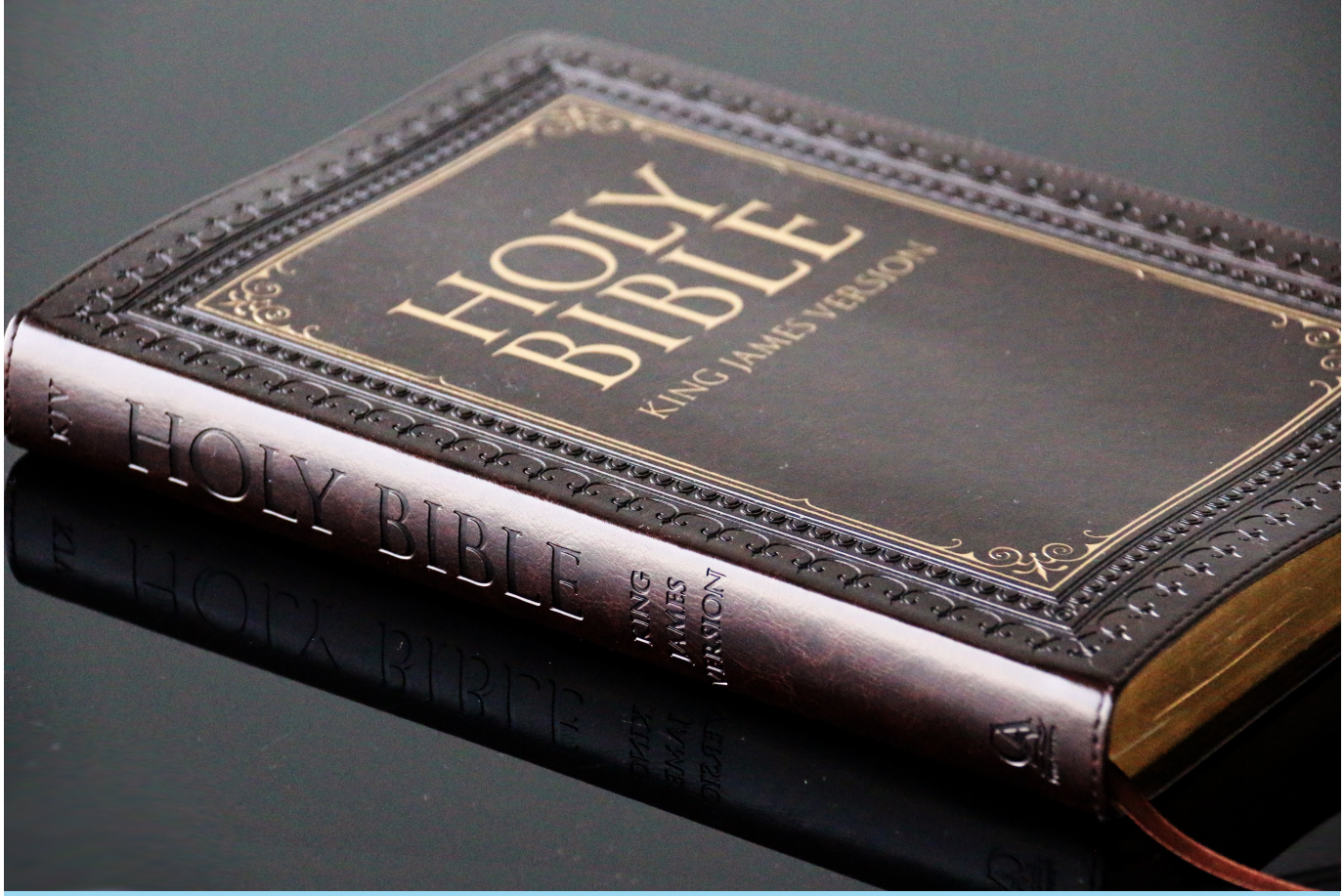


Pauline Universalism

What the Bible says about why, and how, to be a Pauline Universalist

Drew Costen

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By Drew Costen

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Introduction and IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Have you ever wanted freedom from not only the power of sin and the fear of hell, but also from slavery to the seemingly impossible religious rules many Christians insist that one must follow in order to actually be free from these concerns? If so, this book is for you. Throughout it, I'm going to explain some of the most important truths contained in Scripture related to soteriology (which is the theological label for the study of salvation) that you'll almost certainly never hear in a church building (largely because, somehow or other, very few Christian teachers have even heard most of these truths, even though they're right there in the Bible for everyone to see), truths which are the missing key to being set free from ever having to worry about hell again, as well as from the control of not only sin, but from the yoke of *all* religious bondage.

You see, as nearly everybody knows, one of the most popularly accepted doctrines within Christianity is the idea that anyone who doesn't get saved before they die or before Jesus returns will be punished for their sins by ending up being tormented without end in an inescapable place called the lake of fire – often also referred to as hell, depending on one's Bible version – or at least by ceasing to exist permanently at some point after ending up there, and most Christians believe one of these two variations of what I refer to as **The Popular Doctrine** (which is **the doctrine of never-ending punishment for the unsaved, whether one is conscious during this endless period of time or not**), with the theological label for the specific variation of The Popular Doctrine involving unending torment being "Infernalism" (although most Infernalists do seem to dislike this relatively new label for their soteriological viewpoint, but for now it's the only one-word label we have for this variation of

the doctrine of never-ending punishment, so they'll just have to deal with it until somebody can coin and popularize another one), and the label for the specific variation of The Popular Doctrine which involves the unsaved eventually ceasing to exist permanently being "Annihilationism," although I should say that it's sometimes also referred to as "Conditional Immortality" (even though, yes, it's true – depending on the variation of the Annihilationist or Conditionalist at least – that Annihilationism and Conditional Immortality technically aren't always the exact same thing, but being familiar with the nuances of these related views isn't necessary for understanding the rest of this book, and the end result is basically identical, so I have referred to any of the related versions of this type of viewpoint as Annihilationism throughout this book for the sake of simplicity). And just as most Christians currently do (at least at the time this book was first published), I also believed quite strongly that the Bible teaches Infernalism, or at least I did until I came across a group of Infernalists arguing with a seemingly strange group of Christians who believe that Scripture *doesn't* actually teach never-ending punishment of *any* sort for *anyone*, but rather that it says every single human who will ever have lived is going to eventually enjoy salvation thanks to Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third day, with the theological label for this view being "Universalism," also known as "Universal Reconciliation" (although there are many different types of Universalism, so, as the title of this book should make clear, the type we'll be looking at can be referred to as "Pauline Universalism" – which itself is a specific subset of what is often called "Christian Universalism" – although it does have various other labels that I'll share later in this book as well; and I should also point out that a number of Universalists dislike the label of "Universalism" just as much as the Infernalists who dislike their label do, thanks to the fact that some types of Universalists don't believe Christ's sacrifice was necessary for salvation, and since Pauline Universalists would prefer not to be connected or associated with that more pluralistic form of Universalism, not to mention with the various Universalist groups that don't even believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God either, many of them avoid the label of

"Universalist" altogether now – that said, regardless of how they think salvation happens, if someone *does* believe that everybody is going to be saved in the end, they technically *are*, by definition, a Universalist, whether they like it or not, so I personally just accept this fact and continue to use the label myself).

Now, I was already quite familiar with all the "proof texts" (meaning a passage from Scripture that one thinks supports a doctrine they believe to be true) and arguments used to defend The Popular Doctrine, having grown up learning and teaching them myself, so I found it unlikely that those who believed in the salvation of all humanity could possibly win the arguments, but God gave me the curiosity to want to follow the discussions in order to confirm whether what I believed was correct or not (as is something every Christian should be wanting to do when it comes to their most important doctrines, instead of simply assuming that they and/or their religious leaders can't possible be wrong about any scriptural interpretations – especially if they don't want to look hypocritical and full of pride when trying convince *other* people that *they're* wrong about something important *they* believe the Bible teaches), and after watching these Universalists provide not only extremely strong scriptural support for their own soteriological position, but also solid scriptural arguments demonstrating why the supposed "proof texts" used to defend The Popular Doctrine are actually talking about something entirely different from what nearly all of us originally assumed they mean as well, and that they *don't* actually contradict Universalism *at all*, I was forced to repent and accept that the Bible does indeed teach that everyone will be saved in the end, because those who believed The Popular Doctrine just didn't seem to be able to counter the scriptural interpretations and arguments provided by the Universalists they were arguing with (and to this day – meaning the last time this book was updated – despite looking hard for anyone who can, I've yet to find a *single* Infernalist or Annihilationist *anywhere* who has been able to refute *these* particular interpretations and arguments, or who even seems to be aware of the *existence* of the specific interpretations and arguments that I included in this book for that matter, and who doesn't instead

assume that our arguments are something else altogether, meaning straw man arguments[1] that we don't actually believe at all).

To put it really simply, I discovered that the only way to conclude the Bible teaches never-ending punishment is to not only ignore the actual context of the passages which most people assume teach The Popular Doctrine, but also to ignore all of the passages which would then make the Bible contradict itself if these supposed "proof texts" actually *did* teach never-ending punishment the way that most people mistakenly believe they do, and I'm going to share the reasons I concluded all these things here in this book.

Before we get into it, though, I should quickly say that, for various reasons (one of which is because it means that I don't have to worry about copyright), all scriptural references in this book are from the KJB (the *King James Bible*[2]), also known as the AV (the *Authorized Version*) and as the KJV (the *King James Version*). That said, if you don't like the way the KJB is translated, please feel free to look up the supporting references throughout the footnotes and the rest of the book in whichever Bible translation you do prefer, as I wrote this book to be accessible to everyone, be they King James Bible Believers (which is a label that people who are commonly called KJV-Onlyists,[3] and even some who could be called KJV-Mostlyists, often prefer to use) or otherwise, and the scriptural interpretations and arguments I provided in this book can be shown to be true using nearly any English Bible version that I'm aware of.

And along those lines, I should also point out that some of the creators of the supporting material I linked to in the footnotes *do* use other Bible versions themselves, and many of them are not fans of the KJB at all, but I still want you

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[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straw_man

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Version

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Only_movement

to read their articles and books, or to watch their videos, even if you are a King James Bible Believer, in order to learn more details that I didn't have the time or space to get into here myself. Speaking of those footnotes, please keep in mind that just because I link to specific articles, books, or videos doesn't mean that I agree with everything their creators, writers, and/or publishers believe and/or teach. In some cases, I link to them for the sole reason that they happen to have better supporting material on a specific point than anybody else I've found so far when it comes to proving the points made in this book (and I trust you can "eat the meat and spit out the bones," so to speak, when reading or viewing them).

As far as those points in this book go, despite *many* promises to do so over the years by some of the thousands of Christians I've provided previous editions of this book to – with some of these Christians who promised to do so being the type to do immense amounts of research and then write massive volumes and/or create long videos about why other theological views they disagree with are incorrect – nobody has sent me a refutation of the specific scriptural interpretations and arguments made in it yet (instead, literally *every single Christian* who got back to me and was able to confirm that *they* – rather than so-called "AI," or "Artificial Intelligence," really meaning LLMs[4] – *actually read the whole thing carefully from beginning to end* told me they're now Universalists themselves, and even a number of non-Christians, including some who were atheists when they began reading it, have told me they got saved after learning the contents of this book, and that they now believe in the salvation of all humanity, as well). That said, I welcome any and all attempts to refute the conclusions recorded in this book, because if it somehow was the case that we're wrong about this, I would definitely want to know (and I'd think you'd also want to show us where we went wrong).

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[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Large_language_model

Of course, based on my past experiences, most believers of The Popular Doctrine who are reading this are thinking of simply quoting one or more of their favourite "proof texts" that they assume prove never-ending punishment to whoever directed them to this book rather than taking the time to read the whole thing so they can learn why someone might believe that the Bible teaches something different from what they believe it teaches, and why they might be misinterpreting the passages that they assume so clearly teach The Popular Doctrine. The problem is, on top of the fact that these believers in The Popular Doctrine are ignoring Proverbs 18:13[5] by simply "proof texting" without first learning what our interpretations of Scripture even are, we Pauline Universalists are also Biblical Inerrantists who hold to *Sola Scriptura*,[6] which means that we already *believe* and *agree* with those passages of Scripture they're quoting (just as we do *all* passages of Scripture), but simply interpret these passages differently than they do, in ways that seem to be far more consistent with the context of Scripture as a whole. This means that, if they ever want us to change our minds and believe as they do, they're going to have to show us how *we're* the ones misinterpreting these passages rather than them. Because if they can't (or even just won't) do so, we have no reason at all to believe we're incorrect in our interpretations of the passages used to defend *any* of the soteriological positions (meaning our interpretations of the passages we use to support Pauline Universalism *as well as* our interpretations of those passages which are used to defend any variation of The Popular Doctrine), especially considering the fact that I haven't been able to locate a *single* refutation of the particular scriptural interpretations and arguments made in this book by *anyone*, and I've looked hard for one, as I wanted to make sure we weren't mistaken (although, if you know of one, please point me to a refutation that *does* prove *the specific scriptural interpretations and arguments made in this particular book* wrong).

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[5] He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him. — Proverbs 18:13

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sola_scriptura

And honestly, the fact that nobody has even *attempted* to refute the scriptural interpretations and arguments contained in this book, despite the promises of *many* Christians that they will over the years, is one of the reasons I have reassurance that we must be correct about them (the fact that every single Christian I was able to confirm *did* read the whole thing carefully – meaning they actually paid attention to what I wrote in the book rather than simply skimming through it quickly – told me they became Universalists being another of those reasons).

Now, I realize that this book is very long, but it was necessary to make it as long as it is in order to help explain what we believe every single passage in Scripture relevant to this subject actually means, especially the supposed "proof texts" used to defend The Popular Doctrine (because if I didn't, some Christians would inevitably turn around and say, "But what about this passage?", in order to ignore everything else in the book), and I know there will be times when it feels like I'm going off on irrelevant tangents, but each one of those seeming detours are actually very important because they're there to help provide crucial information one needs to be aware of in order to truly understand the necessary details connected with a thorough and consistent biblical soteriology. So please don't get impatient and simply skim through it quickly, or just search for passages you're curious to learn our interpretation of. If you read the whole book carefully, and if God permits it, you'll come to understand what it is that we believe about soteriology and the related topics I cover in this book, as well as why we believe what we do. But if you get impatient and search for passages you want to know our interpretation of, you'll almost certainly miss some of the crucial information required to properly understand what the interpretations we hold to are and why, and what you find probably won't make sense if you do so anyway.

With all that in mind, please don't stop partway into the book to try to argue with me, or to complain about a point you disagree with (again, remember

Proverbs 18:13), as many have tried to do when reading previous editions (and I likely *will* test you to confirm that you have indeed read the whole thing before responding to what you have to say if you do try to tell me we're wrong without reading it through to the end, including, but not necessarily limited to, requiring you to give your answers to the various questions I ask the reader throughout the book, since they *are* questions that you'd need to give strong answers to in order to be able to say you refuted the scriptural interpretations and arguments I made in the book anyway; and if you do reach the end of the book and still disagree with the conclusions in it, you'll still need to have good answers to those questions before it can be said that you *have* truly considered said interpretations and arguments, so please be sure to record all your answers to each question as you read them if you do still think we're wrong as you get to each one of them). Outside of evangelism, at this point I generally won't discuss much about soteriology and the related topics discussed in this book at all with someone who isn't already familiar with our interpretations of Scripture related to them, since I just don't have the time or energy to waste arguing with people who aren't serious about understanding why it is that the people they disagree with believe what they do, and experience has taught me that anyone who won't carefully read this whole book just isn't serious about learning what our interpretations of Scripture really are, but rather they simply want to say that we're wrong (and I see no reason to waste any time on them). One of the reasons I originally wrote this book was so I wouldn't have to keep repeating myself over and over again every time that soteriology and related topics (such as hamartiology – which is the theological label for the study of sin – or eschatology – which is the theological label for the study of the end times and other future events – as just two examples of the various related topics I'll be covering in this book) came up, and since any thorough discussion of *any* of these topics would have to cover pretty much *all* of the points in this book anyway, it saves me time by only having to explain our interpretations of Scripture related to them once, and it also saves you time because you can find our primary arguments and relevant interpretations in one place and don't

have to go back-and-forth with me (or whoever sent it to you) to learn what I'd just be repeating from this very book anyway (and in order to convince any of us that our interpretations of the passages related to these topics are incorrect, you'd first have to know what all of our interpretations of the relevant passages actually are, which would require you to learn everything covered throughout the entire book). Besides, it will take you far less time to read this whole thing than it took me to write it (and if you are planning to try to refute the arguments in this book, please read the whole thing through at least once before beginning, including all the scriptural references in the footnotes throughout it, because otherwise you'll invariably end up wasting your time making arguments that have already been demonstrated to be incorrect farther on in the book, sometimes in the very next paragraph after the one you stop reading at, as has happened more than once by people who have tried to argue against some of the points made in earlier editions of it prematurely).

Also, before we begin, I should let you know that the layout of some pages will look a little unusual, with it seeming like there's a lot of unnecessary blank space on certain pages. The main reason for this is so the scriptural references in each footnote could all fit on one page rather than spilling over onto the next page.

And with all that being said, let's get into it.

Chapter 1: Salvations

When somebody says the Bible teaches that everyone will eventually experience salvation, I can honestly say that I agree with them. And yet, when *somebody else* says the Bible teaches that *not* everyone will experience salvation, I can *also* honestly say that I agree with *them* as well that it's true the Bible teaches that *not* everyone will be saved. This normally sounds like a contradiction to most people at first, but it actually makes perfect sense (and no, I'm not saying that the Bible contradicts itself, because I don't believe that it does). In order to explain how these seemingly contradictory statements can actually both be true at the same time, let me first ask you a question: If I pointed out that, among a group of four people sitting around a table with a pie on it, each of the people had a quarter, but that at the same time only one of them had a quarter, and that both statements were equally true, how could this be the case? Well, it's actually quite simple. All four people had a piece of the pie, each an equally-sized slice of the pie that made up the whole pie when put together – one quarter of the pie each, in other words – but only one of these people had a 25-cent coin in their pocket. You see, the same word can refer to multiple different things, and this applies just as much to the word "salvation" (not to mention the words "save" and "saved") as it does to the word "quarter." Simply put, there are multiple different types of salvation referred to in the Bible (as I'm going to prove quite definitively in this book), and while everybody is going to experience at least one of these salvations by the end of the ages (as I'm also going to prove quite definitively in this book), not everyone is going to experience *every* sort of salvation, and this difference between the various types of salvation is one of the major keys that most people

have been missing when considering the topic of what Scripture really says about salvation. But if this is the case, how did most people miss this fact? Well, it turns out it was quite easy to do so.

You see, when considering the meaning of passages in the Bible, it's very easy to unintentionally read one's preconceived theological beliefs *into* a passage (this is what's known in theological circles as eisegesis) rather than trying to carefully determine the *actual* meaning of the text in question without coming at it with any preconceived ideas as to its meaning (interpreting Scripture this way is referred to as exegesis). This generally occurs because one has heard people they trust – such as a parent, pastor, or priest, for example – tell them that certain doctrines are true, and if they assume their religious teachers can't be mistaken, they'll rarely bother to look into the context of the passages they're told prove these doctrines for themselves. This means that when they see certain words in these passages which *seem* to support their doctrines, at least at first glance, they'll just assume the inclusion of these words in the text proves that the doctrines themselves must indeed be correct, and they won't bother to actually do any study to verify whether this truly is the case or not, or even to verify that the words in question actually mean what we've been taught to assume they mean. Of course, as the old saying goes, a text read out of context is just a pretext for a "proof text," so this often results in people never learning the truth about what these passages *really* mean.

Equally unfortunately, most people rarely bother to compare these passages to the rest of the Bible either, meaning they don't actually consider the context of Scripture as a whole, in order to make sure the doctrines they've been taught don't contradict *other* parts of Scripture. But even among those who do know to consider the context of Scripture as a whole, they tend to be unfamiliar with the concept of perspectives in the Bible, especially the difference between the absolute and relative perspectives (there are more than just these two perspectives in Scripture, but these are perhaps the two most important

perspectives one needs to consider in their exegesis, and yet also the least well known by most Christians), which means they aren't aware that two statements in Scripture which at first appear to disagree with (or even contradict) each other can actually both be true at the same time. As a very simple example of this important hermeneutical principle,[7] Ecclesiastes 11:3 tells us that the rain comes from clouds,[8] while 1 Kings 17:14 says that God actually sends the rain,[9] and we can understand that both of these statements are equally true when we recognize that God is indeed the origin of rain from an absolute perspective (since all is of God[10]), even while the clouds are the origin of rain from a relative perspective. As another example, 1 Chronicles 21:1 tells us that Satan provoked David into taking a census of Israel,[11] while 2 Samuel 24:1 tells us that it was actually God Who had David do this,[12] and both of these statements are also true because it just means that God caused Satan to provoke David into this action, even if Satan didn't necessarily know that God was the one making him do so (which means that, while Satan was responsible for provoking David into this action from a relative perspective, God was ultimately responsible for all of it from an absolute perspective).

And even when the perspective principle regarding the absolute vs the relative doesn't come into play, words just don't always mean, or at least refer to, the

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[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_hermeneutics

[8] If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. — Ecclesiastes 11:3

[9] For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. — 1 Kings 17:14

[10] For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. — Romans 11:36

[11] And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. — 1 Chronicles 21:1

[12] And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. — 2 Samuel 24:1

exact same thing anyway, as we just learned from that example about quarters. For example, certain words (such as the word "fire," as just one example of many) *are* used literally in some passages[13] while also being used figuratively in other passages[14] (with this difference technically being another form of perspective found in Scripture). And it isn't just individual words that are used figuratively in the Bible. Scripture is full of figurative phrases too, including allegories,[15] metaphors,[16] idioms,[17] and various other forms of figurative speech that aren't always obvious to everyone who is just reading an English translation and wasn't alive at the time the original manuscripts were written in their original languages (like metonymy,[18] as just one of the many different examples of figurative language I'll be pointing out in this book, which is a figure of speech where one word or phrase is substituted for another that it happens to be closely associated with, such as how the word "reins" is used as metonymy for "innermost thoughts, feelings, or purposes" in Revelation 2:23,[19] because Jews thought that our reins, which is a synonym for "kidneys" that was sometimes used in older Bible versions, were the seat of feelings back in Bible times – not to mention how the word "hearts" is also used as metonymy for "minds" in the same verse, because the heart was thought to be the centre of

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[13] And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord. — Exodus 29:18

[14] If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee. — Proverbs 25:21-22

[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory

[16] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphor

[17] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiom

[18] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metonymy

[19] And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. — Revelation 2:23

one's spiritual and mental life by them back then as well); and even the English Bible versions themselves sometimes use *English* figures of speech from the time period the version was translated in order to translate a passage, figures of speech which weren't literally present in the scriptural text in its original languages (such as *"God forbid,"*[20] which is an example of the translators of the KJB using an expression from *their* time to render the text in English rather than using a more literal translation, which I say because the Greek phrase μὴ γένοιτο/"may ghe'-noi-to" that it's translated from *literally* means something along the lines of "may it not be happening," and doesn't actually have the word θεός/"theh'-os," meaning "God," in it at all in the original Greek – although the figure of speech *"God forbid"* means the exact same thing, so this isn't a mistranslation so much as it is a demonstration of how the KJB is often a more figurative translation than it is a literal one), and in many cases the readers aren't aware that their translations are employing these figures of speech rather than being literal (there's also a similar sort of figurative translation method used in the *King James Bible* known as *Interpretatio Romana*, which is where a pagan god's name is replaced with a member of the Roman pantheon, such as how the KJB translated Δία/"di'-a" and Ἑρμῆν/"her-men'" in Acts 14:12[21] with "Jupiter" and "Mercurius" respectively rather than with their more literal translations of "Zeus" and "Hermes," possibly because the translators might have believed the writer of Acts instead used *Interpretatio Graeca*,[22] meaning used the *Greek* names for these pagan gods instead of the Roman names that may have *actually* been spoken). This means that if one isn't familiar with the existence of a figurative word, expression, or other figure of speech in a specific passage (be it in the original languages *or* in their English translation), they can

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[20] God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. — Romans 3:4

[21] And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. — Acts 14:12

[22] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpretatio_graeca

end up completely misunderstanding what that passage actually means (not to mention what the original words it was translated from *actually* were), as happens *all the time*. In addition to using words that weren't there in the original text, by the way, I should also say that another way the *King James Bible* renders the text that it's translated from more figuratively is with the *omission* of certain words, such as in Psalm 12:8[23] where the Hebrew word for "children of" (לִבְנֵי/"liv-nay'") is left out of the verse before the word "men" in the KJB, and this technically isn't a mistranslation either because "children of" isn't required to get the meaning of the Hebrew phrase (which *itself* is a figure of speech) – *or* of the passage – across, although it does confirm once again that the *King James Bible* definitely *isn't* the literal, word-for-word translation of Scripture that many people mistakenly believe it to be (of course, the translators also *added* a lot of words to the KJB that weren't present in the original Hebrew or Greek as well, although this was done for clarification of the meaning of a passage, and these words are generally italicized in most print copies of the KJB to make it obvious when it happens, but this *also* confirms what I've been saying about the KJB not being a literal, *word-for-word* translation).

One also needs to be aware of the fact that many words in the *King James Bible* and other older English translations of Scripture have definitions which most people are no longer familiar with today, while mistakenly thinking they *are* familiar with the intended meaning of said words by these Bible's translators because they simply don't know about these words' *other* definitions (thus leading them to completely misinterpret *many* passages in the Bible, and this happens *all the time* as well, even by people who assume they're studying the Bible carefully, as you're going to discover throughout this book). A very simple example of this sort of word in the KJB (although I guess we technically already saw an example when looking at the other meaning of the English word "reins," since that word is typically understood by most people who hear or read the

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[23] The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted. — Psalm 12:8

word these days as simply meaning straps used to control horses, so I suppose I should really be saying, "as *another* simple example," instead) is the word "convenient," which generally refers to "something which saves one trouble" when it's used today, but when you read it in Ephesians 5:3-4 in the KJB[24] it actually means "fitting," because that's what the word "convenient" meant back in 1611 (and yes, this technically still *is* one of the definitions of the word today too, but the average person simply isn't aware of that fact, although it's also true that this particular word isn't likely to trip someone up too badly today, at least as far as important doctrine goes, since it's pretty easy to see while reading the passage that the word *can't* have meant the same thing back then that it typically does today; that said, there's *another* word in that passage which has tripped up nearly *every* modern, English-speaking Christian currently alive, leading them to one of the biggest doctrinal errors of the Christian religion, although I'm going to discuss that word in a later chapter, so I won't say any more about it here so as to not get ahead of myself). Yet another example that really demonstrates this point is the word "let," which generally means "allow" or "allowed" when used today (and it often did in the KJB as well[25]). However, when you read Romans 1:13 in the KJB,[26] "let" actually means the *exact opposite* of that. Rather than "allowed," Paul actually meant "prevented" when he wrote that verse. This isn't a mistranslation, however, because that indeed *was* a meaning of "let" back in 1611, even if almost nobody uses (or really even knows about) that definition of "let" today (and if you aren't aware that this contronym exists, the verse can be quite confusing, as many other verses which include

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[24] But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. — Ephesians 5:3-4

[25] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. — Matthew 5:37

[26] Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. — Romans 1:13

English words with definitions that people tend to no longer be aware of can be as well; a contronym, by the way, is a word with a homonym that also happens to be an antonym, for those who might not already know that). In addition to this, "let" is also an example of how the translators of the KJB and other older Bible versions often used English homonyms to translate entirely *different* words from their original languages, words which could have the complete *opposite* meaning from one another in their original languages at times too – with the first example of "let" we looked at being translated from the Greek ἔστω/"es'-to," and the second example being translated from κωλύω/"ko-loo'-o" – and the reason for this wasn't always because words can have different meanings or homonyms that people tend to no longer be aware of today, since it also seemed to happen simply for the sake of being somewhat poetic, for lack of a better way of putting it (the KJB *was* originally written to be a lectern Bible, after all, "Appointed to be read in Churches," as it said in its front matter, and its translators sometimes – although definitely not always – seemed to be more concerned with how it would sound spoken aloud than they were with using the most literal, the most precise, or even the most clear translation of the original Hebrew and Koine Greek words, since most people were going to hear it read at church at the time it was translated rather than read it themselves; and if you disagree, please read 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 from the KJB to any random person who hasn't studied the Bible and ask them to explain what it means without using any study aids[27]).

As another important example of this happening in the KJB, we have the word "heresy," and this really is an important one to be aware of because of the book you're reading right now (since many of the truths you're going to learn in this book are considered to be "heretical" by most Christians). Even before getting into this one, however, it's important to know that there are two different types

[27] O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. — 2 Corinthians 6:11–13

of “heresies” when the word is used correctly, and that neither of them literally mean “incorrect doctrine” the way most people assume they do (just as the word “orthodox” doesn’t mean “correct doctrine” either, contrary to popular assumption). The first type of “heresy” is the one that’s mentioned in the KJB, such as in 1 Corinthians 11:19,[28] and it’s true that *these* types of “heresies” aren’t good things (at least when they take place within the body of Christ), but the meaning of αἵρεσις/“hah'-ee-res-is” – which is the Greek word that’s transliterated as “heresy” and “heresies” – when it’s used in the KJB is simply “sect,” as the word is also translated in other verses,[29] meaning “division,” “dissension,” or “difference,” and does not literally mean “incorrect doctrine” at all (to be clear, the Greek word literally means something along the lines of “choice,” but choosing something isn’t a bad thing in and of itself, which is why we know from context that it’s used to refer to sects in the KJB). In fact, “sect” was one of the meanings of the English word “heresy” back in 1611 when the KJB was translated as well, and based on the more colloquial usage of the Greek word it was translated from, it becomes obvious that this is what the word “heresy” means when used in the KJB. That’s not to say that the specific sects referred to as “heresies” in the KJB aren’t meant to be avoided, of course, any more than it means that said sects aren’t based on incorrect doctrine, because they are on both counts. My point is simply that the word “heresy” just doesn’t mean what most people assume it does when it’s used in the Bible. This is also an example, by the way, of how the translators of the KJB sometimes used *different* English words in different verses to translate the *exact same* word with the *exact same* meaning in its original language, and if one isn’t aware of what the Hebrew or Koine Greek word that an English word in the KJB has been translated from is or means, they can get just as confused by the translators’ usage of 1611 synonyms as they can when the translators used *the same* English

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[28] For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. — 1 Corinthians 11:19

[29] For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: — Acts 24:5

word (or used an English homonym with the same spelling) to translate *different* words with completely *different* meanings in their original languages. And so, while I know that some King James Bible Believers reading this will recoil in horror at this suggestion, and it is technically true that one often *can* determine when one of these two types of situations is happening simply by the context of a passage – as well as by when a literal (or figurative) interpretation of a specific word would contradict the literal (or figurative) usage of the same word in another place in the KJB – I would still posit that it's wise to look up every single Hebrew or Koine Greek word when doing a careful study into a passage or topic, since, at the very least, you might miss out on some important nuance that isn't obvious in an English Bible translation if you don't, but also because you might even find yourself completely misinterpreting a passage if you avoid doing so, assuming it means the exact opposite of what it *actually* means (and again, this happens *all the time* in real life, as the rest of this book will reveal). Don't mistake this for "correcting the Bible," as some King James Bible Believers think looking at Scripture in its original languages is, though, because it's really not. Rather than correcting the Bible, it's actually just studying the *King James Bible* (presuming that's the translation you're using) more carefully in order to understand what the passages within it truly mean, since it simply isn't always obvious (in fact, as you're going to learn in this book, often even when one *thinks* the meaning of a passage is clear, it turns out that it actually *isn't* clear *at all*). Yes, I know that many Christians assume God made the Bible so easy to understand that a child could read just the KJB and figure out everything He inspired to be written in Scripture in the original Hebrew and Greek. And while one *can* learn everything necessary for *how one gets saved* (and then some) by just reading their *King James Bible* and nothing else, the idea that that one can figure out *everything* that God made sure was laid out in Scripture (including even all of the details connected to soteriology contained within Scripture) by reading just the KJB alone, with no study aids of any sort (including Hebrew and Koine Greek dictionaries), is nothing more than an assumption they're making – since the Bible just doesn't say that anywhere on its pages – and it's an

assumption that is indeed contradicted by the Bible itself too, such as in Proverbs 25:2 which says, *"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."* This tells us that God doesn't necessarily make it easy to learn *every* scriptural truth without careful study (and, in fact, that He sometimes hides the true meaning of various passages of Scripture "below the surface," so to speak), so it's important to stop assuming that you know everything there is to know about the Bible just because you've read it in English, be it the KJB or any other version, because the fact of the matter is that God made sure it was impossible to *truly* understand *everything* in an English Bible version if you just read it on its own with no study aids – and I *will* prove this assertion definitively throughout this book – which I believe He did so that only those people who are actually "approved workmen"[30] learn what it all *really* means, perhaps in order to demonstrate to most Christians just how little they actually cared about truth when they're judged in the end.

And just like it doesn't literally mean "incorrect doctrine" when it's used *in* the Bible, the word "heresy" doesn't literally mean that *outside* of the Bible either. Instead, when used extrabiblically, it simply means "that which is commonly accepted to be incorrect." And just as this type of "heresy" doesn't literally mean "incorrect doctrine" any more than the biblical type does, the word "orthodox" doesn't mean "correct doctrine" either, but really just means "that which is commonly accepted to be true," and there's always been plenty of commonly accepted error out there, just as there's always been lots of commonly rejected truth (with much of that truth being labelled as "heresy" by various people who call themselves Christians).

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[30] Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. — 2 Timothy 2:15

For example, Galileo was technically a heretic, according to the Roman Catholic Church,[31] because he taught that the earth isn't the centre of the universe,[32] but he was still quite correct that it isn't, as anyone who knows anything at all about basic science is well aware (and as is ridiculously easy to prove, although that's not the point of this book so that's all I'll say about this here). Meanwhile, Rome considered their view that our planet is the centre of the universe to be the orthodox one, but they were entirely incorrect, and they even eventually admitted that Galileo's heresy was true after all, many centuries later, thus proving that "orthodox" doctrines can indeed be wrong, and that the things they call "heresy" can be right; and it's important to keep in mind that, if they can be wrong about *even one thing* when it comes to what they refer to as orthodoxy and heresy, the Roman Catholic Church could then be wrong about *anything* they teach is either orthodox truth or heresy (and this goes for every other denomination within Christendom that has ever changed their official position about what they considered to be "orthodox" and "heretical" doctrine as well).

So remember that just because something is called "heretical" doesn't mean it's necessarily unscriptural or incorrect, and that something being called "orthodox" doesn't necessarily make it scriptural or true. Of course, even though they refer to something else altogether from what most Christians today mean when they use the word, the things referred to as "heresies" in the English Bible translations which do use the word (sects, in other words) *are* things to be avoided (although that doesn't mean sects are inherently a bad thing in and of themselves; it's only sectarianism *within* the church that we need to avoid as members of the body of Christ, while sects/"heresies" *outside* the church might be good or bad, depending on the reason for the division). But

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[31] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church

[32] *Galileo goes on trial for heresy* by the History.com Editors: https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/galileo-is-accused-of-heresy

outside of *those* specific things, *many* of the things that most Christians mistakenly refer to as "heresy" or as "heretical" (or even as "heterodox," which more or less means the same thing, just to a somewhat differing degree) are actually quite true, as you'll learn throughout this book. And remember also that Jesus and all of His followers were considered to be heretics by the religious orthodoxy of their day,[33] so consider yourself in good company when someone religious calls you a "heretic" or refers to the truths that you believe as "heresy" (just don't be schismatic from other members of the body of Christ regarding said truths).

Of course, there are *many* more words like this in the KJB that I could discuss here (and I will cover some very important ones in various parts of this book), but the main thing to keep in mind is that anyone using *only* the KJB – or, honestly, *any* Bible translation – on its own with no study aids *definitely* holds multiple false doctrines because of this fact. This isn't to say that the KJB is a bad translation, though. The words its translators used were technically fine for the time it was translated. One just needs to always remember that it's not always a particularly literal translation, but is actually a very figurative – and even poetic – translation in various places (many of which will surprise many of you as you read some of the examples I'll share throughout this book), and also of the fact that the definitions of words change over time, which all means that if one isn't aware of a word's definition in 1611 when it was first translated, and doesn't consider the possibility of figurative English translations within its pages either, they're going to unintentionally end up going astray. Because, as good of a translation as the KJB is, one can't just take what they read in this version (or in *any* Bible version) at face value, since a plain reading of it will very often lead you to the exact opposite conclusion from what Scripture *actually* meant in its original languages, as should be obvious from what we already covered, and as will become even more clear when we consider some of the various other

[33] But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: — Acts 24:14

passages discussed throughout this book, which is, again, why one often **does** need to look at the original Hebrew and Greek in order to *truly* understand the *actual* meaning of a passage (regardless of translation).

To sum it all up, always remember that just because you see a word in one passage in your English Bible, you shouldn't automatically assume it *has* to be referring to the exact same thing as it does in another passage, or even that you definitely know what the word (or even the phrase that the word is a part of) means to begin with, because it could be that it actually means something entirely different in that passage from what you're assuming or have been taught it means (and, in fact, it very often does). Bottom line, when you're studying an English Bible translation (whether it be the KJB or otherwise), be sure to use *all* the study tools available to you – such as a concordance, an English dictionary (one that covers definitions going back to the 17th century or earlier if you're using the KJB), various Bible dictionaries (including Hebrew and Koine Greek Bible dictionaries), internet search engines, and any other study aids you can get your hands on – in order to determine whether or not the interpretations you've always assumed were correct really are. And while digging into what Scripture actually means, keep in mind that *"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him,"*[34] and so, just because the assumptions that most Christians (possibly including yourself, and even various Christian leaders and teachers) make about what the Bible means might sound correct at first, it's important to always investigate carefully whether what they're saying actually *is* right or if your "neighbour" (referring to me and any other Pauline Universalists you may meet, in the context of my sentence here) is correct instead, which means that it's probably time for you to start studying to *"shew thyself approved"* (although, yes, "be diligent," or "endeavour," was indeed another definition of the English word "study" in 1611, and since that's exactly what the Greek word σπουδάζω/"spoo-dad'-zo" that it's

[34] He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. — Proverbs 18:17

translated from in 2 Timothy 2:15 means, it should be clear that this is another example of those words people often misinterpret in the *King James Bible*; that said, scriptural studying, as we use the word today, is still a good way to show our diligence to God). Be warned, however, that if you do come to the conclusions that we Pauline Universalists have about the meaning of Scripture, you'll likely be called a heretic by the "orthodox" members of Christianity, and even shunned (if not worse[35]) by many of them. But to this threat I simply say that "heretic" is the greatest earthly label one can be given by an "orthodox" Christian today (at least as of the day this book was written).

And with all that in mind, since soteriology is among the most important subjects in Scripture, not to mention the main topic of this book, we need to be very careful to make sure that we're interpreting all of the passages which talk about being saved correctly. Because while most Christians assume that there's only one type of salvation referred to in the Bible, this in demonstrably untrue. In fact, unless you think that being saved in whatever way it is you believe that Jesus saves us today – which, as we know, most Christians assume is being saved from some form of never-ending torment in fire – is the exact same sort of salvation that Peter[36] and the rest of Jesus' disciples experienced[37] when they were saved from drowning, that it's the same sort of salvation the Israelites experienced when they were saved from Egyptian slavery,[38] or that women are

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[35] Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. — 2 Timothy 3:12

[36] And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. — Matthew 14:28-30

[37] And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. — Matthew 8:24-25

[38] Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. — Exodus 14:30

required to give birth[39] in order to experience that sort of salvation from never-ending punishment, it should really be a lot more obvious than it is to most Christians that the words "salvation," "save," and "saved" are not all referring to the same thing every time they're used in our English Bibles, and that there are numerous different types of salvation spoken of in Scripture (although, if you don't agree, I have to ask how those *are* literally all the exact same sort of salvation).

In fact, that there are different types of salvation referred to in Scripture is important to understand when it comes to interpreting the passages where Jesus spoke about getting to enter the kingdom of heaven vs going to hell, as well as the passages where Paul wrote about going to heaven, because when reading those passages about hell in the KJB and other less literal translations which use the word (such as Matthew 18:8-9[40] or Mark 9:43-48,[41] as just two of the various examples that are commonly cited when discussing soteriology with English-speaking Christians), somebody who isn't aware of what Jesus meant there might ask what He was warning us about, not realizing that He wasn't warning *us* about anything, because He wasn't talking to *us* to begin with

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[39] Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. — 1 Timothy 2:15

[40] Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. — Matthew 18:8–9

[41] And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. — Mark 9:43–48

(unless, perhaps, you happen to be Jewish). You see, His death, burial, and resurrection aside, Jesus' earthly ministry and messages were technically only meant for *"the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"* as He told His disciples in Matthew 15:24,[42] and not to Gentiles (yes, He did help certain Gentiles on rare occasion, but that was the exception rather than the rule). This means that, while it technically is possible for Gentiles who fear God and who do works of righteousness[43] to end up enjoying the type of salvation that Jesus taught about during His earthly ministry – as evidenced by the salvation of Cornelius and those other Gentiles who heard Peter preach when he visited Cornelius at his

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[42] But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. — Matthew 15:24

[43] Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. — Acts 10:34-35

home in Caesarea[44] – this sort of salvation is still primarily for Jews and other

[44] There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. — Acts 10:1-48

Israelites,[45] and really, basically all of the rewards and judgements Jesus spoke about (including His warnings about hell, not to mention the majority of the other teachings He shared) were essentially only to and about Israelites, with the judgement of the sheep and the goats being one of the only significant exceptions (since He said that one actually *is* a judgement of the people of the nations[46] – and no, He wasn't talking about heaven or hell at all when He discussed *that* particular judgement, but was instead referring to something very different altogether, as you'll learn in a later chapter). That's not to say there won't be any Gentiles in hell, but with *very* few exceptions, the warnings Jesus gave in the books of the Bible called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John technically aren't relevant to Gentiles *at all*.

And just as the punishment in those passages about hell will be "experienced," so to speak, by certain people right here on earth (and not in an ethereal afterlife realm, as I'll also prove from Scripture later on in this book), the salvation Jesus spoke about is *also* to be experienced right here on earth, in the kingdom of heaven (even though it might not be experienced until after one has been resurrected from the dead, as you'll learn soon enough).

Unfortunately, because most people don't pay particularly close attention to the specific wording in Scripture, the fact that Jesus said the salvation He taught about during His earthly ministry is to be experienced in the kingdom of heaven has confused generations of people, leading most to assume it's a reference to an afterlife location called heaven, and others to believe it's instead referring to a spiritual state inside themselves, based on the way the KJB figuratively renders one of Jesus' statements about the kingdom as: *"the kingdom of God is within you"* (which they often interpret literally because they misunderstand a handful

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[45] Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. — John 4:22

[46] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: — Matthew 25:32

of other statements by Jesus – not seeming to realize that He generally spoke in ways which kept the masses from fully understanding what He was getting at when they were around, purposely doing so to keep them from converting and experiencing the sort of salvation He spoke about because it wasn't meant for them,[47] which also confirms that He wasn't talking about the same sort of salvation Paul generally wrote about, since that sort of salvation *is* meant for everyone[48] – ultimately forcing them to descend into contradiction and even outright absurdity in their interpretations of large portions of Scripture, as you'll soon discover, and also confirming that they're just as metaphorically "blind" as the Pharisees that Jesus was talking to were when He said that[49]). This passage really shouldn't be interpreted as meaning the kingdom is literally inside our bodies, though, because, as I mentioned, Jesus said that specifically to the Pharisees, and they weren't saved when He said that to them, which means it makes far more sense to interpret this as Jesus simply telling them that they didn't need to go looking for the kingdom anywhere, or even need to wait to see it at all, because it was *already* present *within the midst* of the very people He was speaking to the whole time, in the person of its Messiah and future king, which means that they were technically already seeing the most important part of the kingdom – even if only in part at that time – and could continue to do so for as long as Jesus remained among them in Israel (and this *is* an interpretation which is indeed proven by the original Greek, since ἐντὸς ὑμῶν/"en-tos' hoo-

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[47] And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. — Mark 4:10-12

[48] For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. — 1 Timothy 2:3-4

[49] And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. — Luke 17:20-21

mone'," which *"within you"* is translated from in the KJB, *literally* means "within the midst of all of you"; that said, this should actually be obvious based on the fact that the word "you" in this phrase in the KJB is a *plural* word, since the word ὑμῶν that "you" was translated from there is a Second Person Plural Greek word, and even if one doesn't know this fact about the Greek word, the way the *King James Bible* renders pronouns such as this one should also make it obvious – because pronouns that start with the letter "y," like "you," "your," and "ye," are always plural words in the KJB, while pronouns that start with the letter "t," like "thee," "thou," "thy," and "thine," are always singular words in this version,[50] with this being one of the reasons why I consider the KJB to be such an important translation, since most other English Bible versions don't use such precision in their translation of these particular pronouns, making it less clear what a specific verse actually means in many cases, at least without looking at the original Hebrew or Greek – and if we took this translation of the verse in the KJB literally, it would mean that Jesus was *actually* saying, "the kingdom of God is inside *all* of your bodies," meaning it was already inside of every person listening to Him speak, including the unbelieving Pharisees hearing Him, and that they would then have already – and currently – been saved at the time Jesus said this to them, even though they didn't believe in Him, since He clearly *didn't* mean, "the kingdom of God *could* possibly come to *enter* all of you, presuming you decide to believe in me," which we know is true because the Greek word ἐστιν/"es-tin'" that "is" was translated from in the phrase *"is within you"* in the KJB is in the Present Indicative tense and mood, which means that whatever it was that Jesus was referring to there was *already*, not to mention *currently*, the case at the moment that He made the statement).

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[50] *Personal Pronouns - Thee, Thou, Ye, etc.* by Mike Wright: https://bereanresearchinstitute.com/02_Bible_Versions/BV.0007_Personal_Pronouns_-_Thee_Thou_Ye_You_Thy_Thine_etc.html

Regardless, we know that Jesus' primary message of salvation was about the fullness of the coming of the kingdom of heaven to earth,[51] and how to get to live in it when it comes fully into effect,[52] and we also know that Jesus' messages while He walked the earth were given in order to confirm that *"the promises made unto the fathers"* would indeed come true, as Paul explained in Romans 15:8[53] (and these were promises made primarily for the circumcision, as Paul also wrote there, meaning promises for the descendants of the "fathers" known as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: ethnic Israelites, in other words). Since the Israelites were promised a future kingdom[54] – one ruled by Jesus, as we also learned in prophecies about Him ruling over the kingdom from the throne of David,[55] which is a figurative term that just refers to rulership over "the house of Jacob," meaning the descendants of Jacob who live in the actual land of Israel[56] – and were also promised that they'd get to dwell in the very land which God

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[51] Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. — Matthew 6:10

[52] And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. — Matthew 3:2

[53] Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: — Romans 15:8

[54] And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. — Daniel 2:44

[55] Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. — Isaiah 9:7

[56] He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. — Luke 1:32-33

gave to their fathers[57] (meaning the land of Canaan,[58] now known as the land of Israel), this all tells us that the kingdom in question will indeed have to be specifically located in that land of Canaan/Israel where God said it would, in fact, be located (a land that was already referred to in the KJB as "the kingdom of the LORD" at one time anyway,[59] before the nation of Israel fell and its peoples were scattered among the Gentiles and the promises of their future restoration to the land were then prophesied, such as what God promised them in the book of Jeremiah,[60] for example), or at least that it will have to be centred within the land of Israel. (For those who don't know, the title "the Lord" – or "the LORD," with all capital letters for "Lord," as it's printed in many Bibles – used in the phrase "the kingdom of the LORD" in 1 Chronicles 28:5 in the KJB, is translated from the Hebrew יְהוָה/"yeh-ho-vaw'," which is God's actual, proper name in Hebrew, and so anybody who heard Jesus say "the kingdom of God"

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[57] And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. — Genesis 15:7

[58] Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. — Genesis 12:1-5

[59] And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. — 1 Chronicles 28:5

[60] Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. — Jeremiah 32:37-40

during His earthly ministry would have recognized it as a reference to Israel based on that verse; and just as a quick aside, the translation of יְהוָֹה using a title for God rather than using His actual name in this verse as recorded in the original Hebrew is also yet another example of why, when you see an English word in one of the less literal translations of Scripture such as the KJB, you can't just automatically assume it's a literal translation of the word that the writer *actually* used in the original Hebrew or Greek, as we've now seen – and while this particular example isn't necessarily going to cause doctrinal confusion, there are cases where it can, as you'll learn while reading the rest of this book, which is why I have to reiterate once again just how important it is to *always* look at the original Hebrew and Greek when studying the Bible rather than simply trusting that an English translation makes it clear what word or words the writer of a specific passage *actually* used is, because the KJB *is* a *very* figurative translation in many places *other* than this one too.)

Now, some Christians try to claim that these promises were all fulfilled back in Joshua's time, based on what Joshua 21:43-45 says about all having come to pass at that time,[61] but there were many prophecies about the same promises connected with dwelling in the land God gave to the fathers (the land of Israel) which were written *after* the events in Joshua took place as well, such as the one in Jeremiah we just looked at, as well as in the book of Ezekiel[62] (to name just two of *many* such examples). Besides, the promise about the land that God

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[61] And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. — Joshua 21:43-45

[62] And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. — Ezekiel 36:28

made is referred to as an "everlasting" covenant in various places,[63] and even though "everlasting" rarely literally means "never-ending" when it's used in the less literal Bible versions such as the KJB (as we'll discuss in an upcoming chapter, although anyone who has paid close attention while reading the Bible should really know that fact already, since it's made obvious in *many* parts of the KJB and the other less literal English Bible versions), it does still mean that the covenant God made with Abraham regarding the actual land will last a lot longer than some Christians think (especially based on when 1 Chronicles was written, not to mention the time period it was written about, as well as the promise in the book of Jeremiah we just looked at – which also used the term in regards to the same sort of promise – all of which were *after* Joshua's time), so there's no reason to believe that the promises related to the very plot of land which God promised to Abraham and his descendants aren't still in effect, especially since many of the details connected with these various prophecies about said land still haven't been fulfilled yet. And remember, Ezekiel says that the land will have some pretty clear geographical boundaries on the earth,[64] not in heaven, or even "in our hearts" (or in whichever bodily organs some people

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[63] Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; — 1 Chronicles 16:16-18

[64] Thus saith the Lord God; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance. And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran. And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side. And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side. And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward. The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side. — Ezekiel 47:13-20

think the kingdom exists inside) when the promises God made to Israel are finally *completely* fulfilled,[65] as demonstrated by the fact that the prophecy said the land would have borders from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Jordan on the east, with the northern boundary at Hamath, and the southern boundary at Kadesh (and if that's supposed to refer to a supposed kingdom "within us" in some figurative manner, I'd like to know which organs in the bodies of Gentile believers that each of those locations is supposed to be referring to are, as well as what happens if someone is missing that specific

[65] Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession: Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. Thus saith the Lord God; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations: Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord God. Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord God. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the Lord. — Ezekiel 36:1-38

body part; and if it's not about body parts, I'd like to know what each of those specific geographic locations *do* refer to if it isn't actual land, because they each have to be referring to *something* specific and distinct from one another, since otherwise there was no reason for them to have even been included in the passage), as well as by the fact that the land is said to contain a new temple with some pretty specific dimensions at that time as well, according to the prophecies[66] (with a part of those dimensions carved out for priests from the tribe of the Levites – who are Israelites, not Gentiles – and I trust that nobody believes we have tiny Levites living inside of us either, which would have to be the case if the kingdom and its temple were literally within our bodies, or even were our bodies). This all confirms that the kingdom is going to be on earth, specifically within those borders that will make up the nation of Israel in the future, rather than somewhere else. And since the temple is said to be located *within* the borders of the land rather than the land being said to be located within the temple, if the kingdom of God actually *is* within us the way some Christians like to claim it is, the bodies of Gentile believers *can't* be the same temple Ezekiel referred to – as some Christians also like to claim it is, based on their bad misunderstanding of Paul's statement about those of us in the body of Christ currently being "the temple of God,"[67] as though there can't be more

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[66] Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the Lord, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about. Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred in length, with five hundred in breadth, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy place. The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the Lord: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary. And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers. — Ezekiel 45:1-5

[67] Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? — 1 Corinthians 3:16

than one temple – because that would place the figurative "land" (presuming "the land" is a figurative reference to that kingdom "within us," at least, as I've heard some of these Christians claim) *within* the figurative "temple" made up of our bodies, which is the opposite of what the prophecies in Ezekiel say. And since Ezekiel's prophecies to Israel about the land were given *after* the events in the book of Joshua took place, even if the promises given beforehand *were* fulfilled in Joshua's time, this means that what was recorded in the book of Joshua can't have been the *final* time they're fulfilled, but rather it means that these prophecies about the land still have to have a second, future fulfillment as well, with what happened in the book of Joshua just being the first fulfillment. (And for those who aren't familiar with the concept, *many* prophecies in Scripture had more than one fulfillment, with the most well-known example probably being Isaiah 7:14, which said, *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.";* this prophecy had its first fulfillment when a woman who was presumably a virgin at the time the prophecy was given[68] – although obviously no longer a virgin by the time she was pregnant – gave birth to her prophesied

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[68] Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. — Isaiah 7:10-16

son, while the second fulfillment would have obviously been Mary, who *did* remain a virgin until after giving birth to Jesus.[69])

Besides, we also know that Israel has to be where the kingdom will be located in the future because Jesus taught His disciples about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God during the 40-day period between His resurrection and His ascension up to heaven,[70] and yet, just before He ascended to heaven, when His disciples asked Him if He'd be bringing the kingdom back to Israel at that time, Jesus didn't correct them by asking, "Did I not just spend 40 days explaining that the kingdom will be in heaven rather than on earth?", or, "Did I not just spend 40 days explaining that you're already living in the kingdom?" – or even, "Did I not just spend 40 days explaining that the kingdom already exists inside your bodies, which means that the kingdom exists within you **rather than you ever getting to exist within the kingdom**?", as would be the case if the kingdom really *was* literally "within us" – (whichever of those options that somebody might happen to believe is the truth about the kingdom), but rather just said, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath*

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[69] Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus. — Matthew 1:18-25

[70] To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: — Acts 1:3

put in his own power,"[71] which means He not only didn't tell them that the kingdom was already fully in effect for Israel, He also didn't correct their understanding that the kingdom was going to be located on earth – specifically in Israel, where it already once existed in the past (even if in a far less grand manner at that time than it will when it's restored to Israel in the future) – which are things they should have really already understood if He'd actually just spent more than a month explaining what the kingdom was about, and that it wasn't going to simply be located in the land of Israel, anyway.

And Peter himself confirmed this only a short time later too, in his sermon in Acts 3 when he said, *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,"*[72] telling us that the kingdom was going to be sent *from* heaven to take place *on* the earth (the various prophecies he was referring to in that sermon also make it pretty clear that *"the times of refreshing"* and *"the restitution of all things"* – a reference to the coming kingdom, and *not* to the salvation of all, despite the belief of some Universalists who mistakenly assume the Greek ἀποκατάστασις/"ap-ok-at-as'-tas-is," translated as "restitution" in this passage, is actually referring to Universal Reconciliation, although this fact will become more clear later in this book – is going to take place on earth too, when Jesus returns, rather than is going to take

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[71] When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. — Acts 1:6-7

[72] Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. — Acts 3:19-21

place in heaven; and this obviously hasn't occurred yet either, as anyone who is familiar with history, or who just watches the news, can tell you, and while I don't have the space to get into all of the various prophecies here, you can look them up to see for yourself).

That's not all, though, because Jesus also explained that angels *"shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"*[73] in his explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares[74] (after which, *"the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"*[75]). Now think about this carefully. If the kingdom of heaven is an afterlife location which people go to when they die, as most Christians assume (including many Christians who *also* believe that the kingdom is somehow "within us" at the same time,

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[73] Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. — Matthew 13:36-42

[74] Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. — Matthew 13:24-30

[75] Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. — Matthew 13:43

however that's supposed to work), and only those who are saved can go to heaven, as most Christians also assume, this passage would make no sense, because the angels can't *"gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity"* if these people are not already in the kingdom at the time of the judgement. And this doesn't happen as each individual sinner dies, as some might try to claim in order to fit these facts into their assumptions about what the kingdom is, since the parable makes it clear that everyone involved "grew up" together in the same place,[76] meaning on earth, and also that the judgement would involve everyone being judged together at this time as well, at *"the end of the world,"*[77] meaning "the end of the age" (the KJB tends to figuratively translate the Greek word αἰών/"ahee-ohn'" – which literally means "age" – as "world"; we know that Jesus couldn't have been talking about the end of our actual planet because the earth won't be destroyed until about a thousand years *after* the events that He was prophesying about there, as we'll discuss shortly), so this can't refer to each sinner being judged in heaven immediately after each of their individual deaths. If "the kingdom" was a reference to the heavenly afterlife most Christians believe the saved end up in after they die, they'd have to already be saved, not to mention dead, which means this parable would be telling us that some people will become sinners in heaven some time after they die, and then be cast out of heaven into hell, presuming the "furnace of fire" actually was a reference to hell (although, contrary to what most Christians assume, the mention of a "furnace" in this context is actually quite figurative and has a very specific meaning that isn't connected with hell or the lake of fire at all, but that's a topic for a later chapter of this book, so keep reading to learn what it's actually referring to, presuming you aren't already familiar with its actual meaning). Or, if the kingdom was

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[76] Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. — Matthew 13:30

[77] The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. — Matthew 13:39

literally inside our bodies instead, it would mean that angels would have to pull tiny human sinners residing in the "kingdom" out of our bodies and cast them into some sort of literal furnace, leaving us behind. Since neither of those interpretations make any kind of sense whatsoever (not to mention since Jesus outright said in His explanation of the parable that the "field" refers to the world[78] – this time *actually* referring to the planet itself, being translated from the Greek κόσμος/"kos'-mos" rather than αἰών in this verse – not to heaven, or even to our bodies), it should be pretty clear by now that the type of salvation Jesus and His disciples taught about during His earthly ministry (and that even the type of salvation His disciples taught about *after* His ascension into heaven, both in person and in their writings) primarily involved certain descendants of Isaac[79] dwelling in the land of Israel[80] and reigning over the earth[81] and its people as *"kings and priests"*[82] (presuming they're included in Israel's *"first resurrection,"*[83] or are among those *"that overcometh"*[84] by surviving the seven-

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[78] The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; — Matthew 13:38

[79] Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. — Romans 9:6-7

[80] The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. — Psalm 37:29

[81] But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. — Psalm 37:11

[82] And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. — Revelation 5:10

[83] Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. — Revelation 20:6

[84] And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. — Revelation 2:26-27

year period of time commonly referred to as the Tribulation[85] while remaining believers throughout it) during the thousand-year age that the kingdom of heaven exists in that part of the world[86] (thus fulfilling a prophecy from the Hebrew Scriptures,[87] meaning the books of the Bible that are generally referred to today as "the Old Testament"), as well as finally being able to keep the Mosaic law perfectly because the New Covenant will finally have come fully into effect for the house of Israel and the house of Judah[88] (and since Gentiles aren't under the Mosaic law,[89] and don't have an old covenant of any sort to be replaced with

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[85] For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. — Matthew 24:21

[86] And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. — Revelation 20:4-6

[87] And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. — Exodus 19:6

[88] Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. — Jeremiah 31:31-34

[89] And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? — Deuteronomy 4:8

by something new,[90] because they weren't given any covenants to begin with,[91] it should be pretty clear that the New Covenant is only for the members of the house of Israel and the house of Judah, as Jeremiah stated, rather than for Gentiles who aren't descendants of *either* of those houses), after the believing Israelites who aren't living there at the time[92] have been returned from their exile[93] back to the land of Israel.[94] Bringing His people into the New Covenant (which was inaugurated by Jesus' death,[95] but which has largely been put on hold until His Second Coming because most of Israel rejected Him as their

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[90] For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; — Romans 9:3-4

[91] That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: — Ephesians 2:12

[92] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. — Isaiah 11:11-12

[93] And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive. — Jeremiah 29:14

[94] I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. — Ezekiel 20:41-42

[95] And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. — Hebrews 9:15-17

Messiah during His first time on earth, as demonstrated by the fact that Jeremiah said *"they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them"*[96] when the New Covenant comes fully in effect, and that sure isn't happening anywhere in the world yet, especially not in Israel where this prophecy will take place, as is made clear by various *other* parts of this prophecy in the same chapter[97]) is how Jesus will *"save his people from their*

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[96] And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. — Jeremiah 31:34

[97] For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border. — Jeremiah 31:6-17

sins," as the angel put it in Matthew 1:21[98] – letting us know that Jesus will fulfill the prophecy in Psalm 130:8 which said, *"And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,"* involving both forgiveness of their sins,[99] as well as finally being redeemed out from among the nations and Gentiles they'll have been living among back to God in Israel[100] – because it's important to remember that pretty much any reference[101] to *"His people"* in Scripture[102] is specifically a reference to faithful ethnic Israelites.[103] And since the promises God gave concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah are without repentance,[104] we know that these prophecies will indeed be fulfilled for exactly the very people that they were made to (i.e., ethnic Israelites, albeit only *faithful* ethnic Israelites), in the exact location He said they'd take place in (i.e., the land of Israel).

And just as a quick but related aside, those Christians who claim that Gentile believers within the body of Christ are, in fact, the temple written about in Ezekiel *also* believe that we're the *"kings and priests"* written about in Revelation and Exodus as well (which would make us somehow *both* the temple *and* its

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[98] And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. — Matthew 1:21

[99] But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. — Psalm 130:4

[100] And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; — Revelation 5:9

[101] Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. — Deuteronomy 32:43

[102] And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the Lord, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel, — 2 Chronicles 35:3

[103] Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, — Luke 1:68

[104] For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. — Romans 11:29

priests), despite the fact that these are obviously prophecies about Israelites. But even if that were the case, since it seems unlikely that there would be any priests on the New Earth, because there presumably won't be a need for any priests anymore at that time, what with there being no physical temple in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth,[105] but rather God Himself, along with "the Lamb" (meaning Jesus[106]), being the temple on the New Earth, the temple written about in Ezekiel *can't* be the same "temple" written about in Revelation 21 (and we can't currently be living on the New Earth either, as some of these Christians somehow also believe to be the case, because regardless of whether Ezekiel was referring to a literal temple made out of physical stone or to a metaphorical "temple" made up of Gentile believers, neither of those "temples" would be God and the Lamb, which means the thousand-year kingdom of heaven and the New Earth can't actually coexist at the same time).

That said, until John wrote the book of Revelation, some people might have been uncertain as to how long the type of salvation Jesus was preaching about during His earthly ministry would last (no, it wouldn't necessarily have been any clearer to them in the language that they *actually* heard Jesus speaking in when it comes to the verses that the KJB and other less literal English Bible versions figuratively translate in English as something along the lines of life

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[105] And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. — Revelation 21:22

[106] The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. — John 1:29

"eternal"[107] or "everlasting" life[108]), although Psalm 90:4[109] might have given them a clue that something referred to as "the *Day* of the Lord" would last about one-thousand years total (since it's a term that not only refers to the

[107] He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. — John 12:25

[108] And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. — Matthew 19:29

[109] For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. — Psalm 90:4

Tribulation,[110] but also refers to the salvation of Israel[111] that Jesus was speaking about – and, as *we* also now know, refers to the destruction of the current

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[110] The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land. — Zephaniah 1:14-18

[111] Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord. — Zephaniah 3:8-20

universe[112] in order for the creation of the New Heaven and the New Earth to take place as well,[113] which we're told in the book of Revelation happens

[112] But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. — 2 Peter 3:10-13

[113] For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. — Isaiah 65:17

approximately 1,000 years *after* the Tribulation ends[114] – and they should have realized that the events of this "Day" weren't all going to take place in one 24-hour period, and hence they very possibly would have figured out that the "Day" would instead take place over a thousand-year span of time, give or take, based on that Psalm). And while it's true that anyone who experiences this type of salvation in the kingdom of heaven will also get to go on to live in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth, at that point the specific type of "eternal" salvation

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[114] And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. — Revelation 20:1-21:2

Jesus was teaching about would technically have come to an end, since the thousand years will have run their course – and yes, I *will* prove quite definitively that this "eternal" salvation *isn't* never-ending later in this book, as well as explain why that's okay and doesn't mean anyone will die or lose anything important after their "eternal" life ends. (And before moving on, I should also say that, yes, it's true that the kingdom of God *does* also have a spiritual nature,[115] and is not *solely* physical, but there *is* still a physical aspect to it – especially for the part of it that Israelites will be living in[116] – as everything we've covered still demonstrates.)

This all means that the method of getting to enjoy this kind of salvation in Israel isn't what most Christians have assumed either. You see, this isn't the type of salvation which Paul taught isn't based on works[117] (although that is an equally valid type of salvation for those people it applies to), but rather, in addition to having to believe that Jesus is Israel's Christ (or Messiah, with these synonyms

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[115] For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. — Romans 14:17

[116] Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. — Matthew 6:25-33

[117] Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, — 2 Timothy 1:9

literally just meaning "anointed one"), as well as the Son of God[118] (and, of course, post-resurrection, having to also believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead[119]), this sort of salvation requires a number of other things from those who are able to do so as well (at least to *remain* saved, even if not in order to be saved in the first place, since *that* simply requires the aforementioned faith in Jesus' identity as the Christ and as the Son of God). For example, it requires repentance of one's sins[120] (as opposed to the type of repentance Paul wrote about, which simply referred to changing one's mind about *who* could actually save those he taught, but we'll discuss that more later), as well as making sure to do[121] good works,[122] including baptism in water in the name of

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[118] But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. — John 20:31

[119] That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. — Romans 10:9

[120] I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. — Luke 5:32

[121] Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. — John 5:28-29

[122] What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. — James 2:14-26

Jesus Christ[123] (and there are multiple other types of baptisms when it comes to this type of salvation too, baptisms which don't even include getting wet in some cases, such as a baptism *with* – or *in* – the Holy Spirit, for example, as well as a baptism with "fire,"[124] among others), following the commandments Jesus gave to the Israelites[125] during His earthly ministry[126] – which includes the

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[123] Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. — Acts 2:38

[124] I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: — Matthew 3:11

[125] Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. — Matthew 5:38-45

[126] And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. — 1 John 2:3-7

commandments[127] within the Mosaic law[128] – doing whatever it takes to be extremely righteous[129] and to avoid iniquity[130] (which is translated from ἀνομία/ "an-om-ee'-ah," a Greek word that literally means to break or ignore the law, and which is presumably what Jesus was referring to when He told His audience to amputate body parts in order to avoid hell and live in the kingdom), and then confessing one's sins if they slip up and do end up sinning[131] (not to mention also forgiving those who wronged them, since Jesus said they couldn't be forgiven themselves if they didn't first forgive others,[132] which is definitely a work, based on how hard it can sometimes be to bring oneself to forgive other people). In addition, they're not only required to turn from pride and be

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[127] And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. — Matthew 19:17-19

[128] Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. — Matthew 23:1-4

[129] For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 5:20

[130] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. — Matthew 7:21-23

[131] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. — 1 John 1:9

[132] And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. — Matthew 6:12-15

extremely humble[133] (since, while avoiding sin and following the Mosaic law is required of Israelites in order to get to enjoy life in the kingdom, following the law on its own doesn't save anyone,[134] and, in addition to faith,[135] humility and repentance are even more required for Israelites than almost anything else[136]), as well as having to make sure they're both meek[137] and poor in spirit,[138] they also can't be greedy or selfish[139] (these sorts of warnings[140] directed towards the

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[133] At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 18:1-4

[134] Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. — Romans 3:20

[135] But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. — Hebrews 11:6

[136] And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. — Luke 18:9-14

[137] Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. — Matthew 5:5

[138] Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 5:3

[139] Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. — Matthew 19:23-24

[140] No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. — Matthew 6:24

rich are given all throughout the Bible,[141] and since rich people can believe that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God just as easily as poor people can, it appears that being willing to give up one's wealth in order to follow Jesus around Israel[142] could be required of an Israelite in order for them to enter the kingdom, at least back then and as far as this type of salvation goes, since otherwise Jesus could have simply told the young man to accept Him as his personal saviour – or perhaps told him to do something that actually *is* a biblical concept – rather than telling him to sell all he had and give it to the poor so he could follow Jesus around the nation while He preached), and they do also have to endure to the end[143] (of one's life or of the period commonly known as the Tribulation, whichever comes first) as well. And that's not all. There are *many* other requirements mentioned elsewhere in Scripture too, but I think you get the idea, which is that this is not the same type of salvation Paul primarily taught about.

And yes, I know that many Christians who are reading this will want to insist these required works are all meant to be interpreted as being the fruit of one's faith – or, as some claim, that Jesus actually commanded His audience members do all these things so that His more humble listeners would realize they couldn't do what He told them to do and would have faith in His death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection, instead (which is what Paul said people who experience at least one of the types of salvation he taught about have to

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[141] Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. — James 5:1

[142] The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. — Matthew 19:20-22

[143] And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. — Matthew 10:22

believe in order to be said to be saved,[144] yet which isn't something anyone prior to him is ever recorded as teaching needed to be believed in order to be saved, especially not during Jesus' earthly ministry) – but not only is there absolutely *zero* indication in *any* of those passages that they *aren't* meant to be interpreted literally (especially since that would also require us to have to make ourselves humble enough to be able to do this, which is a very difficult work in and of itself), there's also nothing in any of the passages to indicate that the people who heard Jesus speak interpreted Him as actually meaning they *didn't* have to obey the commands He was giving them either (or that any of them instead believed that they had to trust in His impending death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third day for their salvation, for that matter, rather than do what He *actually* told them to do), particularly in light of what He said to the lawyer when He told the parable of the Good Samaritan, never once implying anywhere in Luke 10:25-37 that He didn't mean for the lawyer to keep the law (in fact, all He said about following the Mosaic law after sharing the parable was,

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[144] Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

"Go, and do thou likewise," in regards to the method of following the law that lawyer agreed it was referring to[145]).

Besides, Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:17-19, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* All has not been fulfilled yet (heaven and earth haven't passed yet – unless you're reading this book on a whole new planet called the New Earth, long after it was first published – and there are still many prophecies yet to be fulfilled, at least as of the time I wrote this book), so those for whom the Mosaic law is relevant to, namely Israelites, still have to follow it (or, at the very least, certainly still had to until Christ's death, if Jesus'

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[145] And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. — Luke 10:25-37

statement that *"it is finished"*[146] was referring to *all* being fulfilled, although since the current heaven and earth are still here – and there are still many unfulfilled prophecies – as of the time I'm writing this, I don't believe it was). Nobody listening to Jesus could have possibly interpreted any of His statements as meaning that works weren't actually still required of them anyway, since not only had a form of salvation by grace through faith in His death for our sins (along with His burial and resurrection, of course) – apart from any works[147] – not ever been taught prior to Paul doing so, at the time they were preaching to the inhabitants of Israel, not even Jesus' disciples understood that He was going to die,[148] which means that A) this isn't something that Jesus' audience members could have possibly believed is true in order to avoid hell, and B) Jesus and His disciples would have then spent about three years preaching essentially useless messages if the common understanding that there's only one type and method of salvation were true, considering this would mean that they didn't once explain how to *actually* be saved from said hell fire if salvation was based solely on faith in Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection at that time the way it was for those Gentiles Paul later preached to (and people like Zacchaeus couldn't have actually been saved, despite what Jesus said in Luke 19:8-9,[149] which was actually in response to Zacchaeus promising to do good works in the form of making up for his previously harmful actions, not for claiming to

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[146] When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. — John 19:30

[147] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

[148] For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him. — Mark 9:31-32

[149] And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. — Luke 19:8-9

believe in Christ's death for our sins, which is something that wasn't even discussed in the passage). In fact, even Jesus' disciples couldn't have been considered to be saved in any way until *after* His death and resurrection – contrary to what Luke 10:20 seems to imply[150] – if it was a belief which was required in order to avoid hell, since not even they believed He was going to die or be resurrected until after they saw it all finally happen.[151] This also means that Jesus' death wasn't something people prior to His crucifixion were looking forward to for their salvation, because despite His death being foretold in the prophecies of both Jesus and certain other prophets, there's no scriptural basis for assuming that anybody actually *was* looking forward in time in faith for His death to take place to save any of them, so this common assertion has absolutely no scriptural merit either (and if people could be saved *prior* to Christ's death by simply believing that He's Israel's Messiah and the Son of God, along with performing the requisite works of faith, of course, without having to trust in His death *"for our sins"* the way Paul's Gentile converts were required to in order to be considered saved, or even having to know that His death was *"for our sins"* at all, there's no good reason that I can think of to assume it couldn't *still* be possible to experience the sort of salvation Jesus and His disciples taught about that way either, especially since many of His teachings about this sort of salvation and how one experiences it are connected with the future Tribulation), which means there's no good reason to assume these commands weren't being mentioned as actual requirements for salvation (or, at the very least, for maintaining salvation, as I already mentioned) rather than just as evidence of one's salvation (or rather than to convince them of their inability to do what was necessary, in order to drive them to faith in a sacrifice they didn't even know He was going to make), at least not without reading one's preconceived doctrinal bias that there's only one type of salvation into

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[150] Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. — Luke 10:20

[151] When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. — John 2:22

Scripture (which anyone with a concordance can tell you isn't the case anyway, as we've already discussed). And so, anyone who is being honest with the text will admit that works *are* required for *this* type of salvation (it's interesting how many Christians insist on interpreting the parts of Scripture which seem to be meant to be interpreted literally in a figurative manner, all the while criticizing Pauline Universalists for not interpreting the parts that make more sense to be interpreted figuratively in a literal manner, but they have no choice if they want to continue believing that their doctrinal assumptions are correct). This all means, while we're aware that not everybody will get to experience the sort of salvation that He and His disciples taught about during His earthly ministry and beyond[152] since, based on what Jesus said, not everyone will get to live in the kingdom of heaven during the time it exists in Israel, one day even Gentiles other than Cornelius and his associates will be saved in this way because of Israelites – as Isaiah prophesied[153] – and their rise to prominence in the future[154] (and yes, before someone brings it up, that prophecy in Isaiah was indeed at least partially fulfilled by Jesus during His lifetime,[155] but prophecies can have more than one fulfillment, as we've already learned, and this is one of

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[152] He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. — John 3:36

[153] And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. — Isaiah 49:6

[154] Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. — Acts 3:25

[155] And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. — Luke 2:25-32

them, which we know from the fact that Paul and Barnabas *also* fulfilled it in part *a second time*,[156] and also from the fact that it will have an even larger, complete fulfillment in the future, when the kingdom of heaven begins in Israel and when Gentiles can only get saved thanks to the priesthood of Israelites[157]).

And on the topic of the disciples preaching to Gentiles before Paul, no, I don't believe the Ethiopian eunuch was a Gentile, but rather it seems likely that he was actually an Israelite himself, of the diaspora,[158] because not only was he visiting Jerusalem to worship[159] like the other Israelites of the nations a few chapters earlier in Acts 2 were,[160] but also because it wasn't pointed out in the chapter how problematic this should have been if he *was* a Gentile, even though

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[156] And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. — Acts 13:44-49

[157] Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. — Zechariah 8:22-23

[158] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_diaspora

[159] And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, — Acts 8:27

[160] And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. — Acts 2:5

such a big deal[161] is made of Peter's time spent going to minister to Gentiles in the same book[162] (and he wasn't referred to as a proselyte the way Nicolas of Antioch was just a couple chapters before this one either[163]). So it seems very probable that preaching to Gentiles who weren't already proselytes was only done one time prior to Paul doing so, almost certainly for the purpose of Peter being able to later help defend Paul's ministry to the nations.[164] That said, even if the eunuch actually was a Gentile proselyte, his statement of faith before his water baptism had nothing to do with trusting in Christ's death for our sins at all – which makes sense, considering the fact that, while he *was* told by Philip that Jesus died,[165] just as Cornelius and his household later learned from

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[161] And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. — Acts 10:28

[162] And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. — Acts 11:1-3

[163] Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: — Acts 6:3-5

[164] And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. — Acts 15:7

[165] The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. — Acts 8:32-35

Peter,[166] neither Philip nor Peter told their respective listeners that Christ's death was *for our sins,* or that His death *for our sins* is specifically what they needed to have faith in for their salvation – but rather he simply confessed his belief that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God,[167] lining up exactly with what John wrote that an Israelite had to believe in order to be saved.[168] (And yes, I'm aware that verse 37 of Acts 8 isn't included in various modern Bible versions, but while I do personally believe it belongs there since it's included in the TR – meaning the *Textus Receptus*[169] – which, for reasons I'll touch on later, I consider to be far more trustworthy than the *Critical Text*[170] that most modern Bibles are translated from, at least when it comes to the "New Testament" books, either way, I trust you'll notice that what I said about belief in Christ's death being *for our sins* as being necessary to trust in for salvation definitely wasn't mentioned in the chapter either – although, of course, it should be even more clear for those with Bible versions which *do* include the verse with the eunuch's confession, since that verse spells it out.)

