

Have a look at the next verse as well: **“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.”**

The rulers and priests of this kingdom who shall reign over the entire earth are, after verse 9 and 10, the very ones who come from all the peoples of the world, not just from the twelve families of Israel.

Compare the above to the following verse!

**And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel (Rev 7:4)**

Verse 7:4 states that they are from all the tribes of the children of Israel, out of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel, or Jacob. That is how many scholars interpret this. There are two problems. Firstly, do the children of Israel

refer to the tribes of natural Israel or God of Israel? When you check the list of generations to come after the verse, note that it does not fully comply with the list of Jacob's boys. From this one could conclude that what is meant is God of Israel. When the Jews did not accept Jesus as their Messiah, the disciples received a mission statement to take the gospel to the whole world. Born again righteous of the Holy Spirit were around the world and natural Israel was left behind. Someone may interpret this verse so that these are Messianic Jews who have accepted Christ as their savior. But still, the puzzle of the tribe list remains open.

How do we settle this controversy?

a) There are two different matters; 144.000 who follow Jesus where ever He goes are not the group of people who will rule the kingdom with Jesus

b) The 144.000 from the twelve tribes of Israel does not mean the tribes from Jacob's sons but it means so-called God's Israel i.e. holy ones from all around the world