And while Paul *did* sometimes teach about the same sort of salvation that Jesus and His disciples were proclaiming (especially when he's recorded as preaching to Jews in the book of Acts, as well as when he discussed the salvation of Israel

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[166] And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; — Acts 10:39-40

[167] And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. — Acts 8:36-38

[168] But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. — John 20:31

[169] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textus_Receptus

[170] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novum_Testamentum_Graece

in his epistles), most of the time he was either simply talking about being quickened[171] (which refers to having our mortal bodies be made immortal[172] – as Peter said happened to Jesus,[173] which would be after His resurrection of course – being *"made alive"*[174] beyond the reach of death,[175] in other words, which means being incapable of dying,[176] as well as never being subject to the corruption[177] and the humiliation of mortality ever again,[178] which is something that will only happen to certain people who experience the sort of salvation that Jesus taught about during His earthly ministry, at least at the time they're experiencing their particular type of salvation, specifically those who are raised from the dead at the resurrection of the just,[179] with those who are still living at the time they begin enjoying what the KJB figuratively refers to as "everlasting"

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[171] I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; — 1 Timothy 6:13

[172] But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. — Romans 8:11

[173] For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: — 1 Peter 3:18

[174] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

[175] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:54-55

[176] Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. — Hebrews 7:16

[177] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. — 1 Corinthians 15:53

[178] Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. — Philippians 3:21

[179] And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. — Luke 14:14

life[180] or "eternal" life[181] in the kingdom of heaven not being given true immortality at that point, since those who are resurrected after Jesus returns will be like the angels, in that they'll no longer marry nor reproduce,[182] and won't even be able to die ever again,[183] and if everyone who was given "everlasting" life was quickened/made immortal right then, there wouldn't be anyone left to fulfill the prophecies of righteous Israelites not only growing old but also having children in the city of Jerusalem in the kingdom,[184] both on this planet and also later on the New Earth as well[185] – speaking of the New

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[180] For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. — John 3:16

[181] But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. — Mark 10:30

[182] For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. — Matthew 22:30

[183] But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. — Luke 20:35-36

[184] Again the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. — Zechariah 8:1-5

[185] For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. — Isaiah 65:17-20

Jerusalem at that point, as I'll explain in a later chapter), and finally being made truly sinless because of that immortality (which is what salvation will eventually be for those who experience the type of salvation that Paul primarily wrote about – immortality, and hence sinlessness, in other words – as I'll prove later in this book), or to enjoying that particular salvation (which, as I'll demonstrate later, is a type of salvation that can be called Pauline salvation, since the type of salvation that Jesus talked about during His earthly ministry didn't necessarily include full immortality for everyone, at least not right away, as we just discussed) before anyone else, while reigning[186] with Jesus Christ in the heavens[187] (which is what the **special** salvation Paul wrote is "**specially"** for those that believe is,[188] at least in part, and which can only be fully experienced by someone whose mortal body has been quickened, as I'll also explain in a later chapter), since the citizenship of those he wrote to is in heaven rather than in the land of Israel where the citizenship of the people Jesus preached to is located (I realize that the way the KJB renders Philippians 3:20 as saying *"our*

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[186] It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. — 2 Timothy 2:11-13

[187] Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. — Ephesians 1:15-23

[188] For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. — 1 Timothy 4:10

conversation is in heaven"[189] can be confusing to those who aren't familiar with the language, but it essentially just means that "our citizenship is in heaven," and since the citizen of a particular commonwealth has the right to go there whenever they please, as soon as we have the *ability* to do so – which will be when our mortal bodies are quickened – we'll almost certainly *want* to spend most of our time there). Those of us who get to enjoy this special sort of salvation (*also* referred to figuratively as "everlasting" life,[190] or as "eternal" life,[191] in the KJB) are the members of the church that Paul (and only Paul) referred to as the body of Christ,[192] which consists *only* of those who truly understand what it means – and also truly believe – that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, as he explained three chapters later in the same book which he called us the body of Christ in (and again, if you haven't read the whole Bible before and aren't already aware of why this "everlasting" life is a figurative term in the KJB and other less literal Bible translations, please keep reading, as I'll go into great detail in an upcoming chapter on the meaning of "everlasting," "eternal," and "for ever" in the English Bible versions which commonly use these words, although, again, anyone who has read the whole Bible should already be aware of the actual meaning of these words in these Bible versions, unless they weren't paying attention while reading). This obviously isn't something that anyone to whom Jesus and His disciples preached during His earthly ministry could have believed because, as we already discussed, at the time they were preaching to the inhabitants of Israel, not even His disciples knew that He was going to die,

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[189] For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: — Philippians 3:20

[190] But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. — Romans 6:22

[191] For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. — Romans 6:23

[192] Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. — 1 Corinthians 12:27

so this "method" of salvation was clearly intended for a different audience (which means that neither they, nor anyone who believed the message they proclaimed during Jesus' earthly ministry, could be members of the body of Christ; although that's okay, because they had membership in another church Jesus began[193] – one which was just as special as the church[194] that Paul was the first member of[195] – and their church is known as the Israel of God[196]; and please keep reading if you're under the impression that the Israel of God and the body of Christ are the same church, because the rest of this chapter will prove that they can't be).

Just to add some further details about the special type of salvation Paul taught to the nations, unlike the requirements for experiencing the salvation that Jesus and His disciples taught about, this kind of salvation is entirely without any requirement of works of any kind, on our part at least, as already noted.[197] Paul was quite clear that even if we don't do any works at all, we can still be justified,[198] which means that the type of faith those in the body of Christ are supposed to have is *not* dead without works, unlike the way Israel's faith is. In addition, something few are aware of is that baptism for those who enjoy this

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[193] And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. — Matthew 16:18

[194] Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: — Colossians 1:24

[195] Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. — 1 Timothy 1:16

[196] And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. — Galatians 6:16

[197] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

[198] But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. — Romans 4:5

sort of salvation isn't in water. Yes, Paul did baptize a few people in water early on,[199] but he would have eventually stopped completely as he progressed in receiving revelations of truth from the Lord,[200] particularly after learning the truth that there's only *one* sort of immersion, or baptism,[201] for us, which is immersion *by* the Holy Spirit, *into* the body of Christ,[202] including into what He experienced in His body, such as His death, burial, resurrection, and quickening[203] (and Paul was careful to point out that Christ *didn't* send him to baptize at all,[204] which would be unusual if water baptism *was* necessary for the sort of salvation he was teaching the Gentiles about, as some Christians believe, and if he actually *was* trying to get them saved) – as opposed to the various different types of baptisms for Israel that I already mentioned, some of which involved water and some of which didn't, telling us that not all baptisms end up getting someone wet – and so this baptism, or immersion (which is all the Greek word βάπτισμα/"baptisma" that we transliterate the English word "baptism" from means), is quite dry for us, and happens to us entirely passively at the moment we believe and are saved. (In order to try to ignore this point,

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[199] I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. — 1 Corinthians 1:14-16

[200] It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 12:1

[201] There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. — Ephesians 4:4-6

[202] For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. — 1 Corinthians 12:13

[203] Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. — Romans 6:3-4

[204] For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. — 1 Corinthians 1:17

some Christians claim that Paul simply meant we should only be baptized in water once in our lives rather than repeatedly, but he preceded the words *"one baptism"* with the words *"one hope"* and *"one faith,"* and I certainly hope nobody would think we should only have hope or faith once in our lives, as would be the case if Paul meant we should be baptized only once in our lives there, so that interpretation doesn't really fit with the rest of the passage if we're interpreting the whole thing consistently, which tells us he's really just saying that there's only one *type* of baptism for us – one which doesn't involve water at all; although not every Christian uses that interpretation, because others will instead claim that 1 Corinthians 12:13 should actually be translated as "for *in* one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," but since there is only *one* baptism for those in that body, at least at this time, and this verse still tells us that baptism into the body of Christ is what this one baptism actually is, if "in one Spirit" somehow *were* the best translation, and if it did refer to that baptism *with*, or *of*, or *in* the Holy Spirit, then it can't also include getting wet, because water baptism would then be a *second* baptism *in addition* to our *one* baptism in or with the Holy Spirit, so this doesn't help defend the idea of water baptism for the body of Christ at all anyway, which is why I'd suggest that we should stick with the way the KJB translates the verse, and is also why I personally don't trust English Bible versions which *don't* translate the verse this way.) And while forgiving others is still something God would like us to do,[205] it isn't required for salvation for us the way it is for Israel[206] since we aren't under the Mosaic law[207] or required to do good works in order to be saved when it comes to our

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[205] And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. — Ephesians 4:32

[206] For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. — Matthew 6:14-15

[207] For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. — Galatians 3:10

type of salvation (even though, yes, God will still end up having most members of the body of Christ do good works,[208] but we aren't required to do them in order to be saved, or even to *demonstrate* that we've been saved – since we've already learned that *"to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"* – and since Paul told us that *"we are his workmanship"* in the verse where he said we're *"created in Christ Jesus unto good works,"* we know that those are works God will make sure we do, or that He'll technically do through us), the way Israelites are when it comes to their type of salvation (or the way other Gentiles are if they also want to experience the sort of salvation Jesus and His disciples spoke about – remember, Gentiles can experience the same salvation Jesus and His disciples preached about, as evidenced by Cornelius and his household, just as Jews can experience the sort of salvation Paul primarily preached about, as evidenced by Paul himself), and, in fact, we can be saved right now *despite* the fact that Israel is *not* currently a light to the Gentiles[209] as they one day will need to be for Gentiles to be led to salvation, which will be at the time when the law shall go forth of Zion[210] (which isn't right now, at least not as of the time this book was written, since the law not only *doesn't* go forth from Zion – which refers to the land of Israel[211] – but doesn't even apply to Gentiles at all at present, or at least not to those Gentiles who haven't proselytized into the Israel of God).

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[208] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. — Ephesians 2:10

[209] I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. — Romans 11:11

[210] But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. — Micah 4:1-2

[211] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zion

The differences between those various forms of salvation also tells us just how important it is that we don't confuse the people in the church called the body of Christ with those people in the church referred to as the Israel of God, or else we'll misunderstand not only which teachings in the Bible apply specifically to which church, but how those in each of these two churches receive their type of salvation as well.

Of course, most Christians interpret the Bible with a major preconceived bias already present, which is the assumption that the whole Bible is to and about everyone. But unless you believe that everyone needs to build a literal ark out of literal gopher wood,[212] needs to get naked when they preach,[213] or needs to own a sword,[214] it should be pretty obvious that there are things in Scripture which simply don't apply to you, and based on what we just covered about the different types of salvation, it should also be obvious that there are two entirely different sets of messages for two entirely different groups of people in the Bible. And if a declaration regarding one of those particular types of salvation could be referred to as a proclamation of "glad tidings,"[215] or a pronouncement of news which is good, aka "good news" (all of which is what the English word "Gospel" that's translated from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον/"yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on"

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[212] And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. — Genesis 6:13-14

[213] At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. — Isaiah 20:2

[214] Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. — Luke 22:36

[215] And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, — Luke 8:1

means), if there *are* multiple different types of salvation mentioned in Scripture, which we know there are (unless, again, you think that Jesus' disciples being temporarily saved from dying by being saved from drowning in water is somehow the exact same sort of salvation He provided through His death for our sins), then each of those proclamations of good news would technically not be the *same* proclamation of good news as one another, which would mean it could be said that there's more than one Gospel referred to in Scripture, based on the definition of the word "Gospel." But if that's the case, shouldn't the Bible also *say* that there are multiple types of proclamations of good news, perhaps even giving each of these proclamations of good news different titles? Well, it actually does just that, and even tells us some of the names of these different proclamations in different places, such as in Galatians 2:7 (as just one of various examples of the different places that different titles for these proclamations are given), where we're told that two of these different titles are the Gospel of the Uncircumcision and the Gospel of the Circumcision.[216]

Unfortunately, since most Christians mistakenly assume that there's really only one kind of salvation and only one proclamation of good news anywhere in the Bible (at least that's what it would mean if there is only one Gospel in the Bible, based on the definition of "Gospel"), they'll also insist that because the next two verses in Galatians explain how both God and the pillars of the circumcision church (meaning the church called the Israel of God) sent Paul to the heathen (the Gentiles) while Peter and the rest focused on the circumcision[217] (the Jews), then verse 7 must have simply been saying the exact same thing as well. But

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[216] But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; — Galatians 2:7

[217] (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. — Galatians 2:8-9

these verses were actually Paul *expanding* on his previous statement in verse 7, by telling his readers who the primary audiences of each of the two separate proclamations of good news regarding the different types of salvation are, providing new information about what he'd just told them rather than simply being unnecessarily repetitive the way most Christians assume he was being in these verses, causing them to then read this assumption of redundancy into verses 7 through 9, ultimately leading them to believe it just meant Paul preached the Gospel to the uncircumcision and that Peter preached the exact same Gospel to the circumcision. However, for those who insist on interpreting it this way, if Paul *was* trying to get across to his readers that the different types of salvation are shared through different proclamations of good news with the titles of "the Gospel of the Circumcision" along with "the Gospel of the Uncircumcision" (or even perhaps different proclamations of good news with the titles of "the Gospel *to* the Circumcision" and "the Gospel *to* the Uncircumcision," which is along the lines of how many modern Bible versions translate verse 7, although I personally believe the KJB got this right, and that the rest of the chapter you're reading will demonstrate this to be the case), I need to ask you to explain (even if just to yourself) what he would have needed to have written differently there in order to convince you that there *are* indeed two separate proclamations of good news being referred to by two separate titles there, especially in light of the fact that there are obviously multiple different types of salvation referred to in different parts of the Bible, with different methods of being saved when it comes to each of them as well.

As far as what the Gospel of the Uncircumcision is, it's simply the good news that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the

third day,[218] although I should quickly say that Paul also referred to this good news by various other titles as well (as already mentioned), such as "the Gospel of Christ,"[219] as "the Gospel of the Grace of God,"[220] and even sometimes simply as "the Gospel of God."[221] And, of course, those of us in the body of Christ sometimes also refer to it as Paul's Gospel, because Paul himself called it *"my Gospel,"*[222] and because one generally doesn't call something theirs unless they're trying to differentiate it from something that belongs to someone else, or at least trying to point out that it doesn't belong to, or perhaps originate from, someone else; and if there was only one Gospel then Paul would have said "*the* Gospel" rather than "*my* Gospel"[223] in those particular passages[224] (although some have tried to use Paul's use of the phrase *"my grace"* in

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[218] Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

[219] And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. — Romans 15:29

[220] But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. — Acts 20:24

[221] That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. — Romans 15:16

[222] Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, — Romans 16:25

[223] In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. — Romans 2:16

[224] Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: — 2 Timothy 2:8

Philippians 1:7[225] to try to argue that Paul using the word "my" doesn't prove this, but this verse is actually even more proof of what I've been saying, because Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:16 that he was the first human to be shown the sort of grace connected with the Gospel of the Uncircumcision,[226] so this grace began with him just as this Gospel did – relatively speaking, of course; from an absolute perspective, both the grace and the Gospel we're talking about obviously began with God and Christ, but I'm speaking from the relative perspective here, just as Paul was when he referred to *"my grace"* and to *"my Gospel"*).

As for the Gospel of the Circumcision, it was originally referred to by the title of "the Gospel of the Kingdom,"[227] because it was the proclamation of good news that *"the kingdom of heaven is at hand"*[228] which John the Baptist[229] first proclaimed,[230] and which Jesus and His disciples also preached while He walked

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[225] Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. — Philippians 1:7

[226] Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. — 1 Timothy 1:16

[227] And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. — Matthew 4:23

[228] From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. — Matthew 4:17

[229] In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. — Matthew 3:1-2

[230] The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. — Luke 16:16

the earth.[231] From a literal perspective, this proclamation of good news meant that "the kingdom of heaven is near" (and, in fact, while Jesus was still in their midst in Israel, so was the kingdom itself, from a certain perspective, which is why *"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"*[232] is what this Gospel meant from a figurative perspective, and which is also what the proclamation of this Gospel message had to transition into after Acts 13,[233] when the kingdom was no longer literally "at hand" for Israel any longer, at least for the time being), since it was ready to come fully into effect in the near future, and would have shortly thereafter if the right qualifications were met by Israel – although that didn't happen, as we know, so the "nearness" of the kingdom to Israel went into abeyance by at least Acts 13 (if not much earlier). To be saved in connection with this Gospel, one has to repent[234] and believe the proclamation of good news that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God (which is the most important

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[231] These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. — Matthew 10:5-7

[232] But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. — John 20:31

[233] And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. — Acts 13:42-48

[234] Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. — Acts 3:19

part of how one believes this Gospel, although prior to its abeyance they also would have been required to believe that the kingdom truly was "at hand" at the time, and now, post-resurrection, they also have to believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead), and follow this belief up with the required good works such as water baptism[235] and following the law as well, of course. However, after Paul turned to the Gentiles in Acts 13, because the "nearness" of the kingdom to Israel was temporarily put on hold by God at that time – since the majority of Israel was blinded by God to the truth about Jesus from then on, as prophesied both in word[236] and in type,[237] as happened in person at the time[238] – he needed a label to distinguish between his Gospel and Israel's Gospel, which would be why he began calling it the Gospel of the Circumcision (although most believing Israelites saved in connection with this Gospel would have just called it "the Gospel"[239] from that time on, since they weren't

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[235] He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. — Mark 16:16

[236] What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. — Romans 11:7-8

[237] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typology_(theology)

[238] And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. — Acts 13:6-12

[239] But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. — 1 Peter 1:25

concerned with differentiating between the two Gospels themselves when preaching to their intended audience of other Israelites, if they were even aware there was a second Gospel being preached in the first place).

In addition, this Gospel of the Circumcision has also been referred to as "the Gospel of God" by Peter,[240] and this has caused some confusion among certain Christians, because of the fact that Paul *also* referred to *his* Gospel by that label, but this comes down to the fact that "the Gospel of God" is a more generic term that can be used for *any* good news connected with God, and this is, in fact, why Paul said that the Gospel has to be rightly divided in the first place[241] (yes, the term "the word of truth,"[242] or "the word of the truth,"[243] is basically always a reference to good news – aka a *Gospel* – in the Bible[244]). Now, this is where some Christians will also (rightly) point out that the Greek word ὀρθοτομέω/"or-thot-om-eh'-o" – a variation of which "rightly dividing" is translated from in the KJB – can *also* be translated as "making straight" or "correctly handling" or some other similar term, in order to distract from the idea that the good news about God needs to be divided. But as you read the rest of this chapter, it should become pretty obvious to you why "rightly dividing" is indeed a better translation than those other options are when it comes to this verse, so I'm not even going to bother responding to that point here, because you'll be able to see

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[240] For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? — 1 Peter 4:17

[241] Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. — 2 Timothy 2:15

[242] In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, — Ephesians 1:13

[243] For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; — Colossians 1:5

[244] Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. — James 1:18

for yourself by the time you finish this chapter (but feel free to get back to me if you disagree after finishing this chapter, although I will require a good explanation – as well as answers to the questions I asked throughout this chapter – of why you think I'm wrong if you do at that time, taking everything I wrote about in this chapter into consideration).

I should also quickly discuss the fact that their assertion about "the Gospel of God" is similar to how some will also point out that Paul referred to the Gospel he preached to the nations as "the Gospel of Christ," as I already mentioned, but that Mark 1:1 refers to "the Gospel of Jesus Christ,"[245] and that Paul also refers to "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" in 2 Thessalonians 1:8,[246] in order to claim that these must all be the same Gospel. Well, as far as Paul's reference to "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 goes, he actually *was* referring to the Gospel of the Circumcision there, as I'll cover in a later chapter, which is the Gospel that the reference in Mark 1:1 would have also been connected with, so this isn't a problem at all. And as far as his reference to "the Gospel of Christ" in Romans 15:29 goes, this label doesn't have the word "Jesus" in it, telling us that it isn't the same Gospel as the one in those other two passages at all, although the fact that there is more than one Gospel in the Bible should make this clear enough anyway, even if you have to finish reading this book before you're convinced that this is indeed the case.

That there isn't only one Gospel in the Bible really should be more obvious to more people than it currently is, though. I mean, first of all, we know that Paul didn't learn the Gospel he preached to the nations from any mortal humans, but rather he said that he learned this Gospel directly from the glorified Jesus

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[245] The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; — Mark 1:1

[246] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: — 2 Thessalonians 1:8

Christ.[247] However, it wouldn't make sense for him to have been persecuting the Israel of God if he wasn't aware of their most important teaching already (the Gospel they were preaching, which, again, is that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God), having heard it from other Jews at the time, so the Gospel he learned directly from Christ couldn't have been the same Gospel he was persecuting the Jewish church for preaching, because he would have had to have already known that Gospel before he ever even met Christ on the road to Damascus in order to persecute them for preaching it. Although, if you disagree, I have to ask you to explain (again, even if just to yourself) *what* Paul was persecuting the Israel of God for, exactly, if his Gospel was the same one they were already preaching, as well as what the Gospel he said he received not of man, *but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*, was, especially in light of the fact that it doesn't appear as though Paul was told *this* Gospel by Jesus on the road to Damascus either (referring to the Gospel about Christ's death **for our sins**, burial, and resurrection on the third day, which he said that he *wasn't* taught by any mortal humans), at least not based on what Scripture says about this encounter,[248] and yet he immediately proclaimed the same Gospel message about Jesus that Peter and the rest of the apostles were preaching after being healed by Ananias (which was, one more time for those who have forgotten, the message that Jesus is the

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[247] But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. — Galatians 1:11-12

[248] And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. — Acts 9:1-6

Christ and the Son of God[249]). And so, it seems to me that the obvious conclusion has to be that the good news which Paul later preached to the Gentiles *couldn't* have been the same good news which Peter preached to Israel and the proselytes, and which he himself preached not only at the beginning of his ministry, but also three years later in Jerusalem, where the apostles and Jesus' brother James became acquainted with him for a couple weeks.[250] I mean, the most important part of the "him" they became acquainted with would certainly include what the Gospel he believed and preached at that time was – he wouldn't have just been sitting around discussing sports with them for two weeks – especially since he preached with them at the time he visited with them in Jerusalem as well.[251] (And for those who don't know, *"other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother"* in Galatians 1:19 must simply mean, "other than the apostles, I got to know nobody except for the Lord's brother James"; the fact that this particular James wasn't one of the 12 apostles, and that Acts 9:26-29 says he *did* meet the rest of the apostles, and even preached with them, as I just mentioned, clarifies its meaning for those who find the wording confusing.) If the Gospel that Paul referred to as *"my Gospel"*

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[249] And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. — Acts 9:17-20

[250] Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. — Galatians 1:18-19

[251] And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. — Acts 9:26-29

really was the same Gospel he'd already preached with them in Jerusalem, why would he have then had to return more than a decade later to explain what the specific Gospel he was now preaching among the Gentiles was?[252] Peter and the rest of the apostles (as well as James) would already have been well aware of what the Gospel he preached was from his previous visit if it was the *same* Gospel, so for those who believe it was the same Gospel, I have to again ask what the Gospel was that he preached among the Gentiles which he had to explain to them, exactly, if they were already quite familiar with the Gospel he preached, and why did he have to explain it to them all those years later if they already knew it? I've never heard a good answer to this query, and if you can't provide one that makes sense, you have no basis for your assumption that there is only one Gospel, if that's what you assume.

Of course, those Christians who claim that there is only one Gospel to believe and only one type of salvation we can experience, while also understanding that the body of Christ isn't under the law or required to do works for their salvation, yet who also claim that we need to follow Jesus' teachings as laid out in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (because they believe those teachings are just as relevant to the body of Christ as Paul's teachings are), seem to be missing the fact that they're actually *not* following the majority of the teachings that Jesus gave during His earthly ministry at all, because they aren't selling all their possessions and following the Mosaic law, among the various other things He's recorded as telling His followers to do in those books. Still, many Christians pretend that they *are* following these teachings, because they seem to believe these commands weren't meant to be obeyed at all, but rather that Jesus wanted people to *disobey* Him when He told them to do these things, and to disobey God when He told the Israelites to follow the Mosaic law – even though

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[252] Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. — Galatians 2:1-2

there's no indication anywhere in these four books that this is what Jesus meant, any more than there's any indication in any of the Hebrew Scriptures that this is what God meant – and that by *disobeying* both God and Christ they're actually somehow obeying the commands in the non-Pauline books of the Bible. Of course, there are also certain Christians who *do* believe that works are required for salvation, yet even most of them pick and choose which works they want to do, since almost none of them have sold all they have and given the money to the poor either. (And those who might instead claim that the Mosaic law and Jesus' commands to do specific works for salvation *were* relevant at the time but that they stopped being relevant after the cross don't seem to realize they're *still* saying that basically none of the commands in the Bible prior to the cross are relevant or binding on us, especially when it comes to salvation, even though I've heard many of them still preach about these things as though they also somehow *are* still relevant and binding on everyone, although that sort of contradiction is to be expected when one does ignore the meaning of Scripture and doesn't rightly divide the word of truth.)

But all that aside, the definition of the word "Gospel" really makes it clear that there's more than one of them in the Bible anyway. Remember, the word "Gospel" refers to a pronouncement of glad tidings, or news which is good, and the word "news" quite literally refers to "a series of specific words which, when laid out in a specific order, conveys specific information about a specific subject." This means that if you have *another* set of specific words which, when laid out in *their own* specific order, convey some *other* sort of specific information about that subject, you can't say that you have the *same* news, regardless of whether both sets of news are good in nature, or even about the same person (for example, the news that "Joshua went to the graveyard and then returned" can't be said to be the exact same news as "that thing you've been anticipating is ready to happen," because the two messages mean something entirely different from one another since they convey entirely different pieces of information from each other: one piece of news being about

an action a specific person took in the past, with the other piece of news being about something the hearer or reader had been anticipating being ready to occur in the near future). Because they're providing us with different sorts of information from one another, it means that they are, by definition, different sets of news (and that there are at least two different sets of news in existence). And since the news which is good that Jesus and His disciples preached prior to Paul's conversion (which was the news that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand") didn't contain the same specific words as the news which is good that Paul later preached to the nations did (which is the news that "Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day"), nor did it convey the same specific information (since their news which is good didn't contain anything about Christ's death for our sins in it, which it couldn't have because most of the people proclaiming it weren't even aware of the fact that He was going to die at the time they preached their news), it should be very evident that the news which is good that Jesus' disciples preached during Jesus' earthly ministry simply *can't* be said to be the same news which is good (meaning the same Gospel) that Paul taught, and so anyone who still insists there's only one set of glad tidings/news which is good/Gospel in the Bible is simply lying to themselves at this point. Although, if anyone disagrees, I'd be very curious to hear them explain how the news which is good about Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection that Paul preached is indeed what Jesus' disciples were preaching when they preached the Gospel of the Kingdom during Jesus' earthly ministry, all while being unaware that He was even going to die.

And to quickly get the most common objections to the idea of there being two Gospels out of the way, first of all, some people mistakenly believe Paul was saying in Galatians 1:8-9 that anyone who preaches another Gospel will be accursed. Unfortunately, the people who use this argument not only read more into this passage than it's actually saying, they also don't pay close attention to

the specific wording of the passage either,[253] leading them to believe a whole doctrine that wasn't what Paul was getting at there at all. You see, Paul wasn't saying there is only one true Gospel there, or that nobody could ever preach a Gospel to someone other than the one he taught the body of Christ (if that were the case, nobody could ever share good news of any sort with anyone if it wasn't about Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection, including good news/gospels/glad tidings about births or job promotions or any other sort of positive information). Most people who base their assumptions about there being only one Gospel on this passage have likely only read translations of Scripture which render verses 6 and 7 figuratively in the way the KJB does when it says *"another gospel: which is not another"* in the verses before his warning.[254] The problem is, if one doesn't understand that this is a very poetic sort of translation, they can easily end up very confused. Is it another Gospel or is it not another Gospel? It can't literally be both another Gospel and not another Gospel at the same time, which confirms that this particular translation isn't meant to be read literally.

What most people aren't aware of is that Paul actually used two distinct Greek words rather than one in the original text (and that he literally just meant: "a *different* gospel which is not another") in order to differentiate between any legitimate Gospels that weren't his but were still perfectly okay to be taught to certain people to follow for salvation (as long as it wasn't members of the body of Christ being taught that *they* should obey these other Gospels) and any illegitimate "gospels" that shouldn't be taught by anyone at all, speaking of

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[253] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. — Galatians 1:8-9

[254] I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. — Galatians 1:6-7

both a **different** (ἕτερον/"het'-er-on") *so-called* "gospel" which isn't actually a real Gospel at all, and **another** (ἄλλο/"al'-lo") *actual* Gospel (as you can see from the very literal interlinear translation of the phrase that I included here, which is something I'm going to do in various parts of this book because I believe that it's helpful to provide visual demonstrations when it comes to the literal meaning of certain Greek phrases in Scripture, although I do encourage you to confirm for yourself, using whatever study tools you personally use, that this is indeed what the words mean when read literally). The Greek word ἕτερον basically means "other of a differing sort," while ἄλλο means "other of the same sort," so the wording of this passage allows for the existence of another/ἄλλο *true* Gospel (or even true Gospels, plural) in addition to Paul's Gospel. For those who haven't figured it out yet, this is simply another example of the translators of the KJB translating two Greek words which meant something different from one another using the same English word, and if one isn't careful, they can completely misinterpret this passage as saying the exact opposite of what it actually means because they aren't aware of this fact.

What the original Greek words mean when read very literally

ἕτερον	εὐαγγέλιον	ὃ	οὐκ	ἔστιν
a different	Gospel	which	not	is
ἄλλο				
another				

Simply put, Paul wasn't saying that people who taught there are other Gospels are under a curse, since he did so himself in the very next chapter of this epistle.[255] All he was telling his readers is that anyone who tried to get those in *the body of Christ* to follow the requirements of any Gospels **for their salvation** other than the one *they had already received from him* would be accursed. But

[255] But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; — Galatians 2:7

Peter and the rest of the circumcision believers could preach the requirements of their particular Gospel as something to be followed to pretty much anyone that they wanted to without fear, **as long as it wasn't to existing members of the body of Christ**, based on the words "*unto you*" in verses 8 and 9, since Paul was writing to those who had already believed his Gospel (meaning those who had already become members of the body of Christ), not to those who hadn't. In fact, the different/ἕτερον "gospel" that Paul was warning about there was actually an adulterated mix of both Gospels, which means it was an attempt to blend the two Gospels into one (those whom Paul was condemning were trying to mix the law elements associated with the Gospel that Peter preached in with the pure grace of Paul's Gospel, resulting in an illegitimate, unbiblical "gospel"). Unfortunately, this means that the "evangelists" and "Bible teachers" who are also trying to force the contents of each of these two actual Gospels into one today (by insisting that there *is* only one Gospel) are guilty of preaching that very same different/ἕτερον "gospel" that isn't even another/ἄλλο (completely legitimate) Gospel at all like the Gospel that Peter preached was, bringing the curse that Paul warned about upon themselves.

And on the off chance that anyone ever tries to claim that "different" and "another" (or ἕτερον and ἄλλο) must literally always mean the same thing, here are some sentences to consider: 1) "the word 'different' is different from the word 'another,'" 2) "the word 'another' is another from the word 'different,'" 3) "the word 'another' is different from the word 'another,'" 4) "the word 'different' is another from the word 'different,'" 5) "the word 'another' is another from the word 'another,'" and 6) "the word 'different' is different from the word 'different.'" Read those, then ask yourself if those sentences all mean the same thing, or if the last five even make any sense at all. And to really drive the point home, if the two words truly did mean the same thing, the verse could also be translated as "a different Gospel which is not different," similar to sentence number 6 above, but that would be an extremely nonsensical translation. And if the words "different" and "another" *don't* mean the same

thing, as those examples I just gave prove, there's literally no way to interpret the passage as meaning Paul is saying there's only one legitimate Gospel, because he's clearly allowing for at least three separate messages called gospels in this passage, 1) his own Gospel, 2) another Gospel, and 3) a different "gospel," which means the only way he could have been talking about only two messages called gospels – 1) his own Gospel, and 2) a different "gospel" – with only one being legitimate, is if "another" and "different" actually *did* mean the same thing. (This isn't to say that ἕτερον and ἄλλο can't ever be used as synonyms of one another in a more figurative manner in other places, since we already know that the same word can be used in different ways in different passages, but it should be clear by this point that Paul wasn't using ἕτερον as another word with literally the same meaning as ἄλλο in this passage – since then he'd have been contradicting himself by saying it both was and wasn't another Gospel at the same time – but that he was instead using the two words with different definitions intended, contrasting them with one another, in this case; and yes, I used the words "different" and "another" repeatedly in this sentence on purpose, to really drive my point home.) And even if we only look at the way the KJB renders the verse, ignoring the original Greek words, that translation is obviously still saying the same thing, just very poetically (since a literal interpretation on its own would be contradictory, as I just mentioned), so it has to be interpreted as meaning: "another" [so-called] gospel which is not [actually] another [legitimate Gospel] (with the first "another" there being in quotation marks in order to demonstrate that it still just means "different" [from any actual Gospels], when it comes to this particular translation).

Besides, anyone who has studied the Bible already believes that there *were* other glad tidings (again, meaning Gospels) preached in Scripture, such as the angel Gabriel's proclamation of glad tidings regarding the impending birth of

John the Baptist to Zacharias,[256] with "glad tidings" being translated from a verb form of the same Greek word (εὐαγγέλιον) that "Gospel" is translated from in the KJB (and that the English word "evangelism" is transliterated from), literally meaning to "preach this good news" in that passage. This means that there's no way Paul could have been saying there's only one message allowed to be labelled as words of good news/a Gospel/glad tidings/εὐαγγέλιον and preached in existence or else we'd have to remove those verses discussing the other "glad tidings" from the Bible altogether, and Gabriel would have been accursed for telling Zacharias about his wife's pregnancy, unless those various other words of good news/glad tidings all happen to be a part of a larger, all-encompassing, progressively-revealed "Gospel" we have to believe in so we can be saved. But then John the Baptist's birth would also have to be a part of what the body of Christ has to have faith in for their salvation (and someone who hadn't heard of John the Baptist yet couldn't get saved until they do if this were the case), so this obviously makes no sense, especially in light of what Paul said the Gospel he preached actually was, which means that right off the bat we already have multiple proclamations of good news/Gospels/glad tidings/εὐαγγέλιον in the Bible even before we get to any of the Gospels that one can believe when they get saved (another example of this fact was the news which is good that was preached unto Abraham,[257] with this being yet *another* proclamation of glad tidings – preached in order to prove that even the Hebrew Scriptures demonstrate that justification can be through faith – and this good news obviously *also* wasn't Paul's Gospel since, just like the Gospel of the Kingdom, this proclamation of news which is good *also* didn't mention Christ's death for our sins, burial, or resurrection on the third day, not to mention the fact that Paul's Gospel *isn't* justification by faith, even though one *is* justified by faith

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[256] And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. — Luke 1:19

[257] And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. — Galatians 3:8

when they believe Paul's Gospel, as we'll discuss in depth in chapter 6). All that being said, even if somebody somehow still hasn't recognized that there's more than one Gospel in the Bible after everything I've already covered, they should at least now recognize that the passage in Galatians 1 we just looked at about a different gospel which is not another can't be used to refute the idea, since its wording does at least *allow* for another/ἄλλο legitimate Gospel to exist, even if they somehow still don't believe there definitely is another.

And yet, even though the idea of shoehorning all proclamations called good news/Gospels/glad tidings/εὐαγγέλιον (along with any cognates thereof) in the Bible into one supposedly progressively-revealed Gospel makes no sense and contradicts other parts of Scripture (unless, again, people have to have faith in John the Baptist's birth in order to be saved, not to mention have faith that all nations shall be blessed in Abraham), anyone who *does* still believe there's only one Gospel in the Bible after reading all that is pretty much *forced* to believe in a progressively-revealed Gospel (whether they're consistent and include the good news about John the Baptist's birth and the blessing of all nations in Abraham in what's required to be trusted in for salvation, or whether they choose to ignore consistency and leave it out). Of course, many Christians who believe there's only one proclamation of good news/glad tidings/Gospel in Scripture actually do admit that they believe this supposed one proclamation of good news as a whole actually *was* progressively revealed throughout Scripture, and that it now contains both the proclamation of good news made during Jesus' earthly ministry (that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, along with the details of how one gets to enter it) as well as the proclamation of good news which Paul preached to the nations (that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day), and that these two different proclamations of good news are simply two parts of one all-encompassing proclamation of good news which has only been gradually revealed through progressive revelation (although not too all-encompassing, or else, again, we'd have to have faith in the birth of John the Baptist and the blessing of all nations in Abraham for our salvation, not to

mention have to do the good works that were required in order to be saved – which included following the Mosaic law and being baptized in water – back when Jesus and His disciples preached the part of this supposedly progressively-revealed "Gospel" that they preached during Jesus' earthly ministry, since a progressively-revealed "Gospel" would include *everything* connected with it in *all* the time periods it was supposedly being revealed throughout, because otherwise it wouldn't be *one* complete set of news with *one* complete set of requirements that had been progressively revealed as time went on but would rather be two – or more – *distinct* sets of news with *two – or more – entirely different sets* of requirements). And while this idea isn't actually stated anywhere in Scripture, which means they're ultimately just making this idea up in order to support their assumption that there can't be more than one Gospel in Scripture, at least they recognize that this would have to be the case if there really *was* only one Gospel recorded there, which it indeed has to be, considering the fact that what Paul referred to as the Gospel he preached among the nations included Christ's death *for our sins*, His burial, and His resurrection, which is something that Jesus' disciples couldn't have included in the Gospel they preached during His earthly ministry, since they weren't even aware He was going to die at the time, much less be resurrected, as I keep pointing out. Some of these Christians also like to say things such as, "Jesus is the Gospel," however, and while this makes for a catchy statement that many people would automatically want to nod their heads in assent to because of how spiritual it sounds, since the Bible tells us what the two different proclamations of news which is good related to salvation made by Jesus' disciples and later by Paul really are, and because it tells us that these proclamations of news which is good are *about* Jesus, not that He Himself *is* the proclamation of news which is good (with the first proclamation being about the *identity* of Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, and the second one being about the *work* of Jesus through His death *for our sins*), unless you're aware of a verse in Scripture which actually outright says, "Jesus is the Gospel" (which is something I've never seen

in the Bible), we know that this is also nothing more than an assertion made in order to defend their assumption that there really is only one Gospel.

However, let's pretend for a moment that the Bible actually did say there's only one progressively-revealed Gospel in Scripture. If that were the case, considering the fact, again, that none of Jesus' followers prior to Paul preached that Christ's death was *for our sins* (or even that Christ was going to die in the first place, when they were proclaiming the news which is good that they preached prior to His death), or that one had to have faith in His death *for our sins* in order to be saved back then (which they couldn't have since – just as a reminder for those who have somehow already forgotten since the last time I mentioned it – **none of them even understood that He was going to die prior to Him doing so**), this would mean the Gospel being preached before Paul's ministry to the nations (or, at the very least, before Jesus actually died) would have been pretty useless unless those who heard the Gospel being preached back then could be saved *without* believing that Christ's death was *for our sins*, which means anyone who believes this idea is ultimately telling us that we have to divide this *one*, supposedly progressively-revealed, "news which is good" into *two* separate halves, preached during *two* different periods of time, made up of *two* different sets of words talking about *two* different specific sets of things needing to be believed (and perhaps performed) in order to be said one is saved during each of those two respective periods of time: with the first half being preached during the first period of time, meaning *prior* to Paul joining the body of Christ (or prior to Christ's death and resurrection, at least; but since we have no scriptural record of Christ's death being *for our sins* as something that was taught as something that had to be believed in order to be able to be said one is saved by anyone before Paul did, especially based on Peter's sermons in Acts and what John wrote in John 20:31, we have no good basis for assuming it was), and the second half being preached during the second period of time *by* Paul after he joined the body of Christ, taking us full circle to what I've been getting at all along here. Which means the bottom line here is, if there *are* two

different proclamations (meaning two sets of words with two entirely different meanings) which were *both* called “news which is good” that were preached by *two different sets of people* during *two different periods of times* (as would have to be the case even if they were both a part of one progressively-revealed Gospel, and which we’ve already determined is the case anyway, one being about Jesus’ identity and the other being about His work on the cross), then, since the phrase "news which is good" is literally the definition of the word "gospel," the existence of one progressively-revealed Gospel would still ultimately result in the existence of *two* Gospels after we divide that one progressively-revealed Gospel into its two respective halves, meaning its two respective proclamations of “news which is good” preached in their two respective time periods. So at the end of the day, even if we decided to somehow try to claim that there *is* only one Gospel, progressively revealed over time, it still technically results in two Gospels anyway, once all the facts about how it has to be divided into two entirely separate messages preached in two entirely separate time frames (along with how the English language works) are taken into consideration. And with all that being said, there's almost no point in even going over the other objections to the idea of two Gospels, because we've now proven that it's impossible for there to be anything *less* than two Gospels in Scripture once we've properly divided the hypothetical progressively-revealed one Gospel into its two respective halves (since, even if two halves do equal one, you still begin with *two* of these halves, each called “news which is good” and each of them being a very different set of news, regardless), but for the sake of clarity, I'm still going to go over them anyway.

And so, in answer to the next most common objection, yes, it’s true, as many Christians also like to point out when trying to deny the existence of multiple Gospels in Scripture, that there is neither Jew nor Gentile for those people Paul wrote this epistle to.[258] However, that’s only the case *within* the body of Christ

[258] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:28

(members of the body of Christ being those people that this epistle was specifically written to, along with all his other epistles as well), because one's nationality is irrelevant for those in Christ's body,[259] whereas, for the Israel of God, and even for Gentiles during the thousand-year kingdom, the nationality of Jews and other Israelites will remain very important.[260] This means that, based on everything we've covered, it should also now be clear that Paul was *reducing* the scope of membership within the Israel of God in Romans 2:28-29[261] to include only *certain* Jews, not expanding it to include the Gentiles in the body of Christ as well, since "neither Jew nor Gentile" doesn't mean "you're all Israelites now," considering there would then still be Jews, even if *only* Jews, in the body of Christ (and yes, I know there's technically a difference between the

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[259] Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. — Ephesians 2:11-22

[260] Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. — Zechariah 8:22-23

[261] For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. — Romans 2:28-29

words “Israelite” and “Jew,” but the word “Jew” is often used as a synonym for “Israelite”[262] both in and out of the Bible – with the term “the house of Israel” also being used to refer to *all* Israelites at times as well,[263] and not always just to those who separated from the house of Judah[264] – so I’m in good company when doing so).

Some Christians also like to ask how Paul could have been the first member of the body of Christ when he himself said that there were other people “in Christ” before he was.[265] Well, we already know that Paul was the first person to be shown the sort of mercy that he was shown,[266] demonstrating himself to be the first member of the body of Christ (because members of the Israel of God are shown a *different* type of mercy, a type which is a little less unconditional, since works *are* required when it comes to their Gospel), but the words “in Christ” don’t necessarily even refer to being in the body of Christ at all. Sometimes these words are used simply to mean “because of Christ,” such as when they’re used in 1 Corinthians 15:22,[267] as we’ll discuss in a later chapter. And if you look closely, you’ll notice that the words “the body of” aren’t actually used in the phrase “in Christ,” and to assume that it *has* to mean “to be in the body of Christ” is just that: an assumption. Instead, if can *also* just refer to “dwelling in

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[262] *The Terms Hebrew, Israelite, and Jew are Synonymous Terms* by Evrah: https://whitefeatherministries.com/the-terms-hebrew-israelite-and-jew-are-synonymous-terms

[263] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. — Acts 2:36

[264] *The House of Israel and the House of Judah*: https://biblehub.com/topical/t/the_house_of_israel_and_the_house_of_judah.htm

[265] Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. — Romans 16:7

[266] Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. — 1 Timothy 1:16

[267] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

Him" (while having Christ "dwelling in them," so to speak, at the same time[268]) or to "abiding in Him" (while, again, having Christ "abide in them," so to speak, at the same too[269]), as well as can simply refer to *belonging* to Christ, and members of the Israel of God like Peter belong to Him[270] just as much as members of the body of Christ like Paul do,[271] telling us that being "*in* Christ" doesn't mean one has to be a member of the *body* of Christ.

And yes, it's also true – as some will also point out – that while Peter didn't teach Christ's death as being *for our sins* in the book of Acts, and even taught that Jesus' death was bad news for the Jewish people he was speaking to in the same book[272] (rather than being the good news that it was for Paul's Gentile audiences and that it is for us), Paul technically isn't recorded as teaching Christ's death as being for our sins, or as being good news, in the book of Acts either. However, the fact of the matter is that *no* sermon of Paul recorded in the book of Acts contains a *full* "Gospel message" explaining how one gets saved, at least when it comes to *his* Gospel, which means his full Gospel message of how one is saved must have been preached "off screen," so to speak (meaning that specific part of his messages wasn't recorded in Acts, unless you think *"believe*

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[268] And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. — 1 John 3:24

[269] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. — John 15:4

[270] For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. — Mark 9:41

[271] And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. — 1 Corinthians 3:23

[272] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? — Acts 2:36-37

on the Lord Jesus Christ"[273] in and of itself is enough of an explanation of how to get saved for someone who wouldn't have known what that even meant, since he and Silas didn't say *what* to believe *about* the Lord Jesus Christ in that verse; so while they did later explain all the details about what they meant by that statement,[274] those specific details weren't actually included in the book), whereas the sermons of Peter recorded in Acts are a lot more comprehensive (and while these sermons telling his audience members how they could be saved in the manner of salvation he was referring to in these sermons often did include the fact that Jesus Christ died, exactly *zero* of these sermons contained the information that His death was specifically *for our sins* – meaning done to deal with our sins – or that it was necessary to believe specifically that "this is *why* Christ died" in order to be saved in the way Peter meant his audience could experience salvation, meaning getting to enjoy life in the kingdom of heaven on earth in the future[275]). So this just means that the writer of Acts didn't include the contents of Paul's Gospel in the book, likely because it's primarily a Circumcision writing to Israelites concerned with why the kingdom of heaven didn't come fully into effect in the nation of Israel at that time, and not simply a general history lesson about the "early church" and nothing more, the way many assume it is (the "Circumcision writings" are what members of the body of Christ call the books of the Bible not signed by Paul,[276] by the way, with his 13 epistles being referred to by us as the "Uncircumcision writings").

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[273] And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. — Acts 16:30-31

[274] And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. — Acts 16:32

[275] Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. — Acts 3:19-21

[276] The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. — 2 Thessalonians 3:17

Now, some like to also point out that Peter *does* mention the death and blood of Christ in one of his own epistles (specifically in 1 Peter 1:18-19[277] and in 1 Peter 2:24[278]) in a manner that was far more positive for his readers than the way he explained it in his sermons in Acts was (where it was discussed only as a negative as far as his listeners at the time were concerned[279]). And while what Peter wrote in his first epistle technically *can* be considered news which happened to be good, at least as far as his written audience was concerned (which consisted only of Israelites, since it was addressed to "the strangers,"[280] and the Greek word rendered as "stranger" in that verse – translated from παρεπίδημος/"par-ep-id'-ay-mos" – literally means "someone who comes from a foreign country into a new location to reside there by the side of the natives," telling us that Peter was writing specifically to Israelites of the dispersion, or diaspora), it's important to note that it wasn't *called* "the good news" (or "the Gospel") in Peter's epistles the way the message which Paul proclaimed in 1 Corinthians 15 was,[281] and also to note that we already know what the *actual* message called "the good news" which Peter taught was, at least the

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[277] Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: — 1 Peter 1:18-19

[278] Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. — 1 Peter 2:24

[279] Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: — Acts 2:23

[280] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, — 1 Peter 1:1

[281] Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

message called “the good news” which he preached during Jesus’ earthly ministry, and that the message which *he* would have called "the good news" at that time had nothing to do with Christ's death for our sins, or even His subsequent burial and resurrection, at all, because at that time he didn't even realize Jesus was going to die, as I trust you still remember. So yes, Peter did eventually realize the connection between Christ’s death and Isaiah 53,[282] but not until after Jesus died and rose again, and there’s also no indication that he ever actually understood the full effect that Christ’s death for **our** (meaning **all humanity’s**) sins had the way Paul did either, with it seeming likely that he only knew the Circumcision connection to His death according to prophecy rather than the Uncircumcision connection according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret from the time the world began until it was revealed to

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[282] Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. — Isaiah 53:1-12

and through Paul.[283] Because yes, Jesus *did* have to die in order for Israel's New Covenant to come into effect, and also in order to be a propitiation for their sins[284] (and yes, for the sins of Gentiles who get saved in connection with the Gospel of the Circumcision too, which is all that 1 John 2:2 was referring to – no, John's main point in this verse was *not* that everyone will be saved, for reasons that will become clear later, despite how many Universalists wish it was), but His death accomplished *so much more* than that as well (and Peter and John and the other disciples certainly weren't aware of *any* of what the cross accomplished until *after* Christ died and was resurrected, which means the Gospel they preached prior to that point couldn't possibly have contained anything about it the way the Gospel which Paul preached did anyway). You see, the cross of Christ reached so much deeper into humanity's need than merely bringing one small nation closer to their second "birth" (although that is an important result of His death and resurrection as well), getting right down to the root of humanity's biggest problem itself. Remember, Israel's Passover lambs were not tortured during the temple sacrifices under the Mosaic law. Rather, their throats were slit quickly, with that being the extent of their suffering. However, the same can't be said about Jesus Christ. His hours of torment on the cross touched an aspect of humanity's condition that the swift death of the Passover lambs could never reach. In fact, the depth of suffering during His time on the cross goes deeper than anything Peter or John ever understood, telling us that the whole human race is finished (the Passover lambs left Israel intact while the cross wiped out everything and everyone in its path,[285] even if this might only apply in practice to believers in Paul's Gospel at

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[283] Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, — Romans 16:25

[284] And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. — 1 John 2:2

[285] For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: — 2 Corinthians 5:14

first, with it only applying to everyone else from a proleptic perspective until later – prolepsis being a common figure of speech used throughout the Bible which means "the representation or assumption of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished," calling what is not yet as though it already were, in other words, as the Bible says that God Himself does[286]). The other apostles looked back to the patriarchs, but when Paul taught about what happened on the cross, he went all the way back to Adam in his explanations.[287] No other writers discussed Adam when it came to dealing with the sin and salvation of all humanity, especially when it comes to Gentiles; they wrote about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, among others, but only Paul traced our entire spiritual history back to the first man,[288] and only in Paul's Gospel is the entire race made new. The Circumcision writings promise a new "birth" for the nation of Israel (no, being "born again" doesn't mean what most Christians have assumed it does, as I'll prove later in this book), but the new creation Paul taught about is to the new birth what a lake is to a teacup. You see, when Jesus rose from the grave, there was a whole new creation (referred to as a new "creature" in the KJB) which came into existence,[289] one which comes into the lives of everyone who believes Paul's Gospel today,[290] and which will eventually come into the lives of every human who will ever have lived (as I'll also prove

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[286] Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. — Romans 4:16-17

[287] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

[288] Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: — Romans 5:12

[289] For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. — Galatians 6:15

[290] Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — 2 Corinthians 5:17

later). This new creation eliminates fleshly distinctions such as Gentile and Israelite,[291] but Peter wasn't able to teach this because he has to remain an Israelite in the kingdom, seeing as Jesus promised him that he would sit on one of twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel[292] (which also means he was not, and is not, a member of the church called the body of Christ, leaving only the church called the Israel of God for him to be a member of, and the same goes for all of the rest of the twelve apostles for the same reason). So if you want to really understand the complete result of what happened on the cross, you look to Paul's epistles. While the Circumcision writings are indeed useful for their intended purposes (and one *can* join the Israel of God after reading only *those* books), they just don't teach us *everything* that the cross accomplished the way that Paul's Uncircumcision writings do.

Some Christians also like to claim that because the churches of Judea had heard, *"That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed,"*[293] that this means Paul had been preaching the same Gospel Peter and the rest of the disciples preached. And the truth is, they're absolutely correct, because Paul *did* preach the Gospel of the Circumcision to Israelites at various times, as we already covered, including at the time when the churches of Judea heard this report. But having done so doesn't mean he couldn't have *also* preached a *second* Gospel to the Gentiles at *other* times as well, so this

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[291] For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:27-28

[292] And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. — Matthew 19:28

[293] Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me. — Galatians 1:21-24

doesn't actually help prove that there's only one Gospel the way they might think it does either.

This is similar to how some Christians will also point out that Paul stated to King Herod Agrippa II that he was *"witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come."*[294] Just as with the last objection, these Christians aren't thinking about the context, which is Paul speaking to a king with Jewish ancestry about a Jewish Gospel he was in trouble for preaching to Jewish people. This statement was all about the Gospel of the Circumcision, and had nothing to do with the Gospel of the Uncircumcision at all, so his statement doesn't actually cause any problems for the existence of a second Gospel that he preached to an entirely different audience at other times.

On a somewhat related note, certain Christians also argue that, because Paul wrote to believers in Galatia,[295] and because Peter also wrote to believers in Galatia,[296] these believers must have all been following the exact same Gospel and must have been members of the exact same local church (a similar argument is also sometimes made that because Paul wrote an epistle which is labelled as being to the Ephesians in our Bibles, and because John was also

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[294] Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: — Acts 26:22

[295] Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: — Galatians 1:1-2

[296] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, — 1 Peter 1:1

given a prophecy for a local church in Ephesus,[297] that the teachings in both of these writings had to have been for and about people in the same local church – and even that they had to have been for people living in the same time period, which I say because I believe that the seven churches listed in Revelation are seven Jewish churches which won't even come into existence until around the time of the Tribulation[298]). Of course, this assertion demonstrates a serious deficiency of logic, since the idea that just because two men wrote to people in the same general region they had to have been writing to the exact same people in the exact same local church (and also had to have been writing about the exact same thing) is nothing more than an assumption one has to make in order to support their presupposition that there's only one Gospel and one church spoken of in the Bible. In addition, they sometimes also argue that because Paul wrote specifically to the same audience Peter wrote to at least once,[299] he must have taught the exact same things as Peter. And, in fact, Paul sometimes *did* teach the exact same things as Peter, when he taught members of the Israel of God doctrines related to their own Gospel (as we already covered). But again, that doesn't mean he didn't *also* teach *different* things to those under *his* Gospel. Besides, as we've also already discussed, we know from 1 Peter 1:1 *exactly* who Peter's audience was anyway, and it didn't include Gentiles since it was specifically addressed to *"the strangers,"* telling us that Peter was writing to Israelites *living among Gentiles* in Galatia and other locations, and not to the

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[297] Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. — Revelation 1:11

[298] *The Seven Churches in the book of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, are not Body of Christ churches, they are Jewish congregations* by D. Paul Beck: https://wwurd.com/2025/08/28/the-seven-churches-in-the-book-of-revelation-chapters-2-and-3-are-not-body-of-christ-churches-they-are-jewish-congregations

[299] And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; — 2 Peter 3:15

Gentile members of the body of Christ that Paul was writing to in his epistle to the Galatians at all. And just as Peter was only writing to Israelites among the diaspora in his epistles, I should also point out that James was also only writing to members of *"the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad"*[300] (also referring specifically to Israelites of the diaspora, unless you believe you're a Gentile member of one of those twelve tribes – and if you do believe that, I'd like you to also tell me which of the twelve tribes, exactly, you happen to be a member of), just as John was writing specifically to Jewish "brethren" rather than to Gentiles,[301] and Jude, who technically didn't specify an audience, but seemed to also be writing to people who were intimately familiar with Israel's history,[302] and considering the intended audience of rest of this batch of epistles, it's very unlikely that Gentiles were included among his book's audience either, any more than they were included in the audience of the book of Hebrews, with the name of *that* book clearly pointing out *its* intended audience – although I think it's safe to say that all the Circumcision writings would likely still apply to all believing members of the Israel of God and not just to those among the diaspora (and this would presumably also include Gentiles who *have* proselytized into the Israel of God as well). Simply put, while all Scripture is useful for all of us in various ways,[303] any book of the Bible not

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[300] James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. — James 1:1

[301] Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. — 3 John 1:5-7

[302] I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. — Jude 1:5

[303] All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. — 2 Timothy 3:16-17

signed by Paul is primarily to and about the Israel of God, with only Paul's 13 epistles being specifically to and about members of the body of Christ (although even those epistles contain information about the Israel of God and their form of salvation at times too, as you'll learn in this book, so one has to be careful to interpret Paul's epistles carefully when reading them as well).

Some Christians also point out that Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:3-5 that, *"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."* Somehow they assume this verse means that Paul meant the body of Christ needs to follow every word Jesus is recorded as speaking in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, forgetting the fact that not every word Jesus spoke is meant for everyone to follow at all times (because if they were, again, we'd all have to buy and carry swords[304]), and that some of the words Jesus spoke can be only intended for certain people at certain times to follow, and that it's possible (and in fact, based on everything this chapter covers, it's required) for Paul to have been referring strictly to the words our Lord Jesus Christ spoke *directly to him* in order to give specifically to the body of Christ to follow.

Meanwhile, other people have also argued that Paul wasn't teaching unbelievers how to get saved in his epistles, since he was writing to people who were already believers, so what he referred to in 1 Corinthians 15 as the Gospel he preached unto them[305] wasn't meant to teach his readers in Corinth how to get saved. And while it's true that his written audience *was* primarily made up of

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[304] Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. — Luke 22:36

[305] Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; — 1 Corinthians 15:1

believers, this is irrelevant, and I'm not sure why anyone would even present that as an argument against the existence of two Gospels, because Paul still outright said in that passage that it *was* the Gospel he preached unto them, and also that it's the Gospel they had to believe in order to be saved,[306] so we know exactly what he preached unto them as how they're saved, which means their argument doesn't actually help them prove that there's only one Gospel anyway.

That said, it is also true that chapter 15 of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians wasn't *specifically* written to teach about his Gospel (although, whether he originally intended to or not, he ended up expanding on what his Gospel meant later in the chapter regardless, as will also be discussed in more detail later in this book), but was instead originally written to discuss bodily resurrection (since some of the members of the church in Corinth had stopped believing in their own literal future resurrection in physical bodies), with the specific contents of his Gospel only being included in two verses in the chapter in order to make his point that resurrection *has* to be literal because otherwise it would mean that Christ Himself hadn't even risen from the dead and that they would have then believed the Gospel he preached to them when he first met them in vain if Christ hadn't risen from the dead (since a third of the Gospel he preached to them was specifically about Christ's resurrection). And this fact about the point of this chapter (or at least the point of the first part of the chapter) is actually important to keep in mind for when a different group of Christians attempts to claim that Peter and others were preaching the same Gospel as Paul based on verse 11, where Paul wrote the words, *"Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."* If simply sharing his Gospel with his readers was why he wrote the chapter, as these particular Christians assume, their claim that *"so we preach, and so ye believed"* in that verse means they were preaching the same Gospel *would* be valid. But if you

[306] By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. — 1 Corinthians 15:2

consider the context of the rest of the verses *surrounding* verse 11,[307] it becomes clear that Paul was simply telling his readers – who already knew his Gospel, per verse 1, which means he didn't need to share it with them again here in order to help get them saved so much as to lay the foundation for providing his proof about resurrection – that both he and Peter saw and preached about the risen Jesus Christ, which proves that Jesus *was* indeed resurrected from among the dead in the same physical body, just as the Gospel he'd already told them back when he met them in person says as well, which means his readers could be reassured that they'd be raised from the dead in the future too.

So no, he wasn't saying that both he and Peter preached the same Gospel. If that's all his point was, he wouldn't have needed to include all of what he did in verses 5 through 19 at all, but would have, at most, replaced verse 5 with verse 11 (and included Peter's name in the verse) and left it there without mentioning the details about Jesus being seen by all those people after His resurrection. Besides, if sharing his Gospel *was* his only (or even just his main) point there,

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[307] For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. — 1 Corinthians 15:3-19

and *"so we preach, and so ye believed"* actually *was* in reference to his *whole* Gospel rather than just one third of it, it would also mean that everything written in verses 5 through 10 was a part of his Gospel as well, and that the good news we have to believe in order to be saved would also include the facts that Jesus was seen of Cephas and James and 500 others after His resurrection, as well as that Paul is the least of the apostles (but that he also laboured more abundantly than the rest of them), among various other details he included in those six verses. I don't think anyone would believe *that's* all a part of the Gospel we have to believe in order to join the body of Christ rather than being a part of the explanation of why he even mentioned his Gospel in this chapter in the first place, though, so we can lay this misunderstanding of verse 11 to rest once and for all.

Still, it's easy to see how someone could misunderstand verse 11, since Paul didn't explain *why* he wrote the first eleven verses (or why he even mentioned his Gospel there at all) until he got to verses 12 through 19. And so, if a modern reader goes through the chapter without being aware of the controversy about resurrection among the Corinthian church back then, they could be forgiven for assuming that Paul *was* writing this chapter in order to share his Gospel (at least if they don't pay close attention to the wording of verses 5 through 11). But Paul's audience at the time *definitely* would have understood what he was getting at by the time they heard verses 4 or 5 being read, realizing *why* Paul was explaining that Jesus really did rise from the dead, and when whoever read the letter to them for the first time got to verses 12 and onwards, they almost certainly would have hung their heads in shame and concluded that, "Yes, if we believed Paul's Gospel when he first told us in person that Christ rose again the third day after His death for our sins and burial, then physical resurrection *is* literally true" (and those who can't see that Paul made it quite clear what he was referring to when he wrote *"so we **preach**"* in verse 11 – and why he even mentioned his Gospel in this chapter in the first place – when he wrote, *"Now if Christ be **preached** that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there*

is no resurrection of the dead?", in the very next verse after that one are really just lying to themselves by completely ignoring context as usual, with the context of the first 19 verses of the chapter essentially being Paul reminding his readers that they'd already believed people can be resurrected from the dead because they'd already believed that about Christ when they believed his Gospel back when he first met them, with Paul's mention in verse 17[308] that his readers' *"faith is **vain**"* if Christ wasn't resurrected from among the dead being yet *another* connective tissue demonstrating what I'm saying, by his clarification in *that* verse of what he meant about them hypothetically having been able to have *"believed in **vain**"* in verse 2,[309] which is something that they *also* wouldn't have understood until they heard verse 17 read to them, confirming everything I've been saying here yet again).

That said, we shouldn't look down on Paul's original readers for this, because without their mistake, Paul wouldn't have written the most important chapter in the Bible, and we theoretically might not have even still known what his Gospel actually was today (although God would have then presumably inspired Paul to include it elsewhere in his epistles for perhaps a different reason, so that's probably not something which could have actually happened in practice).

It's also sometimes pointed out that Paul had Timotheus (more commonly known as Timothy) circumcised,[310] and that he even performed other actions

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[308] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. — 1 Corinthians 15:17

[309] By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. — 1 Corinthians 15:2

[310] Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. — Acts 16:1-3

under the Mosaic law at times as well,[311] in order to try to argue that this means there must be only one Gospel (and sometimes also to try to prove that those of us in the body of Christ *are* under the law), not realizing that these facts actually help prove the exact opposite of what they assume. The reason Paul had Timothy circumcised was simply because he wanted to bring him along on a particular journey to help preach, and he knew that the Jews in the region would cause trouble for them if someone who was of Jewish ancestry but hadn't been circumcised (presumably due to having a Gentile father who didn't allow it when he was a baby) was preaching to them. This doesn't mean that Paul was supporting following the Mosaic law as something members of the body of Christ should do, however (as is also demonstrated by the fact that he *didn't* have Titus circumcised,[312] which he definitely would have done if following the Mosaic law *was* necessary for the body of Christ). So how could he have done these things, then? Well, simply because he wasn't doing them for the sake of obeying the Mosaic law in the first place (nor was he doing them for the sake of his or Timothy's salvation, or even perfection), but rather was doing them because these actions were beneficial for the spreading the Gospel of the Circumcision to other Israelites.[313] As we've already discussed, Paul often preached the Circumcision Gospel to Israelites in the hopes that they as a whole would finally accept Jesus as their Messiah, and law keeping was still important for those who followed that particular Gospel (if it wasn't, James wouldn't have been bragging to Paul about how zealous for the law the Jewish believers in

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[311] Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. — Acts 21:26

[312] But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: — Galatians 2:3

[313] And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; — 1 Corinthians 9:20

Jerusalem were,[314] and Paul would have also chided him **very strongly** for not correcting them, based on how **severely** he criticized the Galatians for even *considering* following the Mosaic law[315]). But when he was teaching about his own Gospel instead, Paul was very careful to point out that law keeping for its own sake (or for trying to perfect oneself) was *not* something they should be trying to do, and that following the law simply for the sake of following the law (or even for the sake of trying to please God) leads to falling from grace[316] (that's not to say it's wrong to do or avoid certain actions listed in the law for reasons *other* than keeping the law itself, including being circumcised for medical reasons, or avoiding murdering people because it's against the secular law, not to mention avoiding specific actions because they're unloving; it's just doing so *for the sake of following the Mosaic law* that causes us to fall from grace – which, I should probably also point out, doesn't mean losing one's salvation, but just means missing out on enjoying the freedom Christ gave us, and possibly also losing out on certain rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ, since Romans 8:30 tells us that anyone God calls for membership in the body of Christ *will* be

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[314] And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. — Acts 21:20-21

[315] O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? — Galatians 3:1-3

[316] Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. — Galatians 5:1-4

justified and glorified,[317] with absolutely zero qualifications beyond being predestined and called by God, making it very clear that it's impossible for members of the body of Christ to lose their salvation, even if members of the Israel of God seem to be able to lose theirs).

I've also heard it claimed that, because Peter defended Paul's specific form of ministry to the nations by saying, *"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they,"* referring to Cornelius and those with him getting saved after hearing Peter preach,[318] that every single Jew and Gentile must then all be saved in the exact same manner, and all in connection with the exact same Gospel. This is reading far more into the statement than Peter was really getting at, however. It's important to remember that Acts is a Circumcision writing, and that Paul's Gospel was never actually explained in the

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[317] Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. — Romans 8:30

[318] And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. — Acts 15:1-12

book (because its original audience wasn't meant to understand his Gospel, having another Gospel to follow). And since Peter himself didn't really comprehend the difference between the two Gospels either (in fact, it's quite possible he wasn't even aware that there were two Gospels at the time he made this statement), he really couldn't have meant anything more than: "Jews and Gentiles can both be saved by Jesus Christ if they have faith." And this is indeed true when it comes to both Gospels, even if the faith we have in connection with Jesus is different under each Gospel, with one being faith in His identity, and the other being faith in what He accomplished.

Of course, if someone reads Peter's statement without being aware of all the details we've covered in this chapter, and, as such, reads Acts 15 while still believing that there is only one Gospel, it's easy to see how they'd read that assumption into Peter's statement and think it proves their belief to be true. But anyone who is familiar with all the facts we've looked at so far (as well as the facts we've yet to look at) can see why this statement doesn't actually prove that there's only one Gospel or way to be saved at all, and can understand that Peter was just stating the limited facts about being saved by Jesus that he was aware of (keeping in mind that he never became fully aware of *all* the facts, because if he did, he would have ended up in the body of Christ and would eventually end up in heaven, and hence will end up missing out on the specific rewards in the kingdom of heaven that he was instead looking forward to – and no, Peter is not currently in heaven, as most Christians assume he is, but that's a topic for another chapter). Besides, if Cornelius joined the body of Christ after Peter preached to him, Paul would have been lying when he said that *he* was the one who opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles,[319] which means that the message of faith *he* was sharing with the Gentiles couldn't have been the *same* message of faith that Peter shared with Cornelius and the other Gentiles in his household.

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[319] And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. — Acts 14:27

Some also like to point to Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that God had made them *"able ministers of the new testament,"*[320] per the KJB, and then claim that the New Covenant must apply to Gentiles after all, and, as such, everything else we've just covered must be wrong. Well, I'm assuming that, if you've made it this far into the book, you know that this can't be the case, but does this mean the New Covenant *is* applicable to Gentiles after all? No, obviously not. There is disagreement among those who do believe in the existence of multiple Gospels as to what Paul did mean here (including the idea that the terms "New Covenant" and "New Testament" actually refer to two separate concepts, and that Paul was referring to the "New Testament," the way the KJB renders the verse – which some King James Bible Believers believe *does* apply to Gentiles, since, instead of seeing it as referring to an agreement of sorts between God and Israelites the way the term "New Covenant" does, or at least an agreement on God's part to do something for Israel, they see the term "testament" there being used more in the sense of a "last will and testament" of someone who has died, which Jesus did do – rather than to the New Covenant, with others instead pointing out that there were very likely Israelites joining the church gatherings of the body of Christ in Corinth, and claiming that this was likely simply in connection with Paul teaching them their Gospel just as he did any time he came across Jews in his various travels, among various other interpretations that also don't cause problems for the idea of there being multiple Gospels or the fact that the New Covenant is only for Israelites), and while I personally still haven't decided which interpretation I think is more likely to be the correct one, whatever it is that he meant, being a minister of something doesn't necessarily mean you're partaking in that thing you're dispensing anyway, so this doesn't actually disprove anything I've written so far, while everything you have read up until now should be enough proof that this can't refute the fact that the New Covenant is only for Israelites, so I think it's safe to leave it at that

[320] Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. — 2 Corinthians 3:6

(although, if it is true that this was in reference to a testament rather than a covenant – and the Greek word διαθήκη/"dee-ath-ay'-kay" that "testament" is translated from in that verse in the KJB technically *can* mean either "covenant" *or* "testament" – the entire argument that this causes problems for the idea of two Gospels is a moot one anyway).

And finally, no, the body of Christ has not been "grafted into Israel," nor are we now "fellowcitizens of Israel," as many misunderstand Romans 11:1-25 and Ephesians 2:11-22 to be saying, even though, yes, Abraham is indeed said to be the "father" of those who follow the law *as well as* the "father" of those who simply have faith.[321] Because – as many Christians who make the claim that believing Gentiles within the body of Christ become "spiritual Israelites," and hence members of the Israel of God, seem to forget – Abraham had many physical descendants who *weren't* Israelites, which means that being able to refer to Abraham as one's "father," be it physically as in the case of his biological descendants, or even simply metaphorically as in the case of the members of the body of Christ, just doesn't mean someone is also an Israelite. To be an Israelite, someone also has to be a biological descendant of Isaac and Jacob as well (presuming they don't marry or proselytize into the actual nation of Israel instead, of course).

I should also quickly point out that this assertion about Abraham's descendants is similar to the claim some of the same people make that, because Paul said in Galatians 3:16 that the promises made to Abraham apply to Jesus,[322] no other Israelites will actually inherit the land as they were promised to in the various supporting passages I've already mentioned. What they fail to realize is that

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[321] Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, — Romans 4:16

[322] Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. — Galatians 3:16

Paul was employing a specific methodology of interpretation there called Midrash,[323] which Jews sometimes used to bring out deeper truths in Scripture that Gentiles are unlikely to be aware of based on a strictly literal interpretation of a passage in the Hebrew Scriptures (this is along the lines of the way Matthew interprets Jesus' return from Egypt[324] as being a fulfillment of Hosea 11:1[325] as well, even though, in its literal context, Hosea was obviously referring to the nation of Israel coming out of Egypt in the Exodus; basically, this is a method of interpretation that is sometimes used to reveal hidden or layered meaning in a passage of Scripture without negating the original interpretation, or its first fulfillment in the case of prophecies). There's a lot more that can be said about this, but ignoring all of these facts also ignores the fact that we aren't claiming *all* Israelites will inherit the land of Israel anyway. We believe that only those Israelites who are Christ's (meaning those who are members of the Israel of God) will inherit the land along with Christ Himself (and that those of us in the body of Christ will as well, because we'll be in an even higher position of rulership than the Israel of God will be at that time – reigning with Christ over the whole universe, which includes earth – and by extension we'll also "inherit" the land of Israel, so to speak, along with the Israel of God, even if we're not literally living in the land while we're reigning from and living in heaven the way they will be), which is backed up by Paul a few verses later anyway, when he wrote in Galatians 3:29, *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise,"* demonstrating that "seed" (which, yes, is translated from the singular Hebrew word זֶרַע/"zeh'-rah" in

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[323] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midrash

[324] When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. — Matthew 2:14-15

[325] When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. — Hosea 11:1

Genesis,[326] but just like the singular English words "sheep" or "deer," or even the word "seed" itself on occasion, depending on the context, it can be used as a plural word as well) doesn't only refer to Jesus but refers to all those people who are Christ's as well, meaning both those in the Israel of God and those in the body of Christ. I should also point out that, if Jesus Himself *is* the only one who receives the fulfillment of the promises, the people using Joshua 21:43-45 to try to prove that all the promises were already fulfilled back in Joshua's time are going to have some trouble continuing to use that passage to also try to prove that they can't also be fulfilled for future Israelites too. To sum it all up, Paul wasn't trying to redefine Israel as simply meaning Jesus Christ alone in that verse, but rather he was pointing to Him as the central figure through whom God's promises to the Israel of God – not to mention to the body of Christ – are fulfilled, which also means that Galatians 3:16 doesn't make the Gentiles in the body of Christ a part of the Israel of God the way some people want it to either.

In fact, we can see quite clearly that the Israel of God is a distinct group from the Gentiles in the body of Christ because Israelites are only said to be the

[326] And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. — Genesis 12:7

natural olive branches in Romans 11, not the whole tree.[327] Remember, not all of the metaphorical natural olive branches are pruned out of the metaphorical tree in that figurative explanation of past, present, and future events pertaining to Israel and the other nations (at least it's still future as of the time this book you're now reading was written). Instead, some of the natural olive branches remained attached to the tree (with it being these particular branches that refer

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[327] I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. — Romans 11:1-25

to Israelites who believed the Gospel of the Circumcision, and not the trunk itself representing them) while the wild olive branch was grafted into the tree *next* to the remaining branches rather than replacing them. And as Paul made clear in this passage, Israel is not cast away permanently, but is only "cast away," so to speak, temporarily, until the full complement of the nations may be entering the body of Christ (I say again, *entering the body of Christ*, and **not** entering the *tree itself*, since the *whole* metaphorical wild olive branch had *already* been grafted – past tense – into the metaphorical tree when Paul wrote that, with no new wild branches *ever* going to be grafted into it as well after he wrote that), at which point the nation of Israel will become the focus of God's purposes once again, at the time when the wild branch itself is pruned out to make room for the currently pruned-out natural branches to be grafted back into the tree. If this seems confusing, the phrase *"cast away"* in verse 1 was translated from a different Greek word in the KJB – ἀπωθέω/"ap-o-theh'-om-ahee" – than the phrase *"casting away"* in verse 15 was – which was instead translated from ἀποβολή/"ap-ob-ol-ay'" – and is referring to a more forceful and permanent thrusting away in that verse than the temporary placing aside that the hyperbolic "casting away" of verse 15 in the KJB is referring to, for anyone who might be wondering how Israel can be not cast away while also being "cast away" at the same time. If it isn't obvious by now, this case of being both "cast away" and not cast away at the same time is yet another example of how the translators of the KJB and certain other Bible versions would sometimes use the same sort of English word or phrase to refer to contrasting concepts for some reason, as we already saw by how they used the English word "another" both figuratively and literally to represent two different Koine Greek words in their translation of Galatians 1:6-7, and the same goes for how they used the English word "fall" to refer to both "falling" and also not falling at the same time in this very chapter of Romans as well. In verse 11, Paul asked, *"Have they stumbled that they should fall?"*, then answered his own question by saying, *"God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."* So we can see that they didn't literally fall far away and permanently,

but they did "fall," hyperbolically speaking, with the first "fall" being translated from a variation of the verb πίπτω/"pip'-to" in the Greek, referring to falling from a height, being thrust down violently or purposefully, or even to perishing, and the second "fall" being translated from a variation of the noun παράπτωμα/"par-ap'-to-mah" in the Greek, literally referring to simply stumbling and landing gently (or at least less violently than the first word implies) beside or near something else (this word is also translated as "trespasses" in other verses in the KJB, I should add). While this contrasting usage of the same English word in the same passage in the KJB can be confusing to those who don't understand what's going on, I have to assume that the translators expected the readers to be able to figure out when the words are being used literally and when they're being used figuratively in the same passages, based on an understanding that the Bible can't contradict itself. And so, we know from what Paul wrote in this chapter that, while the nation of Israel as a whole did indeed stumble ("fall"), and has even been "cast away," so to speak (really just meaning temporarily placed on the back burner), so that Gentiles can have an opportunity to enjoy salvation without having to go through Israel for the time being (when he wrote, *"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles..."*, and, *"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world..."*), he also told his readers that the nation of Israel *will* be restored in the future (when he also wrote, "...*how much more their fulness?"*, and, "...*what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"*).

It also helps to understand that this passage has nothing to do with the salvation of individuals, the way many people assume it does, nor does being pruned from the tree have anything to do with the idea of losing one's salvation, which is made clear by the fact that the pruned-off natural branches were never saved to begin with and yet had to have been a part of the tree at one time in order to be pruned from it. This is also made clear by the fact that it's a *singular* wild branch being grafted into the tree, as opposed to the *plural* natural branches. Of course, some who read the KJB might be confused by the fact that it says *"a wild*

olive tree" in verse 17,[328] but Paul explained in the same verse that this **whole** *"wild olive tree"* was *"graffed in among them,"* which tells us that he was referring to a wild olive *branch* rather than a literal whole wild olive *tree* (that the phrase *"wild olive tree"* in verse 17 in the KJB is talking about a single "wild olive branch" is also confirmed in verse 24,[329] where we can see that he was referring to something which had been removed *from* a "wild olive tree," since a whole tree can't be removed from itself). Regardless, that only one whole object – as opposed to multiple, separate wild-olive branches – was grafted into the natural tree is also clarified A) by the fact that the Greek ἀγριέλαιος/"ag-ree-el'-ah-yos," which *"a wild olive tree"* was translated from in the KJB, is a Singular noun, as well as B) by the fact the KJB also uses the Singular "thou" in both verses 17 and 24, rather than the more catch-all "you" that most English Bible versions used to render the Singular Greek word σύ/"soo" in those verses. This all tells us that the single wild olive branch (note that Paul didn't say all the people reading his epistle were "wild olive tree**s**," plural, there, but referred to them all as an **individual** *"wild olive **tree**,"* at least in the KJB, giving us even more proof that there's only *one* object being referred to by this term in the passage) which was grafted into the natural (or "good") olive tree refers to every single Gentile who will have ever lived during the entire time that the dispensation (meaning the administration, or economy) of the grace of God is in effect[330] – since all Gentiles living during the existence of this dispensation, both saved and unsaved, are being grouped together as a singular whole in these verses, being referred to collectively as a *"wild olive tree"* – rather than simply referring to only those Gentiles who join the body of Christ (and also confirms that the

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[328] And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; — Romans 11:17

[329] For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? — Romans 11:24

[330] If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: — Ephesians 3:2

metaphorical "grafting into the tree" only "happened," so to speak, one time – in the past – rather than "happens" multiple times – as each Gentile gets saved – the way most Christians assume Paul meant). And since the *whole* wild olive branch (or *"wild olive tree"*) will eventually be pruned from the "good" tree, as it will have to be in order for the temporarily-removed natural branches to be grafted back *"into their own olive tree,"* every Gentile member of the body of Christ would lose their salvation if being grafted into and pruned from the tree was connected with being saved.

And so, no, being grafted into the tree doesn't mean that a Gentile has been grafted into Israel, or that they have become a "spiritual Israelite," which is a completely unscriptural term anyway. Instead, I would suggest that the *"wild olive tree"* being temporarily grafted into the natural tree simply refers to the fact that Gentiles currently have access to God's grace[331] (via justification by faith) without needing Israelites to help them do so the way Gentiles will need them for in order to get to know God in the future, after the *"wild olive tree"* is removed from the natural tree (due to unbelief,[332] since, after the body of Christ is taken up to heaven,[333] there will be no more believing Gentiles left in the wild olive branch – only unbelieving Gentiles will remain in that metaphorical "branch" at that time). This means that believing Gentiles don't replace unbelieving ethnic Israelites, the way some Christians mistakenly believe they do, or become a part of the church called the Israel of God at all, but rather it means that Gentiles are able to join the church called the body of Christ instead,

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[331] Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. — Romans 5:1-2

[332] Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. — Romans 11:20-21

[333] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:17

at least until the full complement of the nations has entered the body of Christ (meaning until the last person ordained for membership in the body of Christ has been saved), at which point the dispensation of the grace of God will come to an end, the *"wild olive tree"* will be removed from the tree, and the only way for Gentiles to approach God again (at least for 1,000 years) will be to go through citizens of the nation of Israel.

And this also all tells us that the same goes for the idea some Christians have that Paul said Gentiles join the "commonwealth of Israel," or become "fellowcitizens" of the nation of Israel, when they join the body of Christ. Based on everything we've just covered, this obviously can't be what he meant in Ephesians 2.[334] Besides, the word "commonwealth" (translated from πολιτεία/ "pol-ee-ti'-ah" in the original Greek) has to do with actual citizenship in an actual nation, and we don't legally become citizens of the country called Israel when we join the body of Christ (if you're a Gentile who disagrees, try moving to Israel and telling the government there that you're now a legal citizen of their nation because you've come to believe in Jesus, and let us know how well that goes). Besides, our citizenship is in the heavens, not down here on earth where

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[334] Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. — Ephesians 2:11-22

Israel is located, as we've already established, and I don't see the term "spiritual Israel" anywhere in the chapter (or in the Bible, for that matter), so anyone who tries to claim we're "spiritual Israelites" is just reading their assumptions into the chapter. Instead, we've become "fellowcitizens" of the kingdom of God, and of the household of God (which members of the Israel of God are certainly also members of), and not of the nation of Israel itself, although the geographic nation of Israel *will* become a part of the kingdom of God after Jesus returns, at which point the land of Israel will be known as the kingdom of heaven, but it certainly isn't a part of the kingdom yet, which means that we Gentiles can't be said to become citizens of the nation of Israel, or really even a part of Israel in any way, when we believe Paul's Gospel, but simply become citizens of the kingdom of God instead.

Knowing all this should also make it clear that Paul wasn't calling us spiritual Israelites when he said "we are the circumcision" in verse 3 of Philippians 3 either.[335] Since we now know that there's no such thing as "spiritual Israel," he obviously had to have been referring to something other than that, and he certainly was. "Circumcision" in this passage is typology referring to the putting off of the flesh (meaning having no confidence in one's own abilities for salvation and entrance into the kingdom of God, in other words), so all Paul was doing there was warning his readers about the Judaizers,[336] using the word "circumcision" as a metaphor to point out that those of us who are said to have died with Christ[337] are the ones who have *actually* "put off the flesh," so to speak (which the Judaizers haven't, since they're still trusting their own "flesh," including their literal, physical circumcision, for their salvation), making us

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[335] For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. — Philippians 3:3

[336] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaizers

[337] In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: — Colossians 2:11

metaphorically "the circumcision," even if not *literally* "the circumcision" (although *actual* Israelites, meaning the members of the Israel of God, would *also* fall under the label of "the circumcision" – as opposed to the label of "the concision," meaning "the mutilators," that the KJB translates Paul as using mockingly in verse 2 for the Judaizers,[338] since all they were doing was maiming themselves without benefit due to trusting their own flesh over God for salvation – because even though the true Israel of God *does* still need to follow the law in order to enjoy life in the kingdom of heaven in the future, including being circumcised, they also have no confidence in their *own* flesh, but are trusting God to help them do what's required instead, and are performing their works as acts of faith rather than as acts to save themselves).

As for those who might be wondering why I make a distinction between "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of heaven," yes, I'm well aware of the fact that the term "the kingdom of heaven" seems, at least at first glance, to be used simply as a synonym for "the kingdom of God"[339] at times in the book of Matthew[340] (which is the only book in the Bible to use the phrase "the kingdom of heaven"), and also that the word "heaven" was a common metonym for "God" in general back then as well. However, since we now know that the book of Matthew was basically only talking about the part of the kingdom of God which will exist in Israel in the future, the fact that Paul *also* used the term "the kingdom of God"[341] tells us that the kingdom as a whole is much larger than *just* Israel, and that it must encompass the parts of the universe that aren't just here

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[338] Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. — Philippians 3:2

[339] For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. — Luke 7:28

[340] Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. — Matthew 11:11

[341] For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. — 1 Corinthians 4:20

on earth. And since Jesus almost certainly wasn't actually saying the words "the kingdom of heaven" when He spoke the words recorded in the book of Matthew (based on the fact that the books of Mark[342] and Luke[343] both used the phrase "the kingdom of God" in the parallel passages to the ones where Matthew recorded Jesus' statements with "the kingdom of heaven" instead[344]), it seems that God inspired Matthew to do so in order to give us a label that refers strictly to the part of the kingdom of God that would apply only to Israel. Basically, none of the references to entering the kingdom of God in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John were about the part of the kingdom of God that the body of Christ will be in after we're caught up together in the air to be with Christ when He comes for His body[345] (which will be heaven), but are referring to the kingdom in Israel in the future, as we've now learned, and so "the kingdom of heaven" can't refer to the part of the kingdom of God which is in heaven either, since it's specifically only used in reference to the part of the kingdom which is in Israel. So while "the kingdom of God" *can* technically refer to both, since both Jesus and Paul used it, anytime we see the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" used, we know it's only referring to Israel after Jesus' Second Coming. To put it simply, it basically just means "the kingdom [sent] *from* heaven." This means that, while it's perfectly fine to refer to Israel during the thousand years as "the kingdom of God," since those are the words Jesus presumably actually spoke, to make things less confusing, it's also easier to just refer to it as "the kingdom of heaven" when discussing it ourselves. And for those who aren't convinced,

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[342] And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: — Mark 4:11

[343] And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. — Luke 8:10

[344] He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. — Matthew 13:11

[345] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:17

remember that the book of Matthew used *both* terms,[346] so I have to assume that God inspired the use of the unique term in specific places in Matthew for a reason (I don't believe that anything is in Scripture by accident, but rather I believe that everything written there is included a very good reason, which means that whatever reason that the writer of the book of Matthew might have had to use the term from a relative perspective, God made Him do so for *His* own reason from an absolute perspective, which I believe was to give us a term to use for the specific part of the kingdom of God which will be in Israel in the future).

And with all that being said, it should now be obvious why the title *"the Israel of God"* in Galatians 6:16 can't possibly be referring to the body of Christ. Since there's literally zero scriptural basis for the idea that those of us in the body of Christ are some sort of "spiritual Israel," I trust you can now see that this can only be a reference to the circumcision church. And while the Greek word translated as "and" – καί/"kahee" – in the *"and upon the Israel of God"* part of the verse technically can be used to distinguish or identify a group when it's used in Koine Greek, this particular use of καί is rare,[347] and never actually occurs in this exact construction anywhere else in the Greek Scriptures (meaning the books of the Bible that are generally referred to today as "the New Testament"), at least based on what I could find while digging into this topic,[348] so there's no reason to believe it's being used that way here either, outside of presuppositional bias, of course. And as far as I've been able to find, aside from

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[346] And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. — Matthew 19:24

[347] *Who is "the Israel of God" in Galatians 6:16?* by David Huffstutler: https://religiousaffections.org/articles/biblical-studies/who-is-the-israel-of-god-in-galatians-616

[348] *Who is the "Israel of God" in Galatians 6:16?* by Brian Collins: https://exegesisandtheology.com/2020/09/07/who-is-the-israel-of-god-in-galatians-616

when it refers to Jacob[349] or to Jesus (as in the case of Matthew interpreting that passage in Hosea we looked at earlier with a midrashic second sort of fulfillment, for example), the word "Israel" is never used to refer to anyone *other* than ethnic Israelites in Scripture anyway. And while there's a *lot* more that can be said about this topic to prove this, based on everything we've just learned about the kingdom of heaven and the different types of salvation, the words "and upon" simply *have* to be telling us that there are two separate groups of people being spoken of by Paul in this verse (the first group being *"as many as walk according to this rule,"* meaning members of the body of Christ, and the second group being those believing, ethnic Israelites who are known as *"the Israel of God"*), especially in light of everything else he'd just finished teaching in this epistle (since the whole context of this epistle contradicts any notion at all that Gentiles are now a part of Israel, because if we are, we'd also be required to keep the Mosaic law the way they're required to, when the entire reason Paul wrote that epistle in the first place was to make sure we *don't* try to follow the Mosaic law).

[349] And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. — Genesis 32:28

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision	The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision
Will keep the law perfectly when the New Covenant finally comes fully into effect and replaces the Old Covenant completely (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:26-27, Micah 4:2, Hebrews 8:8-12).	Not only are we not under the law at all, and in fact should not try to keep any of it (Romans 6:14, Galatians 5:3), Gentiles were never under the Old Covenant – which was about Israelites keeping the Mosaic law – to begin with, so we don't have an Old Covenant to be replaced with by a New Covenant the way Israel does anyway (Exodus 12:43-49, Exodus 19:3-6, Leviticus 26:46, Deuteronomy 4:8, Deuteronomy 28, Nehemiah 9:13-14, Psalm 147:19-20, Malachi 4:4 Romans 2:14-15, Romans 9:3-5, Ephesians 2:12).
Jewish believers within this church were still zealous of the law, even after the Council of Jerusalem, and they were upset that Paul was teaching Jewish members of the body of Christ to avoid practicing the Mosaic law, including circumcising (Acts 21:17-26).	Not only did Paul teach against circumcising – or any law-keeping – for Gentiles in the body of Christ, he taught against it for *anyone* in the body of Christ, including Jewish members, and if Paul was teaching the same thing that Peter and James and the rest of the Jewish church were, the members of their church in Jerusalem wouldn't have been so upset at Paul for teaching against circumcising and law-keeping for Jewish members of his church when he visited them later (Acts 15:1-21, Galatians 2:1-3, Acts 21:17-26).
Spoken of by the prophets since the world began (Acts 3:21-25).	A secret until Paul (Romans 16:25, Ephesians 3:8-10).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision	The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision
Only 12 apostles for this church – a number with much spiritual significance to Israelites – and they were all called inside of Israel (Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 10:2-4). Even though Judas was replaced by Matthias after being disqualified (Acts 1:12-26), no others out of the 12 were ever replaced because there will only be 12 thrones for them to sit on in the kingdom of heaven, and only 12 foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem to be named after them on the New Earth (Matthew 19:28, Revelation 21:14).	The first apostle of our church – who is not one of the 12 apostles of the Israel of God – was called outside of Israel (Acts 9:3). This is spiritually significant because Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13).
Are supposed to eventually teach all the nations to obey everything Jesus commanded, and to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:16-20), although – outside of Peter's visit to Cornelius – Scripture tells us this hasn't happened yet (Acts 11:19, Galatians 2:8-9).	The fact that Paul is called *the* apostle of the Gentiles, and that a whole new set of apostles were in fact sent to the Gentiles, is significant because it means the 12 apostles of the Israel of God were *not* the apostles of (or to) the Gentiles (Romans 11:13, Acts 14:14, 1 Corinthians 4:6-9, Ephesians 4:11), nor were the rest of the members of that church preaching to the Gentiles yet either, since the pillars of their church had agreed to leave the preaching to the Gentiles to Paul and to those with him, for the time being, which means Israel hasn't even really begun her so-called "Great Commission," as it's often referred to, yet (Galatians 2:8-9, Acts 13:2).
Proclaimed among Israelites (James 1:1, 1 Peter 1:1).	Proclaimed among the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:8).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision	The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision
Called the little flock, and as future citizens of the New Jerusalem, which is referred to as the bride of the lamb itself after it descends to the New Earth, the saints of this church who will inhabit this city can figuratively (albeit only proleptically) also be referred to as the bride of the lamb (Luke 12:32, John 3:29, Revelation 21:9), and are also referred to as the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).	The saints of this church are referred to as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:30).
Racial distinctions important (Matthew 15:26, Matthew 19:28, Revelation 21:12, Zechariah 8:22-23).	Racial distinctions irrelevant (1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28).
Believers known *from* the foundation of the world (Revelation 17:8).	Believers known *before* the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).
Believers called first, then chosen (Matthew 22:14).	Believers chosen first, then called (Romans 8:30).
Water baptism required (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38).	Water baptism not required (1 Corinthians 1:17, 1 Corinthians 12:13).
Many types of baptism/immersion: John's baptism in water unto repentance, the Lord's baptism in water – obviously not a baptism unto repentance – water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ/the name of the Lord, baptism *in* the Holy Spirit, and in fire, baptism into Moses, and baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, 13-17, Acts 1:4-5, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:48, 1 Corinthians 10:2, Matthew 28:19).	Only one baptism/immersion: not *in* the Holy Spirit (or in water either), but rather *by* the Holy Spirit, *into* the body of Christ, including into what He experienced in His body, such as His death, burial, resurrection, and quickening (Ephesians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 6:3-4).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision	The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision
Must have circumcision of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:16, Acts 7:51, Romans 2:29).	Circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the "circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).
Must have works, if possible between conversion and death, since faith without works is dead for them (James 2:20).	Even if we don't have works, but only have faith, we are still justified, which means faith without works is not dead for us (Romans 4:5).
Must keep His commandments, and live as Jesus did (1 John 2:3-6).	God's grace motivates us to live well, not the threat of losing our salvation if we don't, as is the case for Israel (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).
Must forgive others or God will *not* forgive them (Matthew 6:12-15).	Should forgive one another as God has already forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32) – but even without works, we're still justified, so we aren't required to forgive others in order to be saved, even if it's still good for us to do so (Romans 4:5).
Must not eat things sacrificed to idols (Revelation 2:14, 20).	Are permitted to eat things sacrificed to idols as long as conscience permits it (Romans 14:14, 1 Corinthians 8:4).
Must be an overcomer to avoid second death (Revelation 2:11).	Saved from second death by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).
Hoping for grace, which will be brought to them when Jesus returns to the earth (1 Peter 1:13).	Already standing in grace (Romans 5:2).
Must be waking and watching, not sleeping (Matthew 25:1-13, Luke 12:37, Hebrews 9:28).	Whether waking or sleeping (1 Thessalonians 5:10).
Must be wise, not foolish, or will not be chosen (Matthew 25:1-13).	Few who are wise are chosen, and most who are chosen are foolish (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision	The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision
Can be put to shame at His presence if not careful (1 John 2:28).	*Will* all be changed for the better – meaning given glorified, immortal bodies – at His presence, which is the blessed hope all of us in this church should be looking forward to (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Titus 2:13).
Will go through day of wrath (Revelation 6:1-17).	Not appointed to wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:9).
Will meet Christ on earth (Acts 1:11-12, Zechariah 14:4).	Will meet Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
The resurrection of the just, also known as Israel's "first resurrection" (Luke 14:14, Revelation 20:1-6), occurs 75 days *after* Jesus steps foot on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4-7, Acts 1:9-12, and compare the numbers in Daniel 12:11-13 to the numbers in Revelation 13:5 to understand the 75 day difference between these two events).	The dead in the body of Christ are first resurrected, then those who are still living will rise with them to meet Christ in the air together when He comes for our church, before He ever even gets close to the Mount of Olives (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
Will reign on the earth as a kingdom of priests over the nations (Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 61:6, 1 Peter 2:5-9, Revelation 2:26-27, Revelation 5:10, Revelation 20:6).	Will reign in the heavens (Ephesians 2:6-7, 2 Timothy 2:12).
Will fill earth with knowledge of God's glory by being a light to the Gentiles and salvation to the ends of the earth (Habakkuk 2:14, Isaiah 49:6).	Will display God's wisdom among the principalities and powers in the heavens (Ephesians 3:10-11).
The meek shall inherit the earth, and will live in the land God gave the patriarchs, which is the land of Israel (Matthew 5:5, Ezekiel 36:28).	Our citizenship is in the heavens (Philippians 3:20).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision	The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision
There will still be mortal “flesh and blood” humans living in the part of the kingdom of God that is on the earth, and they will even continue to reproduce, both in the thousand-year kingdom of heaven in Israel, as well as on the New Earth for a time (Zechariah 8:3-4, Isaiah 65:17-25).	Mortal “flesh and blood” is not able to inherit the part of the kingdom of God that is in the heavens (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).
The 12 apostles will judge the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).	Paul, not one of the 12 apostles of the church known as the Israel of God, but rather the first apostle of the church known as the body of Christ, will, along with the rest of the body, judge the whole world, as well as judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).
The cross was only bad news to those hearing the Gospel of the Circumcision – at least in the sermons recorded in Acts – and a shameful thing which needed to be repented of *in order* to be saved (Acts 2:22-38, Acts 3:13-15, Acts 7:52).	The cross is only good news for those hearing Paul’s Gospel, and is even something to glory in because it’s *how* we are saved (1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Galatians 6:14).
As far as their Gospel is concerned, Jesus gave His life as a ransom only for “many” – meaning only for those who obey this Gospel (Matthew 20:28).	As far as our Gospel is concerned, Jesus gave His life as a ransom for all – meaning all humanity (1 Timothy 2:6).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision	The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision
Exhorted to remain in Him, and seem to be able to fall away and not be able to be renewed to repentance, so appear to be able to lose out on getting to experience their sort of salvation (1 John 2:28, Hebrews 6:4-6, Hebrews 10:26-27), although this is not the same sort of salvation that Paul primarily taught about, so anyone who doesn't experience this sort of salvation will still experience the *general* salvation of Paul's Gospel (even if not the *special* salvation connected with his Gospel).	If we died with Christ – and if we did, we can't un-die – we *will* live with Him, since He cannot disown His own body. Yes, we can "fall from grace," so to speak – which basically just means placing oneself under the bondage of religion and rules, such as the law, and, because of doing so, missing out on enjoying the freedom Christ gave us – and it might be that we can also lose out on reigning with Him by denying Him in order to avoid suffering, but either way, we still remain His body, and He won't amputate and disown His own body parts, and body parts can't amputate themselves either (Galatians 5:1-4, 2 Timothy 2:11-13). Besides, Paul said that if we're called, we *will* be justified and glorified, and didn't include any qualifications in that verse, so any passages in Paul's epistles which seem to teach otherwise *must* be talking about something else (Romans 8:30).
Abraham being justified by works given as an example (James 2:21-23).	Abraham being justified through faith rather than by works given as an example (Romans 4:2-3).
Gentiles will be blessed by Israel's rise in the future (Isaiah 49:6, Zechariah 8:22-23, Acts 3:25).	Gentiles are currently blessed by Israel's "fall" (Romans 11:11).

Now these aren't just minor variations in terminology; these are obviously completely different messages for two completely different groups of people. Unfortunately, if one isn't being honest with Scripture, and insists on trying to make these major differences between Paul's Uncircumcision writings and the teachings in the Circumcision writings say the same thing, because their preconceived doctrines force them to have to believe they mean the same thing, they're just not ready to interpret the rest of Scripture, and should not be teaching anyone from the Bible. In fact, not only is this concept so extremely important for believers to grasp, it's also so central to understanding what Scripture is saying and who a particular passage is relevant to that one can't properly interpret much of the Bible at all without beginning from this perspective. Even something like evangelism will be a confusing task for those who don't understand that "the Great Commission" (a label that isn't actually even found in the Bible) wasn't meant for the body of Christ at all. Instead, rather than teaching all nations to be observing *all* things that Jesus commanded His disciples, and baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (which is a whole different baptism from the one that Peter did with water, since the baptism he's recorded as having performed in Scripture was specifically *"in the name of Jesus Christ,"* and would also be a command Paul would have been disobeying when he stopped baptizing people in water if it was meant for all believers in Jesus to do, as it would have to be if the so-called "Great Commission" itself was meant for the body of Christ to also complete, since it's a part of said "Great Commission"[350]) as the Israel of God will be called to do in the future (when the dispensation of the grace of God is

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[350] Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. — Matthew 28:16-20

complete and Israel has been saved[351] and finally begins their ministry to be a light to the Gentiles and salvation unto the ends of the earth as they were long ago prophesied to one day be, and when Gentiles will in fact only come to know God by following the Jews – which is how they'll finally get to be that kingdom of priests they were prophesied to one day become), we have a greater "commission" and "one baptism" (into the body of Christ), and are called to be stewards of the mysteries that were kept secret since the world began just as Paul was,[352] and can in fact currently help other Gentiles come to God even if we're not Jews, which is why it's imperative to truly understand this important topic.

And that brings up another point we should consider, which is the question of why Paul was even called for apostleship in the first place. There were already 12 apostles who were given the so-called "Great Commission" to go to the nations and teach them to observe everything Jesus had commanded and to baptize them in the manner He'd prescribed (okay, technically only 11 apostles were given that command at that specific time, but it would have applied to

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[351] And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: — Romans 11:26

[352] Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. — 1 Corinthians 4:1

Matthias too, after he was appointed the 12th apostle in order to replace Judas[353] – and no, there's no biblical basis for the idea that *Paul* was supposed to be the 12th apostle, as some claim, since he didn't fit the qualifications for Judas' replacement that Peter listed at the time[354]), and as we learned from that list of differences in the above chart, there can *only ever be* 12 apostles in connection with the Israel of God, because there will only be 12 thrones for the apostles to sit on in the kingdom of heaven in Israel. This means that Paul didn't replace anyone from the 12 when he was made the apostle of the Gentiles, but if the existing 12 apostles *had already been commissioned* to go to the nations, why would God then appoint a *13th* apostle (Paul) to go to the nations instead,[355] rather than having the 12 do the job that Jesus assigned to them? The only way this makes sense is if the time of the 12 to go to the nations hadn't begun yet,

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[353] And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. — Acts 1:15-26

[354] *Was Paul A Replacement for Judas?* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/mystery/was-paul-a-replacement-for-judas

[355] And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. — Galatians 2:9

and if Paul had a whole other ministry and message for the Gentiles of the nations than the ministry and message that the 12 will bring to the nations when the kingdom of heaven begins, when they've been resurrected from the dead after the Tribulation concludes.[356]

Even after learning all of that, however, some Christians will still want to say things along the lines of, "I follow Jesus, not Paul" (or worse, some like to say, "I worship Jesus, not Paul," even though literally *nobody* worships Paul), with some of them quoting Paul himself when he wrote, *"was Paul crucified for you?"*, pointing to Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 where he corrected his readers for saying, *"I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas"*[357] – often following their statement up by then saying they're only of Christ. The problem is, if they only took the time to read the whole passage, they'd notice that Paul condemns saying even, *"and I of Christ."* That doesn't mean we aren't supposed to follow Christ, as some will then accuse us of teaching when we point this fact out, but following Christ wasn't the point of the passage, which was simply about Paul condemning sects, meaning divisions, which had begun springing up within the local church in Corinth. Besides, Paul made it quite clear in the very same book that we *are* to follow him, when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:1, *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."* So yes, we still follow Christ,

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[356] *Reasons We Ought Not to Follow the "Great" Commission* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/prophecy/mmlj/reasons-we-ought-not-to-follow-the-"great"-commission

[357] Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? — 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

but those of us in the body of Christ follow Him by following the teachings He gave to us *through* our apostle: Paul.[358]

I should add, in a last-ditch effort to defend the idea of there being only one Gospel, I've heard it pointed out by some Christians that the words *"the Gospel"* technically aren't included in the original Greek text prior to the words *"of the Circumcision"* in Galatians 2:7 (which is true), and then asserted that Paul would have used those words there if he meant for it to be understood that he was referring to two separate Gospels, but based on the clear pattern of things that differ between the teachings Paul preached among the nations (including the exact words in the Gospel message he preached to them, and what those words mean) and the teachings that Peter and Jesus' other disciples gave to Israel (including the exact words in the Gospel message they preached to them, and what *those* words mean, especially in the four books commonly referred to as "the Gospels" and in the book of Acts), it should be clear by now that Paul being concise in that verse doesn't detract at all from the fact that there *are* at least two Gospels connected with salvation in Scripture.

Still, if somebody wants to somehow insist that there really is only one Gospel taught in Scripture after reading everything I just covered in this chapter, I'd very much like to hear why they want Scripture to contain only one Gospel so badly. And it has to be a matter of wanting it to be true, since, at the very least, they have to not only admit that all of the passages we've looked at *can* be interpreted in such a way that supports the existence of two Gospels, but also that there's no passage in Scripture which actually outright says there's only one Gospel. But really, at this point it should be obvious to anyone who has been paying attention that even if I missed any other passages somebody might try to use in order to argue that the disciples *were* proclaiming the exact same news which is good during Jesus' earthly ministry that Paul later proclaimed to the

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[358] If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. — 1 Corinthians 14:37

nations (which was the news which is good about Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection), those "proof texts" simply can't actually support their belief at all. And so, my challenge to anyone still trying to hang on to the idea that there's only one Gospel is to answer the various questions I've asked throughout this chapter, and to provide their refutations of every single one of the scriptural interpretations and arguments I've brought up in support of the existence of two Gospels, including an explanation of how they reconcile the extensive list of scriptural contradictions that would seem to exist if there *was* only one Gospel (based on the comprehensive list of differences I've laid out which only seem to make sense if there are indeed at least two Gospels). In addition, I want them to write down and send to me or to whoever sent them this book (or at least to write it down for themselves in order to consider) **exactly** what they believe this one Gospel is and what someone has to do in order to be saved under it, both someone who lived prior to Christ's death and someone who lived after His resurrection (leaving no details out, and including their scriptural basis for all of it). And if what someone had to do in order to be saved under this one Gospel was different **in any way whatsoever** before Jesus died than it now is since He's been resurrected, they also need to explain how that different thing they had to do prior to Christ's death actually *is* the exact same thing Paul said the people of the nations that he declared the Gospel unto had to do in order to be considered saved (which includes believing that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day), which it would have to be if both proclamations of news which is good actually *are* the *exact* same Gospel message with absolutely *no* differences, as many Christians claim is the case. So far nobody has been able to do all of the above after reading earlier editions of this book, as well as after reading any of my other writings covering the same details I just went over in this chapter (a few have sent attempts at refuting a few points, but they all ignored the majority of what I wrote and gave up quickly), and unless someone can, the idea of there being only one Gospel simply remains an assumption there seems to be literally zero excuse for making.

All this does bring up a very important question, however, which is *why* there are two Gospels in the first place, and why Jesus *didn't* preach the same Gospel during His earthly ministry that Paul later preached to the nations. Well, the answer to that question is simply that He couldn't, because if He had, *nobody* would be able to get saved. You see, as we've already learned, the Gospel Paul preached is Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection, and this event is the very basis of our salvation (and is, in fact, the only reason *anyone* can be saved when it comes to the type of salvation Paul primarily taught about). This means that if Jesus had preached the same message (that His death was going to be *for our sins*, meaning that His death would be the basis of our salvation) as His Gospel around Israel before He died, the spiritual powers of darkness behind His death would have undoubtedly gotten wind of this, learning the truth about how we're saved, and would *not* have had Him crucified after all, as Paul explained[359] (and, in fact, would have done everything they could to keep Him from going to the cross, since they don't want any humans being made immortal and sinless and taking their rulership from them). Yes, humans technically crucified Jesus, but it was the evil spiritual beings ruling the world behind the scenes during this age – which, as anyone who is familiar with the Doctrine of the Ages is aware, is the same age I wrote the book you're reading in – who drove them to it, but only because they thought it would put an end to His eventual usurping of their leadership over humanity. Little did they realize that they were played, since His death was one of the main reasons He was born in the first place, but that fact was well disguised by His ministry to the Circumcision (in fact, while it's not the whole reason, it likely is still a large part of why God had a chosen people in the first place; basically, God plays the long game, and used Israel, and even the Gospel of the Circumcision, to distract the spiritual "princes of this world" from His much-grander hidden plans). And so,

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[359] But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. — 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

the answer to the question of why there *might* be two Gospels connected with salvation is itself yet another proof that there *have* to be two Gospels connected with salvation. Which also means that even if someone misses out on the type of salvation connected with the Gospel of the Circumcision, there's no reason they can't end up enjoying the type of salvation connected with the Gospel of the Uncircumcision as laid out in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 instead. But what does that have to do with the salvation of all humanity? Well, while most Christians think that 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 doesn't actually say anything about Universalism, this is because there are at least two different types of salvation connected with Paul's Gospel as well – both a general salvation which everyone will eventually get to enjoy, and a special salvation connected with it which only a relative few will ever experience, both of which are covered in that passage – and most Christians miss this fact, as you'll discover later in this book, just like they miss the fact that there's more than one Gospel in the Bible. However, before we do get to this fact about 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, we need to first take a look at a few more assumptions about certain words and concepts which most Christians believe prove The Popular Doctrine, especially the variation of it known as Infernalism. And I should also say that anyone who is reading this who *already* believes (or even anyone who has now been convinced) that there *are* indeed at least two Gospels in the Bible but *isn't* yet a Pauline Universalist either needs to at least finish reading this book through to the end of chapter 6 – to learn why *only* Pauline Universalists can join the body of Christ – or needs to begin *fully* obeying the Gospel of the Circumcision by doing good works instead. Because, if someone *isn't* a Pauline Universalist, they *haven't* truly believed Paul's Gospel yet, despite likely assuming that they have (and this *also* goes for if one happens to believe that Jesus continued to exist as a conscious being while He was dead, since a person can't join the body of Christ while believing that either, as you'll learn in chapter 3, although *this* fact is important for those in the Israel of God to know as well, even if *they* don't need to be Universalists in order to be saved the way that one needs to be in order to be a member of the *true* body of Christ,

so please at least read the next two chapters regardless of whether you plan to finish reading the rest of the book or not).

Chapter 2: The "Hell" of Hinnom

As basically everyone who understands English and has read the Bible (or has heard it read aloud) knows, Jesus is recorded as having warned His listeners about a place that's generally referred to as hell in English (well, He's recorded as having done so in the *King James Bible* and other less literal English translations of Scripture anyway). But just as it is when it comes to the topic of the various salvations, most people are unaware of many scriptural facts regarding the various hells as well (yes, there are multiple different hells referred to in the KJB – it's important to remember that the same English word is often translated from multiple different Hebrew and Greek words which can mean different things from one another in the KJB, and this is indeed the case when it comes to the word "hell" too, as will soon be demonstrated, although I'll really only be discussing two of the hells referred to in the *King James Bible* in this chapter, and will get more into some of the other hells it also talks about in the next chapter). Of course, most Christians assume that hell (which most of them also believe is a reference to a place called the lake of fire) is an afterlife location which anyone who doesn't get saved before they die or before Jesus returns will be endlessly punished for their sins in while dead, and these passages are among the most commonly-quoted verses in the Bible used in order to prove the commonly-believed doctrine of never-ending torment in hell for unsaved, dead sinners:

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee:

for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. – Matthew 5:29-30

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. – Matthew 18:8-9

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. – Mark 9:43-48

There are a few factors here that almost nobody ever considers when reading these passages, however. First of all, there's nothing in the text which tells us that anyone will actually *remain* in the hell fire that Jesus warned about in these three passages. Yes, Jesus said that the *fire* is "everlasting" in less literal Bible translations such as the KJB, but He didn't say that the time *spent* in said fire will be never-ending, and insisting that these three passages mean any humans will be trapped in this hell fire without the possibility of ever leaving it requires someone to read their assumptions and doctrinal presuppositions about never-ending punishment into the text (and yes, I know that there are other passages which you assume say that people will be in hell, or the lake of fire, without end, but none of *those* passages actually use either label in them, which means that this assumption really is just that: an assumption – and one which is quite

incorrect at that, as I'll demonstrate later in the book, because you're going to learn that they *have* to be referring to something *other* than hell or the lake of fire when one takes *context* into consideration instead of just cherry-picking scary-sounding words from specific verses on their own the way that most Christians do, but that's a topic for a later chapter; that said, it's *also* important to remember that "everlasting," "eternal," "for ever," and even "never" are often *figurative* terms in the various less literal Bible translations such as the KJB, and that they don't necessarily *literally* mean "never-ending," "without end," or "can't ever" in these versions, as I've touched on previously and as anyone who has read the entire Bible carefully should already be well aware, so even if any passages referring to judgement *did* happen to say that the punishment is going to be "everlasting," or is going to last "for ever" – or even "for ever and ever" – in one of these Bible translations, it *still* wouldn't necessarily mean they'd be punished without end, because it could easily just mean that they'd simply be punished for a long period of time – although we'll get into why that is in a later chapter too, for those who somehow *did* miss this fact when reading the Bible, as well as for those who haven't read the entire Bible, but for now we need to get back to learning what the hell that Jesus was warning about really is).

On top of all that, it's also *extremely* important to notice that Jesus said *"thy whole body"* could be cast into hell in the passage we looked at in Matthew 5,[360] so His warnings can really only be referring to something which happens to the physical bodies of people in a geographic location on an actual planet rather than to the ghosts of dead people (for lack of a better term) trapped in some sort of afterlife realm. That's not all, though, because He *also* didn't say that

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[360] And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. — Matthew 5:29–30

anyone would even be conscious or suffering while in the hell fire He warned about. Of course, anyone who has read the whole Bible – or who has at least read 1 Corinthians 15:53-55 – should already know that for a human to be immortal means for that human to be saved[361] (and remember, Jesus was referring to physical bodies, as we saw in that passage from Matthew 5, not to one's supposed "immortal soul" in an afterlife realm, if such a thing even exists), so that really isn't an option anyway (since any living human body that *isn't* immortal would burn up and die when cast into fire). And if someone tries to claim that Paul was only referring to believers when he said that immortality for humans means to be saved, point out to them that there's nothing anywhere in the passage which even *suggests* their assertion might be true, so this is nothing more than another assumption they're trying to force into the text, which is pure eisegesis on their part, especially since Paul was quite clear in the passage that, when mortality is replaced by immortality for someone, the wages of sin – *death*, in other words[362] – is swallowed up in victory for them, so this assumption is clearly contradicted by what the passage says anyway, not to mention what the rest of the chapter says, as you'll also learn later in this book (this is also one of the reasons I use the label "Pauline salvation" for the type of salvation connected with Paul's Gospel, because, as we learned in chapter 1, the type of salvation connected with the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus and His disciples taught about during His earthly ministry doesn't necessarily involve immortality for those saved under that Gospel, since those who go into the Kingdom without having died and been resurrected first won't be made immortal at that time but will instead remain alive due to eating the fruit of the tree of life on a monthly basis, as we'll discuss further in a later chapter,

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[361] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

[362] For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. — Romans 6:23

whereas *everyone* saved under Paul's Gospel is made *completely* immortal – without being required to eat that fruit on a monthly basis to *remain* immortal – once they're *fully* experiencing this type of salvation).

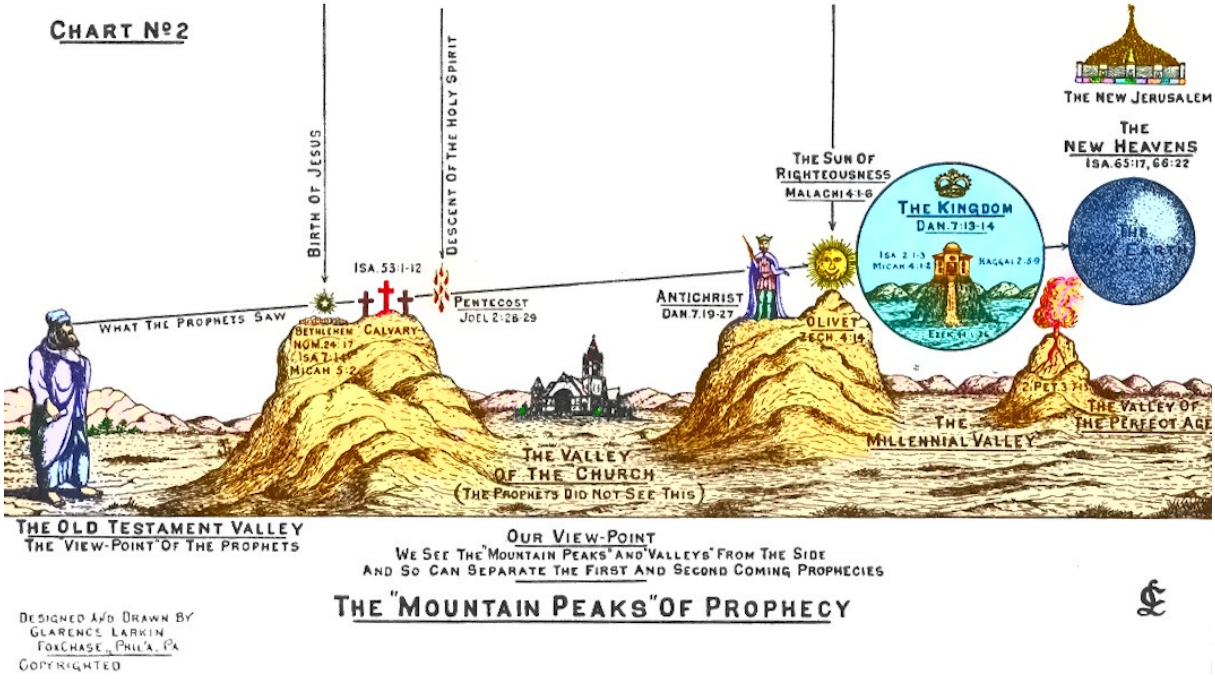
Of course, the passage I included from the book of Mark *also* confirms that this is all about physical bodies anyway (the mention of the "undying" worm and unquenchable fire gives it away), because it tells us that these warnings by Jesus were referencing a prophecy in Isaiah 66:23-24 which said: *"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."*

Few people who read this prophecy ever seem to notice it, but there's a word in there which confirms that Jesus definitely wasn't talking about ghosts who are suffering consciously in an ethereal afterlife dimension, with that word being "carcases," meaning corpses, or physical dead bodies. And not only did Isaiah say that there will be dead bodies there, he also said that they'll be looked upon with abhorrence (meaning contempt or aversion) by "all flesh" (meaning by any living human, since ghosts wouldn't have flesh, yet again confirming this can't take place in some sort of afterlife realm) that sees them either being consumed by worms or by fire on a physical planet in the future.

I should probably also quickly point out that verse 22 of Isaiah 66 tells us this prophecy actually seems to take place on the New Earth after the Great White Throne Judgement rather than on our current planet,[363] but Jesus' references to this passage in connection with people still living on *this* earth at the time the judgement He was referring to takes place also tells us that this prophecy has a

[363] For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. — Isaiah 66:22

double fulfillment of sorts, or really that it needs to be interpreted with the "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy in mind, which, for those who don't know, refers to a method of interpreting certain prophecies where there can be prophetic "valleys," meaning events taking place "within" a specific prophecy, but which were not explicitly mentioned within said prophecy and which the prophet himself is not necessarily even aware of, yet which are later revealed to us in *other* prophecies, with these prophetic "valleys" being situated between the prophetic "mountain peaks," meaning the events that the prophet actually *did* foresee and foretell within said prophecy.



For example, while Jesus' earthly ministry and reign as King of Israel was foreseen and foretold in various prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, the church called the body of Christ and the current dispensation of the grace of God were entirely unknown to the prophets recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. From their perspective, all they could see was one unbroken ministry of a Messiah coming to save and lead Israel during one unbroken period of time on

earth, because they couldn't see the "valley of the church" (referring to the church called the body of Christ, of course) hidden between the "mountain peaks" of Jesus' first and second time on earth, with those "mountain peaks" even seeming like one "mountain" to them from their metaphorical "vantage point," as you can see from the illustration I included on the previous page (and for anyone who might already be familiar with it and who might be concerned about it, the copyright on the illustration has long since expired). And this can even happen within a single sentence in a prophecy, as demonstrated in Luke 4:14-21[364] where Jesus stopped reading Isaiah 61:1-2[365] before the end of the sentence in verse 2 of Isaiah's prophecy, because the part of that prophecy about *"the day of vengeance of our God"* hadn't begun at that time yet, since that part won't begin until the Tribulation, around the time of His Second Coming. So with all that in mind, it's important to always consider whether a prophecy might have multiple fulfillments, or even a prophetic "valley" or two (or more) between portions of it, when trying to interpret *any* prophecy in the Bible.

Now, I have heard it claimed that, while the majority of the passage in Isaiah 66 actually *is* referring to what happens on earth, the passage all of a sudden

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[364] And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. — Luke 4:14-21

[365] The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; — Isaiah 61:1-2

begins talking about an afterlife state of souls when we get to the part about the worm and the fire (or, perhaps, that the worm and fire part of the prophecy have a double-fulfillment, both on a physical planet *and* in an afterlife realm), and that this means whoever ends up in this particular "hell" will be dead, but will then continue on as a conscious soul in an afterlife realm to be tormented by "fire" of some sort (however that's supposed to work without matter to combust), and by a "worm" (whether referring literally to an actual spiritual being that will somehow gnaw on their soul, or perhaps referring figuratively to simply being tormented by guilty memories of past sins, as I've heard it asserted by some who want to pick and choose for themselves which parts of this prophecy are literal and which parts are figurative rather than interpret the whole passage consistently) in another "hell" one enters in the afterlife. But since there's absolutely nothing in the text that could have possibly led anyone reading it at the time it was written to interpret it as meaning it isn't simply physical carcases being consumed by actual fire and worms (especially since there hadn't been anything written in the Hebrew Scriptures that outright spoke of a conscious afterlife punishment, as we'll discuss in depth in a later chapter), this is clearly just an assumption they've read into the passage based on a pre-existing doctrinal bias (an assumption which is contradicted by everything else we already discussed, I should add), and so to insist that this is what the passage has to mean without first considering those facts, along with everything else I'll be covering in this book, would also be pure eisegesis.

But what *was* Jesus warning us about, then? Well, He wasn't warning *us* about anything, because He wasn't talking to *us* to begin with (unless, again, you happen to be Jewish). As we already learned in the first chapter of this book, His death, burial, and resurrection aside, Jesus' earthly ministry and messages were technically to *"the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"* not to Gentiles (and please go read the first chapter of this book if you haven't already, because understanding the contents of that chapter is a requirement for understanding pretty much *any* of the Bible). But even if we're keeping that truth in mind, we still have to

ask what Jesus was warning His Jewish audience about in those passages, and based on what we've already covered, we can see that He was simply warning them about the possibility of missing out on enjoying something figuratively referred to in the KJB as "everlasting" life for a thousand years in the kingdom of heaven, pointing out that they might instead end up being consumed by fire and/or wildlife as a corpse on the ground in a valley outside Jerusalem.

Now, if you're wondering why I said He meant they might end up as corpses in a valley, we have to remember that Jesus wasn't speaking English, so when He gave these warnings, His listeners didn't hear the English word "hell" come out of His mouth when He spoke the words recorded in those verses we began with. Instead, they literally just heard Him say "the Valley of Hinnom" in their own language, specifically the word translated as γέεννα/"gheh'-en-nah" in Koine Greek (which itself is essentially a translation of the Hebrew phrase גֵּיא בֶן־הִנֹּם/"gah'-ee bane hin-nome'" – literally meaning "the Valley of the Son of Hinnom" in English – or, more precisely, a transliteration of גֵּיא־הִנֹּם/"gah'-ee hin-nome'" – literally meaning "the Valley of Hinnom" in English – which is what the name of that location in Israel seems to have been shortened to by the time Jesus walked the earth; I say "translated as γέεννα" because Jesus may have been speaking Aramaic rather than Hebrew or Greek, but his listeners then would have simply heard Him say גהנא/"gay-hah-nah'" – which itself also just meant "the Valley of Hinnom" in that language – based on how Scripture rendered it, at least in the original Koine Greek; although if He was speaking Greek, as some Christians actually believe He was, then it definitely would have just been γέεννα that He said, and if He was speaking Hebrew, they would have instead heard Him say גֵּיא־הִנֹּם, both of which literally simply mean "the Valley of Hinnom," as I just pointed out), and they would have – or at least should have – known that this is

referring to an actual, physical location on earth that Jeremiah[366] said would become a place of future judgement[367] (which is because that specific location, which is just outside Jerusalem, had been cursed by God to become a place of condemnation due to the fact that it had been used to sacrifice children[368] to

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[366] For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away. — Jeremiah 7:30-33

[367] Thus saith the Lord, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, And say, Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind: Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter. And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcases will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. — Jeremiah 19:1-7

[368] Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father: For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. — 2 Chronicles 28:1-3

pagan deities in the past[369]), and those who understood Scripture would have realized that Jesus was connecting the warning of judgement in the book of Jeremiah to the warning about corpses in the book of Isaiah, letting them know the exact location on the planet that Isaiah's prophecy would take place, at least prior to the creation of the New Earth (although the reference to "carcases" in the prophecies about the Valley of the Son of Hinnom in Jeremiah means they likely already would have assumed this was the location Isaiah was referring to, but Jesus connecting the prophecies in Jeremiah to the prophecy in Isaiah definitely confirms it for everyone).

I should also say, I've heard it suggested that "unquenchable fire" is actually always used figuratively in the Hebrew Scriptures as a symbol of destruction referring to a form of national judgement (but even if it isn't *always* used that way, it's definitely *sometimes* used that way, such as in 2 Kings 22:1,[370] 2 Chronicles 34:25,[371] and Isaiah 1:31,[372] to name just three of many such examples

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[369] Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: But did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. — 2 Chronicles 33:1-6

[370] Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. — 2 Kings 22:17

[371] Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched. — 2 Chronicles 34:25

[372] And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them. — Isaiah 1:31

– and just as a quick but relevant aside, it's also important to know that something being said to "not be quenched" in Scripture doesn't mean it never stops "burning," whether it's a literal or a figurative "burning," but just means that it won't stop "burning" until the appointed time, as those passages I just referenced in the footnotes should make obvious). This interpretation would seem to include the 587 BC fall of Jerusalem,[373] if it is indeed the case that the fire which is not quenched is referring to a national judgement, but it likely then would have also found a second fulfillment in AD 70 (also referred to as 70 CE[374]), at least as far as some of Jesus' warnings using the term go, considering the fact that the whole city of Jerusalem was burned, and the corpses in the Valley of Hinnom outside the city apparently ended up incinerated in that fire or consumed by worms in the valley at that time as well, or so I've been told by certain people at least (although I should say that I haven't confirmed this for myself, but if it is true, it's an interesting fact to consider). And if that is the case, it means that Jesus' warnings about hell fire were presumably already technically fulfilled at that time. That said, the lake of fire after the Great White Throne Judgement would still be something to be concerned about in that case, of course, even if this is what Jesus meant in His warnings (since Isaiah 66 is at least partly about corpses on the New Earth, even while it's also referring to corpses on this planet at an earlier time too, thanks to the "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy), and also presuming there isn't yet another fulfillment for certain people who go through the Tribulation as far as that warning goes as well (which is what would have to be the case if any of this *was* fulfilled in AD 70, as some people claim it was, because anyone who has studied history can see that the prophecies related to the Day of the Lord were *not* all fulfilled around AD 70,[375] the way some Christians claim they were, considering the fact that the

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[373] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(587_BC)

[374] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(70_CE)

[375] For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. — Matthew 24:21

nation of Israel is not currently ruling the world from the land of Israel as Scripture says they will after the Tribulation ends, especially since we now know from what we learned in the first chapter of this book that the body of Christ *is not* "spiritual Israel," although it would take too many chapters to go into any further detail on that topic, so I'll leave it at that).

To put it simply, the English word "hell" originally had no inherent meaning of "inescapable torture chamber" whatsoever, even though that's how it's come to be used by most people today (and, again, the Greek word it's translated from in these particular passages *definitely* didn't have that meaning, just as the Hebrew words that the Greek word was translated from didn't either, as they all simply referred to a literal valley in Israel). Instead, the English noun form of "hell" originally just meant "hole" or "pit" when used literally, or "a place where something is hidden, covered, or unseen" when used figuratively, with the verb form of "hell" originally referring to covering or hiding something (for example, to "hell a body" would mean to bury a body underground, and "helling a house" would refer to covering, or thatching, a house).

That's not to say the word "hell" is a bad translation in the KJB and other less literal Bible versions which use it, though (although, yes, it has admittedly confused generations of readers and listeners, but this is more due to their lack of careful study into the actual meaning of the word rather than due to what the actual meaning of the word itself is). The truth is, while it's obviously not the most clear English translation of γέεννα (since that translation would simply be "the Valley of Hinnom," based on the actual meaning of the Greek word that it's translated from), "hell" is technically a perfectly acceptable translation of γέεννα *so long as* someone studying the Bible realizes that it's strictly a *figurative* translation when it's used in these particular Bible versions, and that **it shouldn't ever be interpreted as referring to what the modern definition of the word does**, since it just didn't mean that in the original Greek, as I already mentioned. For example, the Greek word γέεννα (again, *literally* just

meaning "the Valley of Hinnom") is translated *figuratively* as "hell" in these Bible versions at least partly because a valley is a long depression, meaning an elongated **hole** in the ground, so "hell" is being used in these verses as a form of synecdoche (which is a figure of speech where a part of something is used to refer to a whole thing, at least when it comes to the microcosm type of synecdoche[376]), since this "hell" only refers to the *first half* of the Greek word (the "hole" – or "valley" – half of γέεννα), with the *second half* (the "of Hinnom" half of γέεννα) simply being implied by the term (this is similar to the way that someone might say "the Great Wall," or even just "the wall," as synecdoche for "the Great Wall of China"[377] in conversation). So technically, when someone says "hell" in reference to this particular biblical location, they're really just referring to "the Valley/Hole/'Hell' of Hinnom" in a shortened, synecdochical manner, even if they themselves might not actually realize that's what they're doing, since they might not be aware of the facts we just covered. (This, by the way, is just more proof that one often *has* to look into the meaning of the original Hebrew and Koine Greek words that the English words in the less literal Bible versions such as the KJB were translated from, since otherwise they'd have no way of knowing what it is that *many* of the English words in these versions *actually* mean, and will end up accepting the horrible misinterpretations that so many people have already come to believe the Bible teaches – although, if you disagree, please ask yourself how anybody could possibly know the connection between this "hell" that Jesus spoke about and the Valley of the Son of Hinnom written about in the Hebrew Scriptures if they *don't* dig into the meaning of the words in their original languages, or even how one can know which definition of "hell" one should be using to interpret the word in any given passage in the KJB without doing so, since we now know from what we've learned in this book so far that simply assuming a specific definition of *any* English word in the *King James Bible* must be the correct one will *often* lead you astray.)

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[376] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synecdoche

[377] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Wall_of_China

Now, some people will try to disagree with everything I just wrote, claiming that some Jews refer to the Valley of Hinnom (or "Gehenna," as it's often also called today, since that's a transliteration of γέεννα) in a figurative manner to speak of a spiritual realm or state of being in which people will be tormented consciously after they die, so as to support an argument that Jesus was just referring to the Valley of Hinnom figuratively as a warning about what those who don't get saved before they die will experience while dead, but there are a couple of problems with Christians using this argument, especially in order to support the doctrine of never-ending torment. The first problem is the fact that most Jews who do use the term "Gehenna" this way don't believe anyone will *remain* in this supposed spiritual "location" or "state" permanently, which means that for a Christian to argue for a very specific Jewish usage of the term – while ignoring the *actual* usage of the term when it's used this way by the people who *do* use it this way – is really to redefine the term to fit their own preconceived ideas, which means they have no actual basis for using it to defend their position to begin with. The other problem is that, whether or not the Valley of Hinnom really was sometimes used figuratively to refer to a negative afterlife realm back during Jesus' time on earth (and I'm not familiar with any proof that it actually *was* used in this manner *at that particular time* – and I *did* look for proof that it was used that way prior to writing this book but couldn't find any, although it's possible I missed something, so please let me know if you can find proof that I missed), there's nothing in the Hebrew – or even the Greek – Scriptures to indicate it *should* be used that way, so to claim Jesus meant it that way wouldn't be an argument based on what Scripture actually says so much as it would be an argument based on extrabiblical Jewish mythology, which isn't something that anyone should be basing their theology on,[378] nor does it seem like something that the One who corrected people for teaching unbiblical theological concepts

[378] This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. — Titus 1:13-14

as truth by saying things like "have ye not read...?"[379] and "it is written..."[380] would do (especially in light of the fact that for Jesus to have been referring to an afterlife "location" when He said γέεννα, or whatever word He spoke that was translated as γέεννα if He wasn't speaking Greek, would have meant He was completely ignoring what is *actually* written in Jeremiah about how **the physical location on earth** called **the Valley of the Son of Hinnom** would become **a place of future judgement** that **"carcases" will be devoured in**, just as He'd also have to have been ignoring what Isaiah said **would happen to physical "carcases"** in the other prophecy He was referencing too, not to mention the fact that He'd have then also been lying when He said that one's "whole body" could be cast into the Valley of Hinnom in whichever language He was speaking – and that's not even taking what He said to the Sadducees about resurrection into consideration, which also proves quite definitively that He couldn't possibly have been talking about an afterlife "location" for ghosts, although we'll look at that statement in the next chapter). Since both Jeremiah and Isaiah said that the only humans who will end up spending time in this particular "hell" as a judgement will be in the form of carcases at the time, it *has* to be referring to that actual valley in Israel, so it really wouldn't even matter if some Jews in Jesus' time *were* ignoring the Hebrew Scriptures and were referring to the valley figuratively in that manner anyway (although, again, there's no proof that I'm aware of that they actually *did* refer to it that way at the time, so unless one can find proof that they did, one would just be reading their own assumptions into the text by insisting they did), because this fact tells us that *Jesus* wouldn't have meant it that way at all, even if it ever turns out that we discover certain Jews actually *did* define the word that way back then (and this also means that, even if the translators of the KJB somehow weren't aware of all this, and actually did intend for us to interpret the English word "hell"

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[379] But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; — Matthew 12:3

[380] But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. — Matthew 4:4

using the modern, popular definition of "inescapable torture chamber," *God* wouldn't have intended for us to interpret it that way, as should be obvious by now, although I have to believe that the translators of the KJB were intelligent enough to have figured out everything we've just covered for themselves, even if they might not have publicized that fact).

Everyone Jesus spoke to desperately wanted to enjoy living in Israel when the kingdom of heaven finally begins there, and the idea that they might be dead during that thousand-year time period, having been buried under a pile of other corpses out in the open air, to be burned up and/or devoured by worms and other wild creatures (which would be seen as a desecration of the body that is considered to be extremely shameful to Israelites[381]) rather than being laid to rest under the ground as all Israelites would prefer to be the way they're interred, or that they might even have ended up weeping and gnashing their (quite physical) teeth because they'd been forced to live in figuratively "darker" parts of the world instead,[382] if the kingdom had fully begun on earth while they were still alive (which was another warning Jesus gave, although it had nothing to do with "hell" the way most people assume it did), would have been a grave threat for them indeed (and, in addition to everything we learned in the first chapter, the fact that Jesus said many will be coming from the east and the west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven also confirms that the kingdom of heaven will be on earth, after those patriarchs have been resurrected from the dead, rather than in an afterlife realm called "heaven," as does the fact that one could *"enter into the kingdom of God with one*

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[381] *Ask the Rabbi: Why does Jewish law prohibit cremation?* by Shlomo Brody: https://www.jpost.com/magazine/ask-the-rabbi-why-does-jewish-law-prohibit-cremation-576174

[382] And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. — Matthew 8:11-12

eye," as Jesus stated,[383] so the "outer darkness" will obviously have to be on earth too, and this threat can only be experienced by the living). That the "outer darkness" can't be referring to hell, at least not the hell we're discussing now, should be obvious anyway, because that particular hell will be within the borders of the kingdom of heaven since it will be in a valley sitting underneath the sun inside Israel (at least, based on everything we've covered, we have no scriptural basis for assuming otherwise at this point, especially since, just as a reminder to those who might have forgotten, that's what the Greek word that the English word "hell" in these passages is translated from in the KJB literally means), so it makes sense that being cast into the outer darkness would simply refer to being exiled from Israel, if one happens to be alive at that time, and missing out on getting to live in the kingdom of heaven during those thousand years.

However, for those who are somehow still skeptical, if Jesus *was* trying to get all of the above across, I have to ask you what He would have needed to have said differently in whatever language He was speaking in order to convince you of this, and I also have to ask you why you believe that what was written in Jeremiah and 2 Chronicles about the physical location on earth called the Valley of the Son of Hinnom – not to mention what Isaiah and Jeremiah both wrote about physical dead bodies in their prophecies about this location – was *not* an actual location where children were sacrificed at all, as would be the case if Jesus actually *was* talking about an afterlife "location" rather than the location on earth called the Valley of Hinnom in His warnings (because if Jesus didn't interpret the reference to the Valley of [the Son of] Hinnom in the passages from the Hebrew Scriptures that He was referring to as talking about an actual valley when He was warning about ending up in **the valley that He specifically mentioned by name as *the Valley of Hinnom* in the language He was speaking when He gave said warnings**, it means there's also no

[383] And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: — Mark 9:47

reason to believe that anything written in the Hebrew Scriptures about *what happened* in the location called the Valley of [the Son of] Hinnom in those passages actually happened either, since it would mean they *aren't* actual locations at all but were always just meant to be interpreted figuratively, even though this means we can't really interpret much of *anything* in the Hebrew Scriptures literally if that's the case), as well as why you believe He was lying when He said that one's "whole body" could end up there.

And before moving on, I also need to ask, if we're to believe that encountering a fiery judgement means being tortured, or even just punished, without end, why did Jesus then wrap up this warning by saying that *"every one shall be salted with fire,"*[384] and why do so many of the references to fiery judgements throughout the Hebrew Scriptures refer to fire purifying Israel and making things right, and never to any Israelites being tortured without end in said fire, as well? (And the odd passage that could theoretically be interpreted as referencing individuals being burned up don't say they'll be suffering, but rather that there won't be any part of them left after the fiery judgement is complete,[385] also contradicting the most popular soteriological position.)

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[384] For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. — Mark 9:49

[385] For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. — Malachi 4:1

But still, if this "hell" *is* a reference to the lake of fire, as most Christians believe it to be, wouldn't that mean the people who end up in it will have to be suffering in it without end, contrary to what Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote about the dead bodies in that location (not to mention what Paul wrote about immortality for humans)? I mean, the Bible says that unrighteous sinners will be tortured consciously in the lake of fire, and that none of them can ever leave that location, doesn't it? Well, let's take a look at what the Bible says about the lake of fire to determine whether that's actually the case or not:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. – Revelation 20:7-10

This is the *one-and-only* passage in the Bible which suggests that anyone might suffer without end in a location specifically referred to by name as the lake of fire (and again, I know that there are other passages you assume are referring to suffering in the lake of fire, or hell, without end, but as I already mentioned, none of those passages actually refer to either hell or the lake of fire, which I'll prove later in this book), at least in the KJB and other less literal versions, and I trust you noticed that it's only the devil, the beast, and the false prophet who are said to be tormented there *"for ever and ever"* in the KJB and other less literal Bible versions. No other humans (in fact, no humans at all) are said to be suffering that fate in this passage. Yes, Revelation 20:15 does say that anyone whose name isn't found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of

fire too,[386] but you'll notice that it doesn't say how long any of *these* people will remain in it for, or even that they'll be alive while they're in it (much less that they'll be suffering), and to insist that the humans who are said to be cast into it in that verse will *not surely die* a second time, as mortal humans normally would when set on fire (and as Revelation 21:8 certainly suggests that they will[387]), but that they'll somehow remain alive, even though there's nothing in the text which even implies this will happen, is the epitome of eisegesis (remember, this takes place *after* they've been resurrected from the dead for the Great White Throne Judgement, meaning they'll be existing in the same kind of biological bodies they had before they died when they're judged and cast into the lake of fire; they won't be resurrected with immortal bodies at that time, because, as I've already pointed out, immortality for humans is always connected with salvation in Scripture, so they'll have to die a second time when they're cast into the lake of fire, just as any other mortal human would today when set on fire). This also means that "the beast" and "the false prophet" in this passage can't be references to humans (or at least can't refer entirely to humans), since the beings who will go by those titles will be cast *alive* into the lake of fire,[388] which means the lake of fire is going to exist here on earth, not in another dimension that ghosts exist in, and there's nothing anywhere in the Bible to indicate that any humans who might go by these titles will be immortal (which they couldn't be anyway since, again, **immortality for humans is always connected with salvation in Scripture**), so the reference to "the beast" and

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[386] And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. — Revelation 20:15

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

[388] And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. — Revelation 19:20

"the false prophet" who are being tormented in the lake of fire pretty much have to be talking about spirits who possessed certain humans rather than talking about the actual humans who will also go by those titles (presuming "the beast" and "the false prophet" who deceive the world during the Tribulation aren't simply spiritual beings the whole time, and that no humans will actually go by those titles at all). Simply put, presuming there are humans who will go by those titles, they'll be cast alive into the lake of fire, at which point they'll die and burn up, leaving behind only the evil spirits who empowered them during the Tribulation, to be bound to the lake of fire for a very long time (similar to the way other spirits are said in the KJB to have been cast into,[389] and to currently be bound in,[390] yet another version of "hell," which is translated from the Greek ταρταρώσας/"tar-ta-row'-sas" rather than from the Greek γέεννα – and we know this is indeed another version of "hell" because Jude said they're chained up "under darkness" rather than in the valley under the sun in Israel which the "hell" sometimes known as Gehenna currently is). And if they're simply spiritual beings the whole time, with no possessed humans involved, then they themselves will be cast alive into the lake of fire and remain bound to that location for a very long time (presumably along with the other spiritual beings who are currently bound in the "hell" translated from ταρταρώσας – which is sometimes instead transliterated as "Tartarus," depending on the Bible version – who will likely also be judged at the Great White Throne as well, if not at the same time the beast and false prophet are cast into that location).

This also means that if the warnings by Jesus about the "Hell" of Hinnom *were* a reference to the future location of the lake of fire (which I actually agree that those passages were indeed referring to), since Isaiah and Jeremiah told us that only dead bodies would be spending time in there (at least as far as its human

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[389] For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; — 2 Peter 2:4

[390] And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. — Jude 1:6

inhabitants go), we can say with quite some certainty (even if Paul *hadn't* told us that immortality for humans means already being saved) that no humans in the lake of fire will be alive or suffering in there, at least not for any longer than it takes for someone to die after being set on fire (and this would fit perfectly with what we know anyway; the lake of fire is called the second *death* for a reason – if the "second death" could somehow be interpreted as being a reference to some form of never-ending torture, with one's supposed "spiritual death," whatever that means, actually being a prior "death" to this one, it should actually be called the "third death," because everybody who ends up there will have also died physically at some point prior to experiencing this fate, and if one's "first death" is actually a reference to their biological death prior to being physically resurrected for the Great White Throne Judgement, the second death would just be more of the same as the first death, which is biological death – which tells us there's no good reason at all to interpret the "second death" as referring to being tortured in fire, but rather that it should simply be interpreted as meaning to literally die a second time in said fire).

As for *why* I personally believe that the lake of fire will be located in the Valley/"Hell" of Hinnom in Israel, at least during the thousand-year age that the kingdom of heaven exists in Israel, there are a couple reasons. The first is because I've noticed that the passage almost immediately prior to the reference in Isaiah to the "undying" worms and unquenchable fire is a statement that implies this will take place at least partly on the New Earth,[391] as I already mentioned (although we do have to keep the "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy in mind here as well, as I also already mentioned, since we know that Jesus' warnings, at least when taken at face value, were at least partially about the period of time when the kingdom of heaven will exist in Israel on our current planet, even if Isaiah himself may not have been aware of that fact), and it seems unlikely that there would be two places for burning corpses on the New

[391] For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. — Isaiah 66:22

Earth (a place called the Valley of Hinnom and a separate place called the lake of fire) after the Great White Throne Judgement takes place. And similarly, we know that "the beast" and "the false prophet" will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of the Tribulation, 1,000 years or more before the New Earth is created, and the similar point that it seems unlikely there would be two different places for burning corpses in the kingdom of heaven as a judgement when it's located in Israel on our current planet would apply here too, and so it makes sense that the valley in Israel referred to synecdochically in the KJB as "hell" will indeed be the future location of the lake of fire, at least prior to this planet's destruction and the creation of the New Earth, although, based on the fact that Jesus *was* referring to a prophecy which also takes place at least partly on the New Earth when He discussed the Valley of Hinnom, it makes sense that the location of the lake of fire on the New Earth will *also* be in a hole/hell/valley named "the Valley of Hinnom" (and this is probably also a good time to say that everything we've looked at in this chapter is why I disagree with those Universalists who claim that the lake of fire is a simply a reference to a process of spiritual purification of conscious beings, since that would also contradict everything we just learned about the Valley of [the Son of] Hinnom, both in the Hebrew Scriptures as well as in Jesus' statements about it where He referenced said passages of Scripture).

Before moving on, though, I should also point out, in addition to the fact that we have no basis for believing any humans will be conscious or suffering in the hell/valley that the lake of fire will be located in, or even for believing they'll never be resurrected from their second death to go live on the New Earth at some point (which is also not a reference to an afterlife state, since nobody going to live on the New Earth will die a second time when arriving there the way those cast into the lake of fire will, but is just a reference to a whole new planet to replace ours after our current planet is destroyed[392]), there's good

[392] But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. — 2 Peter 3:10

reason to believe that not every human judged at the Great White Throne will even end up in the lake of fire to begin with. This idea might sound odd to some Christians, but John's statement about those whose names aren't written in the book of life ending up in the lake of fire would seem to be entirely unnecessary if there weren't going to also be some people judged at that time whose names *are* written in the book of life, especially if the judgement itself were going to prove that they deserved to end up in the lake of fire, as most Christians assume will happen. And remember, this judgement isn't about whether one has "gotten saved" or not (nobody who has been saved will be judged at this time, so it can't be about that). Instead, John tells us that the judgement people will face at the Great White Throne is going to be solely about their works[393] (this also means that they'll be judged based on whether their evil acts "outweighed" their good deeds rather than whether their actions were sinful or not, since "evil" and "sin" two entirely different things – unless you believe that animals can sin,[394] but either way, the two words have two entirely different meanings too, as you'll learn later in this book), saying in Revelation 21:8: *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."* Of course, most Christians will claim that "the unbelieving" being the second category of people who are said to end up there proves that anyone who doesn't "get saved" before they die will end up in the lake of fire, but since John said this judgement is based on works, if "the unbelieving" referred to those who didn't "get saved," it would also mean that believing is a work, which I doubt most Christians agree is the case. The fact that "the unbelieving" is the *second* category rather than the first – *in a list* of different categories of

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[393] And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. — Revelation 20:12

[394] And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. — Genesis 37:33

people who end up there – also tells us just how unlikely it is that John was simply referring to those who didn't choose to "get saved" before they die, since if everyone who fails to "get saved" is guaranteed to end up in the lake of fire, the rest of the list would seem to be entirely unnecessary to begin with (although it's true that, while those in the body of Christ can't lose their salvation – since Paul told us that anyone God calls for this type of salvation *will* be glorified – those Israelites who are given the sort of salvation that Jesus and His disciples preached about while He walked the earth do seem to be able[395] to lose out on their type of salvation,[396] so perhaps the rest of the list technically applies strictly to them, but either way, "the unbelieving" can't simply refer to those who didn't get saved prior to their death, because otherwise it wouldn't even need to be included on the list to begin with, since it would go without saying based on the fact that they were being judged at the Great White Throne in the first place).

The fact that he also says "all liars" will end up in the lake of fire, when every single human who has made it to the age where they can communicate has lied at some point in their life, also makes the rest of the list entirely superfluous, I should add, if it means that every unsaved person who has ever told a lie will end up in the lake of fire, as most Christians claim (it stands to reason that this simply refers to those who make a lifestyle out of habitual lying, such as politicians and religious leaders today, for example, since otherwise the rest of the list just wouldn't have been necessary at all). Anyway, at least as far as

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[395] For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. — Hebrews 6:4-6

[396] For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. — Hebrews 10:26-27

Gentiles go, Jesus Himself seemed to imply that certain non-Israelites will be resurrected for this judgement yet not end up condemned themselves, but rather will condemn certain Israelites who missed out on the resurrection of the just[397] (and they won't have been saved the way the body of Christ or the Israel of God are, or else they would have been resurrected much earlier and missed this particular judgement altogether). And so, I would suggest that it's probably only the worst of the worst who will end up in the lake of fire, with everyone else, likely including most of your loved ones, continuing on to live on the New Earth, even if not in immortal bodies (at least to begin with).

But don't worry, this interpretation isn't teaching salvation by works for those who might get to avoid the lake of fire after being judged at the Great White Throne, because those who would avoid the lake of fire at this judgement wouldn't actually get saved at that time, since A) they missed out on the type of salvation which involved enjoying "eternal" life in Israel during the thousand years that the kingdom of heaven existed on our planet prior to this judgement, and B) they aren't going to be quickened when they go live on the New Earth – at least not right away – so this isn't the sort of salvation which Paul taught isn't by works either, because that particular salvation is largely about being made immortal. All that being said, even if everyone who gets judged at the Great White Throne *does* end up in the lake of fire, we already know that it's only the spiritual beings known as the devil, the beast, and the false prophet who are said to remain in the lake of fire *"for ever and ever,"* or who are said to be tormented in it, so there's no reason to believe that any human whose name isn't written in the book of life will be alive or suffering in the lake of fire, or even that they can't ever eventually be resurrected from their second death the

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[397] The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. — Matthew 12:41-42

way they were from their first death, and then go on to live on the New Earth (whether in an immortal body or otherwise); although, as you'll learn soon enough, *"for ever and ever"* is also a figurative translation of the original Greek, so even those three beings won't necessarily remain there permanently, but that's a topic for another chapter.



A picture of the Valley of Hinnom, which is the "hell," or "hole," that Jeremiah and Jesus warned about (and which is where the lake of fire will be located in the future, at least to begin with), as it exists in Israel, at least as of the time this book was published. [Photograph of "hell" taken by Deror avi (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Valley_of_Hinom_PA180090.JPG). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/en:Creative_Commons).]

Chapter 3: A matter of life or death

What is death? The answer to this question is simple: death is the absence of life. In fact, this is such a simple concept that a child could tell you this. At the end of the day, it takes religion or the occult to truly get someone to believe that death isn't really death after all, but is instead actually life. (Religion also lies about *why* we die, I should add, as we'll learn in an upcoming chapter.)

And if death is the absence of life, what is immortality? Well, it's the complete opposite of death: life that can't possibly ever end because our mortal bodies have been quickened (or vivified, which is a synonym for "quickened" that certain Pauline Universalists use for reasons that I'm not going to get into here). Of course, the fact that we still have to *"put on immortality"*[398] in order to fully experience the salvation Paul wrote about means we humans are *not* inherently immortal, or literally "eternal" beings, but few Christians ever really stop to think about these facts particularly deeply, and so they just assume that we *are* inherently literally "eternal" and immortal, even if it's just our souls which they assume are somehow naturally immortal.

The simple truth, however, is that immortality *isn't* something we're born with. We have to be *given* immortality, and it won't be truly given to any of us until a

[398] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

very specific time in the future, which is all the proof one should need that no human can possibly suffer without end in the lake of fire, as the following points should make clear:

- Immortality for humans is always connected with salvation in Scripture (only those who are finally experiencing salvation physically – in living bodies, with most of them having been resurrected from the dead first, because they died at some point prior to their quickening – will have *"put on immortality,"* or will have been made immortal; and whenever someone is made immortal it can then be said, *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"*, as far as they're concerned, because death will have been swallowed up in victory for them).
- Those who are going to be resurrected for the Great White Throne Judgement haven't experienced salvation yet, so they'll be raised as regular, mortal, biological humans.
- Regular, mortal, biological humans who are set on fire burn up and die, presuming they aren't rescued from the fire first.
- There's absolutely nothing in Scripture that tells us God will keep resurrecting people in the lake of fire perpetually so they can die over and over again without end after they've died a second time (which would make the lake of fire also the third and fourth and fifth deaths, and so-on-and-so-forth, rather than just the second death, which is all the Bible refers to it as in that context), and to insist that He will is quite clearly eisegesis, since there's just nothing in the text that even implies it. (This also means that those Christians who have tried to deny a second resurrection of those who will die a second time in the lake of fire so they can be saved, by telling me, "Scripture doesn't specifically say the words, 'Those who die a second time in the lake of fire will also be resurrected a second time so they can be made immortal,'" can't then turn around and say, "There's a second and third and forth resurrection, and so-on-and-so-forth, so humans can suffer without end," since they've already denied that Scripture says a second resurrection will take place at all – and

yes, this *is* something that I've heard certain Christians try to insist is indeed the case, not seeming to notice the contradiction they're teaching.)

But even if humans can't suffer in the "hell" that the lake of fire will be located in (which will be the Valley of Hinnom in Israel, at least while the lake of fire exists on this current planet, after it starts burning, as we learned is the case in the last chapter), if we're literally "eternal" beings, the way most Christians assume we are, we must still be able to suffer in another version of "hell," which the unsaved will experience as ghosts after they die, right? This is what most Christians believe, anyway. And because of this, while *"ye shall not surely die"* might be the first recorded lie the devil told,[399] it's now being taught as truth by many people in the Christian religion who are trying to convince us that death isn't actually death at all, but is instead actually life ("eternal" life, even, for many), and that it's really a friend bringing us to finally be with the Lord rather than an enemy that needs to be destroyed.[400]

Based on all the sermons where I've heard preachers say things like, "When your heart stops beating, you won't actually die; instead, you'll move on to the next stage of your life, the place where you'll spend the rest of eternity, and the location you'll end up living in from that point forward depends on whether or not you choose to accept Christ before you pass on to that final destination," it's clear they've (at least temporarily) forgotten that nobody remains dead, since there's still a resurrection of the dead in the future, prior to the Great White Throne Judgement (multiple resurrections, in fact, since for there to be a "first" resurrection,[401] there has to also be a subsequent one, and we're told that there

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[399] And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: — Genesis 3:4

[400] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. — 1 Corinthians 15:26

[401] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. — Revelation 20:5-6

indeed is one, in the passage immediately after the verses referring to the "first" resurrection[402]; and yes, I believe that Revelation 20:5 *does* belong in the Bible, despite what certain modern scholars and the apparatus in a recent edition of the *Critical Text* have been claiming – a claim which is contrary to what many *other* Bible scholars argue quite well, I might add – and aside from the fact that it's there in the *Textus Receptus* – which is enough of a reason in and of itself for me to trust that it belongs there since I personally believe it's the best source for translating the Greek Scriptures from, because, among many other issues with the *Critical Text*,[403] if you *are* using the *Critical Text*, it means you can *never* know *for sure* what the Bible *actually* said in the original Greek, since it's constantly changing from edition to edition of the *Critical Text*, and which is one of the reasons why I personally don't consider any Bible version translated from the *Critical Text* to be an *actual* Bible at all – it also fits *absolutely perfectly* with everything *else* that we see taught throughout the rest of Scripture anyway, especially the very next verse after it, although I leave it up to to you to dig into these topics for yourself if you do want to research all this further), so the supposed afterlife "location" which one ends up in while they're dead *couldn't* be their final destination (presuming there even was an afterlife for ghosts, of

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[402] And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. — Revelation 20:7-13

[403] *Part 2: Problems with the Critical Text* by "Concerned Christ Follower": https://greekmanuscripts.substack.com/p/part-2-problems-with-the-critical

course). But in addition to this, it also demonstrates that they're unaware of the fact that the Hebrew Scriptures[404] tell us the dead know nothing,[405] meaning they aren't conscious at all (many Christians will do all sorts of theological and mental gymnastics trying to prove that these assertions made in Ecclesiastes don't literally mean what they say, or at least that they're not actually something we should consider to be true, but there had been no passages in Scripture prior to those which said the dead *are* conscious, so there's no basis for the idea that anyone who read these statements at the time they were written could have possibly understood that the writer instead meant the dead actually *do* have knowledge – although, for those who believe in the immortality of the soul, if Solomon *was* trying to get across to us that the dead *don't* have knowledge, I have to ask you what he would have needed to have written differently there in order to convince you that he actually *did* mean they don't have knowledge). Even in the Greek Scriptures, death is compared to sleep,[406] not to being awake in an afterlife existence (outside of one very misunderstood story in the book of Luke, which I'll discuss shortly). The book of Acts didn't say Stephen died and went to heaven, for example.[407] While his spirit was returned to God – not as a conscious being, though, because our spirit is just the breath of life that generates a conscious soul while in a

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[404] For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. — Ecclesiastes 9:5

[405] Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. — Ecclesiastes 9:10

[406] These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. — John 11:11-14

[407] And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. — Acts 7:59-60

body[408] and isn't conscious in and of itself, since it's actually our soul that *is* our consciousness, and spirits and souls aren't the same thing[409] – the book of Acts says that he himself went to sleep, not that he remained awake.

Scripture also says that David and others fell asleep[410] – referring to their actual persons being asleep or unconscious in death – not that just their bodies decayed while they themselves remained conscious (when Scripture speaks of a person dying, it doesn't just say their body died while they themselves continued to live; instead, it says that they themselves have died, and that the location of their very person is now "in the grave"[411] or "in the dust,"[412] in the

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[408] And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. — Genesis 2:7

[409] For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. — Hebrews 4:12

[410] For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: — Acts 13:36

[411] Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. — John 5:28-29

[412] Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. — Isaiah 26:19

very same place that everyone ends up,[413] including all animals as well,[414] in fact, and there's no scriptural basis for reading these verses in any other way, at least not that I'm aware of – besides, if the immortality of the soul actually *was* a scriptural concept that Israelites believed is true back in "Old Testament" times, they themselves wouldn't have implied in Scripture that the dead are unconscious and that they aren't located in any other place than the ground). Similarly, bodily resurrection is likewise compared to waking up from sleep in Scripture,[415] and not to a person being returned to their body to continue to be awake as they supposedly still were while they slept as well.

It's important to remember that consciousness, at least for biological beings such as humans, can cease to exist, since one can lose consciousness, either by going to sleep, by fainting, or by being knocked out (and when someone has lost consciousness, they are no longer conscious, meaning they are no longer aware of themselves and their surroundings, which means their consciousness has temporarily ceased to exist, which is something I can't believe I have to explain, but somehow many people I've discussed this with seem to miss this fact, so

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[413] For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. — Ecclesiastes 9:1-5

[414] For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. — Ecclesiastes 3:19-20

[415] And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. — Daniel 12:2

here we are), and if we can lose our consciousness under those common circumstances, with it ceasing to exist while we're alive (which means we aren't in a never-ending state of consciousness), there's no reason to believe our consciousness could return after we die without a living and active brain to bring it back into existence the way our brains do when we awaken from unconsciousness, thus regaining the consciousness we lost. To make this really clear, let's say that somebody was sleeping, and hence had no consciousness existing at that point (and before someone brings up REM sleep and dreaming, the subconscious processes of a physical brain that cause us to dream while we're asleep aren't the same thing as the consciousness we have while we're awake, nor is there any reason to believe the neurological processes that generate dreams can occur without a living, biological brain; and one doesn't dream the whole time they're asleep anyway – in fact, we only dream about 20% of the time we're asleep at night, so for approximately one third of our lives, give or take, we aren't conscious at all), or was even knocked unconscious with a hard object or sedated for surgery. If they were to suddenly die right then after having lost consciousness (and this hypothetical person is not in a state of REM sleep, and hence isn't dreaming in this scenario, just to remove any doubt), would their consciousness just pop back into existence at the point of their death? There's absolutely no reason to think it would, and the idea that death can recreate a consciousness that had stopped existing (as would be the case if this happened) really makes no sense at all.

But getting back to Scripture, it's also important to remember that the first time those in the body of Christ are said to meet the Lord is going to be in the air[416] in our newly quickened bodies (while living members of the Israel of God will do so at the Second Coming, and dead members of the Israel of God[417] will do so

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[416] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:17

[417] As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. — Psalm 17:15

at the resurrection of the just, 75 days after the Tribulation ends; and, again, please compare the numbers in Daniel 12:11-13[418] to the numbers in Revelation 13:5[419] if you aren't familiar with the 75-day difference between the end of the Tribulation and the resurrection of the just – which is the "first" resurrection mentioned in Revelation 20:5-6 that we just discussed, and I put "first" in quotes because it's obviously a figurative label, considering the fact that there have already been plenty of resurrections *prior* to this one, including Jesus' resurrection, as well as the resurrections of many other people mentioned in the Bible – because this is an important difference which proves that the quickening of the body of Christ takes place prior to the Second Coming, or at least prior to the resurrection of the just), which is the point from when we're said to finally *"ever be with the Lord"* (and not from a previous point such as our physical death, which would be when those in the body of Christ *actually* began to *"ever be with the Lord"* if the immortality of the soul were true). In fact, the blessed hope[420] we're told to comfort one another with[421] isn't that the dead get to live happily with the Lord as ghosts in another dimension called heaven, but is rather the expectation that the dead in Christ will eventually be physically resurrected, and that all of us in the body of Christ (both those still living and those newly resurrected) will then be quickened and caught up together in the

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[418] And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. — Daniel 12:11-13

[419] And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. — Revelation 13:5

[420] Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; — Titus 2:12-13

[421] Wherefore comfort one another with these words. — 1 Thessalonians 4:18

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,[422] which is when we'll finally be in the heavens. (And the reference to *"them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"* in verse 14 is just talking about the spirits of the dead members of the body of Christ that had "returned to God"[423] now coming back to rejoin their bodies, and isn't meant to imply that they were already enjoying being *"ever with the Lord"* in heaven, since our spirits aren't actually conscious outside of our bodies, and the verse said *"them also which sleep in Jesus,"* not "them also which are awake in an afterlife in Jesus" anyway; remember, it's our souls that are our consciousness, generated by a brain in a body which is being kept alive by our spirit, and our soul can't exist so long as our spirit is not residing within our physical body, keeping our brain alive.) It's important to remember that the reason Paul even brought this up to begin with was to comfort those who had lost loved ones to death. If the immortality of the soul were true, he would have instead needed to have written something more along the lines of, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which are awake in an afterlife in Jesus are with Him now, enjoying the bliss of heaven, which is where you'll go to ever be with the Lord when you sleep as well. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

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[422] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

[423] Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. — Ecclesiastes 12:7

Of course, Paul also makes it quite clear that the immortality of the soul can't be true when he wrote, *"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,"* in 1 Corinthians 15:16-19, as well as when he talked about all the dangers he faced while evangelizing,[424] and pointed out that there would be no reason for him to do so if there were no resurrection from the dead, because if there was no resurrection, then nobody could be saved, in which case he might as well just go live his life without worrying about evangelizing. This wouldn't be true if those who are saved go to another dimension called heaven when they die. The fact that we don't is why he could make that claim: because without the physical resurrection we would have absolutely no hope at all, since we would cease to exist for good (we wouldn't even have the hope of continuing on as ghosts in another dimension called "heaven" with God, since those who died in Christ would have "perished," meaning they're no longer existing at all, and have no hope of ever existing again either, according to this passage), which was basically the entire reason Paul wrote that chapter in his first epistle to the Corinthians to begin with.

[424] I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. — 1 Corinthians 15:31-32

In addition, we know that not only has David himself not gone to heaven, at least not as of the time Peter made that speech recorded in Acts 2[425] (which was after Christ's resurrection and ascension, which means we also have no reason to believe he's ended up there since then, nor do we have any reason to believe that Peter's audience would have assumed he was speaking only of David's body but not his soul, or even that Peter meant that, especially since he didn't say anything hinting at that, which makes sense considering the fact that there's nothing in the Hebrew Scriptures that would have led any of them to believe anyone's soul went to heaven while dead), but that nobody other than Christ Himself had either as of the time John wrote that assertion in his commentary in the book of John,[426] which was also after Jesus ascended into heaven (Jesus' "red letters"[427] quote should probably end at verse 12 based on the fact that verse 13 says the Son of man was in heaven at that point, which we know Jesus wasn't at the time He had that discussion with Nicodemus, so everything from verse 13 to 21 presumably had to have been John's personal commentary on the topic, written after Jesus had left the earth; it's important to remember that the book of John was a theology book rather than a history book and, unlike the Synoptic Gospels,[428] used historical quotes of Jesus to prove theological points instead of primarily being a historical record in and of itself the way the three

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[425] Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. — Acts 2:29-35

[426] And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. — John 3:13

[427] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_letter_edition

[428] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synoptic_Gospels

Synoptic Gospels were, and that John often added his own commentary to the book, even though this commentary would have indeed been inspired by God), so it seems pretty obvious that life in heaven is only for those who have been made immortal, and isn't for those who are currently dead.

In fact, if people were to remain conscious after death, God would cease to be their God while they waited for their physical resurrection, since He is not a God of the dead, but of the living,[429] which would make things strange for people in the supposed afterlife if they no longer had a God (although, if the immortality of the soul were true, that would be a good explanation as to why the dead[430] do not praise God,[431] or even remember that He exists,[432] since He'd no longer be their God while they were still dead). Ironically enough, though, some Christians actually try to use this statement to support their view that the dead remain conscious, mistakenly thinking that Jesus' statement meant the dead aren't actually dead, but are actually still alive somewhere. If they just took the time to examine the context of the whole passage in the book

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[429] For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. — Luke 20:38

[430] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. — Psalm 115:17

[431] Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. — Isaiah 38:17-19

[432] For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? — Psalm 6:5

of Luke,[433] however, they'd discover that it was really about how the Sadducees, who didn't believe in a physical resurrection of dead bodies in the future, were trying to trip Jesus up with a question about who a hypothetical person would be married to after being resurrected from the dead during the impending kingdom in the next age, when the kingdom of heaven exists in Israel for 1,000 years (although it's translated as *"that world"* in the KJB; as already mentioned, the word "world," at least in the KJB, doesn't always mean "planet" or "earth," but in many cases[434] – including this one in Luke, since it was translated from the Greek αἰών here as well – it's actually a metonym for "age" in the KJB, meaning "a long period of time with a definite beginning and end"). To put it simply, they weren't asking about a ghost in an afterlife dimension and whether or not she'd have to be polygamous in that imaginary realm, but were asking their question about her various marriages in order to make the idea of physical resurrection seem ridiculous. However, Jesus corrected them by not only pointing out that those people who are going to be resurrected from the dead at the beginning of that "world"/age will be immortal like the angels and hence will not be married anymore at that time (because procreation, which was

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[433] Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. — Luke 20:27-38

[434] Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: — Galatians 1:4

normally done by married people in Israel, isn't something immortal beings are meant to do, as we know from Genesis 6 – look up the Nephilim[435] if you aren't familiar with what I'm referring to, because that's too big of a tangent for me to explain at this point), but also by using the fact that the Lord could not legitimately claim the title of *"the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,"* as Moses revealed Him to be, if the dead weren't going to be physically resurrected someday, because He's technically not the God of those who are currently dead, but is instead only the God of the living (Jesus was using prolepsis in that statement – prolepsis, again, being a figure of speech which means "calling what is not yet as though it already were"[436] – in order to prove that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will definitely be resurrected from the dead someday, because otherwise that statement about them[437] would have been a lie since it would mean they'll never exist again, when in fact *"all live unto him"* already, considering the fact that, as far as God is concerned, they've already been physically resurrected, at least from His timeless perspective – meaning, because God ultimately transcends space and time, He not only existed in the time Moses wrote that and the time Jesus said that, not to mention exists in our time as well, but He's also already existing at the point in time when these three patriarchs will be resurrected too).

The passage just can't be read as saying the three of them were actually still alive at the time that Jesus made that statement. Verse 37 of Luke 20 ("*...that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush...*") makes it very clear that Jesus is

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[435] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nephilim

[436] Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. — Romans 4:16-17

[437] Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. — Exodus 3:6

talking about the fact that these three patriarchs would eventually be physically resurrected, not that they're actually still alive in another dimension (He didn't say, "that the dead are living in another dimension"; He said, *"that the dead are **raised**,"* referring to a future resurrection). Jesus' whole point is that, if they aren't going to be raised from the dead to live again, God could not be said to be their God, because He isn't the God of the dead but of the living. If they were actually still alive in some afterlife realm, God would have still been their God from a literal perspective rather than just a proleptic perspective at that time (and they could still thank and praise Him, contrary to what the book of Psalms says), but instead, Jesus' whole point was that, without a physical resurrection, He *couldn't* be their God, since they're dead and will never exist again if they aren't going to be resurrected. Because they *will* be resurrected, however, God actually *can* be said to be their God, even if only from a proleptic perspective at present, at least as far as those of us who are subject to time are concerned.

There's just no way to read verses 37 and 38 as meaning anything other than Jesus saying that those who have "gone to sleep" are indeed dead and unconscious until their physical resurrection, because the only way that Moses' statement about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could possibly be used as proof of a physical resurrection from the dead in the future is *if* the three of them have ceased to live and consciously retain knowledge for the time being. If the three of them are actually still alive in an afterlife dimension somewhere, and if Jesus' statement about God being the God of the living rather than the God of the dead was actually Him trying to prove the idea that God is still their God because they're actually still alive somewhere, then the resurrection of the dead would be entirely unnecessary for God to be their God, and Jesus' argument couldn't possibly help prove a future resurrection at all, which means they have to no longer exist as conscious beings for now or else Jesus' entire argument proves nothing as far as what the Sadducees were challenging Him on goes. Of course, Jesus' statement in Matthew 22:31-32 makes this even more obvious, since Jesus is recorded in that book as saying, *"But as touching the resurrection of the dead,*

have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," making it clear that His statement about God not being the God of the dead, but of the living, is entirely about bodily resurrection (when Jesus said, "the living," He could *only* have been referring to living in a physical body in the future and not to ghosts currently "living" in an afterlife realm, based on both this passage in Matthew and the one we looked at in Luke).

However, before moving on, if you still believe in the immortality of the soul after reading about Jesus' discussion with the Sadducees, I'd like to ask how, exactly, you think that Jesus' argument about God not being the God of the dead, but rather of the living, could possibly prove a future resurrection if His statement meant that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob actually *are* still alive in an afterlife realm somewhere. Because, unless you can answer that question satisfactorily, this statement by Jesus seems to be definitive proof that the dead aren't actually conscious, and that no other passage in Scripture which one might believe teaches a conscious afterlife can possibly *actually* be intended to be interpreted that way, which means *all* the other "proof texts" people use to try to prove the immortality of the soul *have* to be interpreted in a different manner from the way most people traditionally interpret them (this also confirms that Jesus' warnings about the "hell" known as the Valley of Hinnom that we discussed in the last chapter *have* to be about the physical valley in Israel rather than an afterlife "location" too). So please **don't read any further in this book** – presuming you disagree with my interpretation of Luke 20:27-38 and Matthew 22:31-32, of course – until you're able to answer that question.

And speaking of dead "Old Testament" saints, one of those "proof texts" is the story of the appearance of Moses and Elias (also known as Elijah) on "the Mount

of Transfiguration,"[438] which many Christians use to try to argue that the dead are indeed still conscious. But aside from the fact that this would make Jesus guilty of the sin of necromancy if He was talking to the ghosts of these two dead men[439] (and Jesus never sinned, so it's clear that this couldn't have been what was happening there), we know that this was simply a vision to fulfill the prophecy[440] made immediately before this passage that some would *"see the Son of man coming in his kingdom"* before dying[441] (which is exactly what happened when His disciples had that vision of Jesus in the glorified form that He'll exist in when the kingdom of heaven comes *fully* into fruition in the future), because Jesus outright said that it was just a vision.[442]

And before someone tries to use Saul's visit to the witch of Endor to prove the immortality of the soul, whatever the witch saw (remember, Saul didn't see

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[438] And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. — Matthew 17:1-3

[439] When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. — Deuteronomy 18:9-12

[440] For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. — 2 Peter 1:16-18

[441] Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. — Matthew 16:28

[442] And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. — Matthew 17:9

anything here), she described it as *"gods ascending out of the earth,"*[443] so this was far more likely to have been a spiritual being of some sort than actually being Samuel (although the way this sort of thing was performed back then, from what I've been led to understand, involved a witch looking into a pit and pretending to speak to the dead in the pit, so I suppose it's possible that God temporarily resurrected Samuel's body from the dead and then transported him to that pit – and if the events on the Mount of Transfiguration hadn't simply been said to be a vision by Jesus, a temporary physical resurrection of Moses and Elijah at that time could have also explained what Jesus' disciples saw there – but that wouldn't prove the immortality of the soul either since Samuel wouldn't have been dead while in that pit).

Those aren't the only passages they misuse, though, to try to prove the immortality of the soul. For example, many like to also claim that Paul said, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." Aside from the fact that this isn't actually what Paul said at all (his actual words in 2 Corinthians 5:8 – at least as translated in the KJB – were, *"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"*), if you look at the context of what he said in the previous verses,[444] and also remember that a

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[443] And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. — 1 Samuel 28:13-14

[444] For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

physical resurrection in an immortal, glorified body is what Paul was, and the living members of the body of Christ currently are (or at least should be), looking forward to, you can see that he was figuratively comparing our current mortal bodies to earthly houses, and saying that he was looking forward to no longer being "at home" in his mortal body, but instead wanted to be at home in his glorified *"house not made with hands."* When Paul talked about "houses" and "homes" in these verses, as well as when he referred to being clothed there, he was talking about physical bodies, with the *"house not made with hands"* being a reference to his future immortal body, not to him existing as a ghost in another dimension after he dies. And so, when he wrote that he was *"willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord,"* he couldn't possibly have been talking about hoping he'd die so he would be with Jesus, since he specifically wrote in verses 3 and 4 that he was *not* hoping for death *at all* (when he wrote that he wasn't looking to be *"naked"* or *"unclothed"*), but rather that he was hoping to be given an immortal body, or to be *"clothed upon"* (*"with our house which is from heaven,"* as he explained in verse 2) so that *"mortality might be swallowed up of life,"* confirming that this whole passage is about mortal bodies vs immortal bodies rather than about existing as ghosts in an ethereal afterlife dimension, and that he simply meant he was wanting (*"willing"*) to trade in his mortal body for his future immortal body so he could be *"present with the Lord,"* which won't happen until the Snatching Away, which is what English-speaking members of the body of Christ generally call the event when *members of the body of Christ specifically* will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air (and which should not be conflated with the Second Coming, when Jesus returns for the Israel of God instead, about six or seven years later, give or take; while the body of Christ will be taken up to heaven at the Snatching Away, all other Christians who are alive at that time will be left behind to go through the Tribulation period along with the rest of the world – and yes, the Snatching Away *is* indeed a biblical concept, contrary to what certain confused Christians claim, as I'll prove shortly).

This is similar to the way they misuse Paul's quote that, *for him specifically at that particular time* (it's important to note that this verse isn't talking about believers in general, but was about Paul's circumstances at the time he wrote these words), *"for to* ***me*** [Paul] *to live is Christ, and to die is gain,"*[445] to try to prove that he believed his death would bring him immediately to be with Christ in heaven, once again ignoring the context of the verses before these words, not to mention the verses after them as well, and the context of the surrounding verses make it pretty obvious that the "gain" Paul was referring to there would be a gain to the furtherance of the message he was preaching while in bonds, which his martyrdom would surely accomplish[446] (the idea that the "gain" referred to going to heaven as a ghost is reading one's presuppositions about the immortality of the soul into the passage). I'll admit, the way his statement was translated into English in most Bible versions confuses many people, and so a lot of people assume that by, *"yet what I shall choose I wot not,"* Paul was saying he hadn't yet decided which option he was going to select, as if it was up to him. But whether he lived or died wasn't actually up to him at all – it was up to the Roman government (well, from a relative perspective at least, although it was ultimately up to God from an absolute perspective). Yes, the phrase "what I

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[445] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. — Philippians 1:21

[446] But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: — Philippians 1:12-23

shall choose" *can* mean "what I will select," but it can *also* be interpreted more figuratively as meaning, "what I would prefer," and this interpretation fits the facts far better (and fits what the original Greek can also mean as well – oh, and for those who aren't aware, the word "wot" in this verse in the KJB simply means "know"). With that in mind, and taking everything else we've learned so far into consideration, I believe it's clear that Paul was simply saying he didn't know (if we take the way the KJB translates this verse literally) – or perhaps that he wouldn't let it be known (if we read his statement rhetorically, as some believe he meant, and as the original Greek can also mean) – whether he would prefer the option of continuing to live as a prisoner in bonds, which did seem to be helping the word to be spread more boldly, or if he'd instead prefer the option of being put to death and letting his martyrdom help the cause even more than his current state was doing, but that he would be "stuck between a rock and a hard place" (which is essentially what *"in a strait betwixt two"* means in modern colloquialism) if these were his only two options, since *neither* of them were particularly pleasant for him as an individual, which is why he then said that he preferred a *third* option to these two undesirable options (at least for him as person, even if they were both good for the spread of the Gospel) instead, which was *"having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better,"* because if Christ were to come for His body while Paul was still alive, he wouldn't have to suffer through being a prisoner *or* through being put to death, but would instead get to escape his captivity *without* having to die, to *"ever be with the Lord"* in heaven in an immortal body, and this would be a much better option than living as a prisoner in a mortal body *or* being executed could possibly be (that said, he did seem to conclude that he probably wasn't going to actually experience *any* of these three options –at least not right away – but would instead be set free, and would even visit his readers at a later time[447]).

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[447] Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. — Philippians 1:24-26

And yes, there are those who believe *"having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ"* should be read in a more figurative manner, and that it actually *did* mean Paul wanted to die because, from his perspective, the first thing he would "experience" after his death would be meeting Christ as He resurrected Paul's physical body from the dead at some point in the future (and, since Paul *did* eventually end up dying at some point after writing that – although possibly not until much later, since many believe that he did end up going free after writing this epistle, as he seemed to suspect he would – this actually *is* what his next conscious moment will indeed be for him when he's finally resurrected from the dead in the future), and so they would say that Paul actually thought dying *would* be the better of the two available options for him (with the second option instead being to continue living as a mortal and going free from prison, if this interpretation is correct – which would also mean that being *"in a strait betwixt two"* actually referred to Paul being **torn** between two *positive* outcomes rather than being **pressed** between two *negative* options), but I just don't see how this interpretation can be correct. For one thing, Paul had just finished saying that he didn't *know* if he actually wanted to continue living in a mortal body or if he instead would prefer to die (or that he wasn't going to make it known which of those two options he'd prefer, if those who believe he was speaking rhetorically are correct), so there's no way that *"having a desire to depart"* could possibly mean his preference was actually for death as it would appear that he was saying if he *was* referring to dying by the word "depart" (especially since, as I just mentioned, if that *was* what he was talking about, his next statement – *"Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you"* – would then *have* to be the second option he was considering instead of his continued imprisonment being that second option he was referring to, which seems quite problematic since he didn't appear to be saying that he saw *this* as something he was actually desiring at all, and also seemed to be saying that he definitely desired the option of "departing" over any *other* possible option). Neither of these two options could possibly fit the conundrum he was facing if he *didn't* actually know which option he'd prefer (or if he wasn't going to *say* which option he'd prefer), which

is why the three options I mentioned originally (imprisonment vs death vs being saved from either of those outcomes via the Snatching Away – with his release from prison being the outcome that he actually saw as being the most likely to happen rather than as being one of the various options he was even considering) *have* to be the options he was referring to there. Besides, he'd previously said that he didn't want to die *at all*, as we learned from his figurative statement in 2 Corinthians 5[448] about his preference to *avoid* death prior to his quickening, and this is another one of the reasons I've concluded that it makes more sense to interpret *"having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ"* as referring to departing this earth while still alive (via the Snatching Away) than it does to departing this life (via death). And on top of all that, being trapped between two things is a better interpretation of the Greek word that *"I am in a strait"* is translated from (συνέχομαι/"soon-ekh'-a-mai") anyway, as it literally means "pressed on every side" or "held together," so it must refer to being stuck with only negative options rather than having positive options available instead, as I already pointed out. The bottom line, though, is that there's simply no excuse for interpreting this passage in a manner which would contradict the *rest* of Scripture, as the teaching that Paul would live on after his death and *"ever be with the Lord"* from *that* point in time rather than from the time the body of Christ is caught up together to meet the Lord in the air does in spades. It's easy to get confused about verses like Philippians 1:21 if you ignore the context of both the surrounding verses and of Scripture as a whole, but once someone comes to realize the truth that death actually is death, and that *"ye shall not surely die"* is a satanic lie, they can then begin to interpret these passages in ways that are consistent with the rest of Scripture.

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[448] For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. — 2 Corinthians 5:2-4

Christians don't only tend to misquote Paul in order to try to prove the immortality of the soul, however. Many also misquote Jesus as well, making Him out to have said, "If you die in your sins, where I go, you cannot come" (I can't tell you how many times I've heard Christians think they're quoting Jesus by using those exact words, but it's a lot). This isn't what Jesus said at all, though. He actually said, *"I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come"*[449] (or at least that's how the KJB renders it). First of all, this was a proclamation of fact, not an if/then proposition, as many misunderstand it to be (it helps to notice the plural "ye" in Jesus' statement in the KJB, since He was talking to multiple unbelieving Pharisees at the time,[450] prophesying that all those Pharisees hearing that statement would indeed die in their sins). Now, yes, in a follow-up statement (in John 8:24) He did say, *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,"* but aside from what I already pointed out (that the Pharisees to whom Jesus made the first prophetic statement definitely *would* die in their sins), this doesn't help prove the immortality of the soul either. All it proves is that the Pharisees couldn't follow Jesus to heaven (which isn't an afterlife realm any more than hell is, as I'll discuss in more detail soon) – presuming that's even the destination He was referring to – but that instead they'd die while seeking to be saved by their Messiah when they needed Him most (almost certainly a reference to their desire to be delivered by their Messiah from the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 when it finally happened to them about forty years later, and how they'd seek their Messiah in vain at that time, and would die in their state of sin while looking, although not even the writer of the book of John would have known that this is what Jesus meant when He spoke those words).

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[449] Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. — John 8:21

[450] The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. — John 8:13

Likewise, they misread passages such as Revelation 6:9-11[451] to defend the idea of the immortality of the soul as well, but if this passage were meant to be read literally it would mean that martyred ghosts are all trapped underneath an altar rather than enjoying life in heaven, and that these ghosts can wear physical clothing. This passage – taken from a very figurative book of the Bible – is obviously meant to be interpreted figuratively, with the "souls" of the martyrs no more literally talking to God than Abel's soul was talking to God from the dirt in Genesis 4:9-10[452] (which would have been just as unusual a place for a soul to reside, if the immortality of the soul were true, as it would be for a soul to reside underneath an altar until its resurrection), especially when taking everything else we've just covered into consideration.

Some also attempt to argue that the reference to the Gospel having been preached to them that are dead, as 1 Peter 4:6 mentions,[453] means the dead must be conscious. At this point it should go without saying, based on all the passages we've already looked at, that there's no question the dead are unconscious, so any passages one brings up to try to argue that they remain conscious have to be interpreted in light of the facts we've already covered, which means that the people mentioned in this passage who had the Gospel preached to them had to have still been physically alive at the time it was

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[451] And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. — Revelation 6:9-11

[452] And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. — Genesis 4:9-10

[453] For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. — 1 Peter 4:6

preached to them, meaning the Gospel was preached to them, and they then died at a later point.

In addition, some Christians also like to quote Hebrews 9:27[454] in order to argue for the existence of a conscious afterlife, because they assume it means that each individual will experience their judgement immediately after they die. This verse can't possibly be saying that at all, however, because we know that the judgement of individuals who have died won't take place until after they've been physically resurrected from the dead at the Great White Throne[455] (presuming they aren't in the body of Christ, in which case they have an entirely different "judgement," so to speak[456]), so anyone who tries to use this verse to prove an afterlife is forgetting this minor detail. On top of that, though, this verse can't actually be talking about humans as a whole at all, because that would contradict the rest of Scripture if it was, considering the fact that many people were recorded as being resurrected throughout the Bible who later would have died a second time as well, prior to their judgement (unless you believe that everyone raised from the dead throughout the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures other than Jesus are still physically alive today), not to mention the fact that not every human *will* die,[457] as they'd all have to if we're interpreting

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[454] And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. — Hebrews 9:27

[455] And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. — Revelation 20:11-13

[456] But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. — Romans 14:10

[457] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, — 1 Corinthians 15:51

the whole verse consistently to refer to everyone dying, so whatever this verse is talking about, it can't mean that humans can only die once, or that they're all guaranteed to die either, as some claim, thus confirming that pretty much *all* of the traditional interpretations of the verse are incorrect. So what is this verse talking about? Well, considering the context of the chapter is high priests and

sacrifices and being forgiven of one's sins after the death of another,[458] not to mention the fact that the death of any people who *aren't* priests wouldn't fit the context of the chapter in any way whatsoever, it makes sense to conclude that

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[458] Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. — Hebrews 9:1-28

the word "men" in verse 27 is referring to *specific* men rather than literally referring to *all* humans in general. And while we should be able to figure it all out just by looking at what the KJB on its own says, taking the context of both the chapter itself and of Scripture as a whole into consideration, it is still useful to know that the existence of the Definite Article before the word "men" in the verse in the original Greek also backs this up, making it clear that the writer of Hebrews had to have meant, "it is appointed unto **the** men once to die," referring only to the death of *certain* men rather than to the death of *all* humans, and that this verse wasn't translated for extreme clarity in most English Bible versions, which was often the case even in the KJB, as we've now learned. So what was the point of this verse? Well, it was actually just a callback to the death of certain high priests as mentioned back in the Hebrew Scriptures (specifically in the books of Numbers[459] and Joshua,[460] as any Israelite reading a book called Hebrews back when it was written should have recognized), specifically high priests – including Jesus, of course. You see, under the Mosaic law, whenever a high priest died,

καὶ	καθ᾽ ὅσον	ἀπόκειται
and	as	appointed is it
τοῖς	ἀνθρώποις	ἅπαξ
the	men unto	once
ἀποθανεῖν	μετὰ	δὲ
to die	after	but
τοῦτο	κρίσις	
this	judgement	

[459] And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession. — Numbers 35:25-28

[460] And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. — Joshua 20:6

there was a judgement which resulted in the freedom of certain Israelite sinners, as mentioned in those passages in the books of Numbers and Joshua, and Jesus' death as high priest resulted in the freedom of even more Israelites (even if that freedom has been temporarily delayed until the kingdom of heaven begins in Israel), which is all that this verse is getting at (and yes, I'm aware that Jesus technically wasn't a high priest under the Mosaic law, but He was still a high priest under the order of Melchizedek – or Melchisedec, as the KJB translates his name – based on both Hebrews 7:14-22[461] and what this passage in chapter 9 is talking about, and it seems the principle still applies).

Still, other Christians will also point to a certain type of passage that they read their assumptions regarding the immortality of the soul into, in order to claim Scripture teaches the doctrine, such as the prophecy to Abram (or Abraham) in Genesis 15:15, for example, which says, *"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace,"*[462] and if one weren't aware of everything we've just covered, and they assumed that there is an afterlife realm which the dead end up in, it's easy to see how somebody could read that assumption into this statement, concluding that his ancestors are in this afterlife realm, and that he would eventually join them there as well. However, there isn't anything in the verse that actually says his fathers were in any sort of afterlife realm at all – the idea that an afterlife

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[461] For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. — Hebrews 7:14–22

[462] And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. — Genesis 15:15

realm is where they were located is nothing more than an assumption one has to read into the text based on doctrinal presuppositions – and based on what we've now learned, they couldn't possibly have been in one, since we now know that the dead are simply unconscious in the grave. And this fact is also confirmed in the second half of the verse, which tells us that the grave is exactly where they were, giving us the location of his fathers which Abraham would eventually go to, when it says, *"thou shalt be buried in a good old age."* What most people don't realize is that this verse is using a figure of speech known as a Synonymous Parallelism, which is where the second part of a passage in Scripture confirms, and even clarifies, what the first part is saying, using slightly different wording, in this case by telling us that Abraham would end up being buried with his ancestors after he'd lived to an old age, which means that these sorts of passages are simply talking about physical death and burial, and that they can't be used to defend the doctrine of the immortality of the soul at all.

I've also heard certain Christians claim that when Job said, *"But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost,"* and when he then asked, *"and where is he?"*, that he was wondering where the dead are residing while remaining in a conscious state. But the truth is, he was simply speaking rhetorically to point out that the hypothetical dead man no longer exists, since he made it very clear in the next few verses that he believed the dead are indeed gone, at least until their future resurrection, by answering his own rhetorical question, saying, *"As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer*

thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."[463] This response by Job to his own question – along with his later statement that he was looking forward to seeing God with his own physical eyes after his resurrection,[464] and not that he was looking forward to doing so in an afterlife realm – should make it pretty obvious that he didn't believe anyone who is dead is actually still awake or living at the time they "sleep," or that they'd see God while they were dead.

And some Christians also try to argue that the prophecy which says, *"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee,"* in Isaiah 14:9-11 proves that there's a conscious afterlife which some people might suffer in as well, but when you consider the facts we've already looked at, and also consider the original Hebrew that this passage was written in, it should be pretty obvious that the English word "hell" here is being used as metonymy for "grave" (at least in Bible versions that use the word "hell" in this passage; many use a transliteration of "sheol" instead, since "hell" is translated from the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל/"sheh-ole'" in this passage in the KJB), as the inclusion of the word "grave" in verse 11, not to mention the references to worms – which are

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[463] But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. — Job 14:10-15

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

creatures that consume corpses – should also make pretty clear. This passage was simply using the figure of speech known as Personification[465] (something done multiple times in Scripture,[466] including in this very book by the same prophet[467]) to taunt a human who will be known as "the king of Babylon" in the

[465] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personification

[466] Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together — Psalm 98:8

[467] For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. — Isaiah 55:12

future[468] (and who will also go by the label of "the beast" during the period of time known as the Tribulation; it would take too much space to get into all the details here but, no, the being referred to as "Lucifer" in that passage in the KJB isn't Satan, as most people have mistakenly assumed it is because they haven't

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[468] For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. — Isaiah 14:1-22

read the whole chapter particularly carefully and have simply accepted the popular tradition about the identity of the "king of Babylon" in this chapter, although the passage may be partially talking about the spiritual being who will also be called "the beast" at that time as well, depending on the specific verse in the passage, but either way, neither of these beings are Satan), pointing out that even someone as proud and powerful as this king ends up in the same place that nearly everyone else ends up in (the grave). And since we already know that the dead are unconscious, the reference to the other dead kings speaking to him is just more figurative language, letting this very human king know that he'd end up in the same place as them (unless you believe the other dead kings mentioned in the passage are sitting on literal thrones and ruling over an afterlife realm called "hell," but I'm trusting that you can see just how figurative this whole passage is, and recognize that the word "hell" in this passage is obviously not referring to the inescapable place of conscious torment which most Christians believe in, especially considering the fact that nothing in the Hebrew Scriptures had ever threatened never-ending torture – much less torture in fire – prior to this prophecy, including in any other passages which used the word "hell" in them in the KJB, so there's no way that anyone who read it when it was written could have possibly interpreted *this* passage as talking about never-ending torment in fire either).

Some people will also bring up verses such as Psalm 139:8[469] and Amos 9:2[470] to try to prove that the Bible teaches an afterlife existence (with the word "hell" in both verses in the KJB also being translated from שְׁאוֹל). Based on everything we've already looked at, however, the usage of שְׁאוֹל in these verses can't mean that ghosts actually exist consciously in this "location," at least not without contradicting everything else we've now learned. And if you read the verses in

[469] If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. — Psalm 139:8

[470] Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: — Amos 9:2

the context of the passages[471] they're a part of,[472] it becomes obvious that שְׁאוֹל is simply being used figuratively in these verses to refer to hidden underground caverns in order to tell us that there isn't anywhere in the universe that God isn't, and that it wasn't being used to teach the concept of an afterlife realm called "hell" at all. In addition, though, the old saying by many Christians that "hell is the absence of God" (or even that "hell is separation from God") is *also* proven to be nothing more than an unscriptural urban legend, thanks to these verses. We know that God is omnipresent, which means He must be present in the Valley/"Hell" of Hinnom in Israel, confirming that God isn't absent from *that* particular "hell." And since the point of these passages *is* God's omnipresence,

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[471] O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. — Psalm 139:1-12

[472] I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good. And the Lord God of hosts is he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name. — Amos 9:1-6

we can see that there's no scriptural basis for the idea that He isn't present in any *other* place referred to as "hell" either. To be fair, when someone is dead, I suppose it can be said that they're "separated from God" in a very figurative manner of speaking, since they're unconscious and hence can't perceive Him, not to mention because He isn't a God of the dead, as we already learned. That said, thanks to His omnipresence, God isn't absent from the location of their corpse (not even if their corpse is in the Valley/"Hell" of Hinnom), so even that statement shouldn't be taken as an absolute. And as soon as a dead person is resurrected, they *definitely* can't be any *more* separate from an omnipresent God in any *other* way than they already were *before* they died either.

However, the main passage that most Christians use in order to try to defend the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16,[473] and this is really the *one-and-only* passage in the *entire* Bible that can possibly be used to even *try* to defend this doctrine, at least as far as I can find, since it's the *only* passage in Scripture which actually seems to

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[473] There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. — Luke 16:19-31

suggest that the dead might really be conscious (I don't count the passage about the king of Babylon we looked at as actually suggesting this, since anybody paying attention when reading it can see that it's obviously very figurative), and this is quite problematic for this commonly-held doctrine, all things considered, especially since it only *seems* to suggest that the dead might really be conscious, and really only if one gives it a cursory reading, because when we look at the details of the passage a little closer, as we're going to do, it quickly becomes apparent that it isn't saying this at all. This passage in the book of Luke does use the word "hell" in the KJB (although most English Bible versions use the transliteration of "hades" instead, because this particular "hell" was translated from the Greek ᾅδης/"hah'-dace" in the KJB, which also happens to be the Greek translation of the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל that we just looked at in the last few passages), but it's obviously about a whole other "hell" than the one where the lake of fire will be located, since that one is going to be a physical "hole" (or valley) here on earth, and this one appears to refer to an afterlife realm of some sort (at least if one takes this story literally), which means it doesn't seem like much about that "hell" can be applied to this one, and vice versa. And so, even if this passage was meant to be taken literally, it couldn't be used to prove Infernalism the way that many Christians attempt to use it to do for some reason, because Revelation 20:13 tells us that anyone who is in the version of "hell" translated from the Greek ᾅδης will eventually leave it when they're resurrected from the dead so they can be judged at the Great White Throne,[474] and then cast into the lake of fire to die a second time, and since the "hell" translated from ᾅδης is also said to be cast into the lake of fire, according to the very next verse[475] (which many of us Pauline Universalists believe is simply referring figuratively to being the only place people will die, or at least the only

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[474] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. — Revelation 20:13

[475] And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. — Revelation 20:14

place where the dead will be located, from then on), and since something can't be cast into itself, figuratively or otherwise, we know that this particular "hell" and the lake of fire can't possibly be the same thing. (This also means that anyone in the "hell" that's translated from שְׁאוֹל in the Hebrew Scriptures will also eventually leave it, because it's the same "hell" being referred to in this passage in Revelation, which we know from the fact that Acts 2:27[476] – which translated "hell" from the Greek ᾅδης in the KJB – was referencing Psalm 16:10[477] – which translated "hell" from the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל in the KJB.)

At the end of the day, though, all the passages we've already covered make it quite clear that the dead can't be conscious, which means there's absolutely no way Jesus could have possibly meant for this story in the book of Luke to have been interpreted literally, at least not without contradicting the rest of the Bible (not to mention basic common sense about how consciousness works, as we've also already discussed), since to do so would mean the rich man and Lazarus actually *were* alive while dead, contrary to what all the passages we just looked at say. Besides, if we were to interpret this story literally, we'd have to believe that Lazarus was sitting inside Abraham's chest, that there's actually physical water and fire which intangible ghosts can interact with, and that there's even gravity which they're subject to, somehow keeping them from floating over a "great gulf," even though there's no matter there to be affected by gravity, since ghosts wouldn't be made of the same sort of "material" that the living are made of (and this also brings up the question of how they even got to their respective sides of the supposedly uncrossable chasm, if this story were describing an actual afterlife realm, and why one couldn't exit this "hell" the same way they entered it in order to re-enter it on the other side, especially since we know that

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[476] Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. — Acts 2:27

[477] For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. — Psalm 16:10

everyone in the *actual* "hell" translated from ᾅδης one day *will* "exit" it, so to speak, in order to be resurrected). Not to mention, if we did take the story literally, we'd have to believe that the rich all go to a place called hell when they die, while the poor all get saved, since there's literally zero indication in this story that Lazarus was a believer. The reason Jesus said Lazarus went to "Abraham's bosom" seemed to be entirely because of his suffering as a beggar, not because He'd accepted Christ as his Saviour or anything like that – and likewise, the reason the rich man was said to be suffering in "hell" was because he got to enjoy good things during his life,[478] and not because he rejected Jesus (there was no indication that either Lazarus or the rich man had ever heard of Jesus, or even that Lazarus was a particularly virtuous man who kept the Mosaic law, if you want to try to look for other possible reasons for him getting to enjoy a better afterlife than the rich man in this story; in fact, Jesus didn't explain *anywhere* in the story how to experience the positive afterlife that Lazarus got enjoy, or what to do in order to avoid ending up in the "hell" that the rich man in the story ended up in – aside from, perhaps, obeying the Mosaic law and other teachings within the Hebrew Scriptures[479] – which you'd think He would have done if this *was* meant to be a warning about how to avoid a negative afterlife in order to experience a positive one). The fact of the matter is, no Christians actually believe *any* of that, which means they're already basically interpreting the story entirely figuratively to begin with (not to mention reading numerous assumptions into the text in order to make the story fit with the theological traditions they learned from their religious teachers), so they should really just finally acknowledge that it's 100% figurative, since they already read it that way anyway (even if they haven't realized that they're doing so), meant to

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[478] But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. — Luke 16:25

[479] Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. — Luke 16:29-31

convey a message that had nothing to do with an afterlife at all, and everything to do with potentially missing out on getting to enjoy life in the kingdom of God when it begins in Israel, just like most of Jesus' other warnings were about, especially in light of everything else we've covered about the state of the dead. Jesus was basically just using this figurative story to let his audience know that the kingdom of God would not be enjoyed by the religious leadership in Israel (at least not during the thousand-year age that it exists in Israel), meaning the covetous Pharisees who were listening to him tell this story,[480] as well as by the chief priests, which the purple and fine linen on the rich man tells us he represented in this story, and that it will instead be enjoyed by other, "lesser" Israelites[481] – meaning Jesus' "lowly" disciples,[482] along with other Israelites who are among *"the least of these,"* currently scattered among the nations,[483] possibly not even realizing yet that they're actually Israelites – who will form *"a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"* in the land of Israel at the time they're resurrected from the dead at the resurrection of the just, or if they've "endured to the end" and survived the Tribulation, especially if they're among the

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[480] And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. — Luke 16:14

[481] Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. — Matthew 21:42-45

[482] Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. — Acts 4:13

[483] And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. — John 10:16

144,000 Israelites spread among the nations who will be sealed at that time.[484] Please note that I'm not insisting this is a parable, however (even though it almost certainly is one[485]), because if I did, some Christians would argue that it *can't* be a parable based on the fact that Jesus mentioned someone by name in the story, and because He'd never done so in any other parables before. And while this is a really weak argument based on nothing more than an assumption that a name used in a story means the story can't be a parable (and I'm not aware of any passage in the Bible which says that a parable can't include a name), rather than get into that whole debate I'll just say, since we know that basically nothing Jesus said in this passage can be read literally anyway, parable or not, it's still entirely figurative, and leave it at that (other than to say it's interesting to know that the word "grave" in 1 Corinthians 15:55 in the KJB is *also* translated from ᾅδης[486] – and that it's also the only time Paul *ever* used a word *anywhere* in his epistles which is also translated as "hell" elsewhere in the KJB – telling us that those in the "hell" sometimes called "hades" *can't* be immortal, since this verse talking about the grave's lack of victory is referring to the *result*

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[484] And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. — Revelation 7:1-8

[485] All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: — Matthew 13:34

[486] O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:55

of immortality,[487] which is also what the salvation that Paul primarily taught about is; and yes, I know that many modern Bible versions use the word "death" instead of "hell" or "hades" here, because they didn't use the *Textus Receptus* to translate the verse from, but rather used manuscripts which have Greek words along the lines of θάνατε/"tha'-nate" instead of the word ᾅδης that the TR has in this phrase, but since Paul is making a midrashic reference to Hosea 13:14 here,[488] which mentions the grave – translated from the same Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל that we've been looking at throughout this chapter – *in addition* to death, we can see that the KJB got this right, which is yet another one of the various reasons why I personally believe the TR is the superior source for translating the Greek Scriptures from in general, and is *also* one of the reasons why I have a serious mistrust of the *Critical Text* that most modern Bibles use for *their* translations of the Greek Scriptures).

So, rather than going to literal afterlife realms called heaven or hell after we die, Scripture instead tells us that death is a return:

- The body returns to the dust,[489] meaning to the ground.
- The soul returns to "hell,"[490] meaning to nonexistence. And for those who aren't aware, the phrase *"shall be turned into"* in Psalm 9:17 in the KJB is simply a poetic translation of the Hebrew word שׁוּב/"shoob," which literally means "is

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[487] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. — 1 Corinthians 15:53-54

[488] I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. — Hosea 13:14

[489] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. — Genesis 3:19

[490] The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. — Psalm 9:17

returned to," telling us that one's soul does a U-turn back into some place or state referred to as the "hell" which is also transliterated as "sheol" in many other Bible versions, since this "hell" is also translated from the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל. This verse just tells us that our sense of feeling and our consciousness (our "soul," in other words) returns to the nonexistence from whence it came, which is all that most of the passages in the KJB which talk about people going to a place called "hell" after they die are referring to, be it passages where "hell" is translated from the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל or from the Greek ᾅδης. And for those who aren't aware of this fact either, there's no such "thing" as a soul, per se, but rather "soul" is just a word that's used in the Bible as metonymy for our sense of feeling and/or our consciousness; for example, the Hebrew Scriptures tell us that the "soul" of the flesh is in the blood, although the KJB translates it figuratively as *"the life of the flesh is in the blood,"*[491] but if you dig a bit deeper you'll discover that the word "life" there has the same root word translated as "soul" twice more in the same verse – נֶפֶשׁ/"neh'-fesh," which is the Hebrew word that's also translated as ψυχή/"psoo-khay'" in the Greek Scriptures – telling us that our sense of feeling and consciousness is dependent upon our blood while we live in these mortal bodies, which can be demonstrated by the fact that, when one loses blood to a part of their body, they lose feeling in that part of the body until the blood rushes back into it, or by how when someone loses enough blood they'll lose consciousness and die, which could be why the KJB translators used "life" as metonymy for "soul" in that verse. Oh, and before someone brings up the fact that Psalm 9:17 is talking about "the wicked," keep in mind that it still tells us they'll *return* to "hell," which means they had to have come from there to begin with in some manner of speaking. So regardless of who this particular verse is talking about, it still means that the "hell" which people "end up in," so to speak, after they die can't be what most Christians assume it to be because this verse tells us that

[491] For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. — Leviticus 17:11

they've already been there previously, figuratively speaking at least, meaning their consciousness/"soul" didn't exist at one time, and it will return to that state of nonexistence again in the future, with their "soul" being "hidden or unseen" at that point, which is why it's said in the KJB that one's soul is in "hell" when one dies (since "hidden" or "unseen" is another meaning of the English word "hell," as I mentioned in the last chapter).

- The spirit returns to God Who gave it,[492] although not as a conscious entity, since human spirits aren't conscious on their own without a body. "Soul" (feeling and consciousness) is an emergent property of combining a human spirit with a body – as happened in Genesis 2:7[493] – just like combining the colours yellow and blue results in the colour green (our spirit *is* our "breath of life" in that verse in Genesis, with the word "spirit" being translated from the Hebrew רוּחַ/"roo'-akh" and its Greek equivalent πνεῦμα/"pnyoo'-mah" in the Bible, which also literally mean "breath" or "wind," and which are also translated that way at times as well, including in that verse I was just referring to, but it doesn't experience consciousness when it's not inside a physical body).

This presents quite a dilemma for the popular view, of course. If the type of "soul" most Christians believe in was existing consciously in an actual place called hell and the "spirit" was with God, would the "soul" of an unsaved person suffer in a fiery location while the "spirit" enjoyed being with God in heaven? Remember, Scripture doesn't discriminate between "saved" and "unsaved" spirits when it says they return to God upon death (to claim that only the saved spirits return to God is to read one's presuppositions into the text, especially since the same book that tells us our spirits return to God when we die also tells us that everybody ends up in the same place when they die). And

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[492] Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. — Ecclesiastes 12:7

[493] And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. — Genesis 2:7

what does that say about us if our spirit and soul could go to separate places but are both conscious (are we made up of two conscious beings that can be split up when we die, yet only one will be punished for sin in hell while the other is in heaven with God)? This is just one more reason why the common view makes no sense. Instead, it's better to believe what Scripture actually says: that "souls" can actually die[494] (simply meaning that our consciousness ceases to exist when we die, as we've now learned). On top of that, if those who are saved "go to heaven" as soon as they die, then death isn't really an enemy to be defeated (and, really, destroyed) at all, as Paul told us it is,[495] but is instead actually an ally finally bringing us to God (and causing us to *"ever be with the Lord"* before the time Paul said this would actually occur), with our eventual physical resurrection just being icing on the cake rather than being the actual cake itself that it's supposed to be (the resurrection and/or quickening of our human bodies has become nothing more than a side note in most of Christendom, when it's what we're actually supposed to be looking forward to).

There's an even more important reason to reject the idea of the immortality of the soul, however, and this is the fact that one can't join the body of Christ while truly believing in the doctrine. You see, when Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 what the Gospel was that his readers believed when they were saved (referring to the special "eternal" life type of salvation that involves being immersed into the body of Christ), he wrote that not only did they come to believe that Christ died for our sins, but also that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day. Now, every Christian out there will claim to agree that these words are true, but few of them actually understand what they mean, and can you really believe something that you don't understand? Yes, all of us who call ourselves Bible believers agree that the words "Christ died for our sins" and

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[494] Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. — Ezekiel 18:4

[495] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. — 1 Corinthians 15:26

"He was buried" are true, but how many Christians *actually* agree that "**He** was buried"? Most Christians believe that *His body* was buried, but they also believe that **He Himself** *went somewhere else altogether* and **wasn't** actually buried in the tomb at all (meaning they believe that He went to another dimension called "hell" as a conscious being for those three days, even if it was in a part of "hell" known as "Abraham's bosom," which many also believe is referred to as "paradise," based on a misunderstanding of another passage that I'll discuss shortly, and which also means that these Christians apparently believe paradise is – or at least was – *inside* hell). The problem is, Paul didn't say that only Christ's body died. What he said was that "**Christ** died"; and he didn't say that only Christ's body was buried while He Himself went somewhere else, but rather that "**He** was buried," which means that **He** was placed in the tomb, not that He went somewhere else while His body was placed in the tomb (*"He was buried"* is a passive statement as far as Christ's person goes, so even if you believe that Christ Himself actually ended up in the tomb temporarily as a ghost, the wording of that passage can't be interpreted to mean He followed His body to the tomb from the cross as a ghost, and then went somewhere else from there after His body was buried, or even just remained in the tomb as a ghost for three days, because the way the verse is worded tells us that He had no involvement in being buried at all, other than passively having it happen to Him; so unless his pallbearers also had some sort of mystical object or magical spell which they used to drag Him into the tomb as a ghost after He died – which wouldn't fit with what John 19:30 says, since it says He *"gave up the ghost,"*[496] not that He *became* a ghost, which means He gave up His spirit and no longer had it for the three days He was dead – it can't legitimately be said that "He was buried" unless He *was* His body and nothing more at that point). Paul didn't just randomly include the words *"He was buried"* in this passage for no

[496] When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. — John 19:30

reason (all Scripture is inspired by God,[497] and every word God inspired to be written down is meant to be there,[498] which means every word is there for a reason, rather than just being arbitrarily thrown in there by the human writer as would be the case if those who believe in the immortality of the soul were correct). If Christ's (and not just His body's) burial wasn't a crucial part of what Paul said his readers believed when they were saved, he would have just written that "Christ died for our sins and rose again the third day," and left those particular words about His burial out altogether, since mentioning that fact would have then been entirely superfluous (not to mention deceptive, at least to anyone who takes the words written there seriously). There's a reason that Paul included the words *"He was buried"* as something he claimed those who experience the special "eternal" life sort of salvation he wrote about have to believe, and the reason is that we have to believe (which means we have to first understand) what those specific words actually mean. (And for anyone who might still be skeptical, if Paul *was* trying to tell us it's important to believe that Christ actually did lose consciousness when He died – just as He would have every time He went to sleep, unless you believe He remained fully aware of Himself and His surroundings when He slept as well – and that **He** was buried rather than just His body while He went elsewhere, I'd like to ask you what Paul would have needed to have written differently there in order to convince you of this.)

And before someone tries to protest, saying that Jesus had the power to resurrect Himself, which means He must have been conscious, pointing out Jesus' claim in John 10:18 that He had power to take His life again,[499] the word

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[497] All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: — 2 Timothy 3:16

[498] The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. — Psalm 12:6

[499] No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. — John 10:18

"power" in this verse in the KJB, translated from the Greek ἐξουσία/"ex-oo-see'-ah," is just referring to the sort of right that someone in a position of authority has to have an action they wish to be completed actually be performed (and, in fact, the Greek word literally just means "authority"). For example, just because a king is said to have the "power" to tax the citizens of his country doesn't mean he personally goes to every single citizen of the country and forces them to give him the money directly; it just means that he has the legal authority to expect they'll pay their taxes. Likewise, Pilate had the "power"[500] (also translated from the Greek ἐξουσία) to crucify Jesus, but that doesn't mean he physically performed the actual crucifixion himself with his own strength (if he had, the Greek word δύναμις/"doo'-nam-is" – which *does* refer to strength or ability in the Bible[501] – would have been used in the original Greek in John 19:10-11 instead, as well as in John 10:18 if Jesus meant He actually had the *ability* to resurrect Himself from the dead), but instead Pilate had his soldiers do the actual deed under his legal authority (and so, what Jesus said literally just meant, "I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to receive it again," and He did receive it again, when He was roused from His sleep by His Father[502]). Likewise, when Jesus parabolically said in John 2:19 that He would raise His body three days after His death,[503] it's important to remember the fact

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[500] Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. — John 19:10-11

[501] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. — Matthew 6:13

[502] For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. — 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

[503] Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. — John 2:19

that *"He was buried,"* and that any passage we read about His resurrection *has* to be interpreted in such a way that it doesn't contradict this crucial part of what Paul said his readers believed when they were saved, which means that Jesus could *only* be referring to raising His body in the sense of getting up off the slab in the tomb after His God and Father[504] resurrected Him from the dead (which is Who the Bible says actually raised Him from the dead anyway[505]). The context of this passage in John wasn't about His ability to resurrect Himself to begin with; if you read the whole passage, you'll see that it was simply about how the fact that He wouldn't remain dead would be a sign to the people who heard Him.[506]

Of course, some will now ask, "But doesn't 1 Peter 3:19 say that Jesus preached to spirits in prison while He was dead?"[507] Well, no, it doesn't. He didn't preach to the spirits until *after* His body was quickened/made immortal (which obviously couldn't happen until after His body was resurrected from the dead), as we can see from the verse before that one.[508] But regardless, Peter said He was preaching to spirits, not to souls. Since, as we already learned, the spirits of

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[504] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: — Ephesians 1:3

[505] Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) — Galatians 1:1

[506] Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. — John 2:18-22

[507] By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; — 1 Peter 3:19

[508] For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: — 1 Peter 3:18

dead humans return to God in heaven (just as Jesus' spirit did when He died,[509] unlike His soul, which instead was figuratively said to have gone to "hell,"[510] demonstrating once again that human spirits and souls are not the same thing), the spirits He was preaching to couldn't have been humans, which means they must have instead been disobedient spiritual beings, exactly as Peter said they were.[511] They weren't the spirits of humans, but rather were the spiritual beings who sinned in Noah's time[512] by breeding with humans (and creating the giants who became mighty men of renown,[513] also sometimes referred to as the Nephilim), and who were then locked up in the version of "hell" sometimes referred to as Tartarus because of their sin.[514] Besides, all passages have to be

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[509] And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. — Luke 23:46

[510] Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. — Acts 2:27-31

[511] By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. — 1 Peter 3:19-20

[512] And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. — Jude 1:6

[513] And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. — Genesis 6:1-4

[514] For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; — 2 Peter 2:4

interpreted in light of Christ's burial anyway, so it goes without saying that any attempts to argue that Jesus was actually conscious while He was dead are nonstarters because of that fact alone, and that any passages we think might imply He was actually still alive have to be interpreted accordingly. (Of course, based on what we learned about God not being a God of the dead from Jesus' discussion with the Sadducees, He'd have been the *only* human to *ever* exist in a conscious state after death if we ignored everything we just learned and assumed that He *did* remain alive while dead, so it makes far more sense to accept that **He Himself** actually *was* buried, and not just that His body was while He Himself continued to live on in an afterlife realm of some sort that nobody else has ever ended up in, at least if the rest of the Bible is to be believed.)

But is it really so important that we should care what Paul meant when he wrote that Christ died and was buried? Well, yes, very much so! It's only when we realize that Christ *actually* died and that **He Himself** was buried that we can truly appreciate His faith in going to the cross. You see, He knew that, unless His Father resurrected Him, He would have remained dead (meaning He would have ceased to exist permanently), and, as Paul explained in Romans 3:21-23,[515] *this* is the faith that ultimately saves us: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by *faith **of** Jesus Christ* [*not* "by faith **in** Jesus Christ"; this is all about *Christ's faith*, not our own] unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." Unfortunately, because almost no "Bible believers" *actually* believe that Christ *truly* died for our sins and *really was* buried, instead believing that only His body did and was, while He Himself lived on and went somewhere else altogether, none of these people

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[515] But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; — Romans 3:21-23

can be said to have been baptized into the body of Christ yet, since they haven't truly believed what Paul said those who experience the special sort of salvation he wrote about will believe at the time they're saved.

And while this might seem like a bit of a tangent at first (even though it's an important aside which is actually quite related to what we just discussed), I should also point out that coming to understand that Jesus actually fully and truly died brings one to the realization that most Christians have misunderstood the nature of God (for lack of a better term) as well, thinking that God is one being made up of three beings rather than being only *one* being[516] (however that's supposed to work – and before someone claims they believe God is actually *not* one being made up of three beings, but rather three beings sharing one essence, they refer to their "three-in-one" deity as "He," not "Them," thus demonstrating that they either don't know how English works or that they don't know what the logical result of their doctrine is). Because, while the Bible says that there are actually *many* gods[517] out there in the universe[518] (it would be difficult for our heavenly Father to be the God of gods if there were no other gods out there for Him to be the God of[519]), it also tells us that there is only **one** *Almighty God*[520] (who created all the other gods), and He has no equals or anyone superior to Him. I mean, can an Almighty God have a God above Him? Nearly everyone I've asked this question to has immediately and rightly answered "no" (and the one person who answered "yes" when I asked him this

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[516] And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: — Mark 12:29

[517] For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) — 1 Corinthians 8:5

[518] God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. — Psalm 82:1

[519] For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: — Deuteronomy 10:17

[520] And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. — Genesis 17:1

question needs to learn how numbers work, because if Almighty God had a God above Him, there would then be *two* "Almighty" Gods: 1) Almighty God, and 2) the God who exists *above* Almighty God, although I suppose that second God would then be an even mightier God than the God referred to as Almighty God – perhaps we should label that second Almighty God they'd be forced to believe in as "Almightier God"?), but as we've already seen, Scripture tells us (in many places, actually[521]) that Jesus has a God[522] – His Father.[523] This means that, while any title His Father has can also now be applied to Him[524] (the English word "God" *is* just a title, after all, and is not His name, similar to the way "President" is a title and not an actual name) when speaking and acting on His Father's behalf as His Father's icon (or image[525]), and hence He can now be referred to as God *representationally* (just as I can show you a picture of my wife and honestly say, "This is my wife," even though it isn't *literally* my wife since I didn't marry a photograph), Jesus can't actually *literally* be the Almighty God like His Father is, because His Father is above Him,[526] and nobody is above – or even beside, meaning equal to[527] – the Lord God Almighty (Who is differentiated from "the

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[521] Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. — John 20:17

[522] The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. — 2 Corinthians 11:31

[523] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, — 1 Peter 1:3

[524] But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. — Hebrews 1:8

[525] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: — Colossians 1:15

[526] Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. — John 14:28

[527] Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. — Isaiah 44:6

Lamb"[528] – referring to Jesus – in the Bible anyway, which should also make this pretty obvious).

And so, even though at this point (post-resurrection and quickening of Christ) one might be able to call Jesus *a* "god," or even be able to legitimately call Him "God" from a relative or representational perspective[529] – since Matthew 28:18 says that *all* power in heaven and earth has been given to Him[530] (meaning authority, in this case, once again being translated from ἐξουσία), and Acts 2:36 even says that He's also now been made "Lord" by God as well[531] – Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 8:6 that, *to us* (meaning to those of us in the body of Christ, which is who Paul was writing to), "there is but *one God, the Father.*"[532] I trust you can see that Paul didn't say, "to us there is but one God, the Father and the Son," which means there's just no way to fit the Son into the title of God in that verse without ignoring the rules of grammar, not to mention the point of the passage it's included in. And likewise, even though the Father is Lord from an absolute perspective, He's temporarily given Jesus the title (and authority) of Lord, so, *to us* in the body of Christ (even if only from a relative perspective), Jesus is the one we currently refer to as Lord (and not someone we refer to as God in addition to Lord, since Paul told us in this verse that, *to us* in the body of Christ specifically, the Father is the *only* one we view as God – which makes sense, considering the fact that the Father really *is* the only God from an absolute perspective anyway, being the only one who can be called Almighty

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[528] And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. — Revelation 21:22

[529] And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. — John 20:28

[530] And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. — Matthew 28:18

[531] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. — Acts 2:36

[532] But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. — 1 Corinthians 8:6

God). Besides, as verse 5 of that chapter says, there are *"lords many,"* so if this passage meant that Jesus is God because He's been given the title of Lord for the time being, then all the other lords would also be God too. (And as for why I said that Jesus is only "Lord" temporarily, it's because 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that He'll eventually give up His reign, after He destroys death.[533])

This is similar to the way that Jesus said, *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,"* in John 17:3. Based on the rules of language and logic – particularly when it comes to the definition of the word "only" – there's just no way to make *"thee the only true God"* include anyone other than the person being referred to by the singular word "thee" (which is translated from the singular word σέ/"seh" in the original Greek) in that verse in the KJB (not to mention anyone other than the person being referred to as "the **only**..."). Jesus would have had to have said something along the lines of, "thee and me, the only true God," or perhaps, "us, the only true God" (and then left out the second half of the verse altogether), in order to be included as a part of "the only true God" there. And yes, some Christians do try to argue that, because Jesus is mentioned in the second half of the verse, this fact then somehow makes Him a part of "the only true God." But since the verse doesn't say, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, who is also the only true God," this is just reading one's preconceived theological beliefs into the verse, especially since He separated Himself from the label of "the only true God" by saying "and" in between *"the*

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[533] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 Corinthians 15:22-28

only true God" and *"Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"* (telling us that "Jesus Christ" exists *in addition* to "the only true God" as *a separate individual* from that God, and not as another part of that God). You see, to use a bit of math to clarify things, when someone states that *somebody else* is the *only x*, and doesn't include themselves or anyone else in that *x* in the statement, there's just no way to then try to argue that said person actually meant that *they* are *also* the *only x*, even though they didn't say that in their statement at all, and anybody who tries to claim otherwise is demonstrating that they either don't understand how language and logic work, or are outright lying (even if only to themselves). Still, if you disagree, please show us how anyone other than the God and Father of Jesus Christ can be squeezed into the label of *"thee the only true God"* without contradicting any rules of language or logic.

Likewise, using John 1:1[534] and other verses in that chapter to try to prove that Jesus is God *also* contradicts the laws of language and logic. John didn't say that "the Word was with the *Father*," He said that "the Word was with *God*." Whatever it means that "the Word *was* God," someone can't be *with* themselves, so if God *is* one, as the Bible tells us He is, God can't be *with* God, since God *is* God, and as I just pointed out, God can't be *with* God (again, John would have said "the Word was with the *Father*" if that's what he meant). Besides, the English word "Word" in that passage is translated from the Greek word λόγος/ "log'-os," which can also refer to a plan or blueprint, so to speak, so "the Word was God" could simply mean that God's ultimate plan was *Himself*, since all will return to Him in the end,[535] and since He's going to be All in all at the end of the ages[536]; and based on the context of the rest of the chapter, the Word

[534] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. — John 1:1

[535] For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. — Romans 11:36

[536] And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 Corinthians 15:28

"becoming flesh"[537] almost certainly began at the time of Jesus' baptism in water[538] – there's a reason John began the chapter by recounting *that* event right after discussing the Logos[539]/"Word" becoming flesh rather than by

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[537] And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. — John 1:14

[538] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. — John 1:1-34

[539] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos

recounting Jesus' *birth* as he would have if *that's* what the "Word" becoming flesh *actually* meant (with the "Him" references to the concept of the Logos/ "Word" in the KJB[540] and the various other less literal English translations of Scripture that use the word just being figurative translations for "it" in the form of Personification – which the original Greek *does* support, I should add; and yes, I'm aware that the *translators* very likely believed Jesus is literally God, which would be at least a part of the reason why they used the word "Him" rather than "it" there in most versions, but I have to believe that *God* still intends for us to interpret the word "Him" less literally in these verses in these translations, based on all the facts).

And similarly to that, claims that certain Jews tried to stone Jesus because He supposedly referred to Himself as God in John 8 by saying "I am"[541] are *also* based on misinterpretations. I'm not going to get into *all* of the grammatical proofs that Jesus didn't mean He was God by this phrase, but suffice it to say, the Greek words ἐγὼ εἰμί/"eg-o' i-mee'," translated in English as "I am" in verse 58, are *not* based on a Koine Greek translation of the Hebrew word אֶהְיֶה/"ay-

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[540] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. — John 1:3

[541] Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. — John 8:48-59

hey'-yeh" that's translated as "I AM" in Exodus 3:14 in the KJB[542] (from what I can tell, Jesus would have actually been recorded as saying, "ὁ ὢν/'ho own'," in Greek if He was trying to reference *that* name for God). All Jesus meant there was, "I am the one predestined to be the Messiah who Abraham saw prophetically," and the reason these Jews then tried to stone Him was for confirming that He indeed *was* making Himself out to be greater than Abraham and the prophets[543] (this is also confirmed by all the *other* times Jesus is recorded as using the Greek phrase ἐγὼ εἰμί *without* being threatened with death, such as earlier in *the very same chapter*,[544] for example – the word "he" is not there in the original Greek in John 8:24, as is made clear by the word being italicized in most print copies of the KJB, so the Jews listening to Jesus simply heard Him say, "for if ye believe not that I am," in whatever language He was speaking, and yet they *didn't* try to stone Him at that point as they definitely *would* have if they interpreted the phrase recorded as ἐγὼ εἰμί in the Greek Scriptures as referring to God's name).

Besides all that, the power (authority) which God gave to Jesus couldn't have been given to Him at all if He was already ontologically *the* capital-G "God," because then He'd already have had all the authority that was given to Him, since you can't be given something that you already possess (and if He was already the capital-G "God," He would have already possessed it all along). And just as with His assigned authority, if He was already capital-G "God," He couldn't be *made* Lord either, because He'd already *be* Lord from an ontological perspective (especially if He was both **fully** human *and* **fully** God during His entire earthly ministry, as the "official, orthodox" teaching says He was, since,

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[542] And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. — Exodus 3:14

[543] Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? — John 8:53

[544] I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. — John 8:24

by definition, anyone who *is* **fully** God would have to *remain* Lord – not to mention maintain all the authority of Almighty God – the entire time they *remain* **fully** God; and for those who want to insist that Jesus' human nature didn't have that authority, but that only His supposed divine nature did, there's nothing in Scripture which states that Jesus had two natures anyway, so this concept is also just an assumption they're reading into Scripture because they're forced to in order to maintain their unscriptural tradition).

But even beyond the fact that the traditional, "orthodox" (really just Roman Catholic) doctrine of the deity of Christ is simply illogical and unscriptural, as I mentioned already (at least from an absolute perspective, even if we could technically say we believe in the deity of Christ from a relative perspective, since any being referred to as a god can be said to be *a* "deity" as well, even if there's only *one* capital-D "Deity"), the bigger problem is that one can't even join the body of Christ while truly believing in this doctrine (because, as we already learned, it means they don't believe Christ actually fully died for our sins, and was buried, but that only His body did and was; God can't die,[545] so if someone believes that Jesus is God, they can't believe that Jesus *truly* died, nor can they believe that **He Himself** was buried), so I would posit that the reason it's become one of the most important ideas in the Christian religion is because Satan wanted to make sure that as few people as possible could become a part of the body of Christ and take his reign from him during the future ages, and so when he created the counterfeit religion which has come to be known as the Christian religion today (for those who don't know, ours isn't a religion so much as a faith if you're in the body of Christ, as I'll discuss in a later chapter, and as such, being a Christian is no guarantee that one is in the body of Christ, or even in the Israel of God), in order to keep people from believing the truth of the Gospel of the Uncircumcision, he made sure it was a part of one of the primary doctrines.

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[545] For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. — Malachi 3:6

In addition, it's possible that belief in this Roman Catholic doctrine which most Christians hold to when it comes to the deity of Christ keeps one from enjoying the sort of "eternal" life that one experiences under the Gospel of the Circumcision as well, because belief that Jesus is the Son of God is required for salvation under that Gospel, and the "orthodox" doctrine teaches that Jesus is "God the Son" (really nothing more than a title for a certain part of God; and yes, logically, that is what it has to mean, despite any protestations to the contrary by Christians who are familiar with the official – albeit unscriptural and illogical – "orthodox" creeds and what the so-called "heresies" declared by the leaders of this religion are) rather than simply the Son of God (Jesus can't literally be both God and the Son of God at the same time because, based on the rules of language, that would make Him the Son of Himself – and anyone who denies this fact is demonstrating their ignorance of both language and logic, thus proving they can't be trusted in general when it comes to theology). Scripture speaks of the Son of God[546] and the Spirit of God,[547] but never "God the Son" or "God the Spirit." It's important to remember that Scripture puts a lot of emphasis on the fact that Jesus is the Son *of* God, and on how one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God (particularly those saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision[548]), so much so that claiming He has an identity not found in Scripture – "God the Son" – could perhaps be said to be teaching another

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[546] And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. — 1 John 5:20

[547] Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. — Romans 15:19

[548] But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. — John 20:31

Jesus.[549] In addition, the Israel of God is commanded to believe that God is one[550] (rather than three), so it seems like, if a member of the Israel of God *were* to believe the "orthodox" view, they'd be breaking this commandment. That said, my suspicion is that God shows mercy to those Christians who don't actually understand what this commandment and various others really mean in this day and age (not to mention what the requirement for salvation under the Gospel of the Circumcision to believe that Jesus is the Son of God really means as well), especially when it comes to Gentiles who join themselves to the church called the Israel of God, in whatever way it is that they do join together with them by believing their Gospel. At least, for their sakes, I sure hope so (that said, if someone *does* believe in the three-in-one deity, I definitely don't believe it's possible for them to join the church called the body of Christ while *truly* holding that belief; although perhaps some who *think* they believe it, but don't *actually* believe it, might be in the body – so long as they actually understand what it means that Jesus died and was buried, and are also Pauline Universalists, since that's also a requirement, as I'll explain in chapter 6 of this book).

Of course, if God really is made up of three persons, then God as a whole wouldn't be omniscient, since Jesus said that only His Father knew the day the

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[549] For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. — 2 Corinthians 11:4

[550] Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: — Deuteronomy 6:1-4

kingdom would begin in earnest in Israel,[551] which means that two thirds of the beings who supposedly make up this one God don't know it, because not only does Jesus not know, the Holy Spirit apparently doesn't know either, and we sure can't use the excuse that the Holy Spirit is restricted in knowledge due to being human the way that many Christians like to do for explaining why Jesus doesn't know certain things.

I also want to quickly point out that one of the common "proofs" that Jesus is God is all of the references in the Bible to attributes, titles, and actions[552] which[553] both God[554] and Jesus[555] are said to have and do, but it can be argued that this is simply because Jesus is the image of God, because He's worthy to use any title of God thanks to His death for our sins and thanks to His position as the Son of God, and because He always does the will of His Father[556] (or because God performs certain actions *through* Him rather than doing them directly

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[551] But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. — Matthew 24:36

[552] I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. — Isaiah 43:11

[553] Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. — Acts 4:10-12

[554] I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. — Revelation 1:8

[555] And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. — Revelation 22:12-13

[556] Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. — John 4:34

Himself, as He does[557] through various other agents in the Bible as well[558]), not because Jesus literally *is* Almighty God, and if being said to do the exact same thing as God is said to do in the Bible actually *did* mean that someone else who performed these actions *must* be God, then Satan would *also* be God, because we learned in chapter 1 of this book that both God[559] *and* Satan[560] led David to number Israel (One from an absolute perspective and the other from a relative perspective, with God performing this action through Satan rather than directly doing it Himself), and "the destroyer" (often referred to as "the angel of the Lord,"[561] and sometimes also as "the angel of death," although that's not a label used in the KJB) mentioned in Exodus 12:23 would *also* literally be God if this was the case too, so this isn't an argument anyone should be using (and any reference to Jesus' actions being the same as God's actions can simply be a relative reference as well anyway).

Many Christians will also point out that Jesus said, *"I and my Father are one,"*[562] and they indeed *are* one. But if this means that they're one and the same God, then everyone who believes in Him is *also* one and the same God (or will *become* one and the same God) since Jesus prayed that His followers would all

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[557] For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. — Exodus 12:12

[558] For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. — Exodus 12:23

[559] And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. — 2 Samuel 24:1

[560] And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. — 1 Chronicles 21:1

[561] Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. — Isaiah 37:36

[562] I and my Father are one. — John 10:30

also be one the same way they are.[563] Simply put, Jesus and His Father are one in *purpose*,[564] as well as one in *testimony*[565] (presuming the reference to "the Word" in verse 7 of 1 John 5 is even talking about Jesus at all, since it could also simply be referring to another aspect of God, such as His plan as we just discussed, similar to how the reference to "the Holy Ghost" – which is a term that just speaks of God's Spirit Itself, mostly referring to God's power and presence – in that verse is also referring to something other than a separate conscious being from the Father) but that doesn't make them all one and the same *Deity* (and everything we've already covered proves that they *can't* be).

Now, some like to claim that the "orthodox" Christian doctrine regarding the deity of Christ and the other blasphemous teachings connected with it is all "a mystery" which isn't meant for us to understand, but nowhere in the Bible do we find this assertion made, so they have no scriptural foundation on which to lay this claim. Besides, if it *is* a "mystery" that can't be understood, what basis do we have for believing it in the first place? Was the idea that Jesus is God prophetically told to be true to those Christians whose viewpoint on this topic

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[563] Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. — John 17:20-23

[564] For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. — John 6:38

[565] Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. — 1 John 5:5-9

won at Nicaea[566] (yet with how the concept is supposed to work, exactly, never actually being explained, as is made clear by the fact that nobody seems to be able to do so without resorting to teaching ideas that are considered heretical to "orthodox" Christians[567])? I don't recall that claim ever being made by any Christians. In fact, the reason the traditional doctrine came to be accepted by the Christian religion as truth is because the position won in a vote, not because any actual prophets at the Council of Nicaea revealed the doctrine to be true, which means that trying to defend the doctrine by calling it a "mystery" doesn't help the position at all.

Ultimately, belief in any of the traditional "orthodox" doctrines of the Christian religion seems to mean that one hasn't fully believed Paul's Gospel and has not joined the body of Christ, and so if something *is* an important teaching or practice (or is considered to be an "orthodox" tradition) among the majority of the followers of the Christian religion, it's generally safe to assume that it's a doctrine of demons and that the opposite is true and biblical instead (particularly if it's a major tradition, doctrine, or practice taught by Rome – for whom never-ending torment in an afterlife realm called "hell," the immortality of the soul, and the deity of Christ, among various other teachings discussed in this book, are all extremely important doctrines; in fact, any Evangelical[568] or Protestant[569] who believes and/or follows *any* of the doctrines or practices that Roman Catholics do is really just a Diet Roman Catholic, even if they don't realize or want to admit it). Really, when it comes right down to it, there's almost nothing that Churchianity (which is what some of us now refer to the Institutional Church, as well as the Christian religion, as) gets right about God or

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[566] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea

[567] *St. Patrick's Bad Analogies* by the LutheranSatire YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/KQLfgaUoQCw?si=BdKHKkilmA7N7dH7

[568] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelicalism

[569] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism

Scripture. Although different denominations within the Christian religion do occasionally stumble upon parts of certain truths seemingly accidentally, it's extremely rare, and none of these denominations *ever* seem to get more than a few things at most somewhat right – and even then, they rarely understand even a small portion of the full implications of the parts they sort of appear to grasp. It seems (from a relative perspective, at least) that Satan works hard to keep people in these denominations from joining the body of Christ, not to mention to also use these churches to keep the rest of the world from learning spiritual truth as well. (And please keep in mind as well that when I say "the Christian religion" I'm simply referring to the unscriptural groups that both follow religious rules and use the "Christian" label – be they "orthodox" or otherwise – and not to all people who call themselves Christians. "Christian" is just a word, as is "Christianity," and a word means whatever the person speaking or writing said word intends for it to mean at the time they say or write it because, outside of legal trademarks, nobody owns any particular word, nor does anyone get to define a word's only possible meaning for everyone at all times, since language evolves, and because the Bible *never actually defines* the label of "Christian" – a label that was quite possibly originally a pejorative which was assigned to believers in Christ by unbelievers in Antioch in the first century,[570] and, if so, the label was first defined by *non-Christians* – these labels can really by applied to *anyone* who falls into the category of people who believe that Jesus is the Christ, regardless of whether or not they happen to be a part of the Christian religion, despite the protestations of the religious Christians who disagree with this fact and who have tried to insist that only *their* definitions of these particular labels are legitimate. In fact, based on what we've learned so far, it could be said that, at least from a certain perspective, those of us who *don't* believe in the absolute deity of Christ are actually the "true Christians" – and we'd definitely be the only fully "Biblical Christians" –

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[570] And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. — Acts 11:26

although, again, one would also have to be a Pauline Universalist if we're going to use that more exclusive definition of "Christian" for ourselves, as you'll learn in chapter 6; but anyone who disagrees is also free to define "Christian" however *they* want, because that's just how language works.) Paul's remonstration against Israel in his epistle to the Romans that, because of them, *"the name of God is being blasphemed among the nations,"*[571] is today almost better applied to those in the Christian religion who give the world contradictory messages about God that keep people who think about these things from believing in such an apparently confused deity, telling people that God actually loves everyone unconditionally, but only as long as they meet certain conditions; that you are saved by grace alone and not by any actions of your own, so long as you act now and choose to become a Christian before you die; and that God is the Saviour of all humanity, even though He's going to fail to save most of the humanity He's supposedly the Saviour of, who will actually be tormented in a place called "hell" without end (or will at least be burned up and permanently cease to exist if certain other Christians are correct) rather than be saved. Thanks to these lies, those who are able to recognize the hypocrisy hear these things and think, "The god of the Christian religion says one thing but apparently means something else altogether, so why would we want anything to do with this seemingly dishonest deity and contradictory religion?"

This isn't to say that everyone who uses the label of "Christian" will definitely miss out on "eternal" life, however (although I suspect that a fair number of

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[571] For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. — Romans 2:24

people who call themselves Christians very likely will[572]), as some of them might still experience life in the kingdom of heaven. It's just that, due to their ignorance, they are unknowingly under the Gospel of the Circumcision instead of the Uncircumcision (or perhaps they'll get to enjoy life in the kingdom of heaven thanks to yet *another* factor that I'll discuss in a later chapter).

So, while those who are called "orthodox" Christians (be they Orthodox[573] or simply "orthodox," meaning also the Roman Catholics and Protestants who *also* hold to the more common practices and beliefs of the Christian religion today) aren't a part of the body of Christ and will miss out on heavenly blessings in the next age (and even in this age), some of them might still get to enjoy the impending age here on earth if they follow the requirements of the Gospel of the Circumcision which apply to them and don't try to mix that Gospel with Paul's Gospel, since it's either one or the other (or if they meet that other requirement I just alluded to, although, again, we'll get to that in a bit). But as far as those of you who have now learned how to differentiate between the two Gospels go, you're ready to also dig deeper into the rest of Scripture with a framework that will make it that much more clear what else the leaders of the Institutional Church might not have taught you thanks to their pre-existing assumptions about what Scripture says.

And with all that in mind, the passages we've looked at so far in this chapter prove once and for all that Jesus is *not* literally – nor can He possibly be – Almighty God, which means that any other passages one thinks might prove the traditional doctrine that He is God *must* be interpreted from the perspective

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[572] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. — Matthew 7:21-23

[573] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church

that He's actually only the *Son* of God instead (manifesting God's attributes through His human flesh[574] without literally being God Himself). And, in fact, there *are* better interpretations for *every one* of the so-called "proof texts" that most Christians use to try to prove their "orthodox" tradition, interpretations which *don't* contradict the passages we just looked at. And so, without getting into the details, we have to always remember that just because a passage might seem to imply Jesus is God, we've already learned that Jesus *can* be said to be God representationally, and that He indeed *is* **a** god (in fact, He's the second highest authority in the universe at this point, higher than any god out there other than His Father, which means one could also say that He's God from a relative perspective, even though only His Father is God from an absolute perspective), just as a passage that might be able to be interpreted as saying Jesus pre-existed His own birth as a human can, at most, be used to defend the doctrine that He was the first being created by Almighty God (presuming there isn't another, equally possible, interpretation of said passage available, which there always seems to be, at least in my experience), so *at most* these passages can be used to defend *those* points. However, since what I've already written proves our perspective on God and Christ quite definitively, while I might add more about this topic in future editions of this book, I'm going to leave it at that for now. Still, there are a *lot* of studies out there which go into even more detail on the topic, so if you'd like to learn what our interpretations of the various supposed "proof texts" for the traditional doctrine are, please read the articles listed on the webpage that I linked to in the footnote here.[575]

And so, getting back to the original topic, everything we've now covered in this chapter should also really be all the proof anyone needs that the traditional doctrine of never-ending torment can't possibly be true either, I should add,

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[574] And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. — 1 Timothy 3:16

[575] *One God, the Father* curated by Drew Costen: https://www.kjvgospel.com/deity

since A) the dead aren't conscious, and hence can't suffer without end in the "hell" they end up in, and B) those humans who end up in the lake of fire will also be dead (or at least will be pretty quickly after arriving there, if they aren't already at that point), making them impervious to any suffering as well, which means that any of the "proof texts" you've been told teach *this* doctrine have to mean something else altogether too (and we'll take a look at those "proof texts" in a future chapter as well, in order to prove this once and for all). Still, if hell isn't a literal "place" where unsaved humans exist consciously after they die, then what about heaven? What and where is it, and how do people go there? Nearly everyone who believes in God has asked these questions at some point in their lives, but the answers they're normally given are generally vague guesses or unscriptural assumptions, unfortunately, or are simply statements insisting that we can't know for sure. The truth, however, is that Scripture actually answers these questions for us, and the answer is so simple that I can actually show you heaven right now (or at least part of it). How? Well, let's take a look at some of the passages of Scripture which tell us what heaven really is:

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. – Genesis 1:20

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. – Matthew 24:30

So when we see the word heaven, we can see that it's sometimes referring to the sky above us, where the birds and clouds are (earth's atmosphere, in other words).

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained – Psalm 8:3

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth – Genesis 1:14-17

As we've already determined, heaven is "above" us, so to speak, but we can now see that it isn't only a reference to our atmosphere, but to outer space as well. (And yes, outer space *is* indeed real, despite what certain people who are **really** bad at understanding even basic science and math have been deceived into believing by proven grifters trying to make money off those who have a poor understanding of how science works, but that's a topic for another time.)

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. – Genesis 1:1

This tells us that there are only two overall "places" God created, which means there are only two places one can be: on earth, or in heaven. And if one is in the sky or in outer space, they're not on earth, which only leaves heaven for them to be in. (This also proves that "hell" isn't a literal *third* place one can be in or that God created, since He only created two "places," I should add, because the Valley/"Hell" of Hinnom is here on planet earth, the "hell" translated from the Greek word ταρταρώσας is also on this planet – underground on planet earth[576] – and the "hell" that dead humans are figuratively said to be in isn't actually a literal "place" at all, but is just a figure of speech for being "unseen," although it's sometimes also used as metonymy to refer to being in a cave or to being in the grave, which would also refer to being underground on planet earth.)

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[576] For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; — 2 Peter 2:4

And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. – Luke 24:51

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. – Acts 1:9-12

This also reaffirms that heaven is a reference to what is "up above" the ground we stand on. We can see that, after Jesus ascended up into heaven, the disciples were gazing up into the sky (heaven), as the angels also confirmed they were (while also confirming that a prophecy of Zechariah is about Him and when He'll one day return to the exact same spot on earth that He left from, which was the Mount of Olives[577]). So, simply put, if someone wants to see heaven now, all they have to do is look up at the sky. (And this also proves that aliens not only exist, but are spoken of in the Bible, by the way; the words "alien" and "extraterrestrial" just refer to any sentient beings not from earth, so if the angels and other spiritual beings come from heaven, it means they come from outer space and are, by definition, aliens.)

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[577] Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. — Zechariah 14:1-4

Most people, of course, think of heaven as a place the righteous dead go to, but you won't find any Scripture that tells you anyone goes to a place called heaven while dead (which makes sense, considering the fact that the dead are unconscious). The truth is that only the living can go to heaven, at least in a conscious state, and those in the body of Christ *will* go there when our Lord comes for His body, and we'll finally *"ever be with the Lord"* there.[578] That said, heaven isn't a place you'd want to go right now in your current body (aside from a short trip there in an aircraft or a space shuttle), because one needs a quickened body that could survive and thrive out there if you were planning to stay long, considering the fact that you'd suffocate from lack of oxygen, or freeze to death, or die from radiation poisoning out there in the heavens without either an immortal body or some sort of vehicle or structure to protect you from death (this is at least partly why Paul wrote that *"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"*[579] – we've already learned that flesh and blood *will* inherit the part of the kingdom of God which will be on earth, meaning the kingdom of heaven in Israel, so this was clearly only about the part of the kingdom that will be *in* heaven, not the part that will be sent *from* heaven). It also isn't the perfect, sinless place most people think it is,[580] at least

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[578] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

[579] Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. — 1 Corinthians 15:50

[580] Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. — Job 15:15

not yet, since the devil and his angels haven't been cast out of heaven yet,[581] for one thing, although it will be pretty great for the body of Christ when we have our new bodies that can enjoy it out there with our Lord as we fulfill our impending ministry to the spiritual beings residing there. This means, by the way, that Christians who like to claim that God can't allow sin into heaven (which is not an assertion I've ever seen made in Scripture) seem to have forgotten that, if Satan needs to be cast out of heaven, it means sin has already been in heaven, as is also confirmed by the fact that the book of Job says he was there too.[582] Similarly, the claim they often make that sin can't exist in heaven because God can't look upon sin is also an unscriptural one, since the words *"to behold"* in Habakkuk 1:13, which they like to quote to try to prove this assertion (and which actually says, *"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity,"*[583] and neither "evil" nor "iniquity" literally mean the same thing as the word "sin," which literally means "miss" – or "fail to do something perfectly" – with the word translated as "evil" in that verse – רַע/"rah" – essentially just meaning "harmful," "calamitous," or "destructive," and the word translated there as "iniquity" – עָמָל/"aw-mawl'" – literally just meaning "trouble" or "mischief"*),* are simply an expression in the KJB that means "to give attention to" or "to look upon approvingly" (which is what the Hebrew word רָאָה/"raw-aw'" that "behold" in this verse is translated from means). Satan's presence in heaven, not to mention God's omnipresence and the fact that *"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,"* as Proverbs 15:3 tells us (with "beholding" in this verse translated from

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[581] Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: — Ephesians 2:2

[582] Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. — Job 1:6

[583] Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he? — Habakkuk 1:13

the Hebrew word צָפָה/"tsaw-faw'," literally meaning "observing"), would make this a very problematic (not to mention contradictory) verse as well, if most Christians were correct about what that verse in Habakkuk meant (just as with the word "hell," this is another instance of the KJB translators using the same English word to translate multiple different words with multiple different meanings from their original languages). I should probably also point out that this is obviously only referring to the sort of evil that falls under the category of moral evil rather than morally-neutral evil, since few people remember that, while evil *can* be sinful, not all evil *is* sinful, as I mentioned previously (and, as I just pointed out, the word "evil" there just means "harmful," "calamitous," or "destructive," and not all actions that cause destruction or damage are inherently sinful, since otherwise it would mean that it was immoral to ever break anything, and that even popping a balloon would be a sin; simply put, the word "evil" in Scripture is basically just referring to anything that breaks something or causes suffering, whether with good intentions or bad – but we'll get more into that topic in an upcoming chapter, where we'll learn a lot more details about both evil and sin, including their origin).

Still, this does bring up the question of where people got the idea that the righteous dead go to a place called heaven in the first place from. There are a few reasons for this, but the main two reasons are verses that refer to God being in heaven,[584] as well as a misunderstanding of the word "paradise." Since we know that the body of Christ will go to heaven, and also that people will be living with God in the New Jerusalem, most Christians have assumed that these references must be talking about a place the dead go, not realizing that these things both take place within the physical universe, experienced by living people, rather than in an ethereal afterlife dimension experienced by the dead (the body of Christ goes to heaven to complete a ministry there, but not until

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[584] After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. — Matthew 6:9

after they've been resurrected from the dead and/or quickened; and the New Jerusalem later descends from heaven/outer space to the New Earth rather than being a place anyone who is dead goes to). That said, yes, God indeed *is* in heaven. He has a throne room (which can also be referred to *figuratively* as "heaven"[585]) and a throne somewhere out there in outer space, presumably in the city that will one day be called the New Jerusalem, while it waits to descend to the New Earth,[586] and it also seems likely that He manifests a part of Himself in some sort of manner that the spiritual beings there can perceive, but He ultimately transcends the whole universe at the same time.[587] (And just as a quick aside about God manifesting a part of Himself in a manner that the spiritual beings in heaven can perceive, there are some people who believe that because the Bible says God is invisible[588] and that nobody has ever seen him,[589] this must then apply to the celestial beings in heaven too – and some even insist that those of us in the body of Christ won't ever see God either, even after we've been quickened and are living up in heaven – and while it's possible that this interpretation of these passages is correct, I'd suggest that these verses were more likely written from a relative perspective, in that it's really only speaking of mortal humans who can't *currently* see God, because something being "invisible" to *us* doesn't mean that such things can't be seen by means *other* than the naked eye of a mortal human, or that something other than a human can't see it either, the way some animals can see things that are invisible to us;

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[585] For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: — Hebrews 9:24

[586] But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. — Galatians 4:26

[587] But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? — 2 Chronicles 2:6

[588] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: — Colossians 1:15

[589] No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. — John 1:18

besides, spiritual beings *do* interact with Him now anyway,[590] and one generally sees somebody that they're standing next to, not to mention the fact that Micaiah – who gave the prophecy about the spirits interacting with God[591] – said he saw God in the vision too,[592] so I think it's safe to say that we'll see Him as well, when we're in heaven, as will[593] the people residing[594] on the New Earth too.[595])

As far as the second misunderstanding goes, paradise is a reference to a future state of the earth where the tree of life will be,[596] both after Jesus returns to this

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[590] And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. — 1 Kings 22:19-21

[591] And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak. — 1 Kings 22:14

[592] And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. — 1 Kings 22:19

[593] And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. — Job 19:26-27

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

[595] And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. — Revelation 22:3-4

[596] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. — Revelation 2:7

planet and also later on the New Earth,[597] which makes sense considering the fact that there would be no need to eat from the tree of life in an ethereal afterlife realm as a ghost in order to remain "alive," if the immortality of the soul were true. This means that Jesus' statement to the thief on the cross about being with Him in paradise[598] couldn't mean what most Christians assume it to mean, because paradise doesn't really even exist yet, at least not outside of the Jerusalem which is currently above as it waits to descend to the New Earth, I suppose (and anyone who wants to insist that Jesus was speaking about something other than a future state of the earth will need to provide some scriptural references with solid exegesis of those passages to prove that assertion, not to mention explain away all the proof we've already covered that the dead really are unconscious – and before someone brings up 2 Corinthians 12:4,[599] in light of everything we've just covered, this being a reference to Paul having a vision of the future splendours of the New Jerusalem on the New Earth, and not a reference to the supposed afterlife dimension we've now learned there's no basis for believing exists anyway, makes far more sense than any other interpretation I've ever heard). Since we have to interpret this verse in light of everything else we've just covered, based on the way it renders Jesus' statement, we're forced to interpret this verse in the KJB figuratively, meaning that, from the thief's perspective, it would feel like the same day when he woke up from his sleep and began to live with Jesus in paradise, either in Israel after

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[597] In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. — Revelation 22:2

[598] And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. — Luke 23:39-43

[599] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. — 2 Corinthians 12:4

Jesus returns, or on the New Earth (and for those who think it would mean that Jesus was being less than truthful by speaking figuratively here, ask yourself if that means He was also being untruthful when He spoke figuratively to call Himself a door?[600]). This is also confirmed by Jesus' statement that He hadn't ascended to the Father yet in John 20:17,[601] not to mention the fact that we're told His "soul" went to "hell" when He died[602] (which simply means that His consciousness ceased to exist when He died), not to heaven (or paradise), and if Jesus did *not* go to paradise on that day (which He really couldn't have without time-travelling to the future when paradise finally exists on earth), the thief couldn't have been with Him there either, verifying that this could only be a prophetic statement about a time in the distant future when paradise begins on this earth or the New Earth. (And yes, I know that Jesus had been resurrected when He made that statement about not having ascended to the Father yet, but it's still not a statement He could have made honestly if He *had* ascended as a ghost, which we know He Himself didn't do anyway since His body was in the tomb and His "soul" was figuratively "residing" in "hell" while He was dead.)

I should say, there are also those who understand what death and paradise are, but who point out that there are no commas in the original Greek that this part of the Bible was translated from, so Jesus' statement in Luke 23:43 could just as legitimately be rendered as, "Verily I say unto thee today, shalt thou be with me in paradise" (presuming the punctuation and capitalization in the *King James*

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[600] I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. — John 10:9-11

[601] Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. — John 20:17

[602] For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. — Psalm 16:10

Bible aren't also inspired and inerrant anyway, at least as far as the assumptions of many King James Bible Believers go, and my understanding is that most King James Bible Believers *don't* believe the English capitalization and punctuation in the KJB are inspired and inerrant, so this idea should be no problem for them at least), just like Paul used similar sorts of expressions in Acts 20:26[603] and Acts 26:2,[604] not to mention all the times expressions like this were used in various parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, such as in Deuteronomy 4:26,[605] 39-40,[606] and 5:1,[607] to list just a few examples), simply meaning the thief would be with Jesus in paradise, either in Israel after Jesus returns, or on the New Earth, in the future (lining up exactly with the malefactor's request that Jesus remember him *when He comes into His kingdom,*[608] telling us that he was expecting Jesus to either escape the cross or to be physically resurrected after he died – something even Jesus' disciples didn't believe was going to happen at that time, which means he might have been the first convert to believe in the resurrection if that was the case – and to inaugurate the kingdom of heaven on earth in the

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[603] Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. — Acts 20:26

[604] I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: — Acts 26:2

[605] I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. — Deuteronomy 4:26

[606] Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever. — Deuteronomy 4:39-40

[607] And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. — Deuteronomy 5:1

[608] And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. — Luke 23:42

future regardless of whether He died or not, which makes sense considering the fact that no Israelite living back then would have been expecting the kingdom to be anywhere *other* than in Israel, least of all in the "hell" sometimes also known as "sheol/hades" where Jesus and everyone else who died "ended up," so to speak, and which he would have had literally *zero* scriptural basis for assuming the kingdom was going to be located). That said, while we certainly can if we want to, without doing any violence to the original Greek, we don't actually have to change the punctuation at all in order to understand what Jesus was getting at since, regardless of where the comma is located, we still have to interpret this verse in light of the rest of Scripture, which means that whether we move the comma and interpret Jesus' statement literally, or leave it where it is in the KJB and interpret Jesus' statement figuratively, the only possible valid interpretation (in light of what we've now learned about heaven, "hell," death, and immortality) is still the exact same no matter where the comma ends up (at least if we're taking the context of the rest of Scripture into consideration), with the thief not ending up in paradise with Jesus until he's resurrected from the dead to live either in Israel or on the New Earth, so I'll leave it at that.

The fact of the matter is, nobody mentioned anywhere in the Bible was ever recorded as looking forward to an afterlife in a place called heaven, or as being afraid of being punished consciously in an afterlife realm called hell, nor had any Scripture prior to Jesus supposedly unveiling it to Israelites for the first time in Luke 16 ever even suggested that people would go to an afterlife realm to live happily or to suffer in while dead either (until Jesus told this story, anyone who based their theology entirely upon what the Scripture which was available to them at that time said would assume nobody is even conscious when they're dead, as we've already learned – and, as I mentioned when I discussed the supposedly figurative usage of the Valley of Hinnom to describe a fiery afterlife realm, it seems extremely unlikely that the Person who corrected people for teaching extrabiblical theological concepts by saying things like "have ye not read…?" and "it is written…" would suddenly turn around and teach a concept

of an afterlife that is not only found *nowhere* in the Hebrew Scriptures, but which also seems to contradict everything the Hebrew Scriptures said about the state of the dead, as well as what He told the Sadducees about God being the God of the living rather than of the dead, a few chapters later, as we've also already learned, which would mean God couldn't have been the God of Lazarus while he remained dead, if the "events" in this story actually took place), and the fact that the concept of an afterlife realm for ghosts wasn't ever taught in the Hebrew Scriptures should really tell you everything you need to know about the idea. What they *were* looking forward to was a physical, bodily resurrection in the distant future,[609] so figurative stories such as the one in Luke 16 have to be interpreted in light of this fact. The story of the rich man and Lazarus wasn't a new revelation to replace the scriptural doctrine of unconscious death until resurrection, so one has to figure out what it means without creating an entirely new theology that not only hadn't ever even been hinted at prior to it in Scripture, but that would also contradict other parts of Scripture, which also means that any scriptural references to the version of "hell" that dead souls are in can't be talking about a place any human will actually suffer in, and neither can any passages that talk about the lake of fire (at least they won't be able to suffer there any longer than it takes for a mortal body to die in that fire). And so, the simple fact is, every single person who dies goes to "hell" (meaning the "hell" used as a figure of speech for the state of being unconscious because one is dead), whether they're a believer or not. And only those who do understand and believe what it is Paul meant when he wrote that Christ died for our sins, that **He** was buried, and that He rose again the third day, will get to go to heaven, but not until after they've been resurrected and/or made immortal, because the only way for someone who is dead to go to heaven would be to put their corpse on an aircraft or space shuttle, but they wouldn't enjoy it

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[609] Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. — John 11:21-24

particularly much (although this does mean that someone who has died can technically be in heaven and "hell" at the exact same time, even if they couldn't know they were in either "location").

This also means that Enoch and Elijah didn't go to live in heaven rather than dying either (at least not the same "part" of heaven that Jesus is now living in, which is presumably the Jerusalem which is above), contrary to the way many Christians assume they did, since whatever happened to them can't contradict what you've already learned from this book about what Scripture says. Genesis 5:24[610] is not an easy verse to understand, but based on everything we've covered so far, we know that Jesus is the only human living in heaven (at least in the part of heaven outside of earth's orbit where certain humans will go to live eventually), so they couldn't have, which means that Enoch had to have gone somewhere other than heaven when he "was not" and was "taken by God." The most probable explanation is that he was "caught away" from a dangerous situation where he would have been killed, to live out the rest of his life in safety somewhere else, similar to the way Philip was "caught away" after baptizing the eunuch,[611] which seems to line up with the fact that the book of Hebrews includes Enoch in a list of people who lived by faith[612] while also saying that everyone in the list died without having received what they were promised

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[610] and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. — Genesis 5:24

[611] And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. — Acts 8:39

[612] By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. — Hebrews 11:5

yet.[613] And it's recorded that King Jehoram received a letter from Elijah[614] after the time that Elijah was caught up in the whirlwind to heaven,[615] so, again, based on everything we now know about who is in heaven, this means that Elijah pretty much had to have been deposited somewhere else on earth to live

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[613] These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. — Hebrews 11:13

[614] And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day. — 2 Chronicles 21:12-15

[615] And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el. And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. — 2 Kings 2:1-11

out the rest of his life in safety too, just like Enoch, and that he then also eventually died, just like Enoch. There's also the factor of how one has to have been quickened in order to live permanently in heaven/outer space, and 1 Corinthians 15 gives us a specific order of when each person will be "made alive"[616] (which refers to being made immortal, as I'll prove from Scripture a few chapters from now), and aside from Jesus, nobody's human body has been quickened yet, so they definitely can't be immortal yet and hence can't be living in the part of heaven that Jesus is currently living in (but you'll learn more about this aspect of salvation in that upcoming chapter).

And this also all means that you can now be free from the fear of either you or any of your loved ones suffering in hell, because you now know that nobody is conscious while dead, and that none of the biblical "hells" are anything even close to what we've been taught they are by most of the leaders of the Christian religion anyway.

And while I will discuss further details related to it in later chapters as well, everything that one *technically* needs to know in order to enjoy salvation under the Gospel of the Circumcision has now been covered in these first three chapters. So if you're happy to be a member of the Israel of God (or at least are happy to be connected with that church in whatever manner it is that Gentiles who obey the Gospel of the Circumcision do end up connected with it in), you can stop reading here if you want (although I'd still suggest reading *at least* the next chapter, so you can learn what terms like "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal" – and ever "never" – *actually* mean in the KJB and other less literal Bible translations, as well as chapter 8, so you can learn what a lot of the "proof texts" commonly used to defend The Popular Doctrine are actually talking

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[616] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. — 1 Corinthians 15:22-24

about, especially the passages from the Circumcision writings). That said, if you'd like to know how one joins the body of Christ, you'll need to read at least to the end of chapter 6 (and at that point, you might as well just finish the book as well). Also, regardless of which church you prefer to be a member of, I'd also recommend reading chapter 9, in order to learn more about what the Bible says regarding sin for members of *both* churches (although if you are going to read chapters 4 through 8, please read them before reading chapter 9). That said, if you decide *not* to read chapters 4 through 8, it's important to know that you need to stop using Paul's epistles for your doctrine (or at least most of Paul's epistles – he technically *does* cover a *few* details relevant to the Israel of God in them, especially in Romans), since his epistles are primarily only to and about the body of Christ. Instead, at this point, you need to rely pretty much solely on the Circumcision writings for your doctrine, at least if you *did* get saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision.

Chapter 4: How long does "for ever" last?

Anyone who believes in never-ending punishment will, of course, refer us to the various passages in the Bible which use words such as "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal" when discussing judgement, in order to defend The Popular Doctrine. And yet, anyone who has studied the whole Bible and actually paid attention while reading it should be embarrassed to do so, since they should already be well aware of the fact that these words, when used in the less literal English Bible versions such as the KJB which translate the original Hebrew and Koine Greek Scriptures this way, rarely actually mean "never-ending" or "without end" at all, contrary to what most people ended up assuming they do, which is why I need to point out their actual meaning in this chapter. Please keep in mind that I'm not saying the KJB and other less literal Bible versions were mistranslated when it comes to these words, though. I'm simply saying that these English words were generally intended to be interpreted figuratively rather than literally (or qualitatively rather than quantitatively) in the less literal versions of the Bible such as the KJB. This isn't to say it's impossible that these words are *sometimes* meant to be interpreted quantitatively rather than qualitatively in certain passages, of course (and I'm certainly not insisting that they couldn't possibly have ever had a quantitative meaning when they were used in Hebrew or Greek outside of Scripture back then either), but one has to consider each instance of these words extremely carefully when reading Scripture, looking at the context of the passage, as well as of Scripture as a whole, before deciding that they are meant to be interpreted quantitatively in a specific passage, so as not to contradict the rest of Scripture (since, if Scripture actually contradicted itself in any way at all,

there would be no reason to even consider what the Bible has to say about this – or any other – topic in the first place, and nearly anyone who did so would likely be wasting their time).

For example, in Exodus 21:4-6 we read about servants (or slaves) who choose to remain in servitude rather than going free on the seventh year,[617] as was their right: *"If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever."* If we interpret "for ever" as literally referring to a period of time that never ends, it would either mean that the servant in question can never die, or that the servant will have to remain in servitude to his master without end, even after both of their physical resurrections and judgements at the Great White Throne in the distant future (as well as in any afterlife in the meantime, at least if one actually existed, even if they both ended up in different places while dead – although we now know that there's no such thing as an afterlife while dead, thanks to what we covered in chapter 3, but the point would still stand for those who do believe in the immortality of the soul). Since I doubt anyone believes either of these options to be the case, I trust everyone would agree that the "for ever" in this verse is actually a hyperbolic translation which really means "for a long – but specific – time period, even if the end date (the time of the servant's death) is currently unknown," which demonstrates that when we see the phrase "for ever" in the Bible, we can't just automatically assume it means "without end."

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[617] If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. — Exodus 21:2-3

Of course, those who use other Bible versions might point out that they say things like “for life,” or “permanently,” rather than “for ever” in this verse, but at the very least, we all have to admit that עוֹלָם/“o-lawm'” (which is the Hebrew word that “for ever” is translated from in this verse in the KJB) doesn’t literally mean “without end” or “never-ending” (or at least doesn’t necessarily *always* literally mean “without end” or “never-ending”).

However, I have had people insist that, even if the word עוֹלָם doesn’t necessarily mean “never-ending” in an ontological sense, the word should still always be understood as meaning something along the lines of: “it’s going to be like this for as long as the thing or person in question exists.” Well, even if that were true, this assertion doesn’t help prove the idea of Infernalism at all anyway, since immortality for humans is always connected with salvation in Scripture, as we’ve now learned, so any human who actually remains alive permanently can’t be cast into the lake of fire – which is a physical location on a physical planet rather than a place in an “afterlife realm” anyway, as we’ve also now learned – because if they’re immortal it means they’ve already been saved, and those who are saved don’t end up in the lake of fire (which, as we *also* now know, means that Infernalism is completely out of the question, pretty much leaving Annihilationism and Pauline Universalism as the only remaining likely options, although chapters 5 through 8 of this book, combined with everything else you’ll learn in this chapter, will remove Annihilationism from the running as well, as you’ll soon discover; that said, there technically *is* a theoretical fourth option – one which *could* have ended up being the case if Paul’s Gospel didn’t mean what I’m going to prove it means in chapter 6 of this book – which is that everyone could technically eventually end up being resurrected in the future, even from their second death, so they can live permanently on the New Earth, only with most people having bodies which haven’t actually been made truly immortal, but instead remaining alive due to eating from the tree of life on

a monthly basis, as Revelation 22:2[618] seems to imply is necessary in order for someone to avoid dying without actually being quickened, but this wouldn't be the sort of Universalism that I'm discussing in this book – meaning Pauline Universalism, even if this fourth option *could* technically be referred to as "Universalism" of a different sort as well – because they wouldn't have actually been fully saved, at least not in the Pauline sense of salvation, since actually completed salvation under Paul's Gospel involves *actual* immortality, being made *incapable* of ever dying even if one *doesn't* partake of said fruit regularly, in other words, and they'd also have missed out on the type of salvation that involves living in the kingdom of heaven in Israel for 1,000 years as well).

But is there any basis for my assertion that the word עוֹלָם doesn't necessarily mean "without end" anywhere else in the Bible, or are those the only examples? In fact, that this word doesn't necessarily mean "never-ending" when it's used in the Bible can be seen in *many* places throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, Isaiah 32:14-15 says: "*Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.*" Unless we're meant to believe that Jerusalem will be left forsaken and desolate and never recover or be inhabited again, as verse 14 seems to say, we have to interpret that "for ever" as meaning a specific period of time again, just as we had to do with the previous example. And, indeed, verse 15 tells us when that "for ever" ends, stating that Jerusalem will be left deserted "for ever," *until* the spirit be poured from on high (which proves that עוֹלָם *isn't* required to mean "it's going to be like this for as long as the thing or person in question exists," the way some people insist, since otherwise Jerusalem *would* have to remain forsaken permanently rather than eventually be restored).

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[618] In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. — Revelation 22:2

And those weren't the only passages to demonstrate that it doesn't mean "never-ending" either. We also read about the fact that the Levitical priesthood will be "everlasting" in Exodus 40:15[619] (with "everlasting" *also* being translated from עוֹלָם there in the KJB, just like "for ever" was in the first two passages we looked at), yet we know from Hebrews 7:14–22 that the priesthood of Aaron's descendants is to be replaced by Jesus Christ, who will be *"a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,"*[620] and we know from 1 Corinthians 15 that even this new priesthood which is figuratively said to last "for ever" is eventually no longer going to be necessary either (since you don't need any priests once there's no more sin or death remaining).[621] That this "everlasting" priesthood will eventually come to an end is also backed up by the fact that, while the believing descendants of Isaac and Jacob will reign over the people of the earth

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[619] And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. — Exodus 40:15

[620] For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. — Hebrews 7:14–22

[621] Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

as "kings and priests" during the thousand-year period of time when the kingdom of heaven finally fully exists on earth, there almost certainly won't be any Israelite priests on the New Earth at all, because there won't be any need for them with no physical temple in the New Jerusalem.

Similarly, in Isaiah 24:5 we read: *"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."* This seems to tell us that the Old Covenant (also known as the Mosaic Covenant[622]) can never come to an end and be replaced by a New Covenant because it's said to be "everlasting," but we know from other parts of Scripture that there *will* be a New Covenant for those in the house of Israel and the house of Judah,[623] and that their Old Covenant in fact began to decay[624] when Christ died[625] (and will indeed eventually vanish away entirely, if it hasn't already). So we can see it once again demonstrated that "everlasting" doesn't necessarily mean "never-ending" or "without end" when we read that

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[622] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic_covenant

[623] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. — Jeremiah 31:31-34

[624] In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. — Hebrews 8:13

[625] And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. — Hebrews 9:15-17

word in the Bible any more than "for ever" does (at least when translated from the Hebrew word עוֹלָם).

And it's not just the Old Covenant that's referred to as an "everlasting covenant" when translated from the Hebrew עוֹלָם in the KJB. The Abrahamic covenant is too, in 1 Chronicles 16:16-18.[626] But since we know that the specific portion of land called Canaan (now known as the land of Israel), which is what the promise in this covenant is about, will eventually cease to exist when the planet that land is located on is replaced with by the New Earth, the "everlasting" period of time that this covenant consists of will also have to expire when our current planet does (which has to happen either way, since if our current universe isn't replaced by a New Heaven and a New Earth, our current earth would get pretty dark at the time of the heat death of the universe, presuming it isn't first engulfed by the sun when our star goes Red Giant, of course, as is believed to be likely to happen in a few billion years, give or take, so either way, the land promised in this "everlasting" covenant *is* going to cease to exist eventually, and thus the covenant must also).

Now, I could go on and on with example[627] after example[628] of things that were said to be "for ever"[629] or "everlasting" that eventually ended (or that are said

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[626] Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; — 1 Chronicles 16:16-18

[627] I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. — 1 Kings 8:13

[628] Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel. — 2 Chronicles 2:4

[629] The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow. — 2 Kings 5:27

will eventually end) in the Hebrew Scriptures (especially when translated from the word עוֹלָם, although these terms are also translated from other Hebrew words in the KJB at times as well – like עַד/"ad," as one example, such as when Habakkuk 3:6 refers to the "everlasting" mountains which aren't as permanent as one might assume,[630] although this doesn't change anything we've learned about the common figurative meaning of these English terms either – which is why you should always look at the original Hebrew to confirm what word is being translated these ways), but the translators of the KJB also demonstrated quite clearly that they didn't believe עוֹלָם always means "without end" or "never-ending" by translating it other ways too, such as in Ecclesiastes 12:5,[631] where they translated the Hebrew word as *"his long home"* when referring to the time someone who is dead spends in the grave. Since we know that everyone who dies will eventually be resurrected to face judgement (or enjoy salvation) one day, nobody could ever be resurrected from the dead if עוֹלָם always meant "never-ending" or "without end" (and the same goes for those Bible versions which translate the verse to instead say "eternal home," confirming that the word "eternal" is meant to be just as figurative a translation in *those* versions when translated from עוֹלָם as "everlasting" and "for ever" are in the KJB, unless we ignore the primary point of 1 Corinthians 15 and decide to believe that there's no physical resurrection of the dead). And they also used this Hebrew word in yet *another* way in Psalm 77:5,[632] where they translated it as "ancient times," telling us yet again that they definitely didn't believe עוֹלָם *must* mean "without end" or "never-ending," since in this case it's simply referring to previous ages – meaning "multiple periods of time, each with a definite

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[630] He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. — Habakkuk 3:6

[631] Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: — Ecclesiastes 12:5

[632] I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. — Psalm 77:5

beginning and end." In fact, "ages" (or just "age," as well as "age-pertaining" – meaning "pertaining to an age or ages" – depending on the passage) is the most *literal* translations of עוֹלָם, although it has plenty of more *figurative* meanings too, as we've now seen.

Of course, the fact that there can't be more than one period of time which is *literally* everlasting (since a *literal* everlasting "period of time," so to speak, would have no end, which means there can't be a second period of time that is *also* literally everlasting if there's a first one), combined with what Psalm 90:2 in the KJB says,[633] *also* confirms that "everlasting" doesn't necessarily *literally* refer to a never-ending period of time in the Hebrew Scriptures, since this verse refers to *two* supposedly everlasting periods of time (both of which are also ultimately translated from עוֹלָם). Instead, based on the literal meaning of the original Hebrew, it makes far more sense to interpret *"from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God"* in the KJB here as a *poetic* translation which just means "from age to age, thou art God." But even if someone wanted to read the verse as simply being a figurative way of saying that God has no beginning or end, as many people *do* interpret it as saying, it would *still* mean that the word "everlasting" in this verse is *not* meant to be read literally, since it refers to *two* "everlastings," which *still* confirms everything that I've been saying about this English word and the Hebrew word עוֹלָם that it's often translated from (and if someone ever tries to argue that the two "everlastings" mentioned in this verse are speaking of the *same* supposedly everlasting "period of time," so to speak, and that the phrase *"from everlasting to everlasting"* is just referring to two different *ends* of this supposedly everlasting "period of time," point out to them that there's nothing in the verse which outright says that the two "everlastings" mentioned there are actually just *one* everlasting "period of time," and that this means they're reading an assumption into the text, and then remind them as

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[633] Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. — Psalm 90:2

well that a *literal* everlasting "period of time," so to speak, *can't have an end*, which means it definitely *also* can't have *two* ends, telling us that this interpretation would *still* result in an entirely *figurative* "everlasting," proving that, no matter how one looks at it, the English word "everlasting" isn't necessarily *always* meant to be interpreted literally in the *King James Bible* and other less literal translations of the Hebrew Scriptures).

And with all that in mind, if "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal" don't necessarily literally mean "without end" or "never-ending" in the parts of the less literal Bible versions translated from the Hebrew Scriptures (and if you look עוֹלָם up in a concordance, you can see even *more* examples than the ones I've discussed here *also* proving that it doesn't necessarily mean "never-ending" or "without end"), it stands to reason that there's a good chance they don't necessarily mean that in the parts of the less literal Bible versions translated from the Greek Scriptures either, and along with what you're going to learn about both judgement and salvation in the upcoming chapters of this book, that they don't is also made obvious by the fact that, depending on the context, the Greek translations of the Hebrew word עוֹלָם we've been looking at in this chapter (which are indeed the words translated from the Greek Scriptures as "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal" in the *King James Bible*) can be either αἰών/"ahee-ohn'" (which is a noun that literally means a singular "age," referring to "a long period of time with a definite beginning and end," although, as I've mentioned previously, the KJB often also uses the English word "world" in places that refer to a single "age" when translated from this Greek word,[634] though it also uses other words to translate αἰών as well, such as when it used the word "course" to translate this Greek word in Ephesians 2:2,[635] as just one

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[634] But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: — Luke 20:35

[635] Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: — Ephesians 2:2

example), αἰῶνας/"ahee-ohn'-as" (which is a plural form of αἰών, literally meaning "ages," as the KJB translates the word at times[636]), or αἰωνίων/"ahee-o'-nee-ohn" (which is an adjectival form of αἰών, essentially just meaning "age-pertaining" when read literally, although the word is used in other ways in the Bible too, such as how the KJB used it to translate 2 Timothy 1:9 in order to say *"before the world began,"*[637] for example, although this is technically a very figurative English translation of three Greek words – πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων/"pro khro'-nown ahee-o'-nee-ohn" – that literally mean "before age-pertaining times," using "the world" as metonymy for "the ages" – or for "age-pertaining times," to be more precise – the way the KJB often does for the word "age" as well, referring to the time *before* the period of time known as "the ages" officially began), telling us that these Greek words definitely can't *only* mean "without end" or "never-ending," as some people who haven't paid enough attention to the original Greek (and the Hebrew word that this set of Greek words are the translation of) insist they must.

πρὸ	χρόνων	αἰωνίων
before	times	age-pertaining

In fact, unless we want to believe there are three eternities, including a "past eternity" (aside from the examples we already looked at, we can see from the way the KJB translators rendered 1 Corinthians 2:7 to say *"before the world"*[638] instead of "before for ever" or "before eternity" that they knew better than to always translate the word αἰών in a manner that denotes a period of time which

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[636] Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: — Colossians 1:26

[637] Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, — 2 Timothy 1:9

[638] But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: — 1 Corinthians 2:7

never ends), as well as a "present eternity" and a "future eternity" (since the KJB translators rendered Matthew 12:32 as *"neither in this world, neither in the world to come"*[639] rather than as "neither in this for ever, neither in the for ever to come" or as "neither in this eternity, neither in the eternity to come"), we can see that the word αἰών simply doesn't necessarily mean "without end" (and αἰῶνας being translated as "ages" in the KJB, as we've already seen it can be, confirms that the plural variation of the word *also* doesn't necessarily mean that), just as the KJB's usage of αἰωνίων to translate Romans 16:25 to say *"since the world began"*[640] instead of "since eternity began" (not to mention its translation of the verse in 2 Timothy 1:9 we just looked at as *"before the world began"* rather than as "before eternity began"*)* proves that αἰωνίων doesn't necessarily mean "never-ending" – and doesn't necessarily refer to *actual* "eternity," which literally means "without beginning or end" – either (which makes sense considering the fact that you can't have a time before literal "eternity," nor could literal "eternity" even have a beginning). So if anyone ever tries to claim that עוֹלָם, αἰών, αἰῶνας, and/or αἰωνίων can *only* mean "without end," "never-ending," or some other word or phrase that denotes an endless period of time, and that they can't possibly refer to something more temporary, simply show them the various passages we just looked at, which is all the proof one needs that this isn't the case at all, and that not even the translators of the KJB thought that (and of course, if they try to insist that, at the very least, the English translations of the *Greek* words rendered as "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal" in the KJB and other less literal Bible versions have to mean "without end" or "never-ending" for some reason, just show them the passages translated from the *Hebrew* Scriptures which use the terms but don't literally

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[639] And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. — Matthew 12:32

[640] Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, — Romans 16:25

mean that – thus confirming that "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal" *don't* necessarily have to mean "without end" or "never-ending" in the KJB and other less literal English translations of Scripture – and explain that there's then no good reason to be inconsistent by assuming they *do* have to literally mean "without end" or "never-ending" in the parts of the KJB and other less literal Bible versions translated from the Greek Scriptures, especially since the Greek words they're translated from in these less literal English Bible versions are technically the Greek translation of a Hebrew word that *doesn't* literally mean "without end" or "never-ending" in most of the cases where "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal" are used in these English translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, and point out that they're reading their assumptions into the text when making this assertion, which is eisegesis).

This can all apply to when a variation of the word αἰών is supposedly used in a passage to tell us that something will "never" happen as well, I should add, which is demonstrated by the way John 11:25-26 is translated in the KJB as, *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* We know this *can't* be a literal translation, because people who believed in Jesus at the time He made that statement *did* eventually drop dead (and still do as of the time this book was written). So unless we're to believe that Paul actually *wasn't* revealing a mystery (meaning revealing a secret which hadn't been disclosed before he did so – for those who don't know, "secret" is what the Koine Greek word μυστήριον/"moos-tay'-ree-on," which is transliterated as "mystery" in the KJB, literally means) in 1 Corinthians 15:51 when he wrote, *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"* we have to interpret the word "never" figuratively in the KJB in that passage in John, because Paul was the *first* to reveal the secret that some people will never die prior to being quickened. And Jesus couldn't have been referring to the supposed "spiritual death" that most Christians believe in, because "never" literally means "not even one time," yet these Christians

believe we already "died spiritually" at least once, at the time of our first sin, if not when we were born or even when we were conceived, so it couldn't refer to that concept even if there was such a thing as "spiritual death," at least not without adding the word "again" to the sentence (and that word is definitely not there in the KJB, any more than it is in the original Greek, as you can see from the literal interlinear translation I've included below). So unless Paul was lying about this being a secret at the time he wrote about it, the passage in John *has* to be a figurative translation of the Greek, simply meaning, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not die during the age" (based on the words it's translated from in the original Koine Greek, as you can see from the literal interlinear translation that I included here), telling us that believers (at least believers saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision, since Jesus stated this during His earthly ministry) won't die during the thousand-year age that they'll get to enjoy in the kingdom of heaven in Israel (the reason we know that Jesus was only referring to this one particular age rather than to multiple ages is because this passage uses the Accusative Singular variation of αἰών rather than using a plural variation of the word). That's not to say the English word "never" can *never* have been meant to be interpreted literally in the Bible. It's just that one has to consider the context of the passage in question (and also look at the original Koine Greek, since "never" in the KJB is *actually* translated literally from other Greek words too, such as οὐδέποτε/"oo-dep'-ot-eh," as one of the various examples[641]) to determine whether doing so

καὶ	πᾶς	ὁ	ζῶν	καὶ	πιστεύων
and	whoever	that	liveth	and	believeth
εἰς	ἐμὲ	οὐ μὴ	ἀποθάνῃ	εἰς	τὸν αἰῶνα
in	me	will not	be dying	for	the age

[641] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. — Matthew 7:23

would contradict other parts of Scripture, because if it would, then that obviously can't be how God meant for it to be interpreted.

With all that in mind, I trust it's obvious by now that "eternal," "everlasting," "for ever," and even "never" in the KJB often have to be interpreted qualitatively and figuratively rather than quantitatively and literally (just as these English words are almost always still used by us today: as hyperbole, meaning they're exaggerated expressions used for the sake of emphasis; for example, if I were to say, "Man, this church service is everlasting – the preacher is going to talk for ever, and we're never going to get to go home," I doubt you'd assume that the meeting will *actually* last for all eternity, that we'd never actually get to leave, or that the speaker will indeed continue preaching for all that endless time as well). Simply put, it seems the translators believed that those who read the KJB (or who heard it read aloud) are able to understand figurative language, and that they never intended for anyone to simply assume the terms "for ever" or "everlasting" should definitely be interpreted as meaning "never-ending" or "without end" when translated into English, with "for ever" often just being figurative language that refers to "an age," to multiple "ages," or to "a long period of time with a definite beginning and end," and "everlasting" or "eternal" often just meaning "age-pertaining," or even just "long lasting," depending on the context of the passage in question, with nearly everything that's said to be "everlasting" or "eternal," or even said to last "for ever," eventually coming to an end. These terms are quite clearly being used as hyperbole in many (if not most) parts of the KJB and other less literal Bible translations that use them, with the various usages of "ever" throughout the KJB (such as "for **ever**," "for **ever** and **ever**," "**ever**lasting," and even "n**ever**") often being used as metonymy for "age" and various cognates of the word, such as "ages" or "age-pertaining," and are not meant to be taken literally at all in most cases (yes, I will prove that this is definitely the case in later chapters of this book; and no, interpreting these English terms in a more figurative manner rather than in a literal manner doesn't actually raise any negative implications

for our salvation the way some Christians assume it must, as I'll also explain soon enough; for now, though, I simply want to drill it into your head that these terms don't necessarily *have* to mean "without end," "never-ending," or "can't ever," which is why I'm being so repetitive about this fact).

But even in passages where it might seem to make sense to interpret some of these terms literally at first glance, such as Romans 16:26 for example[642] (which uses the phrase *"the everlasting God"* in the KJB), this still isn't necessarily the case. Some would insist that to interpret it figuratively would mean the verse says that God could eventually die, but this verse isn't necessarily trying to tell us that God's life will never end in the first place. The fact of the matter is, we already know that God isn't going to die based on earlier Scripture, such as Psalm 102:27, which told us long ago that His *"years shall have no end,"*[643] so that's not something Paul needed to explain to his readers. Instead, if we interpret the word "everlasting" consistently with other instances where it's translated from αἰωνίων (meaning we interpret it as simply figuratively meaning "pertaining to the ages"), we can see that Paul is likely just telling us that God is the age-pertaining God (or that He's the eonian God, as some Pauline Universalists put it, transliterating αἰωνίων as "eonian," which is a word that means "pertaining to an eon or eons" – the word "eon" is a synonym for "age," and some Pauline Universalists prefer to use English words connected with "eon" rather than "age" since "eon" is a transliteration of αἰών, with "eons" being a transliteration of αἰῶνας), meaning that God doesn't just sit on high, removed from our struggles in time, but rather that He cares about – and is even intimately involved in – what happens during the ages (and those who might think this limits Him to the ages aren't thinking things through carefully

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[642] But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: — Romans 16:26

[643] But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. — Psalm 102:27

enough, since otherwise God being said to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob[644] would limit Him to being the God of those three men, and those three men alone, as well). Similarly, Galatians 1:3-5[645] and Philippians 4:20[646] can also legitimately be interpreted along the same lines (as saying something about God's connection to the ages rather than to eternity in these passages). You see, the Greek word for "and" – καί – isn't actually found *anywhere* in the original Greek text translated specifically as *"for ever and ever"* in these passages in the KJB. In fact, it isn't found in the original text translated as *"for ever and ever"* in *any* passage translated from the *Textus Receptus* in the KJB – or in the original Greek in any other manuscript that the phrase is translated similarly from in any other Bible version either, for that matter – confirming that, regardless of whether or not the English translation itself is actually meant to be *interpreted* at face value in any particular passages, *"for ever and ever"* is **always** a *figurative* translation rather than a literal one when translated from the Greek Scriptures, because a *literal* translation would be something more along the lines of "now unto our God and Father be glory for the ages of the ages" in the verse in Philippians, and "to whom be glory for the ages of the ages" in Galatians 1:5 (based on the fact that *"for ever"* and also *"and ever"* are both translated from plural variations of the word αἰών in these verses in the KJB, not to mention what we just discussed, which is the fact that and/καί simply isn't found in the Greek text εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων/"ice toos ahee-ohn'-as ton ahee-oh'-nohn"

εἰς	τοὺς	αἰῶνας	τῶν	αἰώνων
for	the	ages	of the	ages

in the TR that *"for ever and ever"* is translated from in the KJB in these passages, as you can see from this literal interlinear translation). And

[644] Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. — Exodus 3:6

[645] Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. — Galatians 1:3-5

[646] Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. — Philippians 4:20

this wouldn't mean they're telling us that God's glory will end when the ages do, as some will now want to object, any more than the figurative interpretation of Romans 16:26 means that God's life would end at that time; it would just mean that Paul was simply focusing on the glory God will finally receive – which He certainly isn't receiving during the current age, at least not to the extent He will at that time – when the two greatest ages finally begin (those two ages being referred to in the original Greek as "the ages of the ages," which, as those who are familiar with the Doctrine of the Ages – also often referred to as the Doctrine of the Eons by many Pauline Universalists – know, is referring to the thousand-year age when the kingdom of heaven exists in Israel, as well as to the final age on the New Earth, prior to the end of the ages, but I don't have the space to get into the details of that topic right now so I'm going to leave it at that for the time being). Simply put, with very few exceptions, the Bible doesn't actually delve into details pertaining to the rest of eternity, but is instead focused almost entirely on details pertaining to the ages (even though this fact might be less obvious to people who don't consider the original languages that the KJB is translated from when studying it, which is why one should always look at the original Hebrew and Greek to learn more about what the Bible actually means, since God keeps many details hidden from those who refuse to dig deeper, as I've mentioned previously). What occurs after the ages end isn't something that God seems to want us to know right now (other than to know that everyone will have been quickened/saved by that time, as you'll soon learn), but rather it seems He wants us to concern ourselves with what happens *during* the ages instead. And again, for any King James Bible Believers who might be concerned about what I wrote above, please remember that I'm not saying the phrase *"for ever and ever"* is a mistranslation in the KJB. All I'm doing is pointing out that it's technically always a figurative translation in the KJB and other less literal Bible versions, since, in order to be a *truly* literal translation, the word "and" (καί) would *have* to have been present there in the original Greek.

However, even if we *did* interpret "everlasting" and "for ever and ever" in *those* particular passages as telling us that God and His glory are never-ending, the fact remains that "for ever" and "for ever and ever" are still *very often* just figurative language that refers to "an age" or "ages," or to "a seemingly long period of time with a definite beginning and end," when used in the KJB and other less literal English Bible versions (not to mention in the original Hebrew and Koine Greek that these less literal English Bible versions are translated from), as we've now learned, and the same goes for not only "everlasting," but also "eternal," which, as you know, is often used as a synonym for "everlasting" in the KJB and other less literal Bible versions, since it's almost always translated from the same Greek word in these versions too – with the one exception in the KJB, where it's instead translated from ἀΐδιος/"ah-id'-ee-os," not causing any problem for the soteriological position of Universalism at all either.[647] And so the bottom line is that we should always be considering the context of the passages these various terms are being used in, as well as comparing these passages to the rest of Scripture, in order to determine whether these English translations actually *should* be interpreted as *literally* meaning "without end" or "never-ending" (not to mention "can't ever," in the case of the word "never" being used) in those instances – such as in Lamentations 3:31-33,[648] which at least *seems* to be an example of how "for ever" *could* mean "without end" in the KJB, although I can see how it *might* refer to just one age as well, so I can't say for certain, but if it is meant to be interpreted literally in the KJB, it's a good example of a passage in the Hebrew Scriptures refuting both Infernalism *and* Annihilationism, and even if it doesn't prove *Pauline* Universalism, it *could* be used to defend a more *general* form of Universalism as well, including the

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[647] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: — Romans 1:20

[648] For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. — Lamentations 3:31-33

hypothetical “fourth option” I mentioned earlier in this chapter – or whether they should instead be interpreted figuratively, to make sure a particular interpretation of these words wouldn’t contradict other parts of the Bible, in other words. Because, just as the “everlasting” Old Covenant can’t be talking about a covenant that literally doesn’t actually end in the KJB and the other less literal versions, since that would contradict the passages which talk about how it has to fade away and be replaced with by a New Covenant (not to mention how “from everlasting to everlasting” can’t literally be talking about two never-ending periods of time, the way a literal interpretation of the word “everlasting” in Psalm 90:2 in the KJB would mean it is, since that would contradict logic), references in the *King James Bible* and other less literal versions to “everlasting” (or “eternal”) judgements which are negative (not to mention references to punishments which last “for ever,” or even “for ever and ever”) *likewise* can’t *literally* be talking about judgements and punishments which never actually end either, because that would contradict all the passages which talk about the salvation of all that we’re going to look at later in this book.

This, by the way, also means that, while we can figuratively be said to be given “eternal” life (or “everlasting” life) at the point we believe the Gospel and are saved, this can really only be said to be the case from a relative, or perhaps proleptic, perspective at that time, because the actual, physical experience of “eternal” life – referring to our quickening and being taken to the heavens in the case of those of us in the body of Christ, and to getting to live in the kingdom of heaven during the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth in the case of those in the Israel of God – can’t really fully begin from a literal perspective until the final ages actually commence, since the phrase really just means “age-pertaining” life when it’s interpreted consistently with the rest of the parts of Scripture that refer to salvation, although it technically does begin a few years before the beginning of the final ages for the body of Christ, at least in a manner of speaking, but only by about seven years before at most. Simply put, just as the English word “hell” has multiple meanings in the KJB, so does “for ever”

(not to mention "for ever and ever"), and "everlasting," "eternal," and "never" do as well, which is why it's so important to look all of these words up in the original Hebrew and Greek – and also to consider the context of the passage they're used in, of course – to determine what they're actually referring to in a given passage (especially because, if we don't do so, we won't know if they're referring to just one age or to multiple ages in the instances where they're not just referring to a long period of time, or actually literally referring to a never-ending period of time).

Still, even if a King James Bible Believer ignored everything I covered about the Hebrew and Greek words we just looked at, because they only want to consider the English words in the *King James Bible*, the facts about the figurative meaning of the *English* words they're translated into in the KJB should still be pretty obvious based on all the passages I used to discuss them in their original languages, and so it should now be clear to any King James Bible Believers who take the context of Scripture as a whole into consideration when interpreting the Bible and who have made it this far into the book that "everlasting," "eternal," and "for ever" (and even "never") *are* often meant to be read figuratively rather than literally in the KJB (that said, it should *also* be obvious by now, from everything you've read in this book so far, that it actually *is* very important to look at the original Hebrew and Greek that the *King James Bible* was translated from if you want to *truly* understand everything in it).

Of course, as I already alluded to, some Christians reading this will now be thinking that, if the "everlasting" life Jesus spoke about isn't literally never-ending life, wouldn't this mean we won't actually have lives that never end? That isn't the best conclusion to draw from this fact, however, since we don't actually need verses about "everlasting" life to tell us we'll eventually be in a state where we'll never die to begin with, because it isn't figurative verses about "everlasting" life (or life "eternal") which promise us this anyway, but rather it's

those verses about our impending immortality which teach us this fact[649] (and not all Israelites will be made immortal at the time they experience their "everlasting" life, as we've already covered in chapter 1 of this book, but will have to wait until a future time for the quickening of *their* mortal bodies to occur, demonstrating quite clearly that "everlasting" life doesn't literally mean life that can never end, even if they likely won't ever die again since they'll eventually be given immortality as well, although not until quite a long time after they begin their "everlasting" life, as you'll learn a little later). Of course, this all makes particular sense when we consider the fact that, even in less literal translations such as the KJB, Jesus Himself said that having life "eternal" simply figuratively means *"that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,"*[650] which tells us that the term life "eternal" isn't inherently referring to never dying anyway (at least for those He was ministering to during His time walking the earth). At the end of the day, though, while almost no Christian seems to consciously realize it, most of them are *already* interpreting "everlasting" life and life "eternal" in a qualitative, figurative manner rather than in a quantitative, literal manner, since, aside from believing what Jesus said life "eternal" means there, most of them also believe that all humans continue to live on without end after they die anyway, which means that "everlasting" life or life "eternal" wouldn't be required to have life that is literally, or quantitatively, everlasting or eternal (meaning a life that never ends), at least if the doctrine of the immortality of the soul were true, and hence "everlasting" life or life "eternal" can't actually mean to never die, or at least it couldn't if they were correct about the immortality of the soul. Think about it, if we're already "eternal" beings, in the manner that most Christians

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[649] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

[650] And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. — John 17:3

mistakenly believe we are, then life "eternal" or "everlasting" life *can't* literally be talking about how long we continue to exist, since we'd all continue existing without end regardless of whether we have life "eternal" or not, at least according to the most common Christian viewpoint. And so, as I said, most Christians *already* interpret terms like life "eternal" and "everlasting" life in a qualitative manner, and understand that they're both actually simply a figure of speech connected with salvation rather than literally referring to how long one continues to exist, even if they hadn't fully realized it until they read this. (And if our "everlasting" life *is* a figurative term in these less literal Bible translations, it makes sense to conclude that the references to "everlasting" punishment must be figurative in them as well; and they indeed are, as I'll prove a little later in this book too.) But even if you were an Annihilationist who already knew that people don't live on as conscious beings after they die prior to reading this book (which I say because I get the impression that *some* Annihilationists actually *do* believe in a conscious afterlife, even if just a temporary one for those who aren't saved), you still now know that the words we looked at in this chapter don't *have* to literally refer to endless periods of time. And just like any Infernalists reading this, you too are going to *also* learn in some of the upcoming chapters of this book that "everlasting" life simply *can't* be literally referring to never dying as well. We do need to discuss something else in the next chapter first, however, since it's an important foundational truth which is extremely beneficial to understand before getting to the scriptural proofs that everyone will indeed eventually experience Pauline salvation.

Chapter 5: God is still on Plan A

As promised a couple chapters back, it's time to discuss the topics of evil and sin a little more in depth, because in order to understand why everybody is going to end up saved in the end, it's important to also understand a little bit about why we ended up needing that salvation in the first place (although this chapter will only cover the reason from an absolute perspective, but I'll be going into the reason from a relative perspective in the chapter after this one as well, so you can see the complete picture).

As one learns more about the theology of those of us in the body of Christ (not to be confused with the theology of those in the "orthodox" Christian religion who have mistakenly appropriated our title), they're often extremely surprised when they discover our theodicy, meaning what we believe when it comes to resolving what's generally referred to as "the problem of evil." When they learn that we believe God is 100% in control of absolutely everything (because the Bible says that **all** things are indeed of Him,[651] not just *some* things, and that He works **all** things after the counsel of His own will,[652] not just *some* things), and that the evil which exists in the world is included in the "absolutely everything" (meaning the "**all** things") we believe Him to be in control of, they tend to be very shocked at first.

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[651] For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. — Romans 11:36

[652] In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: — Ephesians 1:11

Of course, most people will argue that God *can't* be behind the evil in the world (despite the fact that He actually takes responsibility for the existence of evil,[653] not to mention for the existence of "**all** things," as we already learned) because they believe that would mean He must be evil Himself, or at least that He can't be very good or loving. And if you look at the problem from a "forward in time" perspective (meaning, if you begin with what you assume it would say about God if He actually is behind the evil in the world, especially the evil which exists in the form of unmerited suffering, and work your argument forward from there), it's easy to understand why someone would conclude that God just can't be behind it.

However, if you instead take a look at the problem from a "backwards in time" perspective (meaning you *begin* with the fact that evil, especially evil which includes unmerited suffering, exists in the world, and then work your way backwards to figure out why that is), you'll discover that none of the other possible reasons for the existence of said evil are any better (and that many are actually far worse) when you really break the options down. Because the fact of the matter is, the world *does* contain unmerited suffering – huge amounts of it – which is to say that people suffer for all sorts of reasons that they can't be directly blamed for, such as babies who are born with painful diseases, or people who lose their homes to unforeseeable natural disasters, or even people who lose loved ones to disease or accidents, among the vast number of other kinds of suffering that nobody chooses to endure.

And while it can be argued that "evil" doesn't have an ontological existence in and of itself, as some like to point out, and that the form of evil we experience as suffering technically only takes place in our minds (which means that, if we

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[653] I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. — Isaiah 45:7

didn't care about the results of these events, we wouldn't suffer, and hence evil wouldn't exist in that form), the way our brains are wired means that these catastrophic events being experienced by our minds *do* still cause us suffering, so from that perspective, evil *does* still exist. But beyond that factor, there's also the definition of "evil," which is really just any action (or, I suppose, inaction) which is "harmful," "calamitous," or "causes damage or destruction," as I mentioned previously, and these things not only *do* happen (so from that perspective, evil definitely *does* exist as well), but the Bible says that God Himself does many of these things which bring about destruction[654] and calamity.[655]

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[654] And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. — Genesis 6:17

[655] Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? — Amos 3:6

Even after reading all that, however, many Christians will *still* deny that "**all** things" are indeed of God. And because of this, we have to ask them the question (although, even if they didn't deny what Scripture says, it's still a good question to consider), "What are the possible reasons for the existence of evil, especially in the form of unmerited suffering?" Well, the following nine options are the only reasons I can think of that could possibly answer this question (at least in a universe created by a God who *is* both omnipotent[656] and good[657]/loving,[658] as the Bible claims He is):

1. **God doesn't want this suffering to occur (meaning He doesn't actually enjoy witnessing it happen), but it all happens against His will because He's powerless to stop it.** This option could only be the reason if God isn't actually omnipotent, which basically means He wouldn't actually be Almighty God, so it's not technically a valid option at all, but for the sake of completion, I'm including it in the list anyway.
2. **God does want this suffering to occur (meaning He enjoys witnessing the suffering), which works out well for Him because He would technically be powerless to stop it if He didn't enjoy watching it happen.** This is just another variation of the last option which removes God's omnipotence altogether (while also making God out to not be good and loving either), so it's really just as invalid as the last one and doesn't even deserve consideration, at least if we're assuming that God is Almighty, as well as good and loving, as the Bible says He is, so we'll leave it at that.
3. **God doesn't want this suffering to occur (meaning He doesn't actually enjoy witnessing it happen), nor does He will it to occur (meaning He**

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[656] But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. — Matthew 19:26

[657] And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. — Luke 18:19

[658] Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. — 1 John 4:7-8

isn't actively behind it in any way), and there's no ultimate greater good that comes out of the suffering, but while He has the power to stop it, He decides to just sit back and let it occur naturally anyway. This option maintains God's omnipotence, but it indicates that He isn't very good or loving, since He could have stopped it but chose not to, even though there's no good reason for letting it happen, and He doesn't even want it to occur to begin with.

4. **God doesn't want this suffering to occur (meaning He doesn't actually enjoy witnessing it happen), nor does He will it to occur (meaning He isn't actively behind it in any way), but while it would be within His power to stop it, the suffering (which must be naturally occurring in some way) somehow does work out for the greater good of those who experience it, so He simply sits back and lets it all play out.** This seems even less likely than any of the other options so far, when you really think about it. The idea that every single instance of unmerited suffering (out of the trillions of cases or more of it occurring throughout human history – not to mention throughout the history of animals, who also did nothing to deserve the suffering they go through, and yet they *do* suffer, as anyone who has ever owned a pet can attest) could possibly somehow work out for the greater good of every being who ever experienced it without God ultimately being behind it is statistically impossible (you'd probably have a better chance of winning the lottery jackpot every single week of your life than of this somehow happening to be the case), so this option isn't even worth considering.
5. **God does want this suffering to occur (meaning He enjoys witnessing the suffering), and although He doesn't will it to occur (meaning He isn't actively behind it in any way), and while it would also be within His power to stop it, because the suffering (which must be naturally occurring in some way) somehow not only does work out for the greater good of those who experience it, but also because He enjoys watching us suffer in the meantime, He sits back and lets it all play**

out. This option has the same statistical impossibility as the last one, so it's also not worth considering, but it also has the additional problem of meaning God isn't good or loving, making it doubly untenable.

6. **God does want this suffering to occur (meaning He enjoys witnessing the suffering), although He doesn't will it to occur (meaning He isn't actively behind it in any way), and while there's no ultimate greater good that comes out of the naturally-occurring suffering (other than God getting what He wants), and while He could stop it at any time, He sits back and lets it happen because He enjoys it.** This option would obviously mean that God isn't very loving, so it isn't really an option either if we're trying to maintain that God *is* loving, but I'm including it for the sake of covering all of the possible reasons that suffering might exist in a universe created by God.
7. **God does want this suffering to occur (meaning He enjoys witnessing the suffering), and He even wills some, if not all, of it to occur (meaning He's actively behind some, if not all, of it), and while there's no ultimate greater good that comes out of the suffering for those who are experiencing it, He makes sure that some, if not all, of it occurs because He enjoys witnessing it (I say "some, if not all, of it" because some of it might also be incidental to His actively making it happen, but He must enjoy watching that particular suffering that He didn't cause too, or else He wouldn't let it happen as well).** This option would also mean that God isn't loving, and it definitely *would* mean He's evil, so it isn't really an option at all if we're trying to maintain that God is good and loving and not evil, but, like all the other options that don't really deserve consideration so far, I'm including it for the sake of covering all of the possible reasons that suffering might exist in a universe created by God.
8. **God does want this suffering to occur (meaning He enjoys witnessing the suffering), and He also does will it to occur (meaning He's actively behind it) because He knows there's ultimately a greater good for all of us that will come out of the specific suffering He causes each of us**

to experience. This is getting close to the actual reason, but it would mean that God wouldn't actually be loving, so it can't quite be the answer we're looking for.

9. **God doesn't want this suffering to occur (meaning He doesn't actually enjoy witnessing it happen), but He does will it to occur (meaning He's actively behind it), because He knows there's ultimately a greater good for all of us that will come out of the specific suffering that He causes each of us to experience.**

As far as I can tell, those are the only logical options available to us as to why unmerited suffering occurs in a universe created by God (yes, it's possible there might be some slight variations of the above that I missed, but even if so, I don't think that any of them would be at all tenable without devolving the options into absurdity, and I definitely can't think of any that make sense and are also superior to any of those options, so I'm leaving it at that), and when you look at the suffering that exists in the world beginning from this perspective, it seems to me that option 9 is the only one that actually maintains God's existence, as well as not only His omniscience, omnipotence, and sovereignty, but also His good and loving nature, because it tells us that not only is He behind it, but that He's doing it for reasons that are in all of our best interests (although it's important to point out that option 9 can only be true if it's *also* true that nobody will actually be punished without end, since otherwise the majority of the suffering that people experience doesn't end up working out in their best interests after all).

Of course, when considering the above, or even when trying to think of an alternative option that I might have somehow missed which you do believe is superior to any of the options in that list, it's important to keep in mind that there's little-to-no moral difference between being omniscient and omnipotent yet choosing not to stop the unmerited suffering and actively being behind said suffering in some way, so if you're going to go with an option where God could

have stopped it but chose not to, you'd better have a good reason for that option which does work out for the greater good of all those who are experiencing it.

Now, as for the question of what the greater good actually is that might explain why God did it this way, the fact of the matter is, we could simply say that we don't know, and this would be a perfectly good answer to give (because, since option 9 is the only possible option that makes any sense, we could legitimately just trust that everything *will* work out for the best, even if we don't know how or why that is right now). That said, many of us Pauline Universalists *do* have an answer we believe to be true, one which is often referred to as "the contrast principle." Basically, the conclusion which most of us have come to is that one can't truly and fully appreciate good without first experiencing evil (referring to *all* the various forms of evil, of course, and not just suffering, although suffering is definitely included), and likewise, that we can't fully understand and appreciate God's love without having first experienced a lack of His love, or at least the feeling that we're not experiencing it (similarly, we would argue that we can't fully understand and appreciate His grace without first experiencing sin). If this doesn't seem to make sense at first, think about how one can appreciate the warmth of being indoors in a heated building after being outside in the cold much better than they would be able to if they'd never actually experienced cold weather (or vice versa, with being able to enjoy the cold generated by air conditioning if one lives in a part of the world which is always hot, and how they wouldn't appreciate that relief from the heat if they lived in a part of the world which was always cold). So basically, while it definitely isn't fun in the short term – as we experience the suffering – by the end of the ages we'll all thank God for the suffering He put us through, because we'll all appreciate our existence at that time much more than we could have if we hadn't ever suffered (so, with that in mind, we need to remember that God isn't doing this *to* us, but that He's actually doing this *for* us, even though we might wish He'd stop already in the meantime).

Of course, in response to this, the argument is often made that God could have simply created us with the necessary knowledge of good already present in our brains at our birth, and that He didn't have to make any of us suffer at all (or have to allow any of us to suffer, if you prefer). And while I have to think that He technically *could* have created us with whatever knowledge He wanted us to have already in our brains (He is God, after all), as it turns out, He *didn't* create us with this knowledge already in our heads. And since He didn't, He must have had a good reason for not doing so, which means we have to once again work backwards from that fact and ask ourselves what that reason is. And when you do so, since unmerited suffering still exists, everything I included in the list of options still stands as well.

The fact of the matter is, God didn't seem to create us with *any* conscious knowledge in our brains at the time we're born *at all*, but seems to instead want us to have to learn things as we grow, either through study or through direct experience (or, really, through a combination of both study and experience). As for why God did it this way, there could be multiple reasons, but one possible reason is that, if we didn't actually experience it ourselves, our understanding of both good and evil would simply be academic rather than experiential, and based on the way that God *did* create us (having to learn many things through experience), the most logical conclusion seems to be that experiencing suffering will lead to a better possible outcome or outcomes (with the appreciation of good likely being at least one of these outcomes, if we're right about the contrast principle) than simply having the knowledge already in our heads at the time of our birth could have.

Now, even after reading all of the above, some will *still* assert that, if this is true, then God must be evil, regardless of the points I've made that would suggest otherwise. But in light of the fact that God *didn't* create us fully formed with the knowledge of good and evil already stored in our minds, whether or not the contrast principle *is* why God did things this way, Him willing unmerited

suffering, among other forms of evil, to exist must still be the best possible way to do things. Think about it: Since we *do* exist in a universe where we're born without any knowledge, having to learn things as we grow, if God truly is sovereign, good, and loving, then the sort of universe we currently exist in, including all its suffering (merited or otherwise), *must* result in the best possible outcome for us, meaning the best possible outcome for all of us *must come* from living in a universe where we begin knowing nothing. And since it exists, this would also have to mean that evil and suffering are unavoidable in *this particular* sort of universe. Of course, the contrast principle could still potentially be a beneficial side effect of this sort of universe as well – or could perhaps be a required principle, based on the fact that the best possible way for us to get to the best possible outcome is to live in a universe of growth and learning and processes and suffering rather than one where we come into existence fully formed with all the knowledge we need already in our brains and with no suffering – but either way, since this is the way the universe is, and since we're assuming that God indeed *is* sovereign, good, and loving, because those nine options I listed are still the only logical possible reasons for the existence of unmerited suffering (outside of the possibility of God simply not existing, of course, but I'm writing about "the problem of evil" from within a theistic framework here), I have to indeed conclude that we've now determined this assumption of theirs – that God must be evil if He's actually behind this – *must* be incorrect (and, in fact, is also somewhat blasphemous) and that it's time for them to discard that idea. Because when we look at it from the "backwards in time" perspective, they're still stuck with those nine options and *only* those nine options, and so they'll have to decide which of them they want to believe.

And this is why those of us in the body of Christ are able to understand that God can cause (or create) evil without being evil, as long as the evil exists for good reasons (basically, we believe that the ends justify the means, at least when it comes to God's actions). As I already mentioned, "evil" really just means "calamity" or "destruction" (or "that which causes suffering," as I've been using

the term in this portion of the book) anyway, and we already know that evil can be done to serve a greater purpose. And the potential "contrast principle" isn't the only good purpose it can be done for. As another such example (one which might be more applicable to humans right now), one could amputate a gangrenous limb – causing much future suffering due to the loss of the limb, unmerited suffering even, if the patient didn't do anything to cause the infection, which is the exact form of evil we've just been discussing – in order to keep it from spreading, ultimately saving the life of the patient. This is yet another proof that evil *can* be done to bring about a good outcome, and that doing or causing evil definitely doesn't mean that the one *doing* evil necessarily *is* evil (meaning they aren't necessarily a malicious being who performs these acts simply for the sake of causing harm, which is what an *actually* evil person would be), or even that evil acts are always immoral (and for those who would insist that this action isn't evil because it saves the patient's life, it still involves causing damage to a part of the patient's body, and causing suffering to the patient, so it still falls under the – or at least *a* – definition of "evil"). Now, some people, upon hearing this example, have claimed that this idea makes God out to be abusive, insisting this would mean that God was thinking something along the lines of, "Healing is so inherently great and desirable that I will get everyone in the world sick just so that I can eventually heal them," to which I would first respond by saying that bringing God down to a human level there – similar to the way Job did – isn't necessarily the wisest way to go, but also that, based on the fact that we *do* go through unmerited suffering, in light of the fact that the nine options I listed still remain the only options, it might be time for them to accept that perhaps it could be true that it *is* better for us to have experienced both the "sickness" and the "healing" than to not have experienced them, and that this isn't actually abusive at all, since it ultimately works out in our best possible interest; and, in fact, that it would really be *less* loving of God to *not* have done so.

And with all that in mind, I maintain that this solution to the problem of evil is really the only possible option, at least if you don't want to go with atheism as the reason behind the unmerited suffering that we all experience at one point or another in our lives (which is technically a tenth option for why unmerited suffering might exist, and you're free to believe that if you prefer, but that option gives us far less hope than option 9 does – in fact it offers no real hope that our suffering has any meaning at all – so I'm sticking with option number 9 because I prefer an option that provides us all a promise of a better future, and also makes the suffering we all go through actually have meaning). However, if you think you *can* come up with another option that you believe I missed, one which actually *does* work as a better theodicy than option 9, please do let me know (so far nobody I've asked for a better option from has even tried to do so, though).

That said, it isn't just evil that God is responsible for. If Scripture is to be believed, He's ultimately responsible for "**all** things" (at least from an absolute perspective), which would also have to include sin too (unless sin somehow doesn't fall under the category of "**all** things"). This idea can seem confusing to most people when they first hear it, because it would seem logical that God doesn't want us to sin, and in fact He seems to tell people not to do so in Scripture. Well, the truth is, He *doesn't* want us to sin, and He does indeed tell people not to. But at the same time, He still wills us to sin. This might sound like a contradiction at first, but it's really not. Just as with the nine options I provided for solving "the problem of evil," it comes down to understanding the difference between God *wanting* something to happen (in the sense of enjoying something that might occur) and *willing* something to happen (in the sense of allowing, or even causing, something to take place – something He doesn't necessarily enjoy happening, but knows needs to happen in order to bring about an even more desired outcome than would happen if it didn't take place).

As an example, someone might not *want* to go to work on a given day, because they might prefer to just lay in bed all day, but they can still *will* themselves to go to work if they need to earn money to pay their bills. Simply put, someone (even God) can will themselves to do something they take no pleasure in and would prefer not to do if they recognize that the end result of doing that thing will be better than not having done it, as we just discussed. Some of you are now thinking, that's all well and good, as far as what God "wants" versus what He "wills" goes, but what about His commandments? Isn't it God's will that humans obey them, meaning that we don't sin? Well, this comes down to not recognizing another difference, which is the difference between His absolute will and His relative will (or, to put it another way, the difference between His preceptive will[659] and His providential will[660]), meaning the difference between His public commandments (or precepts[661]) and His hidden intentions (or plans). Not recognizing the difference between these two different types of "wills" leads many Christians to believe that God never intended for people (beginning with Adam) to disobey Him in the first place, when the truth is that He secretly intended for people to rebel against His commandments all along.

A great example of this is His commandment against murder.[662] God made murder a sin, yet He had the murder of Christ planned[663] from the foundation

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659 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. — Matthew 7:21

660 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: — Ephesians 1:11

661 *The Sovereignty of God* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2015/09/the-sovereignty-of-god.html

662 Thou shalt not kill. — Exodus 20:13

663 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: — Acts 2:23

of the world,[664] knowing full well when He gave the commandment against murder that without it there would be no salvation for anyone (and I'm sure it should go without saying that God didn't actually enjoy seeing His Son tortured and killed, but He still *willed* it to happen because He knew it *had* to happen in order to accomplish His purposes[665] – and before anyone brings up Isaiah 53:10,[666] that's obviously a very figurative verse referring to God considering Jesus' suffering and death to be a satisfactory ransom for sin,[667] since there's no way God would literally take joy in watching His Son be tortured for no reason other than the sake of taking pleasure in watching it happen, as though He's some sort of sadist, because that definitely *would* make Him evil if that was the case).

A less obvious, yet no less helpful, example (and one which explains how it all began in the first place) would be His commandment to Adam and Eve to avoid eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When we consider the facts – that while He told them not to eat of it,[668] He all the while placed the tree right in the centre of the garden with nothing to make it difficult to get at (when He didn't have to place it in the garden, or even anywhere on the planet, at all if He really didn't want anyone to sin), made it look like good food and

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[664] And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. — Revelation 13:8

[665] Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. — Luke 22:42

[666] Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. — Isaiah 53:10

[667] He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. — Isaiah 53:11

[668] And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. — Genesis 2:16-17

pleasant to the eyes and to be desired to make one wise,[669] and even placed the serpent right there to tempt them (since nobody is anywhere that God didn't specifically place them; and remember, being both omniscient and omnipotent and then allowing either something to happen or someone to be in a specific location is no different, morally speaking, than directly causing it or placing them there – although the story of Micaiah tells us that God *does* send spiritual

[669] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. — Genesis 3:6

beings to lead people astray in order to complete His purposes anyway,[670] not to

[670] And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to day. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah. And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand. And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak. So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord? And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee. But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee? And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. — 1 Kings 22:1-37

mention Him using Satan to tempt David,[671] as we've already discussed a couple times now – and for those who want to insist that God simply *permitted* Satan to tempt David, there's nothing in the passages which even *imply* that it was simply God *allowing* its occurrence rather than outright *arranging* it[672]), not to mention the fact that, without eating it, humanity would not only never understand evil but would never truly understand the contrasting goodness either[673] (it wasn't called just "the tree of the knowledge of evil," it was called "the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil") – it becomes obvious that God actually planned for them to disobey Him so that death and sin could enter the world (and, again, had already intended to have His Son killed prior to this, which would be a strange thing to intend if He didn't also intend for sin and death to exist; God doesn't make contingency plans – each plan He makes is something that He fully intends to take place and that will indeed happen, so the death of His Son wasn't just something He had in mind to do *if* humanity happened to sin, but was instead a plan He fully intended to implement long *before* Adam ever sinned, and in fact the reason Adam sinned was so that humanity would be mortal in order that God could implement His plan to have His Son crucified).

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[671] And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. — 1 Chronicles 21:1

[672] And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. — 2 Samuel 24:1

[673] For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. — Genesis 3:5

And, of course, a large part of the reason He even gave Israel the Mosaic law in the first place[674] was so that they would sin all the more.[675] It might seem hard to believe, and some even try to deny it by making the assertion – one which is not only found nowhere in Scripture but which is actually contradicted by it – that "God is not the author of sin," but the Bible actually tells us that God has not only purposely locked up His human creation in unbelief,[676] but that He has also purposely locked us up in sin,[677] in vanity, and in corruption[678] (meaning in decay, humiliation, and death), all in order that He can later set us all free (and He can't free us if we aren't first locked up).

This means that, while sin is still sinful, it's not something that surprised God, or even something that He didn't actually secretly intend to come into existence in the first place (again, for the purpose of revealing goodness and grace –

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[674] For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. — Romans 7:5-11

[675] Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: — Romans 5:20

[676] For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. — Romans 11:32

[677] But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. — Galatians 3:22

[678] For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. — Romans 8:20-21

since, again, without evil we could never truly appreciate goodness, and without sin we could never truly grasp and appreciate God's grace; contrast is often necessary to fully comprehend things, as we've already learned, and knowing this helps us come to understand that the existence of sin is actually just as necessary as the existence of evil is in order for God to complete all His purposes).

Of course, some Christians will now be tempted to quote what James wrote, saying, *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."*[679] And it is true, God doesn't directly tempt anyone to sin. But we're talking about what God does from an absolute perspective here, in order to make sure that we're not only tempted to sin but that we do indeed sometimes give in to that temptation, and not about the temptation itself (which happens only from a relative perspective). And if you believe that God wouldn't ever do something from an absolute perspective to cause someone to be tempted, you might need to read Matthew 4:1 a little more carefully[680] (not to mention re-read all the other passages we just looked at too).

I should probably add, knowing the meaning of the word "sin" might help make what I'm saying seem a little less blasphemous to those reading this who are horrified by the idea of the necessity of the existence of sin. You see, the Hebrew verb חָטָא/"khaw-taw'," along with its Greek translation of ἁμαρτάνω/ "ham-ar-tan'-o," which we often translate as "sin" in English (with the noun versions being חַטָּאָת/"khat-taw-aw'" and ἁμαρτία/"ham-ar-tee'-ah," respectively),

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[679] Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. — James 1:13-14

[680] Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. — Matthew 4:1

is a word that basically means "miss" (or “fail to do something perfectly”) – for example, not hitting a target with a stone thrown from a sling – as the book of Judges demonstrated when it mentioned seven-hundred lefthanded men who "could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss,"[681] with the word "miss" in that verse being the same Hebrew word חָטָא translated as "sin" in other passages, which is why the term “sin” is often described idiomatically as “missing the mark” (and yes, this word can have other meanings too, such as “offence” or “transgression,” but failing to do something perfectly, which missing the mark *is* an apt idiom for, is its most important meaning when it comes to describing what a sinful action actually is, since even a transgression is a failure to follow a law perfectly – missing the mark when it comes to the law, in other words, at least as far as the Israel of God goes; although the body of Christ isn’t under the law, so that legal definition doesn’t work quite as well for us, which is why “missing the mark” regarding perfection in general is still the best way to simply describe what sin is for us). So yes, Adam missed the mark (sinned) by failing to avoid eating the forbidden fruit, but God hit the bullseye perfectly when Adam missed the mark because Adam’s sin was His plan for Adam from the beginning, which means that even though God is responsible for sin from an absolute perspective, He didn't sin by ultimately being behind it all because He didn't miss the mark Himself at all, since sin and death entering the world through Adam’s sin *was* His intended "mark" all along (and for those who insist that God would never give anyone a rule that He actually intended for them to break, if His plan *was* for Adam to sin, He *had* to make a rule for Adam to break or else Adam couldn’t have fulfilled His intention that sin enter the world, although Romans 5:20 also tells us God absolutely *would* do this anyway). This also means that, if Adam *hadn’t* sinned, *God* would then have been the sinner instead, because it would mean He had failed to accomplish His intended goal of sin entering the world – and for those who want to insist that God’s intended

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[681] Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss. — Judges 20:16

goal was a world where humanity never sinned, that would also make God a sinner because Adam *did* sin, which means that God would have also missed the mark if that sin-free world was *actually* His intended mark. And if His plan was simply to let Adam do whatever he wanted and to simply sit back and watch what happens, as some seem to believe, having no particular intended goal for the world at all, and the death of Christ simply being His contingency plan to use if Adam did happen to sin, that would still make God culpable for both the existence of sin and evil (since the nine options we just went over would be just as applicable here, considering the fact that God is omniscient and would have known even before He created the world that it would definitely happen, but also considering the fact that an omniscient, omnipotent being who doesn't stop evil from coming into existence – which God would have known would be the end result of sin coming into existence – is just as morally responsible as said being would be if they had directly caused it anyway), but His sovereignty would then also be a lie, as would be all the passages of Scripture that tell us He's completely in control and that **all** is of Him.

And Scripture *does* tell us that He's completely in control. In fact, the complete sovereignty of God and His purposes for creation from before it all began is one of the most important factors in Scripture, and is taught throughout the Bible. And while most Christians would claim to believe in His sovereignty, not very many actually do, because very few of them actually believe He has a good reason for causing absolutely everything that has happened in creation, and that He has had very specific plans for the ages (and for every one of the people living in each age) from the very beginning. Instead of knowing (and glorifying) God as God,[682] which would involve them understanding that He *is* completely in control, placing everything where He intends it to be and subjecting **all** to His will, nearly all Christians believe that God really hoped Adam wouldn't actually sin (even though He would have known before creating Adam that he *would* sin,

[682] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. — Romans 1:21

making this idea completely nonsensical and hence not worth considering), but that God is now on Plan B because Adam did end up sinning. They just don't believe Paul when he wrote in Ephesians 1:11 that God works **all** things after the counsel of His own will, not just *some* things. But the fact is that He really does, which means that everything about creation – be it good and evil, righteousness and sin, pleasure and suffering, faith and unbelief, and even the crucifixion[683] and the devil (who was created the way he is today,[684] contrary to popular opinion, since he's been a murderer,[685] and, to put it simply, a sinner, at least in his heart, from his very beginning,[686] for the purpose of getting Adam to sin and for bringing sin and evil into the world in general[687]) – was all intended by God from before the beginning of creation. And this isn't just about God being able to see the future and then accounting for it in His plans either, because while God is indeed able to see the future, He also *declares* what is going to be done from the beginning, and what He intends to be done *will* be done.[688] Which means that if God's intended "mark" truly was a universe without any evil or sin, no evil or sin could have possibly ever occurred without God becoming a

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[683] But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. — 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

[684] By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. — Job 26:13

[685] Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. — John 8:44

[686] He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. — 1 John 3:8

[687] Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. — Isaiah 54:16

[688] Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: — Isaiah 46:10

sinner Himself. To put it simply, everything that *has* happened and *will* happen occurs exactly as God planned it, because God is still on Plan A.

Of course, the idea that God planned *everything* makes many people extremely uncomfortable for another reason, which is that they really dislike the idea of predestination in general, since they just don't like the idea that we humans aren't ultimately responsible for our own actions. And so, in order to try to deny the biblical concept of predestination, they like to say things along the lines of, "God doesn't want robots," and claim that God gave us something called "free will." These people don't understand that, aside from being entirely unscriptural, "free will" is a complete impossibility from a purely logical and scientific perspective as well, and that it can't actually exist in reality at all.

You see, while everyone agrees that we can make voluntary choices, most people who teach the importance of "free will" also believe that these voluntary choices can't be predetermined ahead of time in any way. In fact, most people simply assume that the existence of our ability to make choices proves that we must have "free will," because they conflate that ability to make choices with "free will," but this isn't what the term "free will" means at all. The reason so many people make this mistake is because relatively few people have ever taken the time to try to figure out what the term *actually* even means in the first place (not to mention try to figure out why we make the choices we do). But those who have taken the time to determine the meaning of the term have concluded that it *has* to mean "a choice which is independent of any cause" rather than simply "a choice" in and of itself. This is because they realize A) that a choice is simply the act of selecting between two or more existing options (regardless of whether the selection that's made was predetermined or not), which means that the ability to make choices simply *can't* be the definition of "free will," and B) that if a choice one makes has *any* cause at all, it means the choice was predetermined by that cause, since that's what it means to be subject to causality – and hence determinism – meaning the law of cause and effect. And

so, because they don't like the concepts of either predestination *or* natural determinism, they insist (without any actual proof) that we *must* have the ability to make choices which are independent of any cause (and they give this supposed ability the label of "free will"). This assertion of theirs ignores reality entirely, however, because even if our choices weren't predestined by influences outside the sphere of the "physical" universe (such as by God Himself[689]), every choice we make would then *still* have to be predetermined by our nurture and/or nature (meaning our life experiences and/or genetics). You see, while it might even *feel* to some people like our choices are independent of any cause, if a choice truly was (or even could be) uncaused, it would mean the choice one made was actually completely random (which I doubt any Christian would think is better than being predetermined). The bottom line is that, because an event (even an event such as making a selection between two or more available options) has to either have a cause or not have a cause, there's no way for any event (and hence no way for any choice we make) to be anything other than caused or uncaused (meaning anything other than predetermined or random), or at least nobody has ever been able to provide a third option that works within the limits of reality and logic (although, if you disagree, please explain what that third option is), which is why "free will" is *actually* an entirely meaningless term altogether, in that it's a word used to refer to something that can't actually even exist (saying that "free will" exists is like saying that a "fillirrary" exists, with the word "fillirrary," which I just made up, being defined as "a circle with three corners"; regardless of how badly someone wants a "fillirrary" to exist, the word is still defining a meaningless and impossible object, and hence is ultimately a meaningless term), unless perhaps one is simply using it as a synonym for "random chance" (although I personally don't even believe in the existence of true "randomness," because I believe that even when it comes to our lack of ability to predict certain things when it comes to quantum mechanics – such as how long it will take for a single unstable atom

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[689] A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps. — Proverbs 16:9

placed in a controlled environment to decay, for example, which is something we can't predict under those circumstances, but can instead only determine the probability of it occurring within a given time – that God is ultimately still behind even those seemingly random events).

And yes, I am aware that the term *"freewill offering"* is used in many Bible translations, including the KJB,[690] but this *"freewill offering"* isn't the same thing as the so-called "free will" choices we've been discussing here. "Free will" (with a space between the two words), as we've already discussed, refers to a choice supposedly being made without being subject to causality, while the Hebrew term נְדָבָה/"ned-aw-baw'" that *"freewill offering"* is translated from in the Bible simply refers to a voluntary offering which wasn't required by God (as opposed to the types of offerings which *were* required, or commanded to be given, by God), as we can see from the fact that the same word is also translated as *"voluntary offering,"*[691] among other things,[692] in various other parts of the KJB. Now, we've already determined that any choice one voluntarily makes can only be caused or uncaused (meaning either predetermined or random), which means that the term "freewill" in the Bible simply *can't* have any connection to a supposed "free will" choice (if such a thing could even exist in the first place) unless you believe the performing of the *required* sacrifices and offerings (the ones that *weren't* referred to as a *"freewill offering"*) actually *was* predestined by

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[690] Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the Lord for a burnt offering; — Leviticus 22:18

[691] But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten: — Leviticus 7:16

[692] The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses. — Exodus 35:29

God to be performed by those who chose to do so, meaning they had no ability to choose of their own supposed "free will" to *not* perform *those* particular sacrifices and offerings. And if you don't want to believe that, then it should be obvious that the term "freewill" should never be conflated with the meaningless term "free will." (Which also means that, if someone wants to claim we have "freewill," I can technically agree with them, because it just means we have the ability to make voluntary choices; but since those voluntary choices are still predetermined, we don't have "free will," despite having "freewill.")

Bottom line, the facts we've covered prove that the idea of "free will" is not only an unbiblical term, but that the idea really makes no logical sense to begin with. And yet, despite these facts, some people *still* try to insist that a predetermined choice can't actually be a real choice at all, based on the fact that it was predetermined. But as I already mentioned, and as everyone I've ever discussed this topic with in the past agreed is the case at the time I brought it up, "making a choice" can indeed be simply defined as the act of selecting between two or more existing options, and this completely refutes the idea that a predetermined choice can't be an actual choice. I mean, let's break it down logically. If you were walking down a path and came to a fork in the road in front of you, forcing you to select one of two options – in the sense that you have to decide which of those two paths to walk down if you want to continue moving forward – and you selected one of the two paths and walked down it (regardless of which one you selected), based on the definition of "making a choice" that we just covered (which was "selecting between two or more existing options"), you'd have to agree that an option was indeed selected because you're now walking down one of the two paths, and hence a choice was indeed made. And so, if I could then somehow convince you that the option you selected *was* predetermined in some manner ahead of time (perhaps by someone else using some form of mind control to cause you to choose a specific path), you'd have to admit that an option was still selected (based on the fact that you're now partway down the selected path), which means that, by

definition, a choice was still made regardless of *why* it was made. So even *without* "free will," and *with* predestination (or determinism), choices are still choices. Simply put, choice and determinism (or choice and predestination) are not mutually exclusive, and hence the definition of "free will" *can't* simply be "the ability to make a choice." (Some people also go even further by insisting that love would be impossible without "free will," but that's just as ridiculous a claim since the feeling we call "love" would still be something we felt whether or not we were predetermined to experience that feeling, because we still feel it regardless of the cause; and for those who understand that "love" can also be an action or a choice, whatever loving actions one chooses to perform for those we perform them for would still have taken place regardless of the cause of said action as well – and remember, we've already determined that the ability to make a choice is *not* the definition of "free will," and this would apply to loving choices as well – love still exists even though "free will" doesn't.)

When most Christians refer to "free will," however, what they're almost always really getting at is that they believe the fault for not choosing to believe and/or do the same things as them when it comes to matters of salvation lies entirely with the one making the choice, and that the choice couldn't possibly have been predetermined in any way whatsoever (and this goes for their views on why one sins in the first place as well, of course). There are other reasons too (such as self-righteousness and pride), but one of the big reasons many Christians want to insist that "free will" exists is to make sure that God doesn't receive any of the blame for a person's refusal to choose to "get saved," and to make sure it's clear that the sinner in question is entirely to blame for whatever negative consequences this might result in (to put it simply, it's largely because they want to make sure that God is absolved of any responsibility for someone who doesn't choose to "get saved" ending up suffering without end in the unscriptural version of the lake of fire they tend to believe in – and if Infernalism *were* at all possible, I can understand why someone *would* want to absolve God of this responsibility; although, as you'll discover in the next

chapter, our salvation ultimately isn't even based on any choices *we* make at all – and honestly, we should be extremely thankful for that fact, based on just how bad the decision-making ability that God gave to most humans really is).

Since everything has to have a cause, however (because otherwise the thing happening would be uncaused, or random), the questions that really matter when discussing the topic of who deserves the credit or blame for a particular choice are:

1) What is the cause of the choices that people make?

2) Taking into account all the variables that were present at the precise moment a choice was made, could the person making that choice have actually made a choice other than the one they did; and, if so, how, as well as *why* would they have chosen differently if they could have?

In discussions with Christians on this topic, when asked those very questions, they'll often deflect by saying things along the lines of, "Nothing causes the choice except for the chooser." Of course, even if this non-answer was in any way meaningful, or was even demonstrably true at all, in and of itself (which it certainly isn't; it's really nothing more than a confused and nonsensical assumption with no foundation, but one which they're forced to believe – pun intended – in order to continue holding on to the idea of "free will"), it tells us absolutely nothing about what really matters, which is *why* a particular choice is made, and it also ignores the second question altogether (on purpose, I'm fairly certain, even if just on a subconscious level, likely in order to avoid thinking about the topic from this perspective so that they couldn't possibly end up discovering that they might actually be wrong about it).

But even if we were to ignore all the passages in Scripture that tell us God is ultimately responsible for everything, and put the credit and blame for choices

entirely on "the chooser" instead, we'd then have to ask, "What is a chooser?" Well, a "chooser" is simply a person whose brain selects between available options, and one's brain is made up of (among other things) neural connections which are wired differently in each person by a combination of their life experiences and their genetics (their nurture and nature, in other words). The different layouts of the neural networks in each of our brains results in different choices made by each of us (because it's the specific neural network in each of our brains that decides which choices we each make), and none of us gets to choose the way our brains are wired, because we didn't get to choose the life experiences and genetics that caused our brains to be wired the way they are at the time it selects an option or options. This means that at the end of the day, if God didn't interfere, or isn't actually the one who decided what our life experiences and our genetics would be in the first place, it would ultimately simply be our life experiences and our genetics that determine what choices we make, which means that our choices would all be predetermined by our nurture and nature, and that we would still have no "free will" anyway. And so the answer to the question of whether, in a hypothetical parallel universe – with every particle and wave being in the *exact* same location and state in that universe as they existed in when a specific choice was made in our universe, including the particles that the atoms which make up the wiring of the brain of the person making the choice consist of – they could have chosen something different has to be, "No, they couldn't have." But if you believe they could have, I'd like to know not only *how* they possibly *could* have, but also *why* they *would* have (meaning, what would be different in this hypothetical parallel universe, which was 100% identical to ours in every way up until the point they selected the option they did, that would result in them selecting a different option from the one they did in our universe).

Although there's no scriptural or logical reason to do so, at this point some will try to avoid these facts by claiming that our mind isn't actually generated by our brain, but instead somehow exists on a deeper, "spiritual" level (some will also

get into pseudo-scientific talk about quantum realities as well, although I can guarantee you that few to none of them have any idea how quantum mechanics actually works, and that they've almost certainly only brought this concept up based on claims they've heard other people make – people who likely know just as little about science as they probably do). The problem is, aside from the fact that this is clearly both unscientific and unscriptural (as we already learned in an earlier chapter, human consciousness, or our "soul," is generated by an unconscious spirit powering a biological brain, and can't exist separately from a living human body), even if this idea somehow were true, it couldn't actually help support their ideas so much as simply push the problem back a level. You see, a supposedly "spiritual mind," whatever that's supposed to actually be, would still have to be "made" out of something (out of whatever it is that spirit, or whatever it is they're claiming a mind comes from, consists of) and would still have to make choices based on what *its* "neurological structure," so to speak, would then be made up of, and so the questions of why a particular option was selected over another, and whether another option could have actually been selected instead (and why it wasn't), are still the relevant questions that need to be answered, even if this could somehow be the case. Basically, to simply stop at "the chooser" without finding out what "the chooser" consists of and why "the chooser" selects the particular options they do is essentially to say that a specific "chooser" is simply either naturally good or naturally bad (or perhaps naturally intelligent and/or wise, or naturally unintelligent and/or foolish), although even that right there would also prove what I'm saying here, since they'd then just be doing what their nature causes them to do anyway.

Some Christians (especially when discussing the topic of "free will" when it comes to salvation) have also said things like, "It isn't about the ability to choose something else, but about the inner motives of the heart. Some people choose to not get saved because they are lovers of themselves and not of God. They don't want to let go of their way of life, and so they don't want to believe and be

saved. It's a choice that reflects the inner motives of the person." This assertion is actually sort of close to the truth because, yes, most people *do* prefer to love themselves over God. However, aside from the fact that our salvation (at least the type of salvation Paul taught about) has nothing to do with our actions or our way or life in the first place, this assertion doesn't help their arguments anyway, because all it does is tell us the nature of "the chooser" while ignoring the question of *why* the nature of "the chooser" is what it is, meaning why "the chooser's" biological brain – or even their supposed "spiritual mind," if you prefer to believe in such things – is "wired" the way it is at the time an option is selected. And since that "wiring" is ultimately responsible for any choices "the chooser" makes (which it has to be, unless you can provide another cause that works within the realm of reality), the ultimate blame (again, presuming God doesn't interfere) would then be on that particular selfish and/or evil nature (meaning the evil "wiring" of their brain, be it a "spiritual" or physical brain, or even a combination of both) that they weren't even responsible for having in the first place. And if it really does come down to just that nature, it means they still couldn't have ever made any other choices than the ones they did since that would go against their nature, which means any choice was ultimately predetermined by that preexisting selfish and/or evil nature which they had no say in being given to them, because said nature (meaning said evil "wiring" of their brain which resulted in said choice) was generated by their life experiences and genetics. So really, this argument actually helps prove that "free will" would be impossible even if God *wasn't* predetermining everything.

On a somewhat related note, I've also heard some Christians suggest that, while God doesn't predetermine everything Himself by manipulating every particle in existence in order to control every detail of the universe that way (including the particles that the brains which make our decisions ultimately consist of), He still gets all of His will fulfilled because He's smart enough to be able to manipulate events within the universe to ensure people do His will. How He'd do this without controlling the very particles that make up the physical universe, I'm

not sure (perhaps He only manipulates certain particles, to make sure certain things happen, but stops short of controlling the particles that ultimately make up the human brain), but even if He isn't directly controlling the particles that ultimately make up the human brain, if He's controlling enough details in the rest of the universe to ensure His will is done, He'd still technically be manipulating the brain, even if only from the outside, and if His will ends up being done (as the people who suggest this idea believe happens), then He's still making sure that the brain of the person making the choice does end up making the choice He wants them to make (since otherwise His will wouldn't end up getting fulfilled). And so the end result of this idea is *still* predestination by God, because regardless of how the action that God wants completed ends up happening (whether it be via direct control of the brain or via manipulation based on events happening externally to the brain), the action would still end up happening based on God's control, and hence the action was still predetermined by God (and the facts about physical determinism that we've already discussed when it comes to our nurture and nature would all still be true regardless of whether this was the case or not anyway).

I've also heard some Christians – when that first question about the cause of the choices people make is asked in regards to why some people don't choose to get saved – simply reply saying, "It's because they would not," thinking that mangling Jesus' statement in Matthew 23:37[693] somehow answers this question. They don't seem to realize that they're giving an answer to an entirely *different* question there, however, while ignoring the actual question altogether. "They would not" is an answer to the question, "Would they or would they not choose to get saved?", but it doesn't answer the question, "*Why* would they not choose to get saved?" We already know that "they would not," since we already know they haven't (which is why we asked the question in the first place), but we still

[693] O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! — Matthew 23:37

want to know *why* they would not, and to simply say, "It's because they would not," is a circular answer which doesn't answer the *actual* question at all (to put it another way, simply restating *what* happened isn't an explanation of *why* what happened actually happened any more than the statement, *"The ingredients,"* is an answer to the question of, *"What ingredients are in chocolate chip cookies?"*). Of course, logic and linguistics aren't a particular strength of the kind of people who give this sort of answer, so some of them might not even realize just how much of a non-answer this is, but I suspect most of them are aware that they're simply evading the question because they want to avoid the actual answer.

This all means that there are two options and only two options, which are that either A) our choices are predetermined – by one's nurture and/or nature, and, perhaps, by outside influences such as God – or B) our choices are random. As I already said, nobody has ever been able to provide me with a third option, and until they do, those remain the only two options available for us to work with (although, as I said, I don't even believe that the second option is actually possible either, but because I personally can't scientifically prove that God is the hidden variable behind quantum events, and also because, even if *true* randomness *doesn't* exist, quantum mechanics still provides us with events which are *effectively* random due to being unable to predict them precisely, so I included it anyway), which means that even though we *do* all have a will, our wills can't be said to be free (particularly before we're saved – can a slave to sin[694] be said to be free?), and so it's time to recognize that "free will" is not only a completely illogical and unscientific concept, but that it's entirely unscriptural as well, which means that it's time to throw the idea away and accept that God really *is* fully in control. And don't worry, this doesn't mean we're robots.

[694] For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. — Romans 6:20

Because, considering the fact that the Bible refers to us as merely clay in God's hands,[695] well, calling us robots would actually be giving us too much credit.

[695] Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? — Romans 9:19-21

Chapter 6: The Saviour of all men

While we now know from what we learned in some of the previous chapters that no humans are going to suffer consciously in any of the biblical "hells" as a form of judgement (at least not for any longer than it takes to die a second time in the lake of fire, presuming one doesn't die before being cast into the particular "hell" that the lake of fire is going to be located in), you're probably still asking what the scriptural proof that everyone will eventually be saved is (and if you haven't read those chapters yet, go read them – as well as the introduction – first, because one is required to be familiar with the information contained in those chapters in order to fully understand what I'm going to say in the remaining chapters). Well, the answer to that question is found all throughout Paul's epistles (and, I should add for those reading this who might already be Universalists, is found *only* in Paul's epistles, at least when it comes to Pauline salvation, which is ultimately immortality, and hence sinlessness), where he taught that everyone will indeed eventually experience that type of salvation. Before we get into the passages proving this, however, I have to first remind you that – as we learned in the first chapter of this book – one of the biggest causes of misinterpretations of Scripture regarding salvation is a lack of understanding of the fact that there are different types of salvation referred to in Scripture, and this doesn't only apply to the difference between the types of salvation connected with the Gospel of the Kingdom vs Paul's Gospel, but it also applies to the fact that there are different types of salvation *in connection with Paul's Gospel itself*. As you'll learn while reading this chapter, there *have* to be two types of salvation in connection with Paul's Gospel, because, while he taught that *everyone* will be saved, he *also*

taught that only believers will be saved, which means that there *has* to be a general salvation which *everyone* experiences because of his Gospel – this is the type of salvation I also refer to as Pauline salvation: immortality, and hence sinlessness, in other words – as well as a special type of salvation connected with his Gospel which only *a relative few* will experience, in order for Scripture to not contradict itself (and it's very important that you pay close attention to the wording of a specific passage in order to determine which of those types of salvation Paul is referring to in it, or else you *will* walk away extremely confused).

Of course, I'm sure you're wondering what those passages are, so I'm going to go over a number of them in this chapter, beginning with Paul's Gospel itself, which teaches us this (and that's really all the proof one should need, although there are *lots* of other passages we'll look at too, of course). In fact, not only does the *"Christ died for our sins"* element of his Gospel teach this, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 also tells us that someone who believes in never-ending punishment can't actually be a member of the body of Christ, because they don't believe that sin has been dealt with, once and for all, through Christ's death for our sins (even if perhaps only proleptically at present, meaning the penalty for sin is now guaranteed to be eliminated in the future for anyone for whose sins Christ died, which is everyone, as I'll demonstrate in this chapter), and hence hasn't truly believed Paul's Gospel (if anyone believes that a person can be punished without end because of their sins, they haven't understood what it means that *"Christ died for our sins,"* and you can't truly believe something if you don't actually understand its meaning – at the very least, one has to actually believe that everyone will eventually experience general salvation because of what Christ accomplished in order to enjoy the special salvation, even if they don't fully understand all the ramifications of the statement that *"Christ died for our sins"* which we'll be discussing shortly).

On top of that, though, it also means that someone who thinks a person can only be saved by choosing to believe (and/or choosing to do) something specific isn't in the body of Christ either, because it isn't our belief (or any of our actions) that ultimately saves us, but rather it's simply Christ's death for our sins, along with His subsequent burial and resurrection on the third day, that saves us (just in case it isn't obvious, I'm referring specifically to the general sort of salvation which applies to everyone when I discuss verses 3-4 of 1 Corinthians 15, and not to the special "eternal" life (meaning age-pertaining life) type of salvation referred to in verses 1-2 which only a relative few – those who truly believe what Paul's Gospel actually means – will get to enjoy; when it comes to this passage, it's important to keep in mind that *both* types of salvation are actually being discussed in those four verses). To insist that one has to choose to believe something specific in order to experience the general salvation which results from what he said happened in verses 3 and 4 is putting the cart before the horse, since faith, meaning belief and trust, in what Christ accomplished is the cart bringing us into the special "eternal" life form of salvation written about in verses 1 and 2 (known as membership in the body of Christ, which involves enjoying the general salvation – meaning getting quickened and being made fully sinless – earlier than everyone else, among other special rewards and "inheritances," and which, again, is a form of salvation that not everyone will experience), while the general salvation of all humanity because of Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third day, is the horse.

I should say, while "the salvation of all humanity" *isn't*, strictly speaking, Paul's Gospel *itself* – since Paul's Gospel is technically just those combined elements that he said he taught the Corinthians (Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection on the third day) – because the general salvation of all humanity is *the end result* of Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection on the third day, **it means that the salvation of all humanity *because of what Christ accomplished* is this Gospel's main point**. And so, while there are other details about his Gospel which also need to be

understood in order to be considered a member of the body of Christ (such as what it means that "**He** was buried," as we already discussed in a previous chapter), it *can* legitimately be said that "the eventual salvation of all humanity *because* of what Christ accomplished" is *essentially* Paul's Gospel, even if it's not *technically* Paul's Gospel (again, of course, referring to the general salvation that everyone eventually experiences, meaning being made immortal and sinless, and not the special "eternal" life sort of salvation which only the body of Christ will get to enjoy in heaven, or even the other "eternal" life sort of salvation, which the Israel of God will enjoy in the kingdom of heaven for 1,000 years because they obeyed their own Gospel, although, yes, they too will eventually all enjoy the general salvation connected with Paul's Gospel *as well*).

Despite this fact, most people who call themselves "Bible believers" insist, for various reasons, that the phrase "Christ died for our sins" *can't* ultimately be referring to the eventual salvation of all humanity, but that it must mean something else instead. Well, one thing we *do* all agree on is that the five words "Christ died for our sins" have to mean *something* (well, it's five words in the English translation of what Paul wrote anyway). The question, then, is, "What is it that those five words mean?"

There are various different answers I've heard different people who disagree with me on this point provide, but I'm not going to go into all of them because *one* example should suffice to show you why *none* of them can possibly make sense (since, after you read my refutation of *this* answer, you can just apply the reasoning behind said refutation to any *other* answers that anyone might give as well). Before I get into it, however, there's one assertion I've heard that I need to discuss, which is the assertion that the only really important part of this Gospel is *"Christ died,"* and that the *"for our sins"* part isn't the important part, which means that one just has to know what death really is (and believe that Christ *actually* died) in order to join the body of Christ. And that is an important

element of Paul's Gospel, as we learned in chapter 3, but Peter and James and John and the rest of the members of the church called the Israel of God all knew what death was, and they also all knew that Christ really died, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, so if that's all Paul was getting at in his Gospel, they'd then all *also* be members of the church called the body of Christ rather than the church called the Israel of God. Of course, as anyone who read chapter 1 of this book should be aware by now, Peter and James and John were *not* in the body of Christ, which means that it's actually the *"for our sins"* part of Paul's Gospel that *really* differentiates it from the Gospel of the Circumcision, and not just the *"Christ died"* part, and that it's the key to *truly* understanding what Paul's Gospel actually means.

And with that being said, let's move on to the example I was referring to, which is the idea that the words somehow mean "justification by faith," as I've heard some people claim Paul meant when he said "Christ died for our sins." Well, if that's the case, let's break down the passage. Paul said in verses 1 and 2 that those who believe his Gospel will be saved, and then gave the first five words of his Gospel in verse 3 – "Christ died for our sins" – so if "justification by faith" somehow *is* what those five words mean, the Gospel Paul taught people that they needed to believe in order to be considered saved and in the body of Christ would then be, "justification by faith, and also that Christ was buried and rose again the third day," which really makes no sense at all, since it would then mean that we're justified by having faith that justification by faith is true, presuming we have the faith that Christ was buried and that He was resurrected on the third day too, of course, even though we've now lost any information about Christ dying for our sins in the first place in this explanation (and yes, I realize that, from an absolute perspective, it was Christ's faith in going to the cross, along with His subsequent burial and resurrection, that ultimately saves and justifies us, but from a relative perspective it's our faith in Christ – specifically in what Christ did and accomplished [by dying for our sins] – that justifies us, meaning it's our faith that Paul's Gospel is true that justifies us, at

least from a strictly relative perspective; besides, justification by the faith that *Christ* demonstrated by going to the cross and dying for our sins ultimately results in the salvation of all anyway, so that would still support *exactly* what I'm saying as well, presuming *that's* what they *actually* mean by "justification by faith").

The real problem, however, is that "justification by faith" just isn't found *anywhere* in verse 3, which means that this idea is nothing more than reading one's assumption into the verse (*verses 1 and 2* could be said to be connected to the concept of justification by faith, since *those* two verses are about our belief, or faith, but verses 3 and 4 are about what Christ and God did, not what we do). The truth is, "Christ died for our sins" could really mean anything we want it to mean at all if it can mean something that isn't included in, or at least implied by, those specific five words (or at least explained as the meaning somewhere else in the passage, which it isn't, or even somewhere else in the epistle, which it isn't either). For example, it could mean "Alexander the coppersmith did Paul much evil"[696] – or anything else Paul wrote about, for that matter – if we're picking random things from his various epistles that have no connection with the words "Christ died for our sins" on their own. So at the end of the day, it must have something to do with the result of Christ's death for our sins. And since I can't think of anything else that the words "Christ died for our sins" might mean in that verse, at least not without reading one's assumptions into the text, not to mention without contradicting verses 1 and 2 (along with other parts of Scripture as well), I'd argue that the salvation of all humanity is logically the *only* result that Paul could have possibly been referring to there.

It's really all about the process of elimination. Once all of the other options have been ruled out, whatever option remains – no matter how unlikely one might consider it to be, and regardless of how much they might wish it wasn't – is the

[696] Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: — 2 Timothy 4:14

option they have to accept is true. As I said, "Christ died for our sins" has to mean something, and I really can't think of anything else it could mean (nor have I heard a convincing argument from anyone else that their assumption about what it means has to be what it means either, especially since I've never seen any of them demonstrate from Scripture just *how* those five words can mean what they're claiming they do). However, if you still do disagree that it's referring to the salvation of all, I have to ask exactly *where* your interpretation of "Christ died for our sins" is located (whether that interpretation is "justification by faith" or something else entirely) – or at least is implied by, or is the end result of, what's stated – in verse 3, all without contradicting verses 1 and 2 (or any other part of the Bible for that matter), so please **write down your answer to that query before proceeding to read the rest of this book** if you do happen to disagree.

Still, despite all of *those* facts, it's also been stated by many people that Paul was only talking about those in the Corinthian church who believed his Gospel when he wrote 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (or at least only about people who believed his Gospel in general), and that it didn't include the rest of humanity anywhere in its words, and, as such, the *"for our sins"* part of this Gospel was *only* referring to the sins of those specific Corinthians he was writing to who believed that the words in his Gospel are true (or at least only referring to the sins of those who believe his Gospel in general). And yes, it's true that this part of the chapter technically *was* specifically about what the Corinthian believers believed, but the important detail most people seem to miss here is that Paul wasn't telling the Corinthian believers his Gospel for the first time in this epistle; he was simply repeating what he'd previously told them *in person* – back when they were *still unbelievers* – which was the good news that "Christ died for **our** sins" (and that He was buried and rose again the third day, of course), and not something else.

Another detail that people seem to miss is the fact that this statement was unlikely to have meant anything to the Corinthians on its own when they heard these words in person, so they would have then asked him what that meant, and Paul would have, of course, explained that it means all sin has now been dealt with because of Christ's death (and burial and resurrection), and because of this, each of them was guaranteed eventual general salvation (immortality and sinlessness) whether they believed it or not. And unless the Corinthians listening to him speak were severely mentally impaired, they would have understood that this means *all humanity* must be guaranteed general salvation too, whether *they* (meaning the rest of humanity) believe it or not as well (since the Corinthians hearing him proclaim his Gospel to them for the first time would have had no reason to believe that this only applied to Paul himself and the people living in Corinth who heard him speak at that particular moment, but excluded *everyone else* in the world – remember, Paul wrote in this passage that he said "Christ died for **our** sins" to them when he was with them in person, and *not* "Christ died for **your** sins," as many seem to mistakenly think he said). So yes, it seems clear to me that the only way to understand those specific words in verse 3 of 1 Corinthians 15 is to understand that all sin is dealt with through Christ's death, and hence all humanity is guaranteed eventual general salvation (which, again, simply refers to being made immortal and sinless and, yes, being justified, whether they had faith while it was still possible to have faith or not – which I say because, when one is standing before the Great White Throne, things won't be based on faith anymore, but will rather be based on sight at that time). And verses 1 and 2 tell us that only those who believe the good news that Christ's death dealt with all sin (and hence guarantees the eventual general salvation of all humanity) are saved *now*, at least as far as being guaranteed the special salvation goes (presuming they also understood the rest of the passage, of course, including what it means that "**He** was buried").

What Paul definitely *wouldn't* have done when the Corinthians asked him what "Christ died for **our** sins" means was say, "It means you can now be justified by faith," because they then would have asked him, "Faith in what?", and if he turned around and said, "In Christ's death for our sins," that would have been an entirely circular answer (basically meaning that "one can be justified by believing that they can be justified by having faith in the fact that they can be justified by faith," as I was getting at earlier, which ultimately would have been a meaningless explanation), and they would have then walked away completely confused and still unsaved, not knowing what he was talking about. So at the end of the day, if it isn't the salvation of all, you're going to need to come up with a good explanation as to what "Christ died for our sins" is telling us without giving a circular, meaningless answer, not to mention, again, without contradicting verses 1 and 2 (or any of the rest of the Bible either).

Now, all of this is where the Calvinists[697] are at least *partly* correct (or at least those Calvinists who don't say unscriptural and illogical things such as, "Christ's death for our sins was *sufficient* to save all, but *efficient* to save only the elect," are, because if something must be added to His sacrifice in order for someone to be saved – even something as simple as having to choose to believe the right thing – then His death for our sins was, by definition, *INsufficient* on its own to save *anyone*, at least as far as the general salvation connected with Paul's Gospel goes). The consistent Calvinists at least understand that it can only be Christ's death for our sins (along with His subsequent burial and resurrection) that guarantees the salvation of those who get saved as far as the general salvation in connection with Paul's Gospel goes, which means that anyone whose sins Christ died for *has* to be considered to be saved from at least *some* perspective (at the very least, from a proleptic perspective), because otherwise His death for the sins of those He died for (be it the sins of just the elect or the sins of all humanity) accomplished absolutely *nothing* for *anyone* prior to someone

[697] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_Christianity

hearing about His death for our sins, choosing to believe that His death for our sins accomplished something for them too, and then *actually* believing it as well, after choosing to do so (the choice isn't the action, so one's choice to believe something isn't the same thing as actually believing that thing, as it takes a lot of mental work to actually convince oneself that the thing they *don't* currently believe is true actually *is* true), thus making them their own (at least partial) saviours by turning Christ's *ineffectual* action (which, by definition, is what His death for our sins would be if it didn't have any effect on anyone on its own prior to their hearing about it, even if only a proleptic effect) into an action which – only *after* one's contribution (such as the act of choosing to believe the right thing, and then somehow forcing themself to truly believe it as well) – actually had an effect on them after all.

Where these Calvinists go wrong is in forgetting that the good news which Paul specifically said he preached to the Corinthians when he evangelized to them in person was, "Christ died for **our** sins," and *not*, "Christ died for **your** sins," or, "Christ died for the sins of the elect," or even, "Christ died for the sins of believers," and he *certainly* didn't tell them something along the lines of, "Christ *can* have died for the sins of only you Corinthians who are listening to me right now, but only if you happen to believe that He died for your sins, making it so that He did die for your sins, even though He didn't actually die for your sins at all if you don't believe He did" (which is what he would have actually had to have said to them in person if this passage was *only* about the sins of the Corinthians who believed his Gospel rather than the sins of all humanity). Simply put, the good news Paul *actually* preached – that "Christ died for **our** sins" – would have to *already* be true for *every single person* that Paul told this fact to *before* he spoke the words to them, and not just news which *can* be true, but only if they happened to hear it and then also believe it's true, thus somehow turning a lie (which is what "Christ died for **our** sins" would have been if He *hadn't* already died for their sins when Paul preached those specific five words to the Corinthians) into truth (meaning Christ had now

died only for *their* sins specifically, although really only *after* they'd believed that "Christ died for **our** sins"). This means that any time Paul preached the good news that Christ died for **our** sins (and that He was buried and rose again the third day, of course) to a group of people, or even just to an individual person, it had to *already* be true that Christ had died for the sins of whichever people or person he was speaking to, because every single person he preached the words "Christ died for **our** sins" to had to already be included in that word "**our**," which means that before Paul even walked up to them, Christ had to have already died for their sins in the past (and hence guaranteed their future salvation). And the only way that could be the case is if the good news that "Christ died for **our** sins" includes at least every single person who was alive at the time, unless it was possible for Paul to walk up to someone and preach his Gospel to them by saying, "Christ died for **our** sins," and it somehow turned out that Christ actually *hadn't* already died for that person's sins after all, thus making Paul a liar when he said "Christ died for **our** sins" to them. And if it was true for every single person alive at the time, there's no reason it wouldn't be true for every single person who will have ever lived as well.

Besides, if he only meant that Christ died for the sins of his Corinthian readers specifically (and also for the sins of himself as well, of course, as would have to be the case for the phrase "Christ died for **our** sins" to make sense when he said it), we'd have to conclude that He didn't actually die for the sins of anyone else, including the people that Paul wrote to in Rome or Galatia or anywhere else for that matter, and that He didn't die for your sins either (although, if you *do* happen to believe that Christ died for everyone's sins, including your own, yet also believe that 1 Corinthians 15:3 is only referring to the sins of Paul and his Corinthian readers, I have to ask you what the scriptural basis for your belief that He *did* die for everyone's sins as well is, and why it *isn't* what he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3, especially in light of everything you've just read about it).

Also, unless every single Corinthian Paul preached to during his visit to that city actually believed his words (which seems extremely statistically unlikely), if Christ's death for **our** sins (along with His burial and resurrection, of course) is the only thing that saves us as far as general salvation goes (which it is, since anything we had to add to that type of salvation in order to be saved would mean we helped save ourselves, and would also mean that our general salvation was at least partially through works), it would again mean that Paul was lying to anyone who *didn't* believe that Christ died for **our** sins when he spoke those words to them, because that statement would have to include everyone hearing him say those words rather than just the listeners who also believed those words were true (since it would mean that Christ *didn't* actually die for their sins after all, considering the fact that anyone whose sins Christ died for *has* to be saved at least proleptically, as we've already discussed). Not only that, it would mean *we* were *also* lying anytime we explained that Paul's Gospel includes the fact that Christ died for **our** sins, at least if anyone who heard us didn't believe it either (unless, perhaps, what the Gospel that one *actually* has to believe in order to be saved is that Jesus died only for the sins of Paul and the Corinthians he spoke to – and that everyone in Corinth he preached his Gospel to got saved – and *not* that he actually died for you or for anyone else, but then I'd have to again ask you what the basis of our own general salvation really was in the first place if it *wasn't* Christ's death for **our** sins – along with His burial and resurrection – too).

So yes, Christ's death for **our** sins actually *had* to apply to *all* humanity (and hence guarantee the general salvation of all humanity), and if someone doesn't understand that this assertion by Paul means *everyone* has been saved from at least a proleptic perspective, they can't be said to be in the body of Christ yet, because Paul said in this passage that his readers were saved when they believed this Gospel/good news (or, at the very least, they have to believe the truths that are contained within verses 3 and 4 in order to be in the body of Christ, which yes, I'll acknowledge does mean that a Pauline Universalist who

doesn't necessarily understand the truths about what those two verses mean as I just laid them out, but who does still believe the truths *themselves* – meaning they believe in the salvation of all humanity based solely upon what Christ accomplished through His death – because they understand that truth from *other* passages of Scripture, technically would still be a true believer and a member of the body of Christ, even if they were confused about the meaning of *this* passage, presuming they also understand what it means that "**He** was buried," and that "He rose again the third day," of course), and since general salvation is based on Christ's death for our sins rather than on our faith, the type of salvation he wrote about in the first two verses of the chapter can only be the special salvation – meaning membership in the body of Christ – that they were brought into at the time they *truly* believed that Christ died for **our** sins (meaning when they actually understood that all humanity will be saved because of what Christ accomplished); at least, I can't think of any other alternative interpretations that don't contradict Scripture anyway. As I already pointed out, verses 1 and 2 say that one is saved if they believe the Gospel he taught them in person, the Gospel which he then repeated in writing in verses 3 and 4. And we know that belief in anything doesn't save anyone as far as general salvation goes (since adding a requirement for that type of salvation would be teaching salvation by works), so verses 3 and 4 *have* to be about a different form of salvation from the one referred to in verses 1 and 2. And you just won't find anything about "justification by faith" – or any other possible interpretation I've ever heard either – in verses 3 and 4, so there's just no room for it to mean anything *other* than the salvation of all.

If it helps, another way of looking at all this is to recognize that verses 1 and 2 are referring to salvation from a relative perspective, because they're talking about something that relatively few people will get to enjoy, which is an *early* experience of the salvation that *everyone* is *eventually* going to enjoy (that salvation consisting of being made immortal and sinless and being justified, as I've already explained), along with the additional benefits that salvation from a

relative perspective also brings (such as membership in the body of Christ, and all that this membership entails as well). Salvation from a relative perspective *does* require a certain criteria to be met in order to get to enjoy this early experience of salvation, however, even if meeting that criteria (which consists of believing, or having faith, that Paul's Gospel is true, as Paul explained in those first two verses of the chapter that we're talking about) is technically a gift from God rather than being generated by ourselves[698] (as I'll get more into a little later in this chapter). Verses 3 and 4, on the other hand, are referring to the same salvation, but from an absolute perspective (so the same immortality, sinlessness, and justification, in other words, even if not necessarily the membership in the body of Christ that a relatively small number of people will also get to enjoy), because *these* two verses are about the *reason* why everyone eventually gets to enjoy this salvation, with that reason for why everyone will eventually enjoy this salvation *being* Christ's death for our sins, along with His burial and resurrection on the third day (and this reason being referred to as Paul's Gospel). Basically, it's only salvation from a relative perspective that has a criteria which must be met – which is believing the truths taught in Paul's Gospel – but everyone gets to enjoy the salvation from an absolute perspective at some point (both those who experience its early form, also known as relative salvation, and those who experience it later) because of what it is that Paul laid out in his Gospel (Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection on the third day), whether they believed his Gospel or not. But if what "Christ died for our sins" means *also* had a criteria that has to be met in order to experience *its* end result, then salvation from an absolute perspective would require something from us (even if just faith) in order to make Christ's death for our sins actually accomplish anything. So once again, verses 3 and 4 *can't* be about anything *we* have to do – not even having faith and being justified by it – but can *only* be about what *God and Christ* did, namely guaranteeing the eventual salvation of all humanity because of Christ's death for **our** sins, burial, and

[698] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

resurrection on the third day (especially since there *isn't* anything mentioned for us to do in that proclamation of good news Paul listed in verses 3 and 4 anyway; those two verses are all about what God and Christ did, as I just said).

This is also why Paul's Gospel (which, again, is found only in verses 3-4, not in verses 1-2) is universal (Christ died for **our** – everyone's – sins), not personal (since He didn't die only for the sins of Paul and certain Corinthians but not yours, as would be the case if it *was* personal), the way some people also claim it is in an attempt to discredit this point about one needing to believe in the salvation of all in order to join the body of Christ. Yes, verses 1-2 are personal, but those verses are only about believing the (universal) Gospel found in verses 3-4; verses 1 and 2 don't contain Paul's Gospel itself (just as Acts 16:31 doesn't either,[699] which is another passage some people bring up to try to prove Paul's Gospel is personal, as though his Gospel was actually preached in that verse rather than at a future time when he arrived at the Philippian jailor's home – otherwise all the jailor had to believe was that someone named Jesus was Lord, and didn't even have to know what death actually was, much less that Jesus died and rose again, and he'd have been saved, so obviously Paul explained his Gospel and what it meant to the jailor once they arrived at his home, just as Acts tells us, or else the jailor couldn't believe his Gospel and join the body of Christ, and that explanation would have to have included the fact that Christ's death for **our** sins guaranteed the salvation of all humanity, based on everything else I just wrote[700]; as I mentioned in a previous chapter, it's important to remember that the book of Acts was a Circumcision writing primarily concerned with letting the Israel of God know why the kingdom temporarily ended up getting put on hold for them, and that Paul's Gospel was never fully fleshed out *anywhere* in the book since it wasn't meant for the book's

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[699] And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. — Acts 16:31

[700] And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. — Acts 16:32

original audience to believe – because they were meant to believe the Gospel of the Circumcision instead – which is why the writer left the full explanation of what Paul meant out of the book).

That said, yes, the statement that "Christ died for **my** sins" technically *is* true, as is the statement that "Christ died for **your** sins," no matter who we say it to, because both I and any other person one said that to would still be included in the "all humanity" that will eventually get to enjoy salvation because of Christ's death for **our** sins, which means the statement that "Christ died for the sins of the elect," or even the statement that "Christ died for the sins of the Corinthian believers," is also technically true. But regardless of the veracity of any of these statements, they're only true because Christ died for *everyone's* sins, and none of them are the Gospel message that Paul referred to as "my Gospel" (since the first five words of Paul's Gospel were "Christ died for **our** sins"). So if you're evangelizing, please be careful to share the *actual* Gospel message that one has to believe in order to be able to be said to have joined the body of Christ, which includes the good news that Christ died for **our** (all humanity's) sins, or else you might find yourself to be in trouble for preaching a false "gospel" instead.[701]

And just as a quick aside for those who might be wondering about it, while I've stated many times now that the parts of verses 3 and 4 which tell us that "Christ died for **our** sins," as well as which tell us that "**He** was buried, and He rose again the third day," are all a part of Paul's Gospel that one needs to understand the meaning of in order to be able to truly be said to actually believe his Gospel, I don't believe the "according to the Scriptures" parts of these two verses are *also* a part of his Gospel. As I've already mentioned, the main point of chapter 15 was to prove the resurrection of the dead, and Paul simply wrote those verses to remind his readers of the Gospel they'd already believed when they first met him, in order to prove the resurrection of the dead. And since he had a habit of

[701] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. — Galatians 1:8

using references from the Hebrew Scriptures to support his theological points (I'm not going to list them here myself, but he did this *a lot*[702]), I believe that's what he was doing there as well. Basically, I would argue that he was simply interjecting "according to the Scriptures" into his reminder of what his Gospel is in order to confirm that *all* of his Gospel – although especially the part about Christ's resurrection from the dead – is indeed in accord with what the Hebrew Scriptures say (we know that there weren't any passages anywhere in the Scriptures prior to Paul writing this that specifically contained the exact words "Christ died for our sins" or "He was buried, and He rose again the third day" – or even the exact words that "Christ *will* die for our sins" or that "He *will* be buried, and He *will* rise again the third day" – which tells us that this English translation of Paul's statement isn't meant to be taken *too* literally; instead, we should recognize that the words "according to the Scriptures" can also be interpreted more generally as meaning "in accord with the Scriptures," telling us that what Paul was saying is supported by the Scriptures in some manner, even if those exact words weren't ever used anywhere in the Scriptures prior to his writing them). As for which passages of Scripture Paul was referring to, I'd think that Isaiah 53:10-12 is the most obvious when it comes to what passage Paul was referring to in verse 3 of 1 Corinthians 15[703] (although His death for sin was also prophesied **in type** *all over* in the Hebrew Scriptures, even if nobody back when these books were written necessarily understood that the events being recorded in them were also typology), and I don't think any Bible believer would disagree that it prophetically looked forward to Christ's death (even if it

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[702] *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* by Krisan Marotta: https://wednesdayintheword.com/paul-oldtestament

[703] Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. — Isaiah 53:10-12

was technically only referring to His death for the sins of Israel rather than to His death for the sins of all humanity, at least as its primary meaning, although it could be argued that one might be able to midrashically say it has a *secondary* meaning of Christ's death for all humanity as well, but that couldn't have been known until Paul). What about verse 4, though? Well, in this case, I believe he would have been referring to more than just one passage, and that the primary passages would almost certainly have been Jonah 1:17-2:2[704] (since Jesus Himself referred back to it as a prophecy about His impending three-day burial[705]) and Psalm 16:10[706] (where we're told that God wouldn't leave Christ's "soul" in "hell" in the KJB, and while the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל/"sheh-ole'" that is translated as "hell" in this verse technically refers to the state of being unconscious in the death state, as we discussed in chapter 3 of this book, it was also sometimes used as metonymy for "the grave" in the Hebrew Scriptures, as we also discussed in that chapter, and it would have been understood by the readers as having a double meaning here – that passage in Jonah, by the way, along with

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[704] Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. — Jonah 1:17-2:2

[705] Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. — Matthew 12:38-40

[706] For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. — Psalm 16:10

verses 3 through 10 of chapter 2 of the same book,[707] also confirms that being said to spend "for ever" in a specific state or location, even if that location is referred to as "hell" in the KJB, doesn't mean that one is literally stuck permanently in said location either, especially since "hell" in verse 2 was also translated from שְׁאוֹל in the KJB, and "for ever" in verse 6 was translated from the same Hebrew word עוֹלָם/"o-lawm'" that we looked at in chapter 4 of this book, demonstrating once again just how figurative both "hell" and "for ever" can be in the less literal Bible versions that use these terms), with Jonah's time spent inside a sea creature making him a type of Christ, which in turn tells us that Paul was likely referring to typology in general there as well. And with that in mind, the passage in Jonah wasn't the only passage in the Hebrew Scriptures using typology in a manner that could be said to point towards it taking three days for something to come to life (or even come back to life). Hosea 6:2 (which is also a prophecy connected to Christ's return in the future) could be said to be another passage using typology of resurrection on the third day,[708] and Genesis 1:11-13 could be said to be a type of life coming out of the ground on the third

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[707] For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. — Jonah 2:3-10

[708] After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. — Hosea 6:2

day.[709] On top of that, we also have the type of Christ's resurrection demonstrated in Isaac being rescued from death on the third day in Genesis 22:1-12[710] (and he was confirmed to be a type of both Christ's death *and* resurrection in Hebrews 11:17-19[711]). And those aren't the only passages I could point to either, as there *are* various others, but I think the ones we've looked at so far are enough to get my point across, and that it's clear we don't have to be

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[709] And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. — Genesis 1:11-13

[710] And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. — Genesis 22:1-12

[711] By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. — Hebrews 11:17-19

familiar with all of the various passages that Paul was referring to there, as long as we understand that Christ was indeed resurrected from His tomb on the third day in a living, physical body (and, of course, truly understand what it means and believe that He died for **our** – again, meaning all of humanity's – sins, along with truly understand what it means and believe that **He Himself** was buried).

Besides, we can also know that Christ's death for **our** sins actually *had* to apply to *all* humanity (and hence guarantee the general salvation of all humanity) because Paul made this clear when he expanded on all this a little later in the same chapter by writing that just as *"in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."*[712] Many Christians assume that Paul was simply referring to being resurrected here (based on the fact that the main point of this chapter is the resurrection of the dead), but we know that everyone who Paul said will be "made alive" includes those who will never die,[713] such as the members of the body of Christ who will still be living at the time they're caught up together in the air to meet the Lord when He comes for His body,[714] not to mention the members of the Israel of God who will still be alive at the Second Coming and who will remain alive – thanks to the tree of life – until the time they're finally also made immortal, so being "made alive" (translated from a future-tense variation of ζῳοποιέω/"dzo-op-oy-eh'-o" in the KJB, which is the same Greek word that "quickened" is translated from – and which, yes, literally just means

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[712] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

[713] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. — 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

[714] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

"to be given life," but which is almost exclusively used figuratively[715] in the Bible[716] to refer to being made immortal[717]) obviously can't simply be referring to resurrection (which is an entirely different word anyway, translated from the Greek word ἀνάστασις/"an-as'-tas-is" instead) because not everyone Paul said will be "made alive" will actually die and be resurrected, as I just mentioned (yes, that the dead will be physically resurrected *was* Paul's main point in this chapter, but he used his Gospel to prove this point, and in doing so ended up covering details that went far beyond just resurrection, including elements that apply to those people who *won't* be resurrected – because they'll never actually drop dead – as well).

And since the "in Adam" half of the verse is about the end result of his sin as it applies to essentially *everyone* (and not just those people who will actually literally die), it stands to reason that, "*even so,*" the "in Christ" part is about the end result of His death for our sins as it applies to every one of us as well, which can only be the quickening of our mortal bodies (since, as Paul explains later in the very same chapter, being made immortal is what we're looking forward to as far as our salvation goes,[718] and that being made immortal is how the death Adam brought us all is ultimately defeated, which also means that any human who is made immortal will then be experiencing the final stage of their own

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[715] For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. — John 5:21

[716] But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. — Romans 8:11

[717] For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: — 1 Peter 3:18

[718] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

salvation as it pertains to Paul's Gospel). That, combined with the fact that not everyone will end up as a corpse prior to being "made alive" – confirming that the *"for as in Adam all die"* part of the verse can only be referring to being made mortal, meaning being in a state of slowly dying because of what Adam did – tells us Paul was simply explaining that, for as in Adam all are dying (mortal), even so in Christ shall all be quickened (made immortal). The Present Active Indicative tense in the original Greek of the verb translated as *"die"* in this verse in the KJB also makes this clear, I should add, making *"in Adam all die"* in the KJB a figurative translation of a Greek phrase which literally means "in Adam all are dying" (meaning all are in a state of mortality and are slowly dying), telling us that this verse ultimately means, "just as, in Adam, all are dying, even so, in Christ, shall all be made immortal" (and remember what we've already learned that immortality for humans means in Scripture).

ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ
as for in the Adam
πάντες ἀποθνῄσκουσιν οὕτως
all are dying so
καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες
even in the Christ all
ζῳοποιηθήσονται
shall be quickened

Of course, most Christians assume that one can't be "in Christ" without first having made a conscious decision of some sort to end up there, leading them to also assume that only those who choose to be "in Christ" (or only those who are elected by God to be "in Christ," if said Christian is a Calvinist) can be made alive/quickened (and hence be saved), and they then read that assumption into this verse when trying to interpret it. But aside from what we've already covered about the meaning of Paul's Gospel (which should be enough, in and of itself, to prove that everyone has already been guaranteed general salvation, and can, in fact, already be said to have been saved from at least a proleptic perspective), if you read it carefully you'll notice that not only does it not actually say one has to make a choice to end up "in Christ" in that verse, it isn't even talking about being "in Christ" from a positional perspective to begin with.

(The reason most Christians conclude that one has to *choose* to be included in the "in Christ" part of this verse is generally because they're assuming the sort of salvation Paul was writing about here is either the special "eternal" life sort of salvation he also taught about that involves membership in the body of Christ – and which isn't a form of salvation everyone will experience – or the "eternal" life type of salvation Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry which involves membership in the Israel of God – which is a type of salvation where one *does* have to do something specific if they want to experience it, and which is also not a form of salvation that everyone will experience, although whether[719] one does end up experiencing that sort of salvation[720] is just as predetermined[721] from an absolute perspective as the special salvation of those in the body of Christ is[722] – not realizing that Paul was writing about an entirely *different* sort of salvation here.) If Paul had been talking about a choice here, he would have written, "for as **all in Adam** die, even so **shall all in Christ** be made alive." Thankfully, that's not what he actually wrote at all. Instead, the way he carefully worded it ("for as **in Adam all** die, even so **in Christ shall all** be made alive") lets us know that Paul was using a parallelism there to tell us that **everyone** affected by the action of the first Adam is, *"even so,"* thus also equally affected by the action of the last Adam[723] (referring to Christ Jesus, who is also compared to the first man by being called *"the second*

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[719] No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. — John 6:44

[720] And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. — John 6:65

[721] Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. — John 15:16

[722] Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. — Romans 8:30

[723] And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. — 1 Corinthians 15:45

man" in the same chapter,[724] telling us He's the first human of the new creation), and completely outside of their own desire or will at that. The slight difference in wording might not seem important to most Christians (and those who don't want to accept the possibility of the salvation of all humanity will automatically insist it doesn't matter, without even taking the time to think about it), but it makes all the difference in the world when you realize that God didn't simply inspire Paul to just throw words onto the page haphazardly, but rather that He made sure Paul laid the words out the way He did in order to make certain it's clear (at least to those who have "eyes to see," so to speak) that, just as nobody had any say in experiencing the effects of the first Adam's action (mortality and, in most cases, physical death, aside from the relatively few people who will experience their quickening without having died), *even so* they also have no say in experiencing the effects of the last Adam's action (eventual immortality) either. Basically, the order of the words God chose for Paul to use tells us that "in Adam" and "in Christ" simply mean "because of what Adam did" and "because of what Christ did," and are not positional terms at all in this passage, but are rather causal terms.

The fact that Paul wasn't referring to being "in Adam" or "in Christ" from a positional perspective there is also backed up by what he wrote in Romans 5. Of course (even if most Christians don't realize this fact, never having thought it over particularly carefully, although this really is the only way their soteriology could possible work based on the way our brains work), in addition to assuming our salvation is (at least partly) based on possessing a certain attribute that others don't have which allows us to fulfill a required action we have to do for ourselves in order to be saved (such as having enough natural wisdom and/or intelligence and/or humility and/or righteousness to be able to make a choice to believe the specific thing that ultimately saves us, for example, or at least having the natural ability and desire to build up that required wisdom and/or

[724] The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. — 1 Corinthians 15:47

intelligence and/or humility and/or righteousness so one can make that specific choice), rather than our (general) salvation being based 100% on Christ's death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection (with no action taken on our part at all in order to contribute to our salvation, since us having to accomplish anything at all to ensure our own salvation – even if it was just managing to repent, meaning managing to change our minds and believing the right thing after choosing to do so – would be salvation based at least in part upon something we had to do ourselves, which would ultimately be salvation by works), most Christians also assume that the blame for our mortality, death, and sinfulness falls on each of us as individuals rather than on Adam as well, but that's not what Paul taught at all. You see, in addition to what he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:22 about how we "all die" (meaning how we're all mortal) "in Adam" (meaning because of what Adam did), Paul not only confirmed that the specific thing Adam did to bring his descendants mortality and death was *his (Adam's*[725]*) own* sin, over in Romans 5:12, but he also went on to explain in this verse that the reason *we ourselves* now sin is *because* of that mortality we inherited from Adam, when he wrote: *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*

This is one of the most misunderstood passages in Scripture, and most Christians have assumed "for that" in this verse means "because," and hence have interpreted the last two parts of this verse to mean "and so death passed upon all men *because* all have sinned" in order to preserve their doctrine that we're ultimately to blame for our own mortality and death (and many Bible versions have even mistranslated this verse to say as much – although, to be fair, the Koine Greek that this verse is translated from seems to be somewhat

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[725] (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. — Romans 5:13-14

ambiguous, and, as such, it appears that "because all have sinned" technically *could* be a valid translation when it comes to the specific words sometimes translated into those four English words as well anyway, at least if it weren't for the factors we've already looked at, not to mention the factors we're about to consider, as well as because it isn't the *only* valid possible translation, which is why I personally believe the translators of the KJB got it right). The problem is, even though it is another valid possible translation if that part of the verse is taken on its own, aside from the fact that "because all have sinned" would render the rest of the verse literally nonsensical (I can't see any way that the phrase "and so death passed upon all men *because* all have sinned" can legitimately follow "wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and still make any sort of sense at all, at least not based on any rules of grammar, not to mention logic, that I'm aware of), if we die because we sin, the first part of the verse would also be entirely superfluous, and might as well be cut out of the verse altogether, since that part of the passage would tell us basically nothing about *why* we sin, making it entirely irrelevant (not to mention that it would also turn the words *"and so"* in the verse into a lie: the words *"and so"* are connecting the clause in the second half of the sentence to the part of the sentence that came before it, which means that what was written in the first part of the verse *has* to be the reason for the clause that comes after those words, yet there's no actual connection made between Adam's sin and our death and sin in the verse if that clause actually means "*because* all have sinned," since that places the responsibility on us rather than on Adam, contrary to what the words *"and so"* are telling us, as well as contrary to what Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 15:22 – which is that human mortality and death exist because of Adam – and Romans 5:12 can't contradict any other part of Scripture).

And so, if we break it all down we can see that A) Adam sinned (*"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world"*), B) his sin brought him mortality leading to eventual death (*"and death by sin"*), C) because of this, his mortality passed

down to his descendants (*"and so death passed upon all men"*) – and for those who haven't figured it out yet, similar to the way the word "die" is used in 1 Corinthians 15:22, the word "death" is obviously being used as metonymy for "mortality" in this verse as well, since not everyone will literally drop dead before Jesus returns, as we already discussed – and D) **for that reason**, meaning **because of that mortality**, all of us descendants of Adam have also sinned (*"**for that** all have sinned"*), giving us a nice unbroken sequence of causes and effects (and giving a purpose to the word "that" in the verse, confirming that Paul literally meant *"for that [reason] all have sinned"*). But if we were to instead interpret the last two parts of the verse as simply meaning "and so death passed upon all men *because* all have sinned" we've suddenly lost the whole narrative, since this doesn't tell us *why* all have sinned the way the literal reading of this verse does, nor does it explain why Paul included the first half of the verse to begin with. "That all have sinned" *because* "death passed upon all men" answers that question, but reversing the order (making sin the cause and mortality – or even literal death – the effect rather than mortality the cause and sin the effect) just makes a mess of the whole thing, leaving us with the question of why we sin, which was a part of what Paul was trying to explain in the first place with this verse (and as for why mortality leads to sin, it's simply because, while we can have the strength to avoid sinning *some* of the time, being mortal makes us too weak to avoid giving in to sin *all* of the time). In fact, if our sin actually *was* the cause, the verse should have actually been written as: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin... but wait... that really doesn't matter at all, now that I think about it, since death actually passed upon all men because all the rest of us have sinned, and this had nothing to do with that one man, despite what I told the Corinthians in my epistle to them, so why did I even mentioned him here?"

And for those of you who are thinking "Original Sin" might be the answer to that question, aside from the fact that "Original Sin" isn't a *term* found anywhere in Scripture, it isn't a *concept* found anywhere in Scripture either

(and neither is the so-called "Federal Headship of Adam," which, along with the "Federal Headship of Christ," is a part of the doctrine of "Original Sin" that people read into the Bible but which isn't actually scriptural). In fact, the basis of this strange doctrine of "Original Sin" (and its connected "Federal Headship" teaching) is a misinterpretation of the very verse we've just been looking at, along with the verse in 1 Corinthians 15:22 that we also just looked at, but I don't see anything in *either* verse which says we've inherited a "sin nature" from Adam (which is yet another term you won't find anywhere in Scripture, but which many Christians are forced to read into it in order to hold on to certain unscriptural doctrines they don't want to let go of), or even that guilt for Adam's sin has somehow been imputed to us as well for some reason, as those who believe this doctrine claim is the case. Yes, being mortal causes humans to become corrupt and sinful very quickly, but the claims of those who believe in "Original Sin" can't actually be found in the Bible without heavily reading one's own assumptions into this verse. Some people do attempt to use passages such as Psalm 58:3[726] and Psalm 51:5[727] to defend their doctrine of "Original Sin" as well, I should say, but the first verse is talking specifically about *"the wicked"* (who are differentiated from *"the righteous"* a few verses later in the same Psalm,[728] telling us this isn't talking about all humans, but is instead about those who are particularly bad, using relative language; besides we know that newborn babies can't literally speak lies as soon as they're born, as the psalmist said they do, because they can't speak at all yet, so we know he's employing hyperbole there, meaning the verse can't be taken as literally meaning all humans start off wicked, but rather that this is simply an exaggerated statement which just means that the wicked begin their destructive path at a very young

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[726] The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. — Psalm 58:3

[727] Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. — Psalm 51:5

[728] The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth. — Psalm 58:10-11

age), and there are so many possible interpretations of the second verse which *don't* turn Romans 5:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 into a nonsensical lie, as would be the case if "Original Sin" *were* a valid concept, that it's utterly foolish to even *consider* it as a defence of the doctrine. For example, it could simply be more poetic hyperbole (which is a figure of speech David was known to employ in this book, which I trust you now agree with me on, unless you believe his tears could literally create a whole swimming pool on his furniture[729]), it could be using "in iniquity" and "in sin" as metonymy (which is also a figure of speech used all the time in the Bible, as should be obvious by now) for "in a world full of sin," or it could even be referring to the possibility that he was born as a result of his mother having an affair similar to the one he's believed to be confessing he had with Bathsheba in this very Psalm (and which is what many people think the verse means, believing that the way he recorded his past treatment by others in Psalm 69:4,[730] 7-8,[731] 11-12,[732] and 20-21[733] indicates this as well – and yes, I'm aware that these were prophetically referring to Jesus, but they had a double-fulfillment, with the first fulfillment being what happened to David, even if only from a hyperbolic perspective in some cases), and these are just three possible interpretations (there are others I didn't get into here, which you can dig into for yourself if you're so inclined), so

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[729] I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. — Psalm 6:6

[730] They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. — Psalm 69:4

[731] Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. — Psalm 69:7-8

[732] I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards. — Psalm 69:11-12

[733] Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. — Psalm 69:20-21

the concept of "Original Sin" really is a nonstarter (especially since, if Psalm 51:5 means that *all* humans born from a mother are born sinful, or with a so-called "sin nature," and need salvation because of that fact – remember, that Psalm mentions a *mother*, not a father – it would mean that Jesus was *also* born sinful and needed salvation from the "sinful nature" He would have then had as well, so that simply *can't* be what the Psalmist was referring to, as there's no reason Mary wouldn't have *also* passed this supposed "Original Sin" or "sin nature" on to Jesus if such things existed, at least if we're using that Psalm to try to defend the existence of "Original Sin" and/or a "sin nature"; and no, I don't see the Roman Catholic idea of Mary's supposed Immaculate Conception[734] as a way around this fact, since it's not a doctrine found anywhere in Scripture and hence isn't even worth considering – especially since, if she *was* born mortal, she'd *also* have been guaranteed to sin as well, per Romans 5:12, thus proving this doctrine impossible, and if having been born to a sinful mother means one is born with "Original Sin" or a sin nature, not only would Mary's mother also have to be born without "Original Sin" or a sin nature, her grandmother, and every other ancestor of hers going all the way back to Eve, would have had to have been born – and remained – that way as well).

Of course, some Christians also refer us to Ephesians 2:3 in order to defend the idea of "Original Sin," since it says that Paul's readers of that epistle (along with Paul himself too) were the children of wrath by nature,[735] but aside from the fact that the entire concept of "Original Sin" contradicts the only consistent interpretations of Romans 5:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:22, confirming that it can't actually be speaking of that concept at all, they're missing the fact that the word translated as "nature" in that verse – φύσις/"foo'-sis" – can also refer to a way of feeling or acting which, because of repeated practice, has essentially "become

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[734] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immaculate_Conception

[735] Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. — Ephesians 2:3

second nature," so to speak. And when you also consider the fact that the verse begins by telling us that he and his readers had been behaving themselves prior to getting saved *"in the lusts of their flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,"* as well as the fact that Romans 2:14 says that people *can* do, *by nature, "the things contained in the law,"*[736] we can see that human nature *isn't* "totally depraved" as many Calvinists mistakenly believe it is, and that Paul must have just meant that he and his readers had been particularly sinful prior to conversion and were worthy of suffering God's wrath prior to salvation.

And so, as usual, I maintain that the KJB actually got this correct, and that we should simply stick with what it actually says here and interpret it accordingly, in the sense that Paul meant *"and so death passed upon all men,* [and] *for that* [reason] *all have sinned,"* as this is the *only* interpretation which gives us answers to both the question of why we sin (while also explaining why Paul said, *"the sting of death is sin,"*[737] since the word "death" *has* to be metonymy for "mortality" in 1 Corinthians 15:56 as well, unless dead bodies can sin while they're lying unconscious in the grave – and because he wrote this line immediately after his discussion of our impending immortality,[738] it tells us he was reassuring us that we'll also become sinless once we've been quickened), as well as the question of why we're mortal and die (answers which don't end up contradicting 1 Corinthians 15:22 the way the more common translations and interpretations of this verse in Romans do, I might add), keeping the blame for our mortality, death, and eventual sinfulness squarely on the shoulders of the *"one man"* Paul meant for us to understand it belongs on: Adam (at least from a

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[736] For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: — Romans 2:14

[737] The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. — 1 Corinthians 15:56

[738] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:54-55

relative perspective, even if God was ultimately the one behind it all from an absolute perspective, as we learned in the last chapter).

And so, contrary to what pretty much all Christians have been taught, we ourselves don't die because we sin. In fact, Adam and Eve were the only humans who died because they sinned – or, rather, began to die/became mortal because they sinned. Yes, that's what God's warning to Adam, which is rendered figuratively in the KJB as, *"for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,"* meant. Remember, the expression *"thou shalt surely die"* was used in both Genesis 2:17[739] and in 1 Kings 2:36-46[740] in the KJB, and yet, based on the amount of time it would take to travel from Jerusalem to Gath and back (even on horseback, presuming my calculations are correct, although I

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[739] But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. — Genesis 2:17

[740] And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; and king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon. — 1 Kings 2:36-46

challenge you to confirm this for yourself), there's no way that Shimei actually died physically the day he crossed the brook Kidron, as Solomon seems to have warned him that he would in 1 Kings. And he certainly didn't "die spiritually" that day either, as most Christians mistakenly assume the translation of "surely die" in the KJB means (an assumption they make because they recognize that this is obviously a figurative translation, based on the fact that Adam *didn't* physically drop dead on the day he sinned, and the fact that his continuing to live beyond that day would make God a liar if "surely die" *was* a literal translation of the original Hebrew in this particular passage), which confirms that the popular "spiritual death" idea is a complete misunderstanding of the term "surely die" in the KJB. As far as Shimei goes, it just meant that he could consider his days to be numbered as of the day he crossed the forbidden brook, because he essentially signed his own death sentence by doing so. And as far as Adam and Eve go, it basically meant the exact same thing, that they could consider their days to be numbered as of the day they sinned as well, due to their newfound mortality, just with a longer period of time before their eventual death sentence "played out." Simply put, Genesis 2:17 is just telling us that, to die, they began dying – meaning they gained mortality leading to eventual physical death – on the day they ate the forbidden fruit, which makes sense considering the fact that the Hebrew phrase מוֹת תָּמוּת/"mooth ta'-mooth," translated figuratively as "thou shalt surely die" in both passages in the KJB, literally means "to die, dying" (well, if we're reading the Hebrew *super* literally, it technically just means "die, die," although nobody actually thinks it should be translated quite *that* literally). This also tells us that the death spoken of in this verse can't possibly be a reference to being punished in the lake of fire, by the way, because Adam didn't end up in that location the day he sinned either, so becoming mortal remains the best interpretation of this warning. (I should quickly add that I've heard it suggested God might have meant Adam would die

within 1,000 years, since a thousand years are said to be as a day to God,[741] and Adam did only live to 930 years of age,[742] but there's no indication Adam knew that fact, so we have to assume he interpreted it as a warning that he'd begin dying/become mortal on the day he ate the fruit, and that this is the primary interpretation intended by God, even if the thousand-year interpretation could, perhaps, be a perfectly valid secondary, midrashic sort of interpretation *also* intended by God, which would make "surely die" *also* a valid *secondary* translation, if not just interpretation, if God intended that to be the case – yes, biblical language can be interesting that way.)

Understanding this also helps explain why Jesus was able to avoid sinning, as well as why we'll stop sinning once we're made immortal. Basically, Romans 5:12 also tells us that mortality is passed down from our human fathers, not our mothers, since it's Adam who is blamed for our mortality in that verse rather than Eve (who not only also sinned, but sinned before Adam did), as well as tells us that anyone with a mortal, human father *will* sin (presuming one doesn't die as a baby before they have an opportunity to sin). This is why Jesus had to be born to a virgin, because He would have been *guaranteed* to sin at some point if He'd had a human father. Of course, "orthodox" Christians will say that the reason Jesus didn't sin is because He's God, and that only God in the flesh could avoid sinning so He could be the perfect sacrifice for sin, but what they're telling us when they say that, even if they don't realize it, is that we humans could then never be free of sin, not even after our resurrection, since we aren't going to become God, so that couldn't possibly be the reason (of course, if you've read chapter 3 of this book, you now know just how impossible this explanation is anyway). Instead, the reason is because, not having a human father, He was in a state that was neither mortal nor immortal (it's not a term

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[741] But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. — 2 Peter 3:8

[742] And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. — Genesis 5:5

found in Scripture, but because it's useful to have a label for this, I personally refer to existing in this state as being "semi-mortal," for lack of a better term that I'm aware of – although if you've read previous editions of this book, you might remember me using the term "amortal" instead, but I've since decided that "semi-mortal" is a better label), which means that, while He wasn't yet immortal, which means being entirely incapable of dying – as we'll also be when we're quickened, just like He is now – the fact that He didn't have a human father meant that He *could* die but that He *wasn't slowly dying* the way we mortals are either, and not having mortality coursing through His veins, but rather being semi-mortal along with having the Spirit without measure[743] meant He was strong enough to avoid giving into temptation to sin (this combination of "semi-mortality" and having the Spirit without measure also kept Him alive, even on the cross, until He was ready to die[744] and willingly gave up His life[745]). This means that Adam – who, like Jesus, and like Eve, also had to have been in a "semi-mortal" state in order to be able to become mortal after sinning – theoretically could have also avoided sinning if the circumstances had worked out that way, although he didn't have the Spirit without measure like Jesus did, and ultimately gave in to temptation, leading to the mortality and sin that all of us now get to experience as well, thanks to being his descendants.

That Adam is ultimately responsible for our condemnation to mortality, death, and sinfulness is also backed up a few lines later in Romans 5 as well, in verses

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[743] For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. — John 3:34

[744] No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. — John 10:18

[745] And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. — Luke 23:46

17-19,[746] where Paul told us that, just as judgement to condemnation came upon all men because of the offence and disobedience of *one*, and not because of *their own* offences or disobedience, righteousness and justification of life will *also* come upon all men because of the obedience of *one*, and not because of *their own* obedience – which would have to include obedience towards any commands to do anything specific in order to experience (general) salvation, including commands to choose to repent and/or to believe anything specific – telling us that only two people are responsible for our current and future states, the first Adam and the last Adam, and that we're just along for the ride.

You see, when Paul wrote, *"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,"* he was using another set of parallelisms there, something he seemed to love using to prove this particular point in various epistles, where the "all" and the "many" in the second part of each sentence has to consist of no less than the exact same number of people who fall under the "all" and "many" in the first part of the sentences, or else the parallelisms would fall apart, as would his entire point itself (which is that what happens to those who fall under the sets of "all" and "many" is because of what two different people referred to as "one" did – Adam and Christ respectively – and *not* because of **anything** that *they themselves* did, including choosing to believe something specific). And for those

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[746] For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. — Romans 5:17-19

who are wondering why Paul wrote "many" rather than "all" in verses 15[747] and 19 of this chapter, there are at least two reasons (there could be more, but I'm going to give you the most important reasons). First, verse 15 had to use "many" because not everyone will physically drop dead, as we already discussed. And second, Jesus was technically affected by Adam's sin to a certain extent as well, in that He too was condemned to die (even if voluntarily) because of Adam's action, since He had to die for the sins we now commit because we're mortal if He wanted to save us (which is why He could be included in the "all" of verse 18, although it technically only refers to all descendants of Adam, as Eve wasn't included there since she sinned before Adam did, so he wasn't responsible for her condemnation). But since He Himself never sinned (and since Eve became a sinner because of her *own* action rather than Adam's, although, not being a descendant of Adam, that doesn't matter quite as much for this verse), verse 19 couldn't say "all" became sinners because of Adam's action, which is why Paul instead wrote that *"many were made sinners,"* meaning every human other than Jesus (and, yes, Eve, although she's technically not even being considered anywhere in this chapter the way every other human is). And again, being a parallelism, all the people who *"were made sinners"* because of *"one man's disobedience"* will also have to "*be made righteous*" because of *"the obedience of one,"* or else the parallelism wouldn't work (and please re-read that carefully: Paul said that it's because of *"the obedience of one,"* and **not** because of **their own obedience** to choose to repent and/or believe the right thing, that they're ultimately *"made righteous,"* as I already pointed out, even though, yes, those who do happen to believe Paul's Gospel will get to enjoy that righteousness before everyone else, but it's still all due to *the obedience of one* and not due to their own obedience), although Eve will *also* be made righteous because of His obedience too, of course, even if she isn't included in the first half of the parallelism, but we'll get to why that is later in this chapter.

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[747] But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. — Romans 5:15

But for those who still really want to blame our condemnation to mortality and death on our own sins rather than ultimately blaming it on the first Adam's sin, I have to ask what it is they believe the condemnation that came upon all men because of the offence and disobedience of one/Adam actually even is, exactly, not to mention why Paul included the part about *"wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin"* in verse 12, and also why he claimed that *"in Adam all die"* in 1 Corinthians 15:22.

Of course, most Christians like to insist that one has to first *choose* to receive the free gift to be included in the second half of these parallelisms (completely ignoring the fact that this is not how parallelisms work), based on the inclusion of the word "receive" in verse 17,[748] but Paul didn't actually say anything about receiving the gift being a choice in that verse at all (although, if it was a choice, then receiving the *"abundance of grace"* mentioned in that verse would also have to be a choice). The idea that receiving the free gift is a choice is an assumption that one has to read into the verse, since it just isn't there in the text (you won't find the words "choice" or "choose" *anywhere* in the chapter), and receiving something isn't necessarily something one chooses anyway, as evidenced by how Paul told us that, on five separate occasions, he received thirty-nine stripes.[749] Since he would have experienced those lashes whether he first purposefully chose to receive them or not (at no point are we told that he said to his assailants, "Please whip me"; and had he instead said, "I refuse to receive these stripes," they still would have whipped him anyway), it's time to reconsider the idea that "receiving the free gift" is something one chooses rather than simply experiences apart from anything they have to choose to do, because, aside from the fact that this would make salvation something they

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[748] For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) — Romans 5:17

[749] Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. — 2 Corinthians 11:24

gained through *their own* obedience rather than because of the obedience of *one*/Christ (thus contradicting Paul's entire point, which is that only the first Adam and the last Adam are responsible for anything that happens to us when it comes to both our condemnation and our salvation, at least as far as our general salvation goes, which is the type of salvation Paul was writing about in Romans 5), having to choose to receive it would also be something one had to accomplish in order to be saved, which by definition would make it a work one had to do in order to be saved, and the most difficult work one could ever do at that, based on how difficult most people find it to "choose to receive the gift" and "get saved" (at least as far as the more popular Christian understanding of what salvation is goes, although it's true that this understanding is completely wrong). And so, rather than being offered money as a gift in order to pay off one's debts, and having the option to either accept it or reject it (which is an analogy many Christians like to use when discussing salvation), it's actually more like having money deposited directly into one's bank account – enough to pay all their debts – and having automatic payments to those they owe money to set up entirely without their knowledge, with evangelism being about telling people the good news that the money is there and that their debts will all be paid with that money, whether or not *they* happen to believe it, or "choose to receive it," because their *bank accounts* have already received it.

And yes, it's true that the word λαμβάνω/"lam-ban'-o," translated as "receive" in verse 17 in the KJB, *is* indeed in the Active voice in the original Greek, as I've had pointed out to me in order to try to argue that it means they *are* actively choosing to receive the gift, but that doesn't change anything I've just explained in the last few paragraphs, especially since verses 18 and 19 tell us *who* those people are who will receive the gift specifically being referred to there – which we now know is essentially everyone, based on the fact that verses 17 through 19 are a part of a parallelism – so it doesn't actually make any difference at all (and remember, nobody has actually even received the gift yet – at least not as of the time this book was written – outside of from a proleptic perspective anyway,

since nobody's mortal bodies have been quickened yet, and they won't be until "the last trump" sounds for them, so being in the Active voice in Greek doesn't necessarily mean receiving something is a choice anyway, which I'll also demonstrate even further a little later in this chapter as well). Besides, by the time one *does* receive the gift, which is ultimately immortality and perfection (since no mortal human can actually be *literally* righteous – even if believers are *considered* to be righteous by God now – until we're no longer mortal), they're already going to *want* it at that point, so it isn't something anyone would (or even rationally could) decide to turn down regardless, since the alternative would be to remain dead in the lake of fire permanently, and nobody is going to want to remain in the second death without end, or rather go to a permanent third death after they've been resurrected from their second death in order to be quickened (and since the term "the third death" isn't found anywhere in Scripture, we have even more confirmation that nobody would choose to refuse the gift if it actually even was a choice).

The reason most Christians insist that receiving the free gift has to be a choice (aside from simply never having considered the possibility that it might not be) is because they just don't want to accept that condemnation and salvation could possibly be something we ultimately have no say in, which is why they also insist that we're entirely responsible for our own condemnation to mortality and death (and its resulting sinfulness) as well, contrary to what Paul wrote (all the while often also contradictorily placing the guilt for Adam's sin on us *at the same time as blaming us*, in order to preserve the doctrine of "Original Sin," which is a doctrine that really only exists in order to be able to claim that everyone deserves to be punished in "hell" without end simply by virtue of being born, and is a doctrine which literally makes no sense at all when you take the time to actually think about it, since there's just no legitimate way for someone who didn't commit a particular sin to then be considered guilty of committing that sin just because an ancestor of theirs committed it; and one shouldn't conflate the "condemnation" Paul wrote about in that passage with

"guilt" anyway, because the type of "condemnation" in that verse is just the consequence of Adam's sin that we all experience, meaning the mortality we inherited from him, which also leads to all of us then committing sins as well, and not to us somehow magically being guilty of eating the forbidden fruit ourselves, even though we didn't actually eat it at all – which is backed up by the fact that the word "condemnation" there is translated from κατάκριμα/"kat-ak'-ree-mah" in the original Greek, which simply refers to a negative sentence and not specifically to a guilty verdict, and is a word which could also be used to say that one has been "condemned" to die of a terminal illness due to no fault of their own, which is actually pretty close to what the "condemnation" in this passage *is* referring to). You see, if our condemnation to mortality and its resulting sinfulness is based entirely on the action of *one* (Adam), as Paul said it was, then our salvation to immortality and sinlessness would have to be based entirely upon the action of *one* as well (the last Adam), as Paul also said it is, rather than based (at least in part) upon a wise decision we ourselves make to receive the free gift, and the pride of most Christians just won't allow them to accept that as a possibility. Because, although they'll deny it – even to themselves – most of them, at least on a subconscious level, really want to be able to take the credit for having made the wise decision to "get saved," based on the fact that they definitely want those who *don't* make the same wise choice they believe they made to be responsible for *not* getting saved, based on the tragically large number of Christians who have said thing to me along the lines of, "Are you saying that unbelievers will get the same reward as me? Even though they didn't choose to accept Christ like I did? That's not fair!", thus telling us they (at least subconsciously) believe they earned, and even deserve, salvation because they were smart or wise enough to choose to receive it, unlike all those sinners who *aren't* smart or wise enough to make the same good choice they did and hence don't also deserve it the way they do, and so these

Christians are basically boasting about, or glorying in,[750] their smart or wise decision to choose to receive the gift – as they'd be perfectly justified for doing if they *had* made that choice – rather than simply being grateful for having received it without ever getting to decide whether to accept it or not (and the words "receive" and "received" in 1 Corinthians 4:7 are not only referring to having something given to them rather than having actively chosen to accept something – since, again, if it were, they could then glory in their wise choice to accept it – but they're *also* Active voice variations of the exact same Greek word λαμβάνω that "receive" was translated from in Romans 5:17 too, thus confirming once again that it doesn't matter that it's in the Active voice in that verse in Romans anyway; and if you want further proof, the same Greek word λαμβάνω was *also* used in the Active voice to translate the word "take" in the John 10:18 passage we already looked at where Jesus said he had the power – meaning the right – to take His life again,[751] and since we already learned that He was unconscious when He received that life, this also demonstrates that this word being in the Active voice doesn't literally mean that one is actively choosing to do something).

I should quickly add, some will point out that 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 also talks about "receiving" the Gospel Paul preached unto them,[752] and that the salvation referred to in that passage seems like it could possibly be said to be conditional, at least if we take the passage on its own without considering the rest of Scripture. But even if we interpreted the passage as Paul referring to receiving

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[750] For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? — 1 Corinthians 4:7

[751] No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. — John 10:18

[752] Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. — 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

salvation rather than simply receiving (or hearing) the message he preached unto them, based on what we've already covered (not to mention still have yet to cover), it could only be talking about receiving the special form of salvation which involves joining the body of Christ after hearing his Gospel there (a form of salvation that not everyone receives), and not the completed salvation (being guaranteed future immortality and sinlessness) which is discussed in the next two verses after those, and really throughout the rest of the chapter (as well as which is discussed in Romans 5). So even if someone *did* have to choose to "receive" this special form of salvation, it doesn't also mean that anyone has to choose to receive the general form of salvation Christ won for all of us through His death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third day (besides, it's translated from a different Greek word in this verse than the one it's translated from in Romans 5:17 anyway: παραλαμβάνω/"par-al-am-ban'-o"). And so, it's time to recognize that the idea of the salvation Paul primarily wrote about (at least the general type of salvation) being based at all upon something people have to do for themselves – even if what they have to do for themselves is something as supposedly simple as having to choose to believe the right thing – rather than being based *entirely* upon what *one*/Christ did for us, is really something one must read into the text based on one's preconceived idea that this salvation depends at least partly (even if just 1%) on us and our smart or wise decision to believe and/or do something specific rather than depends 100% on what *one*/Christ did.

That said, we actually do have to recognize that this applies to the special type of salvation Paul wrote about too, which means it's time to stop ignoring the truth about predestination as well,[753] since what we've now learned (both about "free will" in the last chapter, and also about salvation in this one) proves that predestination *must* be true, but also that it's not the horrific concept Calvinism

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[753] In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. — Ephesians 1:11-12

makes it out to be. You see, if *everyone* will experience the salvation known as being made immortal and sinless, as Paul said we all will, yet at the same time only *certain* people are chosen,[754] or elected,[755] for the special "eternal" life (again, meaning age-pertaining life) type of salvation, as he also said, then not only does this means that predestination has to be true (since God is only choosing *certain* people for a *certain* type of salvation), but also that the type of salvation he meant we're chosen for can only be the special "eternal" life type of salvation that not everyone gets to enjoy, which means it can be said that predestination is actually more about *when* someone experiences (general) salvation, not about *if* they get to experience it, since everyone *will* eventually experience immortality and sinlessness. And He does choose certain people for the special salvation, as Acts 13:48 also makes clear.[756] Some people try to ignore this fact, but this verse says that only those who were first ordained to "eternal" life believed, and not that those who first believed were then ordained to "eternal" life, which most Christians misread the verse as saying (getting the order backwards due to their doctrinal presuppositions), and one can only be ordained to "eternal" life if God has decided ahead of time that He's going to give them the ability to change their mind regarding the truth[757] (the Greek word μετάνοια/"met-an'-oy-ah," translated as "repentance," literally means to change one's mind), and if repentance is given by God, one then *can't* believe the truth if God hasn't chosen to reveal it to them in order to free them from the

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[754] According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: — Ephesians 1:4

[755] Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. — 1 Thessalonians 1:4

[756] And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. — Acts 13:48

[757] And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. — 2 Timothy 2:24-26

devil's will, who can take anyone captive at *his own will*[758] if God doesn't intervene on their behalf by changing their mind for them (so much for human "free will"; it seems the only two wills that actually matter in this world when it comes to salvation are the devil's and God's, at least if Paul is to be believed, although God's will obviously ultimately wins out in the end). Basically, while some people are chosen by God to receive a special, early experience of salvation – meaning they'll be quickened and made sinless before everyone else, along with receiving various other benefits such as getting to go to heaven, and likely even ruling and reigning with Christ – Paul is teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 that *everyone* will *eventually* experience the salvation which involves being quickened and made sinless, even if perhaps not until after they've been resurrected from their second death at the end of the ages.

Of course, as we already discussed in the last chapter, many people really dislike the idea of predestination (especially as it pertains to salvation). But the fact of the matter is that, even if "free will" weren't the unscriptural and unscientific impossibility we've now learned it is, the existence of "free will" is completely irrelevant when it comes to salvation anyway, because whether "free will" actually could exist or not, Paul not only still places the responsibility for both our condemnation and our eventual general salvation on two men, and on two men alone, rather than on each individual human who will ever have lived, he also places the responsibility for whether or not we experience the special "eternal" life type of salvation on one Person alone as well: God, through His choice of whom He'll give the gift of faith to.[759]

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[758] In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. — 2 Corinthians 4:4

[759] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

And for those who disagree with the idea that even our special salvation is based on the decision of *one* rather than on our own decisions, think about it carefully, because the "gift" in Ephesians 2:8-9 can't really be referring to the salvation and grace part of the passage, considering the fact that A) nobody can save themselves, meaning make themselves immortal or sinless, and B) the definition of grace is "unmerited favour," and so the fact that *they're* both gifts goes without saying. This tells us that the gift Paul mentioned here *has* to be the faith (since nobody could ever think the salvation or grace are "of yourselves"), which means that faith *has* to be something God deals out a certain measure of to each person chosen for membership in the body of Christ rather than something that we build up on our own, just as Paul said it is,[760] and also has to be something we received apart from any action or choice of our own, since otherwise we could then glory either in producing our own faith or in having chosen to accept to receive an offer of faith,[761] neither of which Paul would consider to be possible for anyone he wrote to, because the type of salvation he taught the nations about, in both its general form and its special form, is 100% apart from *anything* we do ourselves, but is always based *solely* on the action and decision of *one:* Christ and God respectively (at least from a relative perspective, even if God was technically behind Christ's decision from an absolute perspective as well). And for those who want to point out that some Greek scholars claim the original Greek actually says the gift is just the salvation and/or the grace rather than the faith, this assertion is disputed by *other* Greek scholars who claim it indeed *is* the faith that is being referred to as the gift in

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[760] For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. — Romans 12:3

[761] For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? — 1 Corinthians 4:7

this passage in the original Greek,[762] so you'd have to demonstrate why *your* Greek scholars are right and why those scholars who disagree with them are wrong. But, as we already learned, because there's no way for the gift to be a reference to the salvation and/or grace on their own anyway (since it *goes without saying* that they're *also* a gift, which means *Paul wouldn't have said it*), this proves the Greek scholars who claim it's the faith that Paul referred to as the gift *have* to be the ones who are correct (to be fair, the Greek *is* somewhat ambiguous on this, but everything in this paragraph demonstrates that this has to be the case). Besides, if the gift *isn't* the faith, it then couldn't be the salvation either, because in that case the salvation would instead be a payment one earned by *building up* the required faith using their own strength, which is a work I don't think anyone could actually do (forcing oneself to actually believe something is true that they don't *already* believe is true would take a *lot* of effort).

But even if the idea that receiving the special "eternal" life type of salvation was a choice *didn't* contradict what Paul wrote, the whole point of the parallelisms in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 is to make it clear that *one*/Christ has at least the exact same level of effect on humanity that *one*/Adam had, meaning Christ's action changes at least the same number of people that fall into the categories of "all" or "many" that Adam's action did, apart from any choice or choices we make ourselves. So even if it weren't true that only those to whom God has given the faith to believe this good news will get to enjoy the special salvation which involves being made immortal and sinless *earlier* than everyone else, and that we had to instead *choose* to be included in the body of Christ, we still know that everyone will eventually experience immortality and sinlessness anyway. Besides, if Christ's action *doesn't* change at least the same number of people that Adam's action did, it means that Adam's failure was ultimately more efficacious

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[762] *Faith as the Gift of God: The Referent of τοῦτο in Ephesians 2:8* by Jack Kettler: https://thereligionthatstartedinahat.org/2026/06/17/faith-as-the-gift-of-god-the-referent-of-τοῦτο-in-ephesians-28

than Christ's victory was, making Adam and his sin far more powerful than Christ and His death for our sins, considering the fact that none of us had to choose to allow Adam's sin to make us mortal the way most Christians think we have to choose to allow Christ's death for our sins to make us immortal, and hence sinless (which is what general salvation is).

If you're still finding any of this hard to accept, though, Paul's parallelism in 1 Corinthians 15:22 can also be expressed mathematically: "For as in *a*, *x* die, even so in *z*, shall *x* be made alive." The way parallelisms work means that the set (or variable, if you prefer) known as "*x*" has to consist of the exact same group (or number) of people in both clauses (with "*a*" and "*z*" being two different reasons for their two respective states at two different periods of time) rather than referring to two separate groups of people who have to choose between Adam and Christ. In fact, since this is a parallelism, and because we know that nobody specifically made a conscious choice to "choose Adam" (I don't recall ever thinking to myself, "I accept Adam as my condemner" before becoming mortal, which would have to be the case if we, *"even so,"* need to choose to "accept Jesus as our Saviour" in order to be made immortal; and if our condemnation happens without our conscious decision to "accept Adam," then, *"even so,"* our general salvation would also have to happen without our conscious decision to "accept Christ," since this is a parallelism), or to die "in Adam," but rather we were all simply born mortal (remember, our condemnation to mortality, death, and sinfulness was entirely because of *one*/Adam, and not because of anything we ourselves did, or else newborn babies who haven't sinned yet would never die, and those who believe that a fetus receives its spirit from God while still in the womb would then have to also concede that it would be impossible to perform an abortion once a pregnancy had reached that point), this also means that, *"even so,"* nobody can choose to be "in Christ" either (if this verse meant that it's up to us to specifically choose to be "in Christ," it would mean that it was up to us to specifically choose to be "in Adam" first, which we already know isn't the case, since we're all born mortal; and if these were positional

sorts of states, and we could unknowingly end up "in Adam" by committing an act we didn't realize placed us there, it would also mean that, *"even so,"* the only way to end up "in Christ" would have to also be by unknowingly committing an act we didn't realize placed us there either). This verse is simply telling us that "all" ("*x*") are mortal/dying "through Adam/because of what Adam did" ("in *a*") rather than because of any choice of our own, and that the same "all" ("*x*," again) will also eventually become immortal ("be made alive") "through Christ/because of what Christ did" ("in *z*") rather than because of any choice of our own. And the same applies to when Paul uses the words "all" and "many" in his parallelisms in Romans 5 as well (go ahead and put an *x* in place of the words "all" and "many," or perhaps an "*x*" and a "*y*" in their respective places, in the verses in Romans 5 to see for yourself). With this in mind, the only way 1 Corinthians 15:22 could possibly mean that only some people will be quickened is if the verse said, "For as in Adam only some die, even so in Christ shall only some be made alive," or if it perhaps said, "For as in Adam all die, *unevenly* so in Christ shall only some be made alive" (the words "even so" in the verse basically mean "in the same way," or "equally so," telling us that the variable *x* has to be the same number of people on both sides of the words "even so").

Unfortunately, due to a combination of the fact that most people are unaware that the English terms "eternal," "everlasting," and "for ever" in the KJB and the other less literal Bible translations don't necessarily have to mean "without end" or "never-ending," as we learned in chapter 4 of this book (and, based on what we've already covered in this chapter, as well as what we'll be covering in the rest of the chapter along with the next couple chapters, we can see that these terms definitely *don't* ever mean "without end" or "never-ending" when it comes to passages about judgement in these particular Bible versions), not to mention that most of them are also unaware of the *actual* meaning of various passages in Scripture about "hell" and the lake of fire, especially the ones that include warnings by Jesus (which are indeed serious warnings, but they don't

mean anything even close to what most people have assumed they mean) – and are misinterpreting these and other Pauline passages about salvation in light of their misunderstandings of those judgement passages rather than interpreting those particular passages in light of these and other Pauline passages about salvation (because they don't realize that the salvation Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry was an entirely different sort of salvation from the one Paul was writing about here, as we learned in the first chapter of this book, they mistakenly assume that, since not everyone experiences *that* sort of salvation, not everyone will experience the type of salvation that Paul was writing about here either, because they're not *"rightly dividing the word of truth,"* and thus showing themselves to be unapproved as a workman – meaning unqualified to be a worker – to God, and demonstrating that they should be ashamed[763]) – along with the fact that this verse says "in" ("in Adam" and "in Christ") rather than "through" or "because of" (which is what the word "in" is talking about here), most Christians read these passages and come away with extremely confused interpretations. Since one can only be "in" one of two people at a time, positionally-speaking, this causes them to miss the fact that the word "all" is the exact same group of people in both clauses (referring to "all of humanity"). To be fair, "in" obviously *can* mean "inside" something, positionally-speaking (from either a literal or a figurative perspective, depending on the context), but it can also mean "through [the action of]" or "because of" something or someone, and that's clearly what Paul was getting at in this parallelism.

However, let's pretend to forget all of the above, and assume for a moment that this passage actually *is* referring to being "in Christ" from a positional perspective rather than referring to our immortality being because of what Christ accomplished. Does that change anything at all about the end result I concluded it would culminate in (all humans eventually experiencing salvation

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[763] Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. — 2 Timothy 2:15

by being quickened)? Not even slightly. To put it simply, because this is a parallelism, we'd then be forced to read it as meaning: just as every human begins dying by being considered to be positionally "in Adam," *even so* every human *will* end up made alive by being positionally "in Christ." So even if you interpret "in" positionally here, being a parallelism would force this verse to then mean that every single person will be "in" both of those two people, figuratively speaking, just at two different points of time in each of our lives (because, as I already pointed out, the verse *isn't* worded, "for as **all in Adam** die, even so **shall all in Christ** be made alive," so the actual wording *has* to mean that everyone would end up being positionally in *both* Adam *and* Christ at some point in their lives). That said, when you consider the fact that the context of the chapter was resurrection and immortality, it's pretty clear that Paul was literally telling us in this parallelism that even though "because of what Adam did all humans are now mortal, even so because of what Christ did all humans will be quickened," and that nobody was ever actually "in Adam" from a positional perspective, but rather "in Adam" was always a causal term, as was "in Christ," at least in that particular verse – and yes, there are other verses which talk about being "in Christ" from a positional perspective,[764] but no others that refer to being "in Adam" at all. (Of course, there are those who might want to try to point to Hebrews 7:9-10 to suggest that we were all "in Adam" before we were even born, just as the writer of Hebrews seems to have said Levi was "in Abraham's loins" before *he* was born,[765] but this statement wasn't meant to be read as absolute truth; you see, it's important to note that he began the assertion with the words, *"as I may so say,"* at least in the KJB, which just means "one might almost say," or "so to speak," in 17th-century language, with the Greek phrase ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν/"hoce ep'-os eye'-pon" that it's translated from being an expression used in Greek literature back then to qualify a

[764] There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. — Romans 8:1

[765] And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. — Hebrews 7:9-10

statement that sounds like it should be taken as absolute truth in order to de-emphasize what was being said, which means the writer wasn't saying that, when Abraham gave the tithe, Levi was also *actually* giving a tithe too, but rather he was just making a metaphorical statement in order to illustrate a theological point, and wasn't intending us to take it literally at all – besides, even if being said to have been in someone's loins in the way the writer of Hebrews used the expression *was* meant to be taken as a literal statement, none of us are *still* in Adam's loins, so to speak, anymore, since we've now been born, so nobody who has been born could still be "in Adam" in that manner anyway.)

For anyone who might somehow still be skeptical, however, hypothetically speaking, if Paul *was* trying to explain in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 that, because of what Adam did, every single human has been condemned to mortality and sinfulness, yet, *equally so*, because of what Christ did, every single human is guaranteed to eventually enjoy immortality and sinlessness, I'd like to know what he would have needed to have written differently in those chapters in order to convince you that this is what he meant.

All that being said, while Paul tells us in verse 22 of 1 Corinthians 15 that everyone who experiences mortality because of what Adam did will eventually experience immortality because of what Christ did, he also tells us (when he wrote, *"but every man in his own order"*[766]) that there's a particular sequential order when it comes to each mortal human being made fully alive beyond the reach of death (meaning that humanity won't all be quickened at the exact same time), with the first order mentioned being *"Christ the firstfruits,"* and the second order being *"they that are Christ's at his coming"* (there's a third order mentioned in the passage as well, but we'll get to that after we consider the first

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[766] But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. — 1 Corinthians 15:23-24

two orders). Now, there is some debate as to exactly who is included in each of the first two orders, with some people believing that the first order refers specifically to Jesus and that the second order includes everyone who will be quickened around the time of His Second Coming (both the members of the body of Christ, and also the members of the Israel of God who will be quickened around the same time, give or take approximately seven years), while others believe that the first order refers instead to the whole body of Christ (since being a part of Christ's body means we can all legitimately be called "Christ," or "anointed" – which is what the Greek word Χριστός/"khris-tos'" that "Christ" is transliterated from means – even if we're not all "Christ *Jesus*" Himself), but that this *excludes* the body's Head (Jesus, who is already immortal), with the second order only being those in the Israel of God who are quickened some time after He returns, at the resurrection of the just. As for me, I believe the latter interpretation to be the correct one, with the firstfruits in the first order being the whole body of Christ[767] – again, *excluding* Jesus – at the time He comes for His body in the air, including both those dead members of the body of Christ who will be resurrected, as well as all the members who are still living, finally experiencing their immortality at that time (the dead members of the body of Christ will be resurrected first, after which they and the remaining living members will be "made alive"/made immortal as we meet the Lord in the air), and who will no longer sin from then on (because they'll no longer be mortal). This event will be God withdrawing His ambassadors[768] from earth (as

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[767] And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. — Romans 8:23

[768] And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. — 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

one does prior to declaring war) before the Tribulation begins, who then go on to fulfill their purpose in Christ in heavenly places.

As for why I don't believe Jesus Himself is included in this order, there are two reasons, both of which I technically actually covered in the last paragraph, but I'll go into a little more detail now in case anyone didn't catch them. The first reason is because verse 22 would also seem to mean that, *at some point in the future*, "in **Christ** shall **Christ** be made alive," which seems to be contradicted by Peter, who wrote that Christ was *already* quickened[769] – *past tense* – by the Holy Spirit, and not that He *will* be quickened/"made alive" – *future tense*, which is the tense verse 22 uses – as though He isn't already immortal now. As for the second reason, it's that *"but every man in his own order"* in verse 23 (of which *"Christ the firstfruits"* is the first order) is referring back to everyone who is promised to eventually be *"made alive"* in verse 22 (which means that to be a part of the orders referred to by *"every man in his own order,"* you have to also be included in verse 22), but since verse 22 is a parallelism, to be a part of the group of people included in the *second* half of the point being made by this parallelism, one would also have to be a part of the group of people included in the *first* half of the parallelism (meaning being included among all those who "die" because of what Adam did, which we already determined refers to being mortal and in the process of slowly dying because of what Adam did). Remember, as we just discussed, the salvation equation is basically: "For as, because of *a*, all are made mortal, even so, because of *z*, all will be made immortal." And so, to be a part of the group of people affected by *z* (at least within the parallelism), one has to first be affected by *a*, which means being mortal. The problem is, being mortal also means being guaranteed to eventually sin, as we also previously learned, and since Jesus never sinned, He couldn't have been a part of group *a*, which means He *also* couldn't have been a part of group *z* in the parallelism, and hence couldn't be a part of *any* of the

[769] For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: — 1 Peters 3:18

orders listed under *"but every man in his own order,"* which does include *"Christ the firstfruits,"* telling us that the people included within this particular order of people being made immortal in the future can *only* consist of the parts of the body of Christ that *aren't* Jesus (who doesn't need to be included in it anyway, for the first reason I just covered, which is that He's already immortal). Simply put, to be a part of the first part of the parallelism, it seems that one has to be a descendant of Adam via their father, as it appears that mortality is only passed on by males (because otherwise Eve would be the one blamed rather than Adam in Romans 5:12, or at least she'd have been equally blamed in the verse, since she sinned first), but Jesus didn't have a father in Adam's line, being born of a virgin and instead having God as His Father, which is why He wasn't included in the first half of the parallelism (and which is also why He can't be a part of the second half of it either).

And yes, I realize this seems to imply that Eve won't be saved, since she *also* wasn't a part of the first group in the parallelism (which means she couldn't be included in the second group in the parallelism either). However, like Christ, she's a unique case in all of this, as she sinned before Adam did and hence is not being able to be included in the parallelism either. This isn't the problem it might seem to be at first, though. As we just covered, Christ Himself was quickened without technically being included in either group within the parallelism, and this is fine because He was never a part of the particular point that Paul was making with this parallelism to begin with, which is simply that everyone affected by *a* is also affected by *z*, and nothing more. And if He can be quickened without being a part of the second group in the parallelism (even though He technically *was* affected by what He did – earning His own quickening through His own faith, as was proven by His voluntary death on the cross – He still was never a part of the parallelism to begin with, outside of being *z* in the equation, of course), there's no reason others can't *also* be quickened (and even reconciled to God) without technically being included in the point the parallelism is making either. And Eve indeed *is* going to be

quickened in the future, and (along with many others who *also* aren't included in group *a* that I'll discuss soon) will even be reconciled to God as well, for reasons I'll explain a little later in this chapter. But even if it somehow could turn out that she wasn't going to be saved, because of not being included in the parallelism, the point Paul was making with the parallelism – that everyone affected by Adam's action is also going to be equally affected by Christ's action – still stands. So don't worry, because she will be quickened, as I'll prove later, presumably at the same time the third order of people will be quickened.

We can't get to that third order without first discussing the second order, though, and I personally interpret this second order – *"they that are Christ's at his coming"* – as referring to those made immortal at the time of the resurrection of the just, 75 days after the Tribulation has concluded (people such as "Old Testament" saints, for example, at least from the point of Abraham onwards – including Elijah, with this being the time he's quickened – as well as those who died following the teachings that Jesus and His disciples gave). I should say, for a long time I assumed that *everyone* who gets to enjoy the sort of salvation Jesus spoke about, both dead *and* living, will be made immortal at this point, but I've since concluded that only those who were dead and who will be resurrected some time after the Second Coming will be made immortal at this time, and that everyone else who gets to enjoy "everlasting" life while living in the kingdom of heaven in Israel will simply remain alive in a "semi-mortal" state (at least to begin with) thanks to partaking of the fruit and the leaves[770] of the tree of life[771] on a monthly basis, and won't be made truly immortal until the third and final order of quickenings included in the parallelism is completed much later. As for why I've come to this conclusion, I'll just quickly say that if

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[770] In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. — Revelation 22:2

[771] Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. — Revelation 22:14

the reward for "overcoming" by some of those during the Tribulation will be to partake of the tree of life,[772] and if one needs to continuously consume its products in order to remain healthy and alive – which Revelation 22:2 seems to imply is indeed the case – yet the quickening of the resurrected dead happens instantaneously[773] and is irreversible, as is demonstrated by those in the body of Christ when they're caught up in the air to meet the Lord (not to mention based on the definition of "immortality"), it seems that there must two different methods of remaining alive on this earth and the New Earth (quickening as the first method, and partaking of the tree of life on a regular basis as the second). That said, as I already mentioned, some like to group the body of Christ in with this order as well, and believe it applies to everyone who experiences the salvation that Jesus spoke about, as well as those who experience the salvation that Paul wrote about – even if some are quickened three-and-a-half to seven or more years apart from each other – and believe the first order is just speaking of Jesus Himself. However, as I already explained, to do so really doesn't make any sense to me, and even more-so if I'm correct that only the resurrected dead members of those in the Israel of God will be quickened at the end of the Tribulation, which it would seem has to be the case for the reason I also already explained, as well as because there wouldn't be anyone left to fulfill the prophecies of righteous Israelites not only growing old but also having children in the kingdom of heaven and on the New Earth if every member of the Israel of God were quickened shortly after Jesus returns, as I've also previously mentioned (and the fact that all the living members of the body of Christ will be quickened when they're caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, as well as the fact that the dead in Christ are resurrected *before* those who are still living when they go to meet the Him in the air, yet those who are raised from

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[772] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. — Revelation 2:7

[773] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. — 1 Corinthians 15:52

the dead at the resurrection of the just are still dead until at least 75 days *after* the Tribulation ends, is also more evidence that the body of Christ is not the Israel of God, and that our respective quickenings take place at different times, which also confirms that one should not conflate the Snatching Away with the Second Coming[774]).

But regardless of which order the body of Christ is included in, there are still a lot of people who won't have been "made alive"/made immortal yet during that second order, including the rest of the members of the Israel of God who aren't quickened at the resurrection of the just but are still alive thanks to the fruit of the tree of life (not only 1,000 years later when the kingdom of heaven on earth draws to an end, but for the duration of the final age on the New Earth as well, however long that's going to last), not to mention everyone else who didn't get to enjoy "everlasting" life when Jesus returns. And so the question arises, if all humanity *is* going to be "made alive" because of Christ, yet each in their own order (which Paul told us *is* going to be the case), when will this happen for everyone who *isn't* included in those first two orders? Well, if everyone will be "made alive" in their own order, there must be at least one more order after that one for the rest of humanity to be included in, and the very next verse tells us there indeed is.

Of course, most people who read this chapter assume *"they that are Christ's at his coming"* in verse 23 is the final order of people to be quickened (if they even realize that Paul was talking about quickening at all), but Paul actually spoke of that third and final order made up of the rest of humanity which we now know also need to eventually be "made alive" when he wrote *"then cometh the end"* in verse 24. Now, this technically could be said to have a double fulfillment of sorts, since the end of the ages *is* almost certainly *when* this final quickening occurs (and is something that the body of Christ has already attained in spirit

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[774] Please see Appendix B for more details on this topic.

now, even if only proleptically, as 1 Corinthians 10:11 so figuratively tells us in the KJB,[775] and will have also attained physically at their own quickening, long before the actual final age ends), and this has caused most people to misunderstand Paul's statement there as meaning that he'd moved on from the topic of resurrection and immortality and had now begun discussing the end of the world (or the end of the ages, as others assume) in this verse instead. But Paul hadn't even hinted at any such topics in this chapter so far, yet had just mentioned an order of different groups of people to be "made alive," made up of every mortal human who will have ever lived (yes, technically excluding Eve, even though she'll also be quickened at the same time those in this final order will be), as stated in the verse immediately prior to this one (in verse 23 when he wrote, *"but every man in his own order,"* which was referring to *all* the men who are mortal because of Adam being made immortal by Christ – as he said would happen in verse 22 – in their own order), so there's absolutely zero basis that I can think of for interpreting this verse as meaning anything other than Paul telling his readers that "then comes the end of the quickenings of all the orders of men to be 'made alive'" (which tells us that the final *group* of men from the "*every man in his own order*" of groups made up of all men who are mortal because of Adam will finally be made immortal at that time) and then going on to explain *when* in the future the end of the quickening of all humanity will occur, which will be at the time *"when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."* I don't believe anyone would disagree with me that when Paul wrote, *"when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God,"* he was explaining *when* whatever *"then cometh the end"* happens to mean takes place. And if the end of the world or ages were going to occur *immediately* after *"they that are Christ's at his coming"* are quickened, it might make sense to assume that's what Paul was referring to there. But as I already mentioned, we know that there will be at least 1,000 years separating the period of time when that particular order of

[775] Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. — 1 Corinthians 10:11

people will be quickened and the time our current world ends and is replaced by the New Earth (and, as those who understand the Doctrine of the Ages are aware, there are two whole ages, likely made up of thousands of years or more, between that quickening and the end of the ages, quite possibly about 34,000 years based on certain other parts of Scripture, but I don't have the time to get into the reason for that number here – especially since it's not one I'm certain about anyway – other than to give you a hint, which is that it's a theory which has to do with numbers of generations mentioned elsewhere in the Bible), so a new topic about the end of the world or the end of the ages doesn't really fit in those words at all because neither of those things are going to come to an end immediately (or even any time soon) after *"they that are Christ's at his coming"* are "made alive."

Meanwhile, the end of the sequence of people being quickened in a specific order fits there perfectly, since the order of those quickenings is what he'd just been writing about. In fact, if he meant the end of the world or the end of the ages, he would have then been leaving out that final order of *"every man in his own order"* of all men who are dying from the sequential order of quickenings he'd just started writing about (including the members of the Israel of God who weren't quickened after Jesus returns and who would then miss out on being made immortal if this wasn't talking about the final group of people to be quickened), so it really makes no sense at all for him to have gone from discussing that topic (the specific order of all the groups of people who are mortal and dead because of Adam being "made alive" because of Christ) to suddenly discussing an entirely new topic altogether in this verse – never having even suggested that he was referring to that new topic (Christ's triumph over other rulers and turning the kingdom over to God, or even the end of the ages or of the world) anywhere else in the chapter up until this point – and then to return to discussing his original topic of resurrection and quickening again as he does just a few verses later. Since it wasn't the point of the chapter to begin with, there would have been no reason for Paul to have even mentioned Christ

delivering the kingdom up to God, to putting down all rule and authority and power, and to the end of Christ's reign over the kingdom (as he discusses in the next few verses after this one) in this chapter at all other than to explain *when* that final order of "*every man in his own order*" to be "*made alive*" that he'd just been discussing actually *is* going to be "*made alive,*" by letting his readers know that this final quickening would, in fact, not only be the end of the quickenings he'd been writing about in the two verses prior to it, but also that it would be the very last thing Christ does before giving up His reign and turning the kingdom over to God (and, in fact, that this final quickening would be how death is finally destroyed, as he said it would be a couple verses later[776]).

Now, a lot of Christians simply assume that the reference to the destruction of death in verse 26 is just talking about the salvation of "*they that are Christ's at His coming*" in verse 23 (they have to, because of their assumption that not everyone will experience the salvation Paul was writing about here). But aside from the fact that death somehow being said to be destroyed by that group of people being quickened (or being saved in whatever way they assume this means) when Christ returns would mean that nobody *after* Christ's return (including anyone born during the thousand-year kingdom in Israel and on the New Earth, as well as those in the Israel of God who aren't quickened at the Second Coming) could possibly ever be quickened either (because the final salvation via the destruction of death would then have already been said to have taken place when Christ returned, since, if their salvation was figuratively referred to as the "destruction of death," there wouldn't be any "death" left to "destroy" for anyone else to get saved by it happening again afterwards, seeing as it would have already been "destroyed" in the past at that point, whatever the "destruction of death" might actually even mean if that were the case), this also isn't possible because verses 24 and 25 tell us that His sentient enemies are subjected, and that death is **then** destroyed, at a point in time **after** "*they that*

[776] For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. — 1 Corinthians 15:25-26

are Christ's at His coming" have been "made alive," and **not** that His sentient enemies are subjected and that death is destroyed **by** that particular group of people being "made alive." Remember, death is the **last** enemy to be defeated, yet there will still be more death and sentient enemies continuing to exist *long* after the quickening of *"they that are Christ's at His coming,"* since, aside from any death which will occur on earth during the thousand years itself, there's not only going to be a final (even if somewhat short and one-sided) battle between God and those who consider Him to be their enemy a thousand years *after* the quickening of *"they that are Christ's at His coming*" which will involve the death of all those enemies who will rise up against Israel in that attack,[777] we're also told in Isaiah 65 that people will continue to die – or at least have the potential to die, depending on whether or not they commit certain sins – on the New Earth for a certain period of time as well (when Isaiah wrote, *"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being*

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

an hundred years old shall be accursed"[778]*),* long after *"they that are Christ's at His coming"* have been quickened.

And while this might seem like a bit of an aside (although it actually is related to the topic at hand), I have to mention that there are some people who will refer us to Revelation 21:1-4[779] in order to try to prove an assumption they make that there won't be any death possible on the New Earth, and that this passage in Isaiah 65 isn't talking about what takes place on the New Earth at all, but rather that it's actually talking about what will take place during the thousand-year kingdom of heaven on *this* earth – and some of them also say the same thing about the events mentioned after the reference to the New Earth a chapter later

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[778] For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord. — Isaiah 65:17-25

[779] And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. — Revelation 21:1-4

as well[780] (although, to be fair, we know from Jesus' quotes that the passage in Isaiah 66 *does* take place *at least partly* on this earth as well, thanks to the "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy, as we learned earlier in this book, but there's *nothing* to suggest that this is *also* the case when it comes to the passage in Isaiah 65; besides, the passage in Isaiah 66 *does* still refer to the New Earth *as well*, thanks to those "mountain peaks," as we also learned). That being said, regardless of which planet this prophecy in chapter 65 takes place on, it proves that death *does* still exist for at least *some* people living in the kingdom of God after Jesus returns, at least for a time, demonstrating the difference between the type of salvation that Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry and Pauline salvation (which involves full immortality for those who experience *this* type of salvation).

The problem with the claim that the prophecy in chapter 65 – not to mention the prophecy in chapter 66 – *doesn't* refer to the New Earth, however, is that these are quite literally the *only* two references to the New Earth in the *entirety* of the Hebrew Scriptures, so any Israelites who read Isaiah 65 and 66 between the time that book was written and the time that 2 Peter was written[781] would be looking for details about this New Earth which Isaiah had just revealed to them for the first time, and the people who first read these prophecies in Isaiah definitely wouldn't have thought they were saying, "There's going to be a New Earth, but never mind that, here are some details about what's going to happen

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[780] For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. — Isaiah 66:22-24

[781] Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. — 2 Peter 3:12-13

on *this* earth, before the new one is even created, and we won't ever tell you anything about that New Earth at all *anywhere else* in the Hebrew Scriptures." There's just no good reason that I can think of for God to have inspired Isaiah to have even mentioned the New Earth (and New Heaven, which just refers to a whole new universe for the New Earth to exist within, or at least a whole new set of stars and planets and other celestial bodies) twice in these prophecies in Isaiah in the first place, after never having mentioned it prior to this, if he was then going to jump back in time to *only* discussing the thousand-year kingdom of heaven on this earth in the rest of the prophecies (all without even giving any hint to the readers that this is what was happening) rather than continuing to discuss what's going to happen on the New Earth that he'd just introduced to everyone for the first time in these prophecies, especially since nobody reading Isaiah back when it was first written would ever assume that these passages *weren't* talking about what's going to happen on the *actual* New Earth (that said, I suppose it's possible, albeit unlikely, that they assumed the thousand-year kingdom of heaven would take place *on* said New Earth, not being aware of the "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy themselves and hence not realizing that there's a thousand-year gap or so between the Tribulation and the creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth, but thanks to what we've *also* covered earlier in this book, we now know better ourselves, and if they considered what I mentioned in an earlier chapter about the *Day* of the Lord, they probably wouldn't have made that mistake either).

Regardless, it's easy to see that the prophecy in Isaiah 65 *has* to be about the New Earth for another reason, which is the fact that John's prophecy is clearly calling back to Isaiah 65:17-19 (*"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying"*) when it refers to the New Jerusalem on the New Earth in Revelation 21:1-4 itself (*"And I saw a new*

heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"), and I think it should be pretty obvious from reading those two passages side by side that the Jerusalem referred to in Isaiah 65:17-19 *must* be the same Jerusalem spoken of in Revelation 21:1-4, which is the New Jerusalem on the New Earth (I'd also think it would have gone without saying for the original readers of Isaiah that the Jerusalem *he* referred to would have to be a *new* Jerusalem in *his* prophecy too, since the old Jerusalem would go with the old planet prior to the creation of the New Earth he wrote about, especially since they also would have had no good reason to believe the details of this prophecy were going to take place anywhere *other* than on the New Earth mentioned at the beginning of the prophecy, as I already stated), which tells us that everything listed in John's prophecy about there being no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain *has* to be about what happens for those who get to reside *within* the Jerusalem mentioned in both prophecies rather than for those living *outside* it (although one could, perhaps, look at the passage in Revelation through the lens of the "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy as well, but rather than talking about both the New Earth as well as what came before it the way the prophecy in Isaiah 66 does, it would then instead first be about what happens *in* the New Jerusalem on the New Earth, *prior* to the end of the ages, with it then later applying to everyone else outside the New Jerusalem on the New Earth as well, *after* the ages have come to an end and *everyone* has been resurrected from the dead and been made immortal).

On top of all that, the passage we began looking at in Isaiah 65 wraps up in verse 25 by telling us that *"the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion*

shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Why does this also tell us that this passage is talking about the New Earth? Because Isaiah had already discussed this concept of animals residing peacefully together previously in the same book, in Isaiah 11:1-9, when he wrote, *"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* This passage in chapter 11 *is* talking about Israel during the thousand-year kingdom of heaven (as we know from the mention of "the sea" in that passage, since there will be no sea on the New Earth[782]), and to mention this detail again 54 chapters later and be referring to the exact same thing would be entirely redundant. Instead, repeating the beginning of the prophecy about peaceful animals from chapter 11 in chapter 65, right after mentioning the New Earth, confirms that animals will indeed continue to be peaceful on the New Earth just as they will be in Israel when the kingdom of heaven exists there (it also confirms that there will be animals on the New Earth during the final

[782] And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. — Revelation 21:1

age, something that wouldn't necessarily go without saying if this verse hadn't been included in the chapter, at least not prior to the end of the ages when death is destroyed altogether).

That said, even if Isaiah *hadn't* told us that certain people were going to die (or, at the very least, that people will have the potential to die, depending on what sins they may or may not commit) on the New Earth, the fact that some people will still be mortal (or at least semi-mortal), not to mention the fact that some people will have died a second time in the lake of fire and that their dead bodies will be displayed there for everyone to look upon at that time,[783] also proves that death continues to exist and remain an enemy for at least a certain period of time on the New Earth, because death can't be considered to have been truly destroyed as long as A) anyone remains dead, and/or B) anyone is still in a state of slowly dying (as mortals are), or is even capable of dying (as semi-mortals technically still are until they're quickened), meaning that death won't actually be destroyed until *"the end"* group of *"every man in his own order"* of groups is finally "made alive" and there aren't any humans left – which would *have* to include Eve, even if she technically wasn't included in the parallelism of verse 22 – who are not yet immortal (and remember, immortality for humans is always connected with salvation in Scripture,[784] thus proving once again that everyone has to eventually experience the sort of salvation that Paul primarily taught about).

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[783] For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. — Isaiah 66:22-24

[784] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

This also disproves the assertion some people (even some Universalists) make that Revelation 21:4,[785] along with Revelation 20:14,[786] is referring to the destruction of death that Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 15:26[787] (assuming that the verse in chapter 21 about there being no more death in whatever context he meant it in also means everyone gets quickened when they go on to the New Earth, and that the verse in chapter 20 is referring figuratively to the death of death itself, as some of them put it), since that would mean there's no lake of fire on the New Earth after all, and also that nobody will reign over anyone else at all during the final age on the New Earth (or in the New Heavens either), not even Jesus or the rest of the body of Christ, much less the regular human kings that John says will be on the New Earth for a time,[788] or the members of the Israel of God who are said will reign *"for ever and ever"* there too[789] (which just means they've reigned on the previous earth during the previous age, and will also reign during the final age on the New Earth, as made clear by plural variations of the word αἰών in both parts of the clause in the original Greek rather than just the last half, telling us it's about reigning in two different ages rather than just one), because death is the

καὶ	βασιλεύσουσιν	εἰς	τοὺς	
and	reign shall they	for	the	
αἰῶνας	τῶν	αἰώνων		
ages	of the	ages		

[785] And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. — Revelation 21:4

[786] And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. — Revelation 20:14

[787] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. — 1 Corinthians 15:26

[788] And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. — Revelation 21:24

[789] And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. — Revelation 22:5

last enemy to be defeated, as we just discussed, **after** every other enemy of God (including those that John said will be on the New Earth,[790] at least for a time) is placed under Christ's feet (which will be via reconciliation, but I'll get to that a little later), and Jesus gives up His rulership and will be subject to God after destroying death.[791] So, no, John can't be referring to the complete destruction of death in Revelation, since it would contradict too many other verses. Instead, we have to remember to consider the context of Scripture as a whole when we read Revelation 21:4 and accept that it's only referring to what takes place *within* the New Jerusalem, not *without* – the rest of chapters 21 and 22 make it pretty clear that the context of the majority of these two chapters are

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[790] Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. — Revelation 22:14-15

[791] Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

about the New Jerusalem too[792] (and since this also all means that Revelation 20:14 can't possibly be talking about the death of death either, the interpretation I mentioned in a previous chapter about it referring to the lake of fire being the only place the dead will be located on the New Earth is the only one I can think of that really makes sense to me).

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[792] And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. — Revelation 21:1-22:21

And on top of everything we just covered, we also need to keep in mind that, without sin and death on the New Earth ("death" in the form of mortality, at the very least, even if not necessarily dropping dead, although Isaiah 65 tells us that's likely to happen too), anyone born on the New Earth would never get to experience the contrast principle we discussed in the last chapter if they too don't get to experience sin, evil, and death (referring again to mortality here, although actually dropping dead could be included as the end result, depending on the person), which would mean they also won't get to *truly* understand and appreciate grace, goodness, and immortality, and there's no reason that this principle would stop being a principle just because one is born on the New Earth rather than the current earth, and there's no indication that mortal and semi-mortal people will stop reproducing on the New Earth, and every indication they will if Isaiah is to be believed, based on what we just covered, not to mention what Paul literally meant when he wrote about "the age of the ages" in Ephesians 3:21,[793] as we can see from the original Greek that the verse is translated from – with the literal meaning basically being "unto Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all the generations of the age of the ages," referring to all the generations born during the final age on the New Earth, which is what the term "age of the ages" is literally talking about in the original Greek words that Paul actually wrote (even if this isn't made particularly clear in the *King James Bible*, thanks to the extremely figurative way its

αὐτῷ	ἡ	δόξα	ἐν	τῇ	ἐκκλησίᾳ
unto Him	[be]	glory	in	the	church

ἐν	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ	εἰς	πάσας	
by	Christ	Jesus	throughout	all	

τὰς	γενεὰς	τοῦ	αἰῶνος	τῶν	
the	generations	of the	age	of the	

αἰώνων	ἀμήν
ages	amen

[793] Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. — Ephesians 3:21

translators rendered the verse – "world without end" was a hyperbolic figure of speech that just meant "for ever" back then, obviously being used in place of the more typical "for ever and ever" that the KJB generally used to figuratively translate the sort of Greek phrase it's translated from in that verse, which, based on what we've already learned, must just mean "for the age of the ages," at least in this passage, per the original Greek, although it is technically true that the age of the ages will take place on the New Earth and that the New Earth is a world that won't ever end; and they used "all ages" as synecdoche for "the people of all ages" as well, meaning "the people of every age group" or, more literally, "all the generations," which is why, just like many of the other passages we've looked at so far, one is required to look at *"throughout all ages, world without end"* in the original Greek in order to determine what this extremely figurative translation means, with it simply referring to the people of every age group on the New Earth during the final age in this case – and yes, I know that many King James Bible Believers will still want to disagree with that requirement, but if you've read this whole book up until this point, I feel like it's safe to say that I've proven it to be a necessity in *many* passages in the KJB by now, although, if you disagree, I have to ask once again how we'd know what the various "hells" referred to in the KJB even are, especially the Valley of Hinnom, not to mention which "hell" was being written about in a given passage, *without* doing so), since the final age will be the greatest age out of all of the ages, and anyone born on the New Earth will still have a human father, and as we know from Romans 5:12, anyone with a human father will eventually give in to sin. Which is why I have to insist that, yes, there will indeed be sin, evil, and death (at least in the form of mortality, although probably also in the "dropping dead" sense of the word too) on the New Earth, even if these things are far less prevalent or powerful there, at least until the end of the ages when death – and hence sin – is destroyed altogether. (I should also point out that, as Pauline Universalists who understand the Doctrine of the Ages know, even if most Christians aren't aware of this fact, "the age of the ages" corresponds in

literary structure to the phrase "the Holy of Holies"[794] – although the KJB just translates this name for a particular part of the temple from the original Hebrew less literally as “most holy,”[795] thus obscuring this fact from most people who only read this version and don’t dig deeper as is often necessary – which is a phrase specifying a *particular* holy place that exceeds in significance and glory to any *other* holy place or places that it’s being compared to, and since nobody of sound mind would assert that this means "an unending number of holy places next to each other," they likewise shouldn’t assume the “age of the ages,” or even “the ages of the ages,” the latter of which refers to the two best ages out of all the ages, with the former referring to the final and greatest of those two best ages, are given that connotation either; see also “servant of servants,”[796] "God of gods" and “Lord of lords,”[797] “vanity of vanities,”[798] “Song of Songs,”[799] and “king of kings,”[800] as other examples of similar constructions in the Bible.)

Of course, some Christians instead assume the references to death in these verses are talking about the mythical “spiritual death” that most Christians believe in (and which some of them mistakenly assume the death in verse 22 is talking about as well, although if it was, then Jesus *definitely* couldn’t be

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[794] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_of_Holies

[795] And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. — Exodus 26:33

[796] And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. — Genesis 9:25

[797] For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: — Deuteronomy 10:17

[798] Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. — Ecclesiastes 1:2

[799] The song of songs, which is Solomon's. — Song of Songs 1:1

[800] Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. — Ezra 7:12

included in the "firstfruits" reference, unless you believe He also "died spiritually," whatever that means, "in Adam"; although, if He did, He would have then only been "made alive" spiritually "in Himself" as well, and wouldn't have been physically resurrected), but if this part of the chapter is just talking about a so-called "spiritual death" rather than physical mortality, and is only talking about certain people being given some sort of "spiritual life" (or "going to heaven" after they die, which we now know isn't even a scriptural concept, since only the living can enjoy life in outer space, as we learned is what going to heaven means in an earlier chapter of this book), the same problem that applies to those who think the destruction of death is simply referring to the salvation of *"they that are Christ's at His coming"* would have to apply here as well, because the end of "death" doesn't occur until *after* both *"they that are Christ's at His coming"* are saved *and* all the rest of Christ's enemies have been subjected as well, since it's the *final* enemy to be defeated. (Although, if there were such a thing as "spiritual death," this would mean that eventually everyone else will also become "spiritually alive" when Christ subjects His enemies and destroys death, since if "death" in this chapter was simply a reference to the so-called "spiritual death" so many believe in, there couldn't be any "spiritual death" left once Christ destroys it, long after *"they that are Christ's at His coming"* have been "made alive," which means that everyone left who is still "spiritually dead" at that time will become "spiritually alive" when death is destroyed as well, especially based on the fact that verse 22 is a parallelism.)

So, unless someone has a better explanation of what these verses are referring to (one which doesn't contradict the rest of Scripture, and so far one hasn't been forthcoming when I've asked), it would seem that the point of verses 24 through 26 definitely has to be about the final order of people to be "made alive"/quickened, meaning the rest of the "all" who die because of Adam who haven't been made immortal because of Christ yet (including both those who are currently dead at that time, meaning those whose bodies will have been burned up in the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgement, as well as

those who happen to die on the New Earth prior to the destruction of death, and also including those who are still living, thanks to having partaken of the fruit and the leaves of the tree of life to keep from dying, but haven't been quickened yet, referring to those whose names *were* written in the book of life but who hadn't already been quickened previously – with Enoch likely being included among this group, presuming he and other righteous men who existed prior to Abraham weren't resurrected with Abraham in the second order of quickenings – along with any of their descendants who also have access to the tree, not to mention any other mortal humans who might be living on the New Earth as well but who have not been given access to the tree at that time, of course), finally quickened after the last age is completed and Jesus' reign over the kingdom comes to an end because He's placed all enemies (including death) under His feet (which ultimately just means that He'll no longer have any enemies at that time: in some cases, such as in the case of death, because they've been destroyed altogether and no longer even exist, but in other cases because they'll then be at peace with Him and God,[801] as I'll soon prove from another letter of Paul's) and has turned all rulership (including rulership over Himself) over to His Father, and God is finally "All in all"[802] (yes, in all, not just in a lucky few; if Paul had not pointed out that the "all" he was writing about doesn't include God, people could then turn around and say that "all" doesn't literally mean "all" because it obviously couldn't include God, so it could then also exclude people who die as non-believers as well if it doesn't actually mean "all," but because Paul does point out that God isn't included in the "all" but doesn't mention anyone else as being excluded from the group, we

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[801] When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. — Proverbs 16:7

[802] For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 Corinthians 15:25-28

know that everyone other than God *is* included in the "all," even those who die as non-believers – and for those who like to argue that "all" in this verse can't actually mean everyone because of what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:6,[803] what I just wrote about "all" including everyone *other* than God tells us that it *has* to be referring to all sentient creatures other than God in chapter 15 regardless, although there's no good reason to assume that the "all" in chapter 12 isn't talking about everyone anyway, and based on what the Bible says about God's sovereignty, it almost certainly is).

Besides, verse 53 says that *"this corruptible **must** put on incorruption, and this mortal **must** put on immortality,"*[804] and *not* that only the corruptible and mortal nature *of believers* must put on the incorruption and immortality that Paul wrote about in this verse (to insist that this outcome is only going to happen to believers is to read one's presuppositions into the passage, which would clearly be eisegesis, since it just doesn't say that it's limited to believers in the passage). And again, because immortality for humans essentially *is* salvation, as I've now pointed out many times (based on what the very next two verses after this one tell us, in fact[805]), this means that all humanity *will* be saved by the time this has happened to each one of us – although, also again, it will happen to each of us in our own order. (And for anyone who might think this verse just means that someone must be made immortal in order to be saved, there's no proposition mentioned in the passage, so that idea would also be eisegesis; to put it simply, because the word "if" isn't found anywhere in the passage, nor is there any other language found in the passage which even *suggests* an option is being

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[803] And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. — 1 Corinthians 12:6

[804] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. — 1 Corinthians 15:53

[805] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:54-55

given to humans there either, the word "must" in verse 53 can't possibly refer to something that will only happen *if* something else happens first, but instead it **must** refer to something that *will* happen because it *has* to happen, thanks to what Christ accomplished.)

This all means, by the way, that being "made alive" in verse 22 can't simply be a reference to joining the body of Christ or the Israel of God or to some other relative form of salvation one experiences at the time one believes one of the Gospels, as some assume, because being "made alive" happens only three times, and in a very specific order (and this is also why Enoch and Elijah can't have been living in heaven all this time, as I mentioned in a previous chapter, because, in order to live there, they'd have to have been "made alive" prior to the specific order of three sets of quickenings when that happens to everyone, although also because heaven is meant for the body of Christ, not for the Israel of God – which is the church that Elijah would be a member of – whose destiny is instead the *kingdom* of heaven, which we now know will exist on earth rather than *in* heaven).

This also means that people who use passages in the KJB which tell us Jesus will reign "for ever"[806] in order to prove that "everlasting" punishment will also never end because *those* passages use the same words too are actually basing their argument on an obvious misunderstanding, since Paul is clear that His reign *won't* be never-ending, but rather will only last until He's defeated the final enemy at the end of the ages, and stops reigning after doing so. This also demonstrates just how few people are aware that A) nearly all of the passages that are translated as saying "eternal," "everlasting," "for ever," or "never" in the popular, and less literal, versions of the Bible such as the KJB have to be interpreted qualitatively and figuratively, as we learned in chapter 4, rather

[806] He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. — Luke 1:32-33

than quantitatively and literally, based on this fact (telling us that the actual meaning of this figurative translation is, "And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages," referring to the final two ages to come, since "for ever" is translated from a plural variation of the word αἰών in this passage), as well as that B) everyone will eventually be quickened/"made alive," which Paul knew because he saw much farther into the future than John did in the prophecies he recorded in the book generally called Revelation (John basically only saw into the beginning of the New Earth, when death is a much less powerful force than it is now, but still exists, since, at the very least, there will still be people dead in the lake of fire at that time, whereas Paul saw a much later point of time, at the end of the ages, when death is finally destroyed altogether, and nobody can be left dead at all if there isn't any death left – which there couldn't be if it's been destroyed).

καὶ	βασιλεύσει	ἐπὶ	τὸν	οἶκον		
and	He shall reign	over	the	house		
Ἰακὼβ	εἰς	τοὺς	αἰῶνας			
of Jacob	for	the	ages			

And since many Christians often make a similar mistake when they try to insist that, "If 'eternal' damnation isn't actually never-ending, then 'eternal' life would have to come to an end as well and we'd eventually die," or even, "if hell eventually ends, then heaven would have to eventually end too," I'm forced to point out that they really aren't thinking things through when they make these assertions, since we've already determined that these type of words in the KJB generally have to be interpreted qualitatively rather than quantitatively (or figuratively rather than literally), so we have to assume they aren't talking about how long one lives (or even how long one is punished) so much as about the form or quality of the life and judgements they experience will be (and, in fact, most Christians *already* interpret this term qualitatively and figuratively anyway, because of their belief in the immortality of the soul, as we've already covered earlier in this book). Besides, we already know that the current heaven *will* eventually cease to exist anyway, or else it couldn't be replaced with by a New

Heaven. And so, just because one's time experiencing "eternal" damnation will come to an end, it doesn't stand to reason that anyone enjoying "eternal" life in the future will eventually die (or lose their salvation), because it isn't verses about "eternal" life that promise us lives which never end in the first place, but rather it's verses about our impending immortality which tell us we'll never die (at least after our quickening), as I pointed out previously. So, when people are eventually resurrected from their second death in the lake of fire to be "made alive"/quickened (which they'll have to be in order for it to be able to be said that death has truly been destroyed, since as long as death continues to hold anyone prisoner, death hasn't actually been defeated or destroyed at all, but rather continues to be an enemy), members of the body of Christ will have reached the end of their figurative "eternal" life at that time as well, but we'll still remain alive because we'll already have been made immortal *long* before that. Basically, when someone reaches the end of the figurative "for ever" or "everlasting/eternal" life, that particular aspect of their salvation (the special, age-pertaining sort of salvation that only a few will ever get to enjoy) will be over, but they'll still remain alive because they'll have bodies that can't die (or, if they're among those who get to enjoy "everlasting"/age-pertaining life in Israel, or perhaps even on the New Earth, but haven't been made immortal yet, they'll finally be given immortality, along with everyone else). The simple truth is, it should be quite obvious to anyone who has made it this far (and really to anyone who has read the whole Bible and was actually paying attention when they did so, as we learned in chapter 4 of this book) that the words "everlasting" and "eternal" (not to mention "for ever") almost never actually mean "never-ending" (or "without end") when you read them in less literal translations of Scripture, any more than they do when they're used in everyday speech today, but almost always have to be read figuratively – as hyperbole – in such Bible versions, because no passage that uses those sorts of words can legitimately be used to prove The Popular Doctrine, since to do so would contradict everything else we've just covered (and are still going to cover) about the salvation of all humanity in Scripture.

In addition to everything else we've now learned about 1 Corinthians 15, this all also tells us that "the last trump" of verse 52[807] will indeed be the final trumpet to sound during the ages – specifically at the end of the ages – even though it's going to sound *before* the final trumpet mentioned in Revelation sounds, long before the ages end. If doesn't make sense to you, remember the "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy, and first think of 1 Corinthians 15:52 as being perceived from a "*forward-facing*" view of a prophetic mountains. If all we read was that one verse on its own, we'd think the trumpet is only going to sound one time (this is the forward-facing view of the prophetic mountains). But if we then shift our perspective and consider the metaphoric "Mountain Peaks" of the prophecies contained in the *entire chapter* from the *"sideways" perspective*, especially keeping verses 22 through 24 of the chapter in mind,[808] we can then see that this trumpet is going to sound at least **3 different times**: once when the body of Christ is quickened (at the Snatching Away, and this trumpet will later be followed by the 7 trumpets of Revelation, during the Tribulation), then a second time when the dead members of the Israel of God are resurrected and quickened at the resurrection of the just (75 days after the Tribulation ends), and finally, it will sound at least one last time, when everyone else is made alive/quickened, with this being what finally destroys death (this final sounding will take place at the end of the ages, thus justifying this trumpet's label as "the *last* trump").

But in case anybody somehow *is* still skeptical about the salvation of all humanity after reading all that, Paul confirmed it beyond any shadow of a doubt

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[807] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. — 1 Corinthians 15:52

[808] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. — 1 Corinthians 15:22-24

when he wrote in 1 Timothy 2:3-6 that Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, which is because God wants all men to be saved.[809] You see, when a ransom is fully paid, all those who are held captive are set free, unless the one paying the ransom has been lied to (and there's nothing in this passage which qualifies the "all" as referring only to believers, so to insist it only includes them – or to insist that it only refers to "all kinds of men," as some Calvinists do – is to once again read one's assumptions into the text, especially in light of the fact that Paul began the chapter talking about all men alive, including all those in authority at the time[810] – unless, perhaps, the only men that God wants to save *are* kings and those in authority, which is really the *only* logical way of trying to limit the scope of God's desire towards human salvation in this passage if it isn't talking about all humanity, although I trust you can see how ridiculous that interpretation would be – and also said in verse 4 that all mankind is included in those whom God wills to experience salvation, and there's nothing in the text to indicate he'd suddenly begun referring only to believers immediately after that, but instead wrote that Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for the same "all" he'd been talking about already, telling his readers that every human who will have ever lived has been ransomed, even though they won't all experience their salvation at the same time).

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

[810] I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. — 1 Timothy 2:1-2

To break it down:

1. Anyone Christ "gave Himself a ransom for" *will* be ransomed.
2. If someone is ransomed as a result of Christ's death, they *will* be saved.
3. The "all" that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for" includes all mankind.
4. All mankind will be saved.

Please don't confuse this as meaning that Christ died in our place, receiving the penalty for our sins so we wouldn't have to receive said penalty for our sins ourselves, though, as many Christians believe He did (so long as we choose to believe He did so, they'd also claim). Of course, even if the idea that Christ paid the price for our sins in our place was a scriptural concept, it makes no sense that we would have to choose to believe He paid the price for our sins in our place in order for Him to have actually paid the price for our sins in our place (He either did or He didn't, and our belief couldn't change the fact either way), because if those who didn't choose to believe it then had to pay the price themselves, it would mean God was double-charging, which would be quite dishonest of Him (not to mention most unfair to His Son, Who endured beatings and the pain and humiliation of the cross before entering the death state of unconsciousness called being in "hell" in the *King James Bible*, all in order to be a ransom for *all* sinners in order to save them,[811] and God isn't going to shortchange Him of any of the sinners He suffered and died for in order to save, regardless of whether some of them might not have been born wise or humble enough to come to believe He did so prior to their death or His return – and those who don't believe this good news includes most Christians out there as well, by the way, since they themselves don't believe that He ransomed "all" humanity through His death for our sins either, which means they haven't fully understood, and hence can't be said to have truly believed, Paul's Gospel, and as such can't be said to be in the body of Christ).

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[811] This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. — 1 Timothy 1:15

That said, there's absolutely nothing written *anywhere* in Scripture which even *implies* that Jesus died "in our place," or that He received the penalty for anyone's sins "in their place" so they wouldn't have to pay the price for their sins themselves. However, for those who have never really thought about this, let's consider what it would mean if He actually *did* pay a penalty for our sins so that we don't have to suffer that particular penalty ourselves. If He did, and if ending up being punished in that other "hell" where the lake of fire is going to be located without being able to leave it was the penalty for our sins (whether consciously or otherwise), it would mean that Jesus would not only have to *still* be burning in that "hell" to this day (and that we'd be able to see Him burning in the Valley of Hinnom in Israel today), He'd have to *remain* there for **all time** (experiencing the specific punishment we deserve is what "paying the penalty *in our place*" means, after all). But since He never even set foot in the lake of fire to begin with (He couldn't have, since it wasn't burning in that valley during His earthly ministry, and He wasn't crucified or buried in that "hell"/valley either), much less remained there for all time (which would have to be the case if that truly was the price to be paid for our sins that He paid), burning without end in the lake of fire obviously wasn't a punishment He suffered "in our place," which means it couldn't possibly be the specific penalty we deserve either, at least not if He *did* pay the penalty we deserved "in our place." And if the penalty He supposedly paid "in our place" was simply death instead, nobody who "got saved" would ever actually drop dead, which obviously isn't the case (and it couldn't simply be crucifixion that He endured "in our place" either, or else all non-believers would have to eventually be literally crucified as their punishment, and no believer could ever be crucified either, but there's definitely nothing in Scripture which even implies this to be the case). This also means the penalty couldn't be never-ending "separation from God," since, if it were, Jesus would also have to be separated from God at this point in time, and for all time, in order to truly "pay the penalty in our place." And for those who want to suggest that the penalty might be "spiritual death," whatever that's

supposed to be, it would again have to mean that A) Christ "died spiritually" for us "in our place" rather than died physically on the cross (and I'm assuming nobody actually believes He "died spiritually"), but also that B) nobody can be "spiritually dead" before they die physically if Christ paid that penalty "in our place," yet most Christians believe we're *already* "spiritually dead" *prior* to salvation, so there's no way He could have "died spiritually" for us "in our place" so we don't have to ever "die spiritually" ourselves, because we're already in this spiritual state *before* we get saved (or we would be if the common Christian viewpoints of "spiritual death" and that Jesus paid the price in our place were actually true, of course).

This doesn't mean that there *isn't* an ultimate penalty for our sins, however. In fact, there is, and that ultimate penalty is indeed death,[812] at least when it comes to mortal (and semi-mortal) humans (specifically to remain permanently dead after we die, or at least that seems to be the logical conclusion based on the fact that people are born mortal without first sinning, and on the fact that it can't refer to suffering in the lake of fire since we now know that no humans can suffer there, so eventual unending oblivion after we die – even if one might be temporarily resurrected for a judgement before dying again and proceeding on to that permanent death – appears to be the only option remaining for what it is that our sin earns us, while also confirming that this is what Romans 6:23 must be referring to, since otherwise we'd never know what the *actual* penalty of sin is; basically, there's a reason that some people believe the Bible teaches Annihilationism, because it sort of does, from a certain hypothetical perspective at least, meaning that it tells us annihilation would indeed be the end result for *everyone* if Christ *hadn't* died for our sins, although, thankfully, He did, and now everyone will instead be saved). It's just that Jesus didn't die "in our place" to receive the penalty so we don't have to, which should be obvious considering the fact that believers continue to drop dead today (and also because He didn't

[812] For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. — Romans 6:23

remain permanently dead, which is a part of the penalty). And while it's true that the reason we die is simply the mortality we inherited from Adam, the sins we can't avoid because of that mortality also make us worthy of the death most of us will experience, so any mortal humans who end up sinning (which is all of us,[813] or at least all of us who don't die before we're able to sin, although everyone who *does* die prior to that point will eventually give in to sin too, as they grow up on the New Earth after they've been resurrected, since they'll still be mortal at that time, at least to begin with) still need to have their sin dealt with.

Because, while God does indeed want all humanity to be saved (as we learned in 1 Timothy 2:4[814]), and even though He could temporarily overlook sin (and in "Old Testament" times He did indeed pass over the penalties of many sins which occurred,[815] especially the sins of those who participated in the sacrificial system under the Mosaic law, presuming they didn't commit "a sin unto death,"[816] meaning a sin that had a death penalty attached to it under the law), the blood of bulls and goats could not actually take away sins[817] (the death of these animals couldn't actually remove the penalty of sin, nor could it keep us from sinning again), and so if Christ had not given His life for us – and if God hadn't known ahead of time that this was going to happen – it would have

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[813] For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; — Romans 3:23

[814] Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. — 1 Timothy 2:4

[815] Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; — Romans 3:25

[816] If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. — 1 John 5:16-17

[817] For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. — Hebrews 10:4

actually been *unjust* of God (Who is indeed a just God,[818] and is one Who judges men according to truth[819]) to pass over the penalty of their sins and treat them as if they *hadn't* sinned and *weren't* deserving of death, even if they *did* perform the required sacrifices under the law (and it would be equally unjust of Him to simply forgive us today without what Christ did as well).

Thankfully, Jesus always did His Father's will[820] (and, as we now know, a part of His Father's will is that all men be saved), and so, because He lived a completely sinless life and then became *"obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,"*[821] He was given all power (once again translated from the Greek ἐξουσία, which, as we learned in a previous chapter of this book, means "authority") in heaven and in earth.[822] This means that Christ now has the authority to be Lord of both the dead and the living[823] (and He couldn't be Lord of the dead if they remained dead, since, as we also now know, the dead aren't conscious), and He also has the authority to save all of the sinners He died to save from the condemnation which our sins made us deserving of. And because of His obedience, Christ also became *more* deserving of having sinners be saved than we sinners remained deserving of remaining permanently in the death state, which means that God

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[818] He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. — Deuteronomy 32:4

[819] But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. — Romans 2:2

[820] Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. — John 4:34

[821] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: — Philippians 2:8-9

[822] And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. — Matthew 28:18

[823] For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. — Romans 14:9

is now able to righteously forgive sins at any time (without our consent, even, if He wants to do so), and is even required to do so now upon Christ's request (which Christ will do because He knows it's God's will that He does so, not to mention because He wouldn't have gone to the cross if He didn't intend to do so anyway), since it would be unrighteous of Him to not do so, as His doing so is now in accord with the truth of what *Christ* deserves due to His obedience. As Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:15, *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (and not "Christ Jesus came into the world to save only those few sinners who happened to be born wise enough to choose to let Him save them"), so every single sinner (and this would have to include Eve, because she was a sinner too, even if she wasn't included in the parallelisms in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5) will ultimately end up saved in the end because it's what Christ Jesus came to do and also deserves. (And I should probably also point out that the condemnation we deserve for our sins is not the same condemnation that we experience because of *Adam's* sin, since that was simply condemnation to mortality leading to death, which in turn condemned us to give in to sin, whereas it's that sin we give in to thanks to our mortality which is what makes us deserve to eventually be condemned to die and remain dead permanently – which means we could also say that we've been condemned to be condemned to be condemned, with Christ dying in order to save us from *all* of those forms of condemnation, along with *other* forms of condemnation that I don't have the time to get into the details of right now as well, at least in the case of some people.)

To break this all down:

1. All mortal humans have sinned (or will eventually sin if they haven't already) and, as such, are all deserving of permanent death.
2. Because God is love, He wills that all humanity be saved from this penalty.
3. It would be unjust of God to use His own authority to save those who are deserving of permanent death by quickening them, or even by keeping them

alive in a semi-mortal state, simply because He desires to do so (since doing so wouldn't be in accord with the truth that they're deserving of permanent death).

4. Because of His obedience *"unto death, even the death of the cross,"* however, Christ became *more* deserving of having God save all sinners than any sinners are deserving of remaining permanently in the death state, and also became worthy of the authority that was required to carry out God's will that all humanity be saved (which He received when he was resurrected by God).
5. Since Christ wills to do the will of his Father – and, as such, is going to use His God-given authority and right to save all sinners from death as His Father wills (starting with believers, of course) – the eventual salvation (and thus the justification) of all humanity by God was guaranteed by Christ's obedience unto death (and doing so is now in accord with the truth that Christ deserves our salvation more than we deserve permanent death).

So, while He didn't die "in our place," or pay the penalty "in our place" (since most of us still die, and since He didn't remain dead), Christ *did* die in order that *the penalty could be justly set aside* at whatever point Christ (and God) decides to do so for each of us (although *"every man in his own order"*), at which time each of us will be resurrected (if we've died), be justified, and be made free from even being able to die ever again – be made immortal, in other words. (There's a lot more I could say about this topic, as well as about the false doctrine of PSA – or Penal Substitutionary Atonement – which is the doctrine that "Christ died in our place," but I don't have the time or space to do so right now; fortunately, though, Aaron Welch has already written an excellent series of articles going far more into depth on both the subject of why Christ's death saves us *and* on the subject of PSA, which means I don't have to, so please go read the article linked to in the footnote at the end of this sentence, as well as

the other articles he linked to in that article, if you're interested in learning more about these points.[824])

That's not all, though. Because He died *for our sins,* He not only condemned sin (not us – sin itself) in the flesh,[825] but His death also put away sin,[826] removing sin from the equation for all humanity altogether, even if perhaps only proleptically for the time being (thus making Him the antitype of the goat in the wilderness in the Mosaic law,[827] among other things), and if sin has been put away, in some ways it can be said that it's ultimately no longer something anyone needs to worry about at all (and in the long run, humanity as a whole definitely doesn't have to worry about it). You see, when He went down into the tomb, it can be said that He brought sin down into the earth with Him, and when He was resurrected three days later, He returned without that sin, and so sin is no longer being held against anyone anymore (at least from an absolute perspective, even if not, perhaps, from a relative perspective at this time), regardless of whether they believe it or not, because Christ died *for our sins,* which is yet more proof that everyone will experience salvation in the end, when they're eventually made immortal and incapable of sinning any longer (although those relative few who *"come unto the knowledge of the truth"* now,

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[824] *A refutation of the doctrine of "penal substitutionary atonement" (part one)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2026/01/a-refutation-of-doctrine-of-penal.html

[825] For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: — Romans 8:3

[826] For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. — Hebrews 9:26

[827] And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. — Leviticus 16:20-22

meaning those who understand and believe what it means that Christ died for our sins, and that He was buried and rose again on the third day, get to enjoy a special form of salvation on top of the type of salvation that everyone will experience: including freedom from religion – because they know there's nothing they have to do, or even that they could do, in order to receive the benefits of what Christ did for us, since they're aware that having to do any act at all would be a work performed in order to earn that gift, even if that act was simply having to choose to receive the free gift that Christ already guaranteed for all of us – and also getting to experience that salvation before the rest of humanity does too, being quickened long before the majority of humanity will be, among other benefits once we're in heaven as well).

The above all definitively proves the salvation of all, but that's not the only biblical proof, because Paul also wrote (in Ephesians 1:13-14): *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."* How does that prove the salvation of all? Well, if you read it in the context of the whole chapter, and are also familiar with the different types of salvation mentioned in Scripture, you'll notice that this

section of the chapter (verses 3 through 14[828]) is primarily about the blessings that God has purposed beforehand to literally lavish upon those (*"hath abounded toward us"*) whom He chose to become members of the body of Christ. Simply put, this section of the chapter is all about how God has predestined certain people to experience certain blessings in Christ, blessings which not everyone will experience. This isn't Calvinism, however, since experiencing the blessings mentioned in this chapter aren't about the general salvation that everyone receives. It's only those who are experiencing the special "eternal" life form of salvation Paul taught about that he was writing to in this passage, specifically the body of Christ.

And so when Paul wrote, "*after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,"* he was saying that his readers had heard the word of truth, and, in what is essentially a parenthetical, explained what that word of truth they heard was: the good news (*"gospel"*) of their salvation. To put it simply, Paul wrote here that the good news they had heard was the good news of their already guaranteed salvation – meaning the general salvation that all humanity has

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[828] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. — Ephesians 1:3-14

been guaranteed – not the good news of how they *could* have salvation if only they did something specific (note that he didn't write, "after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your **potential** salvation, although only if you actually believed that gospel," but rather that they had heard the good news about the salvation which was *already theirs* – since it was already everyone's, even if perhaps just proleptically at present, thanks to Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection – after which they trusted that this good news about their already guaranteed salvation was indeed true). The point here is that, because there is no included proposition in the text connected with the salvation they heard about, the good news they heard was a proclamation that they were already guaranteed salvation prior to hearing about it (as the outcome of Christ's death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection, meaning as the outcome of the facts proclaimed in Paul's Gospel). Simply put, Paul couldn't tell them the good news of their salvation if it wasn't *already* their salvation (at least from a proleptic, or perhaps absolute, perspective).

Of course, most people read this verse and assume that either the first part of the verse (*"In whom ye also trusted"*) or the last part of the verse (*"in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise"*) actually is a proposition about their salvation, and that their salvation wasn't guaranteed until after they actually believed the supposed good news about how they could attain said salvation. But this is a misunderstanding due to not being aware of what the different types of salvation mentioned in Scripture are all about. All the first part of the verse is telling us is that they trusted Christ *after* they heard the good news of their already guaranteed general, absolute form of salvation which He'd already won for all of us (including them), and all the last part of the verse is telling us is that, after they trusted that Christ had already guaranteed that form of salvation for all of us because of what He accomplished through His death for our sins, burial, and resurrection, even before they believed it, they were then sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which means they were also

given a special, relative form of salvation (*"an earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession"*) which doesn't apply to all humanity the way the salvation that Christ guaranteed for all of humanity does, since not everyone is sealed by the Holy Spirit. All that is to say, Paul's little parenthetical in Ephesians 1:13 is simply telling us that "the good news of [their and everyone's general] salvation" was already "as good as done" for them (and for everyone) before they heard it, and after they heard about the salvation that was already guaranteed for them (because it's guaranteed for everyone), they trusted Christ and were sealed with the Holy Spirit, and hence were also promised the special "eternal" life form of salvation which only members of the body of Christ get to enjoy (and were then awaiting that salvation guaranteed for everyone, meaning the quickening of their mortal bodies, referred to here as *"the redemption of the purchased possession,"* which they'll receive when Christ comes for His body, and which everyone else will also eventually receive, although *"every man in his own order,"* as we already discussed). Basically, just as it is with 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, this passage talks about both forms of salvation connected with Paul's Gospel, and just as it is when it comes to that passage, if one isn't aware of this fact, they'll horribly misinterpret Ephesians 1:13-14 too.

But even clearer than that example, Paul also wrote that God is *"the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe"* in 1 Timothy 4:10,[829] and honestly, it doesn't get any more clear than this, with Paul telling us that God will save absolutely everyone, even if those who believe this good news will get to experience a special level of salvation on top of that (as already discussed, including freedom from religion, as well as an earlier experience of immortality than everyone else, among other things). Every Christian out there knows the definition of the word "especially" (or "**specially**," which the KJB uses in this verse, and which, just like the word "especially" in the KJB, is *always* used to mean "particularly" rather than "exclusively" every *other* time it's used in the

[829] For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. — 1 Timothy 4:10

KJB – which makes sense, considering the fact that this is what the word μάλιστα/"mal'-is-tah" that "especially" and "specially" are both always translated from in the Greek Scriptures in the KJB means – so it would make no sense for it to suddenly take on an entirely new meaning in this single verse, one which contradicts the meaning of both the English word in the translation *and* the Greek word that it's translated from), yet somehow most of them seem to forget what it means when they get to this verse. But their apparent selective memory aside, they'd still recognize that if a teacher said, "I've given everyone a passing grade this year, specially Lydia who got an A+," the teacher would have meant that, while nobody else got an A+, they still all passed, since these Christians actually *do* know that "especially" (and even "specially") doesn't mean "specifically" or "only," even if they need to pretend to themselves that it does when considering what Paul had to say here.

Likewise, if someone wrote, *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith,"* the way Paul did in Galatians 6:10, they'd know that they should focus most of their positive efforts on believers *("them who are of the household of faith,"* the very same people Paul was referring to when he wrote, *"specially of those that believe,"* in 1 Timothy 4:10, where he used the same Greek word μάλιστα that he used in this verse in Galatians), but that they should still try to do good unto everyone else (the very same *"all men"* that Paul said God was the Saviour of) as well, and not that we should do good *only* unto believers. In fact, if "specially" did mean "only," the part of the verse which tells us God is the Saviour of all men would be a lie, because it didn't say God is "the *potential* Saviour of all men, but *really* only of those that believe" (or that God is "the Saviour *available* for all men, although He's *actually* only the Saviour of those that believe"), but instead plainly tells us that He actually *is* the Saviour of *all* men, and to be able to legitimately be called the saviour of a group of people, you have to actually save everyone in that group at some point, which means that, to be able to truly be called "the Saviour of all men," God has to actually save all men eventually.

Bottom line, if even *one* human fails to eventually end up experiencing the salvation Paul was talking about, he'd be just as much of a liar as that teacher would turn out to be if any of the students in Lydia's class received a failing grade after telling them they'd all passed.

And Calvinists who insist that Paul is only claiming "God is the Saviour of all *kinds* or *sorts* of men," or, again, that God only wants "all *sorts* or *kinds* of men" to be saved rather than actually "*will* have *all men* to be saved," as Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:3-4, A) that's clearly not what these passages say anyway (the words "kinds" and "sorts" aren't there in the text), and B) they're ignoring the second part of the verse where Paul says "specially of believers" (which can't really follow the phrase "all *kinds* of men" and make any sense in this case, since "specially" would then be have to be qualifying who the "all *kinds* of men" are, but the word "specially" simply can't be used that way, because it means "particularly," not "exclusively") rather than "specifically believers," so they're just reading their own preconceived doctrinal bias that not everyone will experience salvation into these passages because they have no other choice if they don't want it to contradict their theological presuppositions, just as non-Calvinist Christians who believe in never-ending punishment do in their own way as well.

All that is to say, this verse (which is yet another example of Paul referring to both the general and special forms of salvation in the same passage) once again verifies that the doctrine of salvation connected with Paul's Gospel that he taught about throughout his epistles is indeed that every human who is affected by the curse and locked up in unbelief[830] – not to mention in vanity[831] (neither

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[830] For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. — Romans 11:32

[831] For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. — Romans 8:20-21

of which we've been locked up in because of any choice we made, but rather, from a relative perspective, because of a choice Adam made, and, from an absolute perspective, because God Himself chose to lock everyone up in that manner so we could eventually also be shown mercy and be delivered from the bondage of corruption, since, as we already discussed in a previous chapter, if we'd never experienced evil we couldn't have truly appreciated the contrasting goodness, and if we'd never experienced sin and death, we could never experience, and hence never truly appreciate, grace; immortality might not mean as much to us either, without having first experienced mortality, I should add) – will also be equally (actually, it seems even more so[832]) affected by the cross and made immortal, even if it doesn't happen to everyone at the same time (with believers getting that special, earlier experience of salvation they've been promised, as well as potentially getting to rule and reign with Christ in the heavens during the impending ages, or perhaps getting to rule over the earth from Israel – depending on which sort of salvation they're experiencing – figuratively referred to as "everlasting" life, or as life "eternal," in the KJB and other less literal Bible versions).

In fact, the verses (Romans 8:18-23) around the passage which tells us that all creation (referred to in the KJB as *"the creature"*) has been locked up in vanity also tells us quite definitively that all humanity will indeed be delivered from it as well: *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected*

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[832] But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) — Romans 5:15-17

the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Notice that Paul said "the creature" (meaning creation, referring to all human beings – if not all biological beings who can look forward to things – and not just those who are in the body of Christ) has the earnest expectation of *"the manifestation of the sons of God"* (referring to our appearing with Christ when He returns[833]), because *"the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,"* and they wouldn't be looking forward to our appearing if they weren't going to benefit from it, which we know they will, since Paul wrote there that they *shall* be delivered from the bondage of corruption and will become *"children of God"* (not to be confused with those of us who are *"the sons of God,"* which is a much more esteemed position – referring to our position as joint-heirs with Christ[834] – although we *are* still technically *"children of God"*[835] as well, even as *"sons of God"* – and yes, women who join the body of Christ are included in the *"sons of God"* label too, just as all women are in the *"all men"* reference in 1 Timothy 4, which just means "all humans"). In addition, verse 23 says that it's *"not only they, but ourselves also,"* which means *"they"* (those who *aren't* in the body of Christ) and *"ourselves also"* (those who *are* in the body of Christ, referring to those *"which have the firstfruits of the Spirit"* – telling us that there will be others *after* those in the body of Christ who will also have the Spirit, based on the meaning of "firstfruits") will **all** enjoy *"the redemption of our*

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[833] When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. — Colossians 3:4

[834] And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. — Romans 8:17

[835] The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: — Romans 8:16

body" (our quickening, in other words, which is salvation; although *"every man in his own order,"* of course).

However, as I'm sure you expected, I have to once again ask the usual question: If Paul *was* trying to explain that God indeed *will* save everyone eventually, but that He'll also give believers a special salvation on top of that in the meantime, what he would have needed to have written differently in those passages in his first epistle to Timothy and in Romans 8 in order to convince you that this is what he meant?

It's not just salvation that all humans will experience, though; it's also reconciliation. And while the salvation that involves being made immortal is technically only experienced by mortal beings such as humans, reconciliation will be experienced by all sentient beings in the universe who require it, as demonstrated by a passage where Paul used a similar sort of parallelism to the ones he used in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5, this time in the first chapter of his epistle to the Colossians. In fact, I don't know how someone can read verses 12 through 20 of that chapter[836] and not end up a believer in the reconciliation of all creatures, although it seems most people somehow miss the fact that Paul is using a type of parallelism known as an Extended Alternation here – likely because they probably aren't familiar with Paul's consistent use of parallelisms

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[836] Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. — Colossians 1:12-20

Colossians 1:12-20 Parallelism (Extended Alternation)

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

throughout his epistles to prove the salvation (and reconciliation) of all humanity – to tell us that the same "all" created *by Him* are also the same "all" that are reconciled *to Him* by the blood of Christ's cross, and that this passage tells us that not only are *all* humans (meaning *all* the things created in earth, as mentioned in both verses 16 and 20) both created by and reconciled to Him, but all the creatures in heaven/outer space (as also mentioned in both of the same two verses, referring to a list of spiritual beings that overlaps with another list of creatures who are described in Ephesians 6:12 as being the spiritual wickedness in high places[837]) are also both created by and reconciled to Him, and there would be no need to reconcile spiritual beings in heaven who weren't first alienated, so it can only be the foolish[838] (and sometimes sinful, or even evil) spiritual beings in the heavens who are being reconciled; and if all of them are going to be reconciled, as Paul promises they will be in that passage, we know

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[837] For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. — Ephesians 6:12

[838] Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: — Job 4:18

that all the creatures on the earth will be as well, as he also says they will be in the same passage (and these are the group of beings I mentioned earlier that weren't a part of the first half of the parallelism in 1 Corinthians 15:22, since they aren't descendants of Adam and hence aren't mortal like us humans are because of his action, but can still be reconciled to God because of Christ's action, just like Eve, even if none of them were technically included in the point being made by that particular parallelism).

It's important to keep in mind that the words "reconcile" and "reconciliation" refer to the parties on *both* sides of an estrangement or conflict being at peace with one another, meaning that God is at peace with them *and* they're at peace with God when this reconciliation occurs, and this wouldn't the case if any of them were still being tormented in the lake of fire at that time, which they would have to leave right before Christ destroys death by resurrecting and quickening any dead humans still left in the lake of fire as well (thus proving that "for ever and ever" in the KJB isn't meant to be interpreted as literally meaning "without end," even when it comes to the punishment of the spiritual beings known as the devil, the beast, and the false prophet in the lake of fire, since they'd have to be included in the "all" which are both created by and reconciled to God as well, telling us that it actually means "until the end of the ages," or "for the duration of the final age or ages," depending on the context of the passage in question and the plurality of the word αἰών in said passage in the original Greek, with "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages," being what the part of Revelation 20:10 which talks about the duration of their torment, for example, actually means, with "the ages of the ages" referring to the final two impending ages that we'll get to enjoy before the ages finally come to an end, as previously discussed), since Christ's defeat of all other enemies takes place just prior to the destruction of death (and if there's a better way to put an end to one's

enemy[839] than turning that enemy into a willing servant, or even a friend,[840] I don't know what it would be).

This is also proven by the prophecy of Philippians 2:10-11 which tells us, *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,"* because nobody can say Jesus is the Lord and truly mean it apart from the Holy Spirit leading them to do so,[841] which means anyone who does so will possess the Holy Spirit at that time. There's absolutely no indication in this passage that this declaration will be forced out of them the way most Christians assume it will be, especially since it's *"to the glory of God the Father,"* and He'd receive far more glory from a willing confession based on the reconciliation that Paul wrote about than from a coerced concession by an enemy, so the only reason to read the idea of this confession being forced out of still-existing enemies at gunpoint (or whatever sort of threat it takes to get a presumably immortal spiritual being to assent to something they don't want to assent to) rather than being made by friends and willing subjects who are now at peace with Him in their minds is, once again, preconceived doctrinal bias that not every human will experience salvation and that not every created being who needs it will be truly reconciled to God. But if you're having trouble with this parallelism, replace the word "all" with the variable *x* again in both verses 16 and 20 of Colossians 1 – in fact, do it in all the verses *from* verse 16 to verse 20 – and it should become clear what it means.

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[839] Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. — Romans 12:20-21

[840] When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. — Proverbs 16:7

[841] Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. — 1 Corinthians 12:3

Some parallelisms Paul provided in his epistles to prove the salvation of all	
The First Man: Adam = Condemnation [to mortality and sinfulness] of all	**The Second Man: Christ = Salvation [immortality and sinlessness] of the same all**
Therefore as… (Romans 5:18)	**Even so…**
by the offence of **one** [not ours]	by the righteousness of **one** [not ours]
judgement came upon [and **was** received by]	the free gift came upon [and hence **will be** received by]
all men	[all of the same] all men
to condemnation [to mortality and death, and hence to give in to sin]	unto justification of life [meaning eventual immortality and sinlessness]
For as… (Romans 5:19)	**So…**
by **one man's** disobedience [not ours]	by the obedience of **one** [not ours]
many were made	shall [all of the same] many be made
sinners	righteous
For as… (1 Corinthians 15:22)	**Even so…**
in Adam [meaning because of what Adam did]	in Christ [meaning because of what Christ did]
all die [meaning all are born mortal]	shall all be made alive [meaning the same all will be made immortal/be saved]
For by Him… (Colossians 1:16)	**By Him… (Colossians 1:20)**
were all things created	to reconcile all things unto himself (having made peace through the blood of his [Christ's] cross)
that are in heaven, and that are in earth [whether angelic or human]	whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven [whether human or angelic]

Now, some try to argue that verse 21 of Colossians chapter 1[842] contradicts this conclusion, but that just means they aren't reading the text very carefully, since A) it really should be obvious that the point Paul was making about the eventual reconciliation of all created beings concludes with the end of verse 20, and B) they somehow miss the fact that when Paul wrote, *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet* ***now*** *hath he reconciled,"* in that verse, he was simply stating that his readers had already experienced reconciliation at the time he wrote the letter. But since we're not claiming that verses 16 to 20 say *everyone* has currently been reconciled in their minds yet anyway, the current reconciliation of believers doesn't preclude the future reconciliation of everyone else he promised would eventually be reconciled as well (in fact, if it did mean that, it would also mean that no humans other than those who first read this epistle some 2,000 years ago could be reconciled after that time, which would mean there's no hope for you or me either). It's also important to notice that it's only in our minds that Paul says the alienation takes place prior to being reconciled, as well as to know that the alienation is entirely one-sided at this point in time, with religious humans (and foolish spiritual beings) mistakenly believing that God is still angry with them because of their wicked works, as it could be said He was from a certain (almost certainly hyperbolic) perspective prior to the crucifixion,[843] not realizing that God is actually already at peace with everyone (in fact, from an absolute perspective, He always has been), and because of what He did through Christ, He isn't even

[842] And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled — Colossians 1:21

[843] God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. — Psalm 7:11

imputing the trespasses of the world unto them at all[844] – remember, while evil acts will be judged at the Great White Throne, sin won't be, because sin has already been entirely taken care of by Christ – but is instead now asking those of us in the body of Christ to beseech the rest of the world to be reconciled to God, meaning to be at peace with God in their minds because He's already at peace with them, and to believe the good news of their already guaranteed salvation because of what Christ did (and it seems we'll be bringing a similar sort of message of reconciliation to the alienated spiritual beings in the heavens, after Christ takes us up there to be with Him, as well, but that's a much bigger topic than I have the time to get into here).

Some also attempt to argue that Jesus doesn't help angels, but only helps the descendants of Abraham, based on a certain type of translation of Hebrews 2:16 which is rendered along those lines (but which is translated in the KJB as: *"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."*), in order to argue that Colossians 1:20 can't mean spiritual beings will be reconciled to God. But even if theirs was a good translation of the verse, it doesn't say Jesus will *never* reconcile angels and other spiritual beings. Just as not every human is reconciled to God in their minds at present, this translation of the verse could also only mean that Jesus isn't helping angels out *at present* (which does seem to be true). But since Colossians says they *will* be reconciled, we know they'll have to be in the future, and that this verse can't mean what they're assuming it means – although, even if we did ignore Colossians, we'd then have to also believe that no Gentiles could be saved as well, since they aren't descendants of Abraham. (For those who don't know, though, the real

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[844] And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. — 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

meaning of that verse is simply that Jesus had to be born human rather than be created in the form of an angel in order to die, because angels are immortal, as the rest of the chapter makes clear.[845])

Of course, certain other Christians will try to argue that, because 1 Corinthians 15:24-28[846] said, "*he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power,*" and also that *"all enemies"* will be put under Christ and will be subdued unto Him (with "put under," "subdued," and "subject" in this passage all being translated from different tenses of the exact same Greek word – ὑποτάσσω/"hoop-ot-as'-so"), not to mention that Christ *"must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet,"* that this *must* mean these enemies will be punished without end rather be reconciled to God through Christ, and so they'll insist that Colossians 1:20 *can't* include God's enemies (be they humans or spiritual beings) when it refers to all

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[845] But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. — Hebrews 2:9-17

[846] Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

things being reconciled to Him either. They're once again reading their assumptions about never-ending punishment into the text, however, as is made clear by the fact that A) the passage in 1 Corinthians just doesn't say anything about any conscious enemy being punished anyway, much less being punished without end, not to mention the fact that B) Jesus Himself is going to then be put under God and become fully subject to Him as well, and Jesus isn't going to be punished without end when He's subjected to God, so we have no reason to believe that any of the rest of the conscious beings falling under the category of "all things" in that passage will be punished without end when they're subjected either, which once again verifies that God will indeed be All in *all* (especially since the second "all" in the phrase "all in all" is obviously including the "all enemies" in the same passage). To be clear, many of the beings referred to as enemies – human and otherwise – *will* be punished, as we know from other passages (although not all enemies will be punished, since even members of the body of Christ were once listed among those enemies,[847] yet we won't be punished;[848] and if Paul, who was also listed among those enemies, can be reconciled to God, anyone can be), but my point is simply that this passage doesn't actually mention punishment, much less unending punishment, so one can't just read their assumptions about never-ending punishment into it simply because they want to.

Now yes, some will then try to argue that, because the same Greek word – καταργέω/"kat-arg-eh'-o" – is translated *"put down"* when Paul wrote *"when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power"* in verse 24 as is translated *"destroyed"* in verse 26, "all enemies" must then be destroyed too, but that's reading yet another assumption into the text, because this "putting down" or "destroying" only refers to *concepts* (such as the *rulership* by beings

[847] For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. — Romans 5:10

[848] There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. — Romans 8:1

other than Christ and God, as well as mortality/death) being put down or destroyed, and *not* to actual *conscious beings* being destroyed (since concepts obviously aren't going to be included in the "all" that God will become "all" in; only conscious beings would be included in that "all"). So yes, while destruction *can* be a form of subjection, it isn't implied by the term, because it isn't the *only* form of subjection (since, again, Jesus would then have to also be destroyed when He becomes fully subject to God if that were the case), which means that it has to be outright stated that "destruction" is the form of subjection being applied to a specific being in a specific passage in order for "destruction" to apply to that being, and it definitely isn't outright stated that *any* conscious beings will be destroyed in this passage (figuratively or literally), only that certain concepts will be (again, those concepts being rulership by lower beings and mortality/death). Still, others will insist that all enemies being put under His feet – which is a reference to His enemies becoming His "footstool," as Psalm 110:1[849] put it – must also mean these enemies will experience never-ending punishment. But once again, we can see that there's nothing *anywhere* in this passage, or in any *other* passages which refer to being under someone's feet[850] or to being a footstool[851] for that matter, which even hints at the idea that being under His feet or being a footstool means being punished without end. So at the end of the day, rather than disproving it, these verses actually *prove* the eventual salvation of all humans and the eventual reconciliation of all conscious beings who require it.

And at the risk of sounding repetitive, I have to ask yet again: if Paul *was* trying to explain that God indeed *will* reconcile *every being* He ever created who has

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[849] The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. — Psalm 110:1

[850] For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. — Psalm 47:2-3

[851] Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? — Isaiah 66:1

been alienated from God, what he would have needed to have written differently in Colossians 1:16-20 in order to convince you that this is indeed what he meant?

In addition, I'd also like to ask you what the basis of your belief that you've been saved (or will experience salvation) even is, presuming you believe you've been saved? If you can honestly say you've been saved simply because Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, it can be said that you have faith in Christ for your salvation. But if you believe you've been saved because *you chose to believe* that Christ died for your sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, then it can really only be said that you have faith in your faith in Christ for your salvation. Because in order for salvation to be based solely on what God and Christ accomplished (meaning based 100% on Christ's death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection), rather than based (even if perhaps only in part) on what you yourself accomplished (meaning *choosing to believe* in Christ's death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection, and then actually doing so as well), *everyone* has to be saved (at least proleptically; and if something is proleptic in God's eyes, it's guaranteed to happen) by what God and Christ accomplished, whether anyone believes it or not, since otherwise it's your faith that ultimately did the job of saving you, with Christ only accomplishing the first step of your salvation, but not actually completing it Himself.

All that being said, when traditional, "orthodox" Christians insist that not all humanity has been saved, or even that not all humanity *will* be saved, they *are* technically correct. However, at the same time, they're also very wrong. And I trust it's clear by now how this can be the case, which is because relatively few people will experience the sort of salvation referred to under the Gospel of the Circumcision, not to mention the sort of salvation connected with membership in the body of Christ, which means it shouldn't be a surprise to hear me agree that not everyone will be saved, as long as one realizes that I'm referring to

specific *types* of salvation which not every human is guaranteed to experience when I say that, and also realizes that everyone *will* experience at least *one* type of salvation by the end of the ages, and, in fact, that everyone *has* "experienced" a certain type of salvation already too (at least from a certain perspective), whether they realize it or not.

Because everyone *has* already been saved from both a proleptic and an absolute perspective thanks to what Christ accomplished, since God ultimately views all of us as already experiencing our salvation from a physical perspective (which could also be called an eschatological perspective, referring to the physical experience of salvation which occurs at our resurrection and/or quickening, when the mortal puts on immortality and we can finally enjoy the full salvation that we had all along thanks to Christ), as, being Almighty God, He sees all things in all places, all at the same time, from His timeless perspective (and so, perhaps we could even say that all humanity has now been saved from an ontological perspective too, because salvation is not only now a guaranteed part of the human experience thanks to Christ's death for our sins, but because it really always has been, since that was always a part of God's plan for Christ and us to begin with). At the same time, though, only believers have been saved from a relative perspective, which could also be referred to as salvation from a noological perspective, with this sort of salvation being freedom from the power of sin by being given knowledge of the good news of our ontological salvation and truly believing it: faith, in other words ("noological" meaning "relating to the mind," etymologically originating from the Greek word νοῦς/ "nooce," which itself is translated as "mind"[852] and as "understanding"[853] in the KJB). Because when someone comes to realize that God is already at peace with us, and that there's *nothing* we have to do to earn the salvation that Christ

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[852] And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; — Ephesians 4:23

[853] What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. — 1 Corinthians 14:15

already earned for us, they're then freed from the power of sin, which is the law or religion,[854] and one can say that they've been saved "noologically," and have also been brought into membership in the body of Christ. This means it can be said that we've been saved, we're being saved, and we will be saved, all at the same time, as long as we remember that there's nothing we ourselves have to do (or even that we could do) to gain *any* of these salvations (although it is also true that members of the Israel of God *do* participate in *their* specific form of salvation, something I refer to as circumcision, or Israelite, salvation, which they'll experience in the kingdom of heaven when it begins on earth in the future, and which is another equally legitimate form of salvation, as long as one doesn't try to combine their Gospel with the Gospel I've been focusing on in this chapter, which is, of course, Paul's Gospel; Paul says they shouldn't try to switch between the two of them either, but rather that they should stick with the one they're called to[855]).

Now, those aren't all the arguments for the salvation of all humanity (and the reconciliation of all creatures who require it). There are *many more* (some of which we'll actually cover in the next chapter), but those should be enough to make it clear that the only way to avoid the conclusion that every human will eventually experience justification, salvation, and reconciliation is to insert words into Paul's epistles that aren't there, to redefine certain words into meaning something other than what the writers meant by them, or even to change (or simply ignore) the order of the words in some verses. But there's just no justification for doing so, especially when we consider the fact that there's no basis for believing in never-ending conscious torment in the lake of fire – or

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[854] The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. — 1 Corinthians 15:56

[855] But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. — 1 Corinthians 7:17-20

even in an afterlife realm while dead – as we've already learned. However, I know that there are still a number of common objections to the idea that everyone will eventually experience salvation which you've no doubt heard, or perhaps even raised yourself at some point, as well as a number of so-called "proof texts" in the Bible which you've no doubt been taught support the traditional doctrine of never-ending punishment in the lake of fire; and while it should be pretty clear by now to those who have been paying attention to everything we've covered that, when you take everything Paul wrote about salvation – as well as the differences between the various types of salvation mentioned in Scripture, not to mention the figurative meaning of certain English words related to long periods of time that are used in the KJB and other less literal Bible translations – into consideration, none of these arguments or supposed "proof texts" can actually support the popular assumptions most of us grew up with when it comes to this topic, we should still take a look at them regardless, so you can know how to answer them whenever they're used to try to argue against what Scripture actually says about salvation, beginning with the objections, then moving on to the "proof texts," and we'll do just that in the next two chapters of this book.

Chapter 7: Objections answered

Even though the previous chapter of this book proved definitively that all of humanity will eventually experience salvation and reconciliation, there are still a number of objections to the doctrine which you've no doubt heard, or perhaps even raised yourself at some point, as I mentioned in that chapter, which is why we're now going to take a look some of them, so you can know how to answer them whenever they're used to try to argue against what Scripture actually says about salvation.

For example, one common objection is: "If it's true that everyone will get saved, why is it that almost no church teaches this?" Well, while I can't say for certain how accurate the *entire* book is, since I'm not a historian, J.W. Hanson wrote a book asserting that Universalism actually *was* the most common soteriology among Christianity for centuries[856] (even if the exact form of it that I'm teaching here – Pauline Universalism – might not have always been the type of Universalism *other* Christians taught *after* Paul's death). And we already know that believers went astray in many ways quite fast, even while Paul was still alive, so it's no surprise at all that this doctrine has mostly disappeared among Christians today.[857] But there have always been *some* Pauline Universalists since the time of Paul, so the truth of Paul's Gospel never *completely* disappeared.

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[856] *Universalism, The Prevailing Doctrine Of The Christian Church During Its First Five Hundred Years* by J.W. Hanson: https://tentmaker.org/books/Prevailing.html

[857] This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. — 2 Timothy 1:15

Another extremely common objection is simply that the doctrine of the salvation of all humanity has been declared to be a heresy, thus it can't be true, but this is largely based not only on the assumption that the council which supposedly declared this had the authority to make such a declaration, but also on the assumption that it actually *did* make such a declaration to begin with, and many people believe it actually didn't make such a declaration at all, but rather condemned something else altogether, and that the idea that the doctrine of the salvation of all was condemned at that time is based on a misunderstanding of what was actually condemned (although I'm not going to get into the details of that debate here because it doesn't matter to those of us in the body of Christ, since we base our theology entirely on what the Bible says rather than on council meetings of Christian denominations we're not a part of and that weren't recorded in Scripture, but there are Christians who *have* gone into detail on it if you're curious to learn more about this assertion[858]). All that said, as I discussed in the first chapter of this book, the actual definition of "heresy" isn't "false teaching" anyway, just as the word "orthodoxy" doesn't mean "truth." In fact, as I explained there, the meaning of the Greek word which is transliterated as "heresies" in the KJB – αἵρεσις/"hah'-ee-res-is" – is simply "sects"[859] (or "divisions"), and not "incorrect doctrine" at all, and "orthodox" only means "that which is commonly accepted," and there's always been plenty of commonly accepted error out there. As I mentioned in the first chapter, Galileo was technically put on trial as a heretic by the very religious organization (the Roman Catholic Church) that supposedly also condemned the doctrine of the salvation of all humanity as a heresy, because he taught that the earth isn't the centre of the universe, but he was still quite correct that it isn't. Meanwhile, Rome considered their view that our planet is the centre of the

[858] *History, the Fifth Ecumenical Council, and Universal Salvation* by Aidan Kimel: https://afkimel.wordpress.com/2024/07/19/history-the-fifth-ecumenical-council-and-universal-salvation

[859] For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. — 1 Corinthians 11:19

universe to be the orthodox one, but they were entirely incorrect. And if they could be wrong about *that* official teaching and declaration of heresy, they could be wrong about *any* official doctrine they teach, which really means that everything they consider to be "orthodox" should be considered suspect. It's also important to keep in mind that, if you're an Evangelical or some other form of Protestant Christian, the entire existence of your denomination has been officially declared to be heretical by the Roman Catholic Church. But even if your own denomination has also declared the doctrine of the salvation of all humanity to be heretical, the fact that it *is* true, as already proven from what we've covered in this book so far, once again reminds us that just because something is "heretical" doesn't mean it's incorrect, and something being "orthodox" doesn't make it true. And again, never forget that both Jesus and Paul were considered to be heretics by the orthodoxy of their day, so consider yourself to be in good company whenever someone calls you a heretic.

It's also often asserted that, "If everyone gets saved, then Jesus died in vain." This is a very strange, yet also extremely common, claim you'll hear from many Christians who just aren't thinking things through particularly carefully. Because the truth is, if Jesus didn't die, then *nobody* would get saved. Really, this assertion is no different from saying, "If only a few people get saved, then Jesus died in vain since some people will not suffer without end in hell." Either way, we (should) all realize it's what Christ did that saves us, and recognize that this statement is a sign of lazy thinking.

Some Christians will also claim that a sin against an infinite God requires an infinite punishment, because sin would affect an infinite being more than it would affect a mere human. This assumption isn't made anywhere in Scripture, however, which means they have no basis for believing it in the first place, especially because Scripture actually appears to say the exact opposite, in Job 35:5-8 where Elihu (the one friend of Job who wasn't condemned by God for his

words[860]) said, *"Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man."* So no, our sin doesn't actually affect God – who is far above being able to be harmed by anything we can do – at all.

Many Christians also like to object to the salvation of all by saying things along the lines of, "You're putting too much of an emphasis on God's love, all the while forgetting His judgement, justice, and wrath. The justice of God demands that the wicked be punished for their sins without end, which means that if people who don't choose to receive the gift of Christ's sacrifice in order to experience salvation aren't punished without end, then God's justice hasn't been satisfied." There are a number of problems with this assertion, however, the first of which is simply that none of us have forgotten about the judgement, justice, and wrath of God at all (as everything you've read in this book so far should really make pretty obvious). It's just that we also understand that an attribute such as His justice and wrath can never outweigh His very essence, which is love.[861] And if love is His very essence, then, at least in the long run, everything He does must ultimately be beneficial for (and work out in the best interests of) all the creation He loves, which means His love can't ever

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[860] And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job. — Job 42:7-9

[861] Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. — 1 John 4:7-8

take a back seat to an attribute like His justice or wrath, but rather they will always have to be influenced by His love for His creation (and love – or "charity," as the KJB translates the word ἀγάπη/"ag-ah'-pay" in 1 Corinthians 13 – "endureth all things" and "never faileth," if it's a scriptural form of love,[862] so God's love isn't going to give up on His creation). And since allowing any of His creation to suffer without end in fire with no hope of escape could not be said to be an expression of His love for said creation (except in the most horrifically twisted of religious minds), we know that His justice could not allow this to happen because it would conflict with His love towards all of His creation (and even simply letting His creation cease to exist permanently would demonstrate that He *doesn't* have a desire – which literally refers to a deep longing, based on the original Hebrew word כָּסַף/"kaw-saf" that "desire" is translated from – for the work of His own hands after they die[863]). Of course, some Christians will try to argue here that God defines words such as "love" differently than we do, since "His ways are higher than ours,"[864] but A) Scripture already defines "love" for us, and B) if we aren't using words in a way that we can actually all understand them, there's no point in even using these words in the first place, and we might as well just stop studying Scripture altogether. And really, if

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[862] Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. — 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

[863] If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. — Job 14:14-15

[864] For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: — Isaiah 55:8-10

"love" can somehow actually include never-ending torture in a fiery "hell" for some of those it's directed towards, I don't even want to begin to think about what "heaven" might actually include for those of us who are headed there instead, but to say it might not be pleasant would likely be an understatement. There's a second major problem with the popular claim that God's justice isn't satisfied if we don't have to choose to receive the gift of Christ's sacrifice in order to experience salvation as well, though. You see, if someone claims that our salvation is dependent upon God's justice being satisfied (which it indeed is), then when His justice *is* satisfied, we'd also have to be guaranteed salvation, since it would be unjust of Him to punish someone without end if His justice *has* been satisfied. And since we now know from what we've learned in the last chapter of this book that Christ died in order that the penalty for our sins *would* be justly set aside by God, meaning so that everyone will be justified, resurrected (if they've died), and even made free from ever being able to die or sin again, all apart from anything that we ourselves have to do (and not so that the penalty could *potentially* be set aside, but only if we ourselves choose to believe that His sacrifice *was* enough to satisfy God's justice, which is essentially what most Christians insist we have to believe in order to be saved), if someone insists that the salvation of all humanity *isn't* guaranteed simply because of Christ's sacrifice, they're ultimately telling us that they themselves really don't believe Christ's sacrifice actually *was* enough to satisfy God's justice after all, but rather that an action on our part is *also* required *on top* of Christ's sacrifice in order to satisfy God's justice. The problem is, this would mean that they want us to choose to believe something they themselves think isn't even actually true, in and of itself, somehow making what they believe to actually be a lie become true by choosing to believe it to be true (since the idea that what Christ did was enough to satisfy God's justice *would* be a lie if it isn't true on its own, meaning enough to guarantee us salvation apart from us having to *also* do something to *make* it true). Basically, what they really believe (even if they don't realize it) is that justice is *actually* served by *us doing the right thing* (such as choosing to believe the right thing) rather than by Christ's death for our sins, which means

that we must provide *our own* justice – either by being punished without end ourselves or by doing that right thing which they believe is required to satisfy God's justice ourselves – because apparently what Christ accomplished didn't *actually* satisfy God's justice at all, at least as far as their theology is concerned. And if any of them *do* happen to admit that God's justice actually *was* satisfied by what Christ accomplished, but then also try to insist that people *still* have to choose to believe it in order to experience salvation anyway, it would mean that their objection isn't actually about God's justice at all, and that they're simply using claims about God's justice as a distraction from the real issue, which is that they want people to have to at least do *something* in order to gain salvation, even if it's just something as seemingly simple as having to choose to believe the right thing. But the truth is, if anyone at all doesn't get saved simply because of what Christ earned through His death – which is the general salvation of anyone who has ever sinned or who will ever sin[865] – then God actually *would* be unjust, because He wouldn't be giving His Son what *He* now deserves (and He'd also be treating us unjustly as well, because if His justice *has* been satisfied, there's no basis for inflicting the penalty – which we now know is actually just permanent death, and not inescapable torture in fire – upon us any longer). So if anyone ever tries to use the excuse that, "God is love, but He's also just," in order to try to object to the idea that everyone will be saved, you can agree with them, and then explain that it's *because* He's just that everyone *has* to eventually be saved.

Some also argue that teaching the salvation of all humanity undermines evangelism – saying things like, "If the salvation of all is true, it doesn't matter whether you believe now or not, so why bother to evangelize at all?" – as well as undermines the necessity of believing the Gospel – making similar statements along the lines of, "If Universalism is true, it doesn't matter whether you believe now or not, so why bother to become a Christian?" From one

[865] This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. — 1 Timothy 1:15

perspective (the most narrow of perspectives), yes, that could be said to technically be true. But from a broader perspective there are still very good reasons to believe now, as well as to evangelize. For one thing, if it is true, isn't it better to believe (and teach) the truth rather than a lie (especially since the Bible so heavily condemns false teachers who teach lies)? Even beyond that, though, belief in this doctrine helps bring serious peace of mind that few Christians seem to truly have (over the years I've interacted with, or even just witnessed, a lot of Christians who are still terrified that they're going to suffer without end in a place called hell – and I mean a *lot*). But on top of all that, there's another really good reason to believe this, and this is the fact that only those who do believe it get to join the body of Christ (since, if you don't truly understand what it means that *"Christ died for our sins,"* can it be said that you actually believe it, and if you don't actually believe it, how can it be said that you've joined the body of Christ?). However, I suppose someone who says this is implying that, if it's true that everyone gets saved, then there's less urgency to preach the Gospel, or even for people to become Christians. Whether this is true or not comes down to what one means by evangelism, as well as whether "becoming a Christian" is really all that important in the first place, and, really, what the Gospel about how we're saved actually even is. From the perspective of the Pauline Universalists who believe what I've written in this book, we see the idea of having to become a Christian in order to be saved as religion rather than good news. To put it simply, we see religion as anything which teaches that God will only look kindly upon us if we do the right thing(s) before we die or Jesus returns. The good news which Paul primarily taught, on the other hand (that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day), is not a religion at all, but is instead the announcement of the end of religion (simply put, it's a proclamation, not a proposition). Religion, at least to those of us in the body of Christ, consists of all the things (believing, behaving, worshipping, sacrificing, etc.) that the religious think they have to choose to do (and then actually do) in order to get right with God, but no action (which would include choosing to believe something specific that one didn't previously believe to be

true, and then somehow finding a way to force themself into believing it even though they don't think it's actually true) on our part can ever take away our sins or make us immortal (to be fair, there *is* one valid religion out there, which is the religion followed by the members of the church called the Israel of God, but even it will eventually come to an end, after it's served its purpose at the conclusion of the thousand-year age). Thankfully, everything necessary for salvation from sin and death has already been done, once and for all, by God through Christ. And while God calls members of the body of Christ to proclaim Paul's Gospel to those He calls us to proclaim it to, believing it has no effect on one's ultimate salvation, because our ultimate salvation was already guaranteed some 2,000 years ago *by* Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection, and God doesn't intend to bring everyone to a knowledge of the truth in this lifetime anyway (while He's guaranteed salvation for everyone through Christ's actions, He only elects certain people to join the body of Christ – or perhaps to join the Israel of God instead – in this lifetime). So if someone doesn't believe the Gospel, they won't have the peace of mind we have that God in Christ did indeed save all of us already (at least proleptically speaking, or from an absolute perspective), and they might also miss out on living in the kingdom of God during one or two of the impending ages (missing out on "everlasting" – meaning "age-pertaining" – life, in other words), but I'd also suggest that one's concern that they might not become believers if they think the good news I just presented is true is actually not a concern at all because, if someone truly believes that they don't have to become Christians simply because of what Christ accomplished, not only have they already believed the actual Gospel Paul taught (since, if they actually believed they could avoid "converting," so to speak, because the above is true, then they've technically actually *already* believed Paul's Gospel before they even realized it, at least presuming they also understand what death actually is) rather than the "gospel" that the "orthodox" Christian religion teaches, but they're now in the body of Christ as well (and, from a certain perspective, it could be said that they technically *are* Christians too, even if they refuse to use the label of "Christian," as many believers do). So,

perhaps that does undermine "evangelism" from an "orthodox" Christian perspective, but not from the scriptural perspective that those of us in the body of Christ come at things from. And, of course, there may also be certain rewards to be had in heaven for evangelism after Christ comes for His body, which would also be incentive to evangelize if that happens to be the case. That said, wanting to share good news is human nature. There's a reason I wrote this book in the first place, after all (not to mention why I share it so widely and have never charged for the digital version of it), and belief in the salvation of all humanity has never stopped any of us from wanting to let everyone know this good news, or from actually sharing it.

Another variation of that objection is, "If you're right, then I'll miss out on some stuff, but I'll be okay in the end," and some even add, "However, if I'm right, you're going to burn in hell for eternity." It's interesting how some Christians believe it's more important to accept a doctrine because it might have a worse possible outcome than accepting its alternative might have, regardless of whether that doctrine is correct or not, but I'm far more interested in truth than I am in worrying about unfounded threats (and if we needed to choose a theology based on it having the worst possible outcome if we don't believe or follow it, some religions have even worse end results for those who don't follow them than the "orthodox" version of Christianity does, so this argument doesn't help their case the way they might think it does). The real truth, however, is that, if I'm wrong, I've still believed the Gospel – since the facts still remain that A) I believe there's nothing I can possibly do to save myself from sin and death, and B) my faith is solely in Christ's death for our sins, along with His subsequent burial and resurrection on the third day, for salvation (and I also believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, as well as that God raised Him from the dead, which is how one gets saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision) – so that isn't actually the case at all. And so, if I'm wrong, I've actually only been teaching that God is better than He really is, since I'm claiming He'll actually succeed when it comes to accomplishing His will that everyone be saved;

whereas if I'm right, those who make this claim have actually spoken terrible blasphemy, accusing God of doing horrible things to the creation He supposedly loves by torturing them in fire with no chance of escape (or at least of giving up on the majority of them, letting nearly everyone cease to exist completely, never to enjoy consciousness again, if the Annihilationists are correct about their soteriology). This truth is lost on those who are lost, however, as well as on many Christians who are saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision, sadly, thanks to the teachings within the "orthodox" Christian religion, because if most of humanity *were* to suffer consciously in the lake of fire without end, all this judgement would do is torture the majority of people who ever existed nonstop, which would serve no purpose at all other than to stand as a never-ending reminder that Satan, death, and "hell" won the ultimate victory after all (a Pyrrhic victory though it might be for Satan, a defeat of God in the battle over souls it would remain nonetheless – and the same would go if those who understand that the punishment is simply permanently ceasing to exist after death but who also believe that some people *will* "experience" that punishment were right, by the way; it would mean God still lost to Satan, death, and "the grave" in the struggle for souls), and that God was a failure in ridding creation of sin and evil (simply quarantining sin and evil to a small corner of the universe does nothing to eliminate sin and evil from existence, and the only thing it would really change is to add infinitely more suffering to the universe than it currently has, just in a more compressed area, which would actually be far worse than what we have today), ultimately making Him and Jesus A) monsters (only the most horrific of monsters could force, or even allow, someone to be tortured without the possibility of escape; the worst person to ever live could never do anything like that, but many religious Christians want to accuse God of doing something that would make Hitler look like a saint in comparison, since all he was able to accomplish was temporarily torturing and killing millions of people, but even he couldn't torture anyone without end), and B) the biggest sinners of all, since it would mean they "missed the mark" by failing to accomplish their goals. (And don't try to bring up satisfying God's justice as a

possible purpose, because we've already determined that Christ's death for our sins was all that God's justice required, and for Him to require anyone else to suffer too wouldn't be about justice at all, since His justice *was* satisfied by Christ's death, regardless of whether someone believes it before they die or not.) And honestly, if we're going to worry about a "Pascal's Wager" sort of scenario here,[866] I'd much rather err on the side of accusing God of being too good and too loving and too successful than accusing Him of being the exact opposite.

Some Christians also like to say, "Those who believe everyone will be saved just want an excuse to sin," but if someone truly understands and has believed what I've written in this book, then they've already believed the good news that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, and hence have already been saved, so it makes no more sense to say this about us than it does to say it about any traditional Christian who believes they've been saved themselves (especially a Christian who believes in OSAS, meaning "Once Saved, Always Saved"; and while OSAS is only true for members of the body of Christ – since it does seem that members of the Israel of God *can* lose their salvation – the point still stands for Christians who *do* believe in OSAS for *all* Christians). Either way, though, belief in Pauline Universalism has nothing whatsoever to do with wanting to sin, which is proven by the fact that most of us were *forced* to believe the doctrine is true, so to speak, while trying to prove it wrong. So it's not like we decided to become Universalists in order to sin, then looked for passages to prove the doctrine to ourselves, but rather we were introduced to the doctrine while thinking it couldn't possibly be true, and were convinced it actually *is* true while trying to refute it, because we simply weren't able to do so (at least as far as a large number of Pauline Universalists go anyway, myself included).

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[866] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pascal's_wager

On a similar – yet somehow even worse – note, some Christians claim that, "If there isn't a place of never-ending torture in a place called 'hell' for sinners, then there's no point in being good in the first place," and some even go on to assert that, if they believed it was true that everyone will experience salvation in the end, they'd be out there robbing and raping and murdering people. (Seriously, I've had multiple Christians say this to me.) I have to hope they're just using hyperbole there, although if they're being serious, and the threat of never-ending torment in a place called "hell" is the only thing keeping them civilized, then perhaps it is a good thing that they don't believe the truth about this topic, because that's a seriously disturbing admission about who they really are and what they wish they could actually be doing. But regardless of their sincerity in making these statements, they really aren't thinking things through. I'll start with the second claim first, which is to point out that very few believers in the salvation of all are out there committing the crimes these Christians are telling us they apparently wish *they* could – and, if they believed the salvation of all was true, supposedly would – indulge in. However, presuming they aren't actually being sincere about how their belief in never-ending torment is keeping them from acting out some twisted desire to steal from and hurt others, perhaps the bigger admission that Christians who resort to these sorts of arguments are making is that they don't trust God's grace at all. This is actually a bigger topic than just how it applies to the topic of Universalism, and I don't have the time to really get into all the problems connected with this fact right here, but the bottom line is that most Christians really don't trust God's grace in the slightest and are always trying to add at least a tiny bit of law to it (just to be safe), even though mortal humans trying to perform religious law *always* leads to more sin, not less[867] (and not just specifically the Mosaic law, but any religious rules at all, which is what the Mosaic law itself ultimately is), and so this ends up with the exact *opposite* result of what they're hoping to achieve through their attempt to shoehorn religious rules into the salvation connected

[867] Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: — Romans 5:20

with Paul's Gospel. And as far as the first claim goes, for Christians who *haven't* forgotten that our salvation isn't based on "being good" anyway, since our good works can't save us, this statement is about as logical as saying, "If criminals eventually get out of prison, then there's no point in avoiding crime in the first place." Aside from the fact that the threat of life sentences in prison (and even the death penalty, depending on where you live) doesn't deter the criminals who do commit major crimes from the actions that result in these sentences, you don't find most Christians out there living lives of crime (or, if they are, most of them are hiding it pretty well), so we can assume they're just not thinking things through when they say these things (and, just as with the last objection, any Christian who believes in OSAS and makes these claims forgets that they could then be out there committing the horrific crimes they tell me they wish they could be committing, since they're guaranteed to still remain saved regardless, according to their own soteriology, so they aren't being consistent with these assertions at all). Besides, almost no Christian actually believes someone should remain in prison for the rest of their life over a petty crime like shoplifting or jaywalking, so the idea that people should then be tortured without end in "hell" for the same – or even lesser – infractions of the secular law really makes no sense at all (and if someone really believes that sin is actually so serious that it requires someone to be tortured in fire without end, the idea that "the punishment should fit the crime" would be an entirely erroneous idea when it comes to their take on the judicial system as well, since they already believe that every immoral action – which includes breaking the secular law, in most cases – *does* deserve a much worse punishment than just a fine or a period of time spent in prison, even when it comes to extremely minor offences, so they should really be arguing for life sentences, the death penalty, or maybe even torture, for *every* crime, if they wish to be consistent, since they believe that we all deserve far worse consequences than that for committing these actions).

I've also heard certain Christians insisting things along the lines of, "If never-ending torment in hell isn't true, Jesus wouldn't have even come to die, but since it's true that He *did* die, never-ending torment *must* be true as well." This is a very strange claim since, aside from the fact that there's no scriptural basis for this assertion at all, apparently Christ dying to save us from sin, mortality, and permanent death isn't enough for some Christians (even though these are three things I would have thought we could *all* agree that humanity needs saving from). But no, there needs to be an inescapable torture chamber in an afterlife realm for Jesus to bother to die to save us from, or so it seems, and they won't allow for a Gospel that doesn't include one, appearing to be convinced that He simply doesn't care enough about us to die for our sins and to save us from mortality and death if we aren't also destined to suffer consciously without end, which makes it sound like they believe He would have been *happy* to leave humanity to never escape the clutches of sinfulness, mortality, and death, but that He only cares enough to do something about these things if never-ending torture is *also* a threat (which tells me they don't actually take sin quite as seriously as they claim they do either), although they *also* believe that He *still* doesn't care enough to save us if we don't *also* do something in order to help save ourselves *as well* (by choosing to believe the right thing, at least as far as these particular Christians are concerned).

Another very common objection I hear all the time is that Jesus didn't preach the salvation of all humanity, and that if it were true, He would have mentioned it. Well, if you've read this whole book from the beginning up to this point, you already know why this is a bad argument, of course, but I'll elaborate anyway. Simply put, Jesus *couldn't* have preached the salvation of all humanity, and this is for the very same reason I explained in the first chapter of this book as to why there had to be two Gospels. Because His death for our sins (and subsequent burial and resurrection) is the basis for the salvation of all humanity, had He taught the salvation of all humanity publicly during His earthly ministry, the spiritual powers of darkness sometimes referred to as *"the princes of this world"*

would have almost certainly put two-and-two together and realized that Him dying for our sins and God raising Him from the dead would be the only possible way that all humanity could not only miss out on eventually remaining dead permanently, but even be made immortal (these are highly intelligent beings, after all), and they would have then *avoided* their plan to have Him killed, resulting in nobody being saved at all.[868] (And this also means that those of you who already *are* Universalists and use parts of the Bible such as the book of John to try to argue that Pauline Universalism is indeed scriptural really need to stop using these Circumcision writings for that purpose, because those passages you're using as "proof texts" *can't* actually mean what you think they do, since the sort of salvation being referred to in those books isn't connected with Paul's Gospel or the salvation of all *at all* – at least not when it comes to Pauline salvation or Pauline Universalism – so please stick primarily to Paul's epistles when it comes to your scriptural arguments for Pauline Universalism, although, yes, you *can* use passages from the Circumcision writings to *disprove* both Infernalism and Annihilationism, as we've now learned.)

And while there are likely more objections than just these which I could cover here (and if I come across them, I'll likely try to come back and add them to future updates of this book), I'll wrap this list up with a classic: "God is a gentleman who won't coerce people into salvation, or force anyone to go to heaven against their will" (some even go so far as to compare the idea Him saving people without them first specifically choosing to be saved to rape, and I have to say that it's odd how many Christians seem to have this obsession with using sexual assault in their objections to the salvation of all humanity, and so perhaps they're telling us something about themselves there and actually *are* as interested in participating in this crime as many of those who make that previous objection about what they'd do if they believed in the salvation of all

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[868] But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. — 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

seem to imply). Well, if you've read everything I've written in this book up to this point, you already know we believe that only members of the body of Christ will end up living in heaven (with everyone else eventually being resurrected to live on the New Earth instead), so right off the bat that's a straw man argument. But regardless, we don't believe God will force anyone to be saved against their will anyway, but rather that He gives people the will be saved in the first place.[869] And since Paul told us that everyone is going to experience salvation in the end, He'll certainly make sure that everyone is willing to enjoy immortality and sinlessness/perfection by the end of the ages. And those who still insist that God just wouldn't force someone to experience salvation without having to specifically choose to experience it, aside from the fact that this isn't an assertion found anywhere in the Bible (this is just an unfounded assumption which certain Christians make in order to try to hold on to their preferred soteriological doctrines, as well as in order to not have to give up their fetishization of "free will"), most of these people *do* believe that God will instead force people to suffer in fire without end, even though nobody would actually choose that either. This means that, at the end of the day, it seems as though these Christians don't actually care if God forces people to experience something against their will at all, so long as He doesn't let them *enjoy* what's to come against *the will of these Christians* who seem to want people to have to choose to do something specific in order to avoid experiencing never-ending punishment instead, the way that they think they themselves did.

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[869] For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. — Philippians 2:13

Chapter 8: "Proof texts" explained

With all that being said, it's finally time to look at the so-called "proof texts" that we've all heard used to support The Popular Doctrine, in order to finally determine what they're really talking about once and for all:

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. – Daniel 12:1-3

Now, the events of this passage do take place at least partly around the time of the Great White Throne Judgement (at least the negative part of it; the positive part is separated from the negative part by a thousand-year "Mountain Peak" of prophecy – or rather by a thousand-year "valley" in between two prophetic "mountains," so to speak – taking place long before the negative part, as we know from Revelation[870]), but all it says is that some people will be resurrected to shame and "everlasting" contempt, and neither shame nor contempt are

[870] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. — Revelation 20:5

even remotely *close* to being the same thing as torture in fire. Besides, aside from the fact that "everlasting" has to be meant to be interpreted figuratively rather than literally here anyway, based on everything we've already covered about the salvation and reconciliation of all humanity, as well as what we've covered about how the word is generally meant to be read qualitatively rather than quantitatively in the KJB and other less literal Bible translations, it's also only the contempt that is said to be "everlasting," not the shame (and the contempt is experienced by others rather than by the ones being judged in this passage themselves), not to mention the fact that this "everlasting" contempt is only going to be age-pertaining, not never-ending, based on everything else we've learned so far as well. This tells us that, when they're resurrected, many people will feel shame while being judged at the Great White Throne, and then, after they die a second time in the lake of fire, their corpses will be looked upon with contempt by those who see them being consumed on the New Earth during the final age (which we know because this is referring to the same contempt, or "abhorring," that those spoken of in Isaiah 66:24 will feel when looking upon the carcases – meaning the dead bodies – of those in the lake of fire,[871] by the way, as confirmed by the fact that it's translated from the same Hebrew word – דְּרָאוֹן/"der-aw-one'" – in both verses). But at the end of the ages, when everyone who died a second time has been resurrected and quickened (in order for death to be destroyed), this "everlasting" contempt will finally end.

That said, the Israelites who first heard this prophecy very well *might* have assumed that עוֹלָם (which is the Hebrew word translated as "everlasting" in this passage in the KJB) *did* mean "never-ending" in this passage, since they wouldn't have had any particular reason to believe the unrighteous *would* be resurrected a second time after the second death this prophecy revealed would happen to the unrighteous, so it seems that early Israelites (at least those who

[871] And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. — Isaiah 66:24

weren't coming up with soteriological concepts on their own or copying the theological views of their pagan neighbours) could have been Annihilationists, which makes sense considering the fact that Universal Reconciliation wasn't introduced until Paul, as *we* now know (which is why we *also* now know that the word "everlasting" in this passage in the KJB actually *doesn't* literally mean "never-ending," even if those who first heard the prophecy wouldn't necessarily have known that back then – although anyone who thought about it would have at least been aware of the possibility, based on the various legitimate *possible* meanings of the Hebrew word עוֹלָם, even if they wouldn't have had any reason to assume it *must* have meant "age-pertaining" as we now know it did based on what we've learned from the previous chapters of this book), not to mention the fact that Infernalism wasn't even a concept taught in the Hebrew Scriptures or by any of the prophets (at least that we're aware of) back then either. Remember, not once did the Hebrew Scriptures ever threaten any human with never-ending torture (much less torture in fire), either while dead or after one is resurrected, as a punishment for breaking the Mosaic law (or even for sin in general). At most, they threatened physical death for certain capital crimes. Aside from the fact that Daniel *didn't* actually said that certain people will be tortured in fire without end while they're dead in this passage, or even after they've been resurrected, there'd never been a threat of a never-ending conscious punishment before this passage either, so there's no good reason to assume that Infernalism was suddenly being proclaimed here, centuries after the giving of the Mosaic law, when no Israelite had ever heard of that concept taught before (at least not from Scripture), and when the readers of Daniel clearly couldn't have possibly understood it to mean that prior to Jesus' statements about "hell" anyway (presuming we ignored the context of *those* warnings, which we learned from Isaiah and Jeremiah, of course, as discussed earlier in this book). You'd think that, at the very least, God's chosen people would have been given a warning about something as horrific as never-ending torture (in fire, no less), not to mention be told who would be experiencing such a thing or why, or how to avoid it, for that matter, prior to Jesus (or even

prior to Daniel) supposedly doing so. The fact is, not only was no Israelite ever warned about it (at least not that we see in Scripture, and we need to base our doctrines on what Scripture says), nobody prior to Israel was ever warned about it either, at least that we're told of in Scripture. Not even Adam and Eve were warned about suffering without end in a fiery place if they sinned, much less anyone who lived from their time to the time Daniel was supposedly warned about it.

And even if to "surely die"[872] (which was obviously a figurative translation in the KJB, as we've already learned, since Adam didn't physically drop dead the day he sinned) *was* referring to the so-called "spiritual death" that many Christians mistakenly believe in, there's no hint of being tortured in fire without end in that expression anyway. I say "mistakenly," of course, because "spiritual death" is actually a completely unscriptural and meaningless term (at least outside of the fact that those in the body of Christ can be said to have died with Christ when He died,[873] but that isn't what Christians mean when they talk about the so-called "spiritual death" of sinners, although perhaps we Pauline Universalists should start using the term to refer to this fact in order to give it a definition that actually *is* scriptural) since, if our spirits *could* die, we'd drop dead ourselves (considering the fact that a body requires a spirit to remain alive,[874] and I can't imagine that a spirit which had somehow literally dropped dead, however that's supposed to even work, would still be able to sustain life in a body). And if the term is simply a metaphor, then it can't actually be a literal "spiritual death" so much as a metaphorical "death," in a similar sort of way that one's body being

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[872] But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. — Genesis 2:17

[873] Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: — Romans 6:8

[874] For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. — James 2:26

said to be dead because of sin in Romans 8:10[875] can't be literal because the person in question isn't actually a corpse, but is simply metaphorically "dead," meaning mortal and hence prone to sin (which we know is what the verse is referring to based on what the very next verse says about immortality,[876] and being made immortal means freedom from being prone to sin, as we've already learned from 1 Corinthians 15); and if to "surely die" is just a metaphor, it can't be a metaphor for being separated from God, as some assume, because *"in Him we live, and move, and have our being,"* as Paul explained,[877] so to be separated from God would mean to cease to exist, if it were even possible to be separated from Him at all, outside of the period of time when we're physically dead (which it isn't, since to actually be separated from God while conscious would require a "universe" that exists "outside" of Him, so to speak – for those who are separated from Him to end up in – but to have anything "outside" of Him would mean there's another "universe" that's somehow "larger" than God,[878] requiring an even "higher" God than ours to create *that* universe, so the entire idea is actually quite blasphemous). And it can't be a metaphor for ending up in the lake of fire either, because Adam didn't end up in the lake of fire on the day he ate the fruit. Besides, if Adam *did* only die metaphorically, then *we'd* only die metaphorically as well (and Christ would have also only died and risen metaphorically too), which we know isn't the case, so there's just no good scriptural basis for interpreting these things the way most Christians have been taught to interpret them, and it should really be clear that this figurative

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[875] And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. — Romans 8:10

[876] But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. — Romans 8:11

[877] For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. — Acts 17:28

[878] See Appendix C for more discussion on that topic.

warning in the KJB should simply be interpreted as meaning Adam would gain mortality leading to eventual physical death, as we've previously discussed.

I should say, Romans 8 isn't the only place that "death" (or "being dead") is used as a metaphor in the *King James Bible* either. For example, it's also used in Ephesians 2:1-7[879] in the KJB, which, ironically, is actually often quoted in error by many Christians in order to try to *prove* the existence of the "spiritual death" that they tend to believe sinners "experience," although it obviously can't be saying that people are *literally* "spiritually dead" for the reasons we just covered, not to mention because it also says we've already been quickened in that passage, despite the fact that we *haven't* literally been given immortal bodies yet; and we aren't literally sitting in heavenly places right now either (at least as of the time I wrote this book), which this passage in the KJB says we are if we interpret it literally. The key to the part about being quickened, of course, is partly found in verse 7[880] (where we can see that this is indeed figurative, since this verse tells us that Paul is referring to the ages to come, which means the references to having been raised together and seated in heavenly places in verse 6, and having been quickened in verses 1 and 5, have to be mostly proleptic, meaning they're a guarantee of our future immortality, sinlessness, and position when we're finally in heaven, although they actually *do* have a secondary, spiritual meaning as well, but only in the sense of referring to our

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[879] And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. — Ephesians 2:1-7

[880] That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. — Ephesians 2:7

spiritual union with Christ who *is* currently both immortal and in said location), and also partly found in Colossians 2:10-13[881] (which is the passage that tells us we've been baptized into not only Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, but into His quickening/immortality as well, although it obviously isn't physical for us yet as it one day will be when we're *literally* up in heaven; and if the "quickening" in these passages *was* simply referring to being "made alive" from our previous state as sinners, as some Christians believe, it would then mean that Jesus – whose quickening we're sharing in a spiritual sense, according to the passage in Colossians – was *also* "made alive" from a state as a sinner that *He* previously experienced as well, but since He never sinned, not to mention since He was semi-mortal rather than mortal prior to His death, we know that it's referring to the actual quickening of our physical bodies, both proleptically and spiritually – due to our spiritual union with Christ). And so, everything we've covered proves that *none* of these passages can be referring to a "spiritual death," as most Christians assume they do, without contradicting the rest of the Bible (since the only *actual* spiritual death in the Bible is the death the body of Christ "experienced," so to speak, through our spiritual union with Christ, as just discussed), which means that the phrases *"who were dead in trespasses and sins"* and *"even when we were dead in sins"* in verses 1 and 5 of Ephesians 2 in the KJB *have* to be interpreted metaphorically rather than "spiritually"[882] in the manner that many Christians interpret them, and the same has to go for the words *"being dead in your sins"* in Colossians 2:13 in the KJB too, with these passages using metaphorical language about our having been "dead" and about

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[881] And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; — Colossians 2:10-13

[882] *Spiritualizing Scripture, The Crime* by Martin Zender: https://www.martinzender.com/Zenderature/spiritualizing_scripture.htm

our "current" quickened "state" in order to contrast our past condition as slaves of sin with both our glorious future in our immortal bodies which will hence be free from ever sinning again, as well as with our present union with Christ (besides, even if we *did* interpret "quickened" as speaking of something other than our mortal bodies being made immortal in these verses in the *King James Bible*, we'd still know it couldn't *literally* be about our spirits being resurrected from *actual* death because, again, a body without a living spirit couldn't remain alive, so it would still have to be a metaphor or be referring to our union with Christ or be saying something else along those lines; but all that aside, I don't see the term "spiritual" mentioned *anywhere* in *any* of the passages which metaphorically talk about being dead in one's sins in the KJB anyway, so the idea that Paul was referring to the version of "spiritual death" which most Christians believe in, whatever that's even supposed to actually be, is obviously reading one's assumptions into the passages, although that's no really surprise since most Christians do that about basically *every* doctrine they hold to, as we've now seen – and will continue to see – proven throughout this book).

That tangent about "spiritual death" aside, though, as I already mentioned, the passage in Daniel is talking about a physical resurrection on earth anyway. It wasn't referring to a spiritual existence in an afterlife realm while dead at all. The negative part of this passage is referring to those resurrected to life at the Great White Throne Judgement before they're either sent off to their second death – when they're tossed into the lake of fire to die a second time for a while – or perhaps even to their time paying off "the uttermost farthing"[883] on the New Earth (which is a whole other topic that most Christians aren't familiar with at all – nor would the Israelites who first heard the prophecy in Daniel 12 have been either, I should add – and which has nothing to do with "earning salvation," as most Christians assume would be the case if it means what some of us believe it means, because nobody gets saved by paying off their debt, since

[883] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. — Matthew 5:26

that doesn't gain anyone any of the types of salvation we've already covered, but we'll get to that topic a little later), so it seems safe to say that this isn't actually talking about what most people have read into it. And all of this is aside from the fact that 1 Corinthians 15:53-55 tells us that for a human to be immortal means for that human to be saved,[884] as we've now discussed *many* times throughout this book, which is why anyone who has read this far already knows that never-ending conscious torment is impossible anyway, and is also why we should now move on to the next passage.

Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. – Matthew 5:21-22

Jesus said this shortly before one of His suggestions that people amputate body parts in order to avoid the "hell" known as the Valley of Hinnom that we looked at back in chapter 2 of this book,[885] but even if we ignored what we've already discussed many times about how 1 Corinthians 15:53-55 proves that immortality for humans *is* salvation (making the doctrine of Infernalism impossible to begin with), you'll notice that he didn't say anything about being conscious while on fire in the Valley of Hinnom (which is the "hell" He was referring to in this

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[884] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

[885] And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. — Matthew 5:29–30

warning as well) in this passage, or about being there without end either, so the same comments I made about His warnings in chapter 2 apply to this warning as well. And if any Christian wants to insist that never-ending punishment is somehow implied by all of these references to "hell" (as I've actually heard some Christians claim, without any basis for doing so, I might add), they'd have to demonstrate how everything we've already covered in this book has been incorrect, not to mention prove that this assertion of theirs is indeed the case, in order for it to be anything other than an assumption they're reading into Scripture.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. – Matthew 18:6

This passage doesn't actually mention any version of "hell" by name, but it also precedes one of Jesus' suggestions that people amputate body parts in order to avoid the "hell" known as the Valley of Hinnom that we looked at back in chapter 2,[886] so I wanted to mention it because these various warnings by Jesus all seem to suggest that if people either kill themselves (or allow themselves to be killed) after (or perhaps rather than) committing a certain type of sin, or at least mutilate their bodies in order to avoid committing certain types of sins, they can avoid being punished in hell, which really doesn't seem to fit with the traditional Christian doctrine of salvation, at least not that of most Evangelicals and other Protestants. And if they aren't taking the methods of avoiding being punished in hell in these passages literally (or at least interpreting the methods figuratively to mean that one must do whatever they can to avoid sinning in

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[886] Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. — Matthew 18:8–9

order to avoid hell, which also doesn't fit with The Popular Doctrine, because most Protestants don't believe we can avoid hell by avoiding sinning, considering the fact that by the time anyone had heard or read these warnings they'd already have sinned at least once in their life, guaranteeing them a one-way trip to their version of "hell," if they were right, and so these warnings would have come far too late to be useful to anyone if they happened to be correct in the rest of their theology), then they can't really use these passages to defend their assumptions either, if they want to remain consistent. These warnings *do* make sense, however, when one considers what I explained back in chapter 1 of this book, which is that members of the Israel of God have to do certain works, not to mention avoid certain actions, in order to get to enjoy life in the kingdom of heaven when it begins here on earth after the Tribulation.

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. – Matthew 12:31-32

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. – Mark 3:28-29

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. – Luke 12:10

These are parallel passages that are all talking about the same thing: the so-called "unforgivable sin." The first thing it's important to note when reading them is how long the penalty for this sin will actually last, because contrary to

what most people assume, it isn't a never-ending punishment. You see, while the passage in Mark tells us, *"he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness,"* the passage in Matthew tells us how long that "never" (which, as we've already learned – back in chapter 4 of this book – can be a figurative translation in the KJB) will actually last: for the duration of this "world" and the "world" to come. This is another case of the word "world" being used as metonymy for "age" in the KJB (having again been translated from the Greek word αἰών in this verse), and there are at least two ages or "worlds" to come still, as we just learned when we looked at Ephesians 2:7[887] (note the plural "ages" in the verse – and I should also mention that those who understand the Doctrine of the Ages do believe we're still living in the same age that Jesus was living in when He spoke the words we've been looking at). This means that, while someone who is guilty of this sin won't be forgiven in this world/age, or even the next world/age, they could theoretically be forgiven during the world/age after that (which, as those who are familiar with the Doctrine of the Ages believe, will be the final world/age, on the New Earth, prior to the time Christ destroys death), not to mention *after* the final world/age has concluded (as all ages will have to do, based on the definition of the word "age"). This also once again supports the fact that the word "everlasting" generally just means "age-pertaining" when it's used in the *King James Bible*, since we can see from what we just covered from Matthew 12 that the "everlasting" damnation of Mark 3 will only last for two ages total (the age that Jesus lived in while He walked the earth, along with the age after that one, and will then end after that second age referred to there also ends).

But what is this "everlasting" damnation, specifically? Well, it's important to note that time spent in the lake of fire is not implicitly meant by the word "damnation" there (the word "damnation" in this passage in Mark – translated

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[887] That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. — Ephesians 2:7

from the Greek word κρίσεως/"kree'-seh-os" in the KJB – basically only means "judgement," "sentence," or "penalty," referring to the fact that there is indeed going to be an "everlasting" penalty, figuratively speaking, but not implying any specific penalty in the word itself), and since neither hell nor the lake of fire are mentioned in any of these passages, to read punishment in the lake of fire into those passages without a good reason to do so is simply an assumption one has to make in order to support their soteriology. And while the less literal Bible versions such as the KJB don't make it quite as obvious what the penalty is the way the original Koine Greek does, anyone who has made it this far in the book should really be able to figure it out on their own.

Before I explain it, however, I should really point out that, even if "*hath never forgiveness*" in Mark in the KJB was meant to be taken literally and actually meant they *wouldn't* eventually be forgiven, people don't necessarily need forgiveness in order to make it onto the New Earth. That might sound like a strange statement, but there are two factors to consider here. The first is simply that someone who is condemned to some form of punishment doesn't require forgiveness in order for their punishment to end, because even when someone is found guilty of a crime and sentenced to a certain number of years in prison today, they still leave the prison once they've served their time, even if they are never forgiven or pardoned (and to assume that the sentence of those who commit the so-called "unforgivable sin" has to be without end is also nothing more than eisegesis, especially since we already know from Matthew that it only lasts until the conclusion of the world/age after the one Jesus lived in during His earthly ministry, and that there's at least one world/age to come after that next one ends, based on what Paul wrote in that verse in Ephesians 2:7 we just looked at, which means "but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath not forgiveness for the age, but is in danger of age-pertaining damnation" is what the *King James Bible's* figurative translation in Mark is essentially saying, simply telling us that they won't be forgiven during the current age, or during the thousand-year period of time sometimes referred to as "the age" in the

original Greek either; and this is backed up by the fact that it's a legitimate literal translation of Mark 3:29, as demonstrated by the literal interlinear translation I included here, at least in the *Textus Receptus*, which I say because many of the modern Bible versions are translated from different manuscript wording which says ἁμαρτήματος/"hah-mar-tee'-ma-tos" – meaning "sin" – instead of κρίσεως at the end of the verse, but that doesn't change anything I said about "the age," or the fact that the sin would only be an "age-pertaining" sin, at least if ἁμαρτήματος was the correct Greek word to translate from, although I don't believe it is since, again, I personally believe the TR is always the superior source to translate from). And the second thing to consider is that there's actually something even better than forgiveness, and that's justification. Forgiveness implies guilt, and just means that the forgiver is overlooking the guilt of the one being forgiven by not punishing them

ὃς	δ'	ἂν	βλασφημήσῃ	εἰς	τὸ	
he	but	that	blasphemes	against	the	
πνεῦμα	τὸ	ἅγιον	οὐκ	ἔχει	ἄφεσιν	
Spirit		Holy	not	hath	forgiveness	
εἰς	τὸν	αἰῶνα	ἀλλ'	ἔνοχός	ἐστιν	
for	the	age	but	in danger	is	
		αἰωνίου		κρίσεως		
		[of] age-pertaining		judgement		

for their crime (and said forgiveness can be revoked as well[888]), whereas justification means "not guilty" to begin with, or "declared to be righteous" (it's sometimes well defined as: "just as if I'd never sinned at all"; and it's important to note that justification can't be revoked the way forgiveness can be – at least not the sort of justification Paul wrote about, anyway – and there's no reason to believe that a "not guilty" verdict by God could suddenly become a "guilty" verdict), so even if somebody does miss out on forgiveness entirely, justification is far superior to it anyway, and that passage doesn't even hint at the idea that they won't eventually be declared justified (which it seems they eventually will have to be, based on everything we already went over from Paul's epistles).

So, with all that being said, what is the punishment for the sin that these passages are referring to? Well, there were various reasons one might end up experiencing this sentence, but there was basically only one ultimate punishment that Jesus ever threatened His Jewish audience with: missing out on

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[888] Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. — Matthew 18:21-35

getting to live in Israel during "the age" when the kingdom exists there for 1,000 years (regardless of whether the cause of missing out on "everlasting," aka "age-pertaining," life in the kingdom is because one has not been roused from the dead at the resurrection of the just, is because one has been executed and had their corpse burned up or devoured in the Valley of Hinnom, or is simply because one has been exiled from Israel to live in the "outer darkness" at that time, missing out on living in Israel during that thousand-year age was basically the bottom line when it came to the punishments Jesus spoke about), and since one needs forgiveness in order to live in Israel during "the age," we can determine that the sentence of "eternal"/age-pertaining damnation must simply be referring to missing out on getting to live in the kingdom of heaven during that thousand-year age because they won't have been forgiven during that period of time.

But as big and bad a threat as that was for Jesus' audience (and it was a pretty major threat for them), missing out on getting to enjoy life in Israel for that thousand-year age wasn't the final word. Jesus said that *"the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you"*[889] to the chief priests and the elders of the people,[890] but that doesn't mean the chief priests and elders won't ever go into the kingdom of God themselves (even if they missed out on the part of the kingdom of God known as the kingdom of heaven, since that part only lasts for 1,000 years). In fact, they indeed will, just not until a point in time *after* the first group has already done so (Jesus said *"before you,"* **not**

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[889] Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him. — Matthew 21:31-32

[890] And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? — Matthew 21:23

"instead of you"), and since both groups are currently dead, with the first group not even having enjoyed life in the thousand-year kingdom yet, the only time and place left for the second group to possibly enter the kingdom of God *after* the first group does will be on the New Earth, after the Great White Throne Judgement has ended (since they won't be resurrected until after the thousand years are over[891]), which proves that people who miss out on the salvation Jesus spoke about can still make it to the New Earth. Please note that I'm not saying they'll definitely have been forgiven at this point, though. In fact, I'm willing to concede that they very well might not be forgiven at that time, and they certainly won't have been saved at that point (at least not when it comes to the sort of salvation Jesus primarily spoke about, since they'll have been dead during the thousand-year "age," or at least for most of that period of time; and they won't be made immortal at that time, so they won't enjoy Pauline salvation at that particular time either). But that's okay because, as we've already covered, one doesn't need to be forgiven (or pardoned) once they've paid the penalty for a crime, and the penalty for this particular crime was simply to miss out on life in Israel for the thousand years that the kingdom of heaven will exist there (simply put, forgiveness is quite possibly only necessary for getting to live in the kingdom of heaven during the thousand-year period of time it exists on this planet, or for getting to live in heaven itself during the same time period, although the forgiveness that the Israel of God experiences is conditional, whereas the "forgiveness" that those of us in the body of Christ experience was given to us by God without us having to do a single thing to enjoy it,[892] simply because He chose to bless us more than anyone else, and the word "forgiveness" when it comes to us is mostly just referring to being dealt with graciously by God, but that's a much bigger discussion than I have the room to get into here, although it really should be pretty evident based on everything

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[891] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. — Revelation 20:5

[892] And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. — Ephesians 4:32

else I've covered about our salvation in this book – I should point out, however, that all this confirms the fact that salvation isn't required for someone to enjoy life on the New Earth, as I suggested is the case back in chapter 2 of this book).

To reiterate all that, there are people who will get to enjoy the kingdom of God when it begins on earth shortly after Jesus' Second Coming, in the next world/age (this would include the tax collectors and prostitutes Jesus spoke of, among others). But after the Great White Throne Judgement, during the final world/age (which will be the world/age *after* the one Jesus referred to as "the world to come"), the kingdom will be located (at least to begin with) in the massive city[893] known as the New Jerusalem,[894] and it's during this world/age that people such as the chief priests and elders, as well as those who are figuratively said to *"hath never forgiveness"* in the KJB, will get a chance to enter the kingdom (which refers to getting to enter the New Jerusalem; it isn't a reference to simply living on the New Earth, since there will be plenty of people living on the New Earth who aren't living in the New Jerusalem). Not everyone will get to do so until they've paid off "the uttermost farthing," however (which I personally suspect means, at least in part, paying restitution to the people they wronged in this lifetime in some way while on the New Earth, based on what

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[893] And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. — Revelation 21:16-17

[894] And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. — Revelation 21:2-4

seems to be implied by both Matthew 5:26[895] and Matthew 18:21-35,[896] and which is why I suspect that people in the lake of fire will be resurrected – although not quickened yet – in the order of those who have the most wrongs to right first to those who have the least amount of wrongs to right last, so they each have enough time to repay those debts to their "debtors" prior to the end of the ages and the final quickening of everyone including them). But when they have repaid that uttermost farthing, they'll presumably also get to enjoy life in the kingdom of God, quite possibly in quickened bodies at that time, since that's very likely going to be when Jesus will finally destroy death, at the final sounding of "the last trump" we discussed earlier (even if they missed out on the salvation Jesus spoke about, since they didn't get to live in Israel when Jesus first returned). This doesn't mean the salvation *we're* concerned with is through works, though, because this repaying of debts has nothing to do with Pauline

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[895] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. — Matthew 5:26

[896] Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. — Matthew 18:21-35

salvation at all. Paying off their debt on the New Earth won't earn them their immortality at that time (and we don't know for sure *when* they'll *actually* be quickened, of course, so even if it does happen at that time as I speculate, this would simply be coincidental timing and have nothing to do with earning salvation), which is what the salvation that Paul wrote about was largely referring to (although I'd also speculate that they'll remain alive even if they *aren't* quickened at that time, thanks to the fruit and leaves of the tree of life, similar to everyone else who *did* have their names written in the book of life and had been living on the New Earth already, but it seems they'll need to continue consuming the tree's products regularly in order to remain healthy and alive – presumably on a monthly basis, based on Revelation 22:2 – as already discussed, and so while they won't technically be mortals at this time, since the tree's produce will protect them from death by aging or illness, they'll be in that state which I refer to as being "semi-mortal" rather than being truly immortal, since true immortality refers to being incapable of dying, which means they wouldn't need the produce of the tree of life to remain alive, and hence this isn't the salvation that Paul primarily wrote about).

I should probably also quickly add that, being recorded only in Circumcision writings, and based on the fact that members of the body of Christ are guaranteed our special salvation regardless of what we do, this particular sin isn't something we need to concern ourselves with (even if blaspheming the Holy Spirit is still a good thing to avoid). Basically, this warning is really only applicable to Israelites who are hoping to live in Israel during "the age." And I should perhaps *also* add that this means Jesus was technically bringing *better news* to His listeners than they might have already been familiar with based on what the Hebrew Scriptures said, because while He wasn't telling them that everyone would experience the salvation which involves getting to enjoy life in the kingdom of heaven for 1,000 years, He was at least giving them hope that they might eventually get to live on the New Earth after all, even if not in immortal bodies, since only Paul shared *that* good news with us (that said, Jesus

didn't tell them they'd live *permanently* on the New Earth, but ironically enough, His warning about the so-called "unforgivable sin" that has scared so many people actually *does* seem to at least provide *some* form of possible hope for the unrighteous that Israelites back then might not have even been aware of, although it *is* possible that passages such as Lamentations 3:31-33,[897] which we looked at earlier, *might* have already given them this type of hope, even if they wouldn't have had the *full* hope of Pauline Universalism that Jesus later taught *us* about through the apostle Paul).

For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. – Psalm 49:17-19

Of course, "hell" isn't mentioned in this passage, but regardless, the reference to the one who dies in this passage never again seeing light is sometimes still used to try to defend The Popular Doctrine. However, by this point, I trust you can see that the reference is obvious hyperbole, since we already know that they *will* see light when they're resurrected to be judged. This is simply poetic terminology being used in a book of poems and other figurative language, in this case to say that those who do evil can't rely on their wealth to save themselves, and that they'll wind up in the dust along with the animals who

[897] For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. — Lamentations 3:31-33

have died, during "the age" that the writer gets to enjoy his salvation,[898] which we now know will be in the kingdom of heaven on earth. But we also now know that this isn't going to be the last word on their final outcome, even if the writer of the Psalm himself wasn't aware of this fact.

For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. – Proverbs 2:18-19

Similar to the part of the Psalm we just looked at, this Proverb is obviously also using hyperbole for the exact same reasons, so I trust I don't have to go into any detail actually explaining it, since what I said in that explanation about future resurrection would also apply equally here.

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[898] Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: Both low and high, rich and poor, together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp. Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about? They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah. Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish. — Psalm 49:1-20

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. – Isaiah 55:6-7

Some Christians will quote this verse in order to suggest that one can't find the Lord or be saved after the time that *"he may be found"* or *"is near."* This passage was written specifically to the Circumcision (Israelites), however, and we already know that not everyone will be saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision, so it doesn't cause any problems for the doctrine of the salvation of all, because anyone who misses out on salvation under *that* Gospel will eventually experience salvation under the Gospel of the Uncircumcision, as we've already learned, so this passage doesn't actually help defend The Popular Doctrine either.

(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) – 2 Corinthians 6:2

This reference of Paul to Isaiah 49:8[899] is obviously just talking about the special salvation of the body of Christ (and perhaps also the salvation of Israelites under their Gospel, as Paul often used Circumcision writings in a midrashic manner to prove doctrines related to his own Gospel, as we now know), not the general salvation of all humanity, so even if someone doesn't get to experience the special salvation during *"the day of salvation,"* they'll still get to enjoy general salvation in the future as Paul also promised elsewhere in his epistles.

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[899] Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; — Isaiah 49:8

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? – Isaiah 33:14

I'm sure it should go without saying, by this point, that the "devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings" can't be referring to any version of "hell." For one thing, as we've already covered, nobody who heard or read this warning at the time it was given could have possibly interpreted it as referring to any version of "hell," since no location referred to as "hell" in any English version of the Bible had ever been described that way in Scripture when that prophecy was written, and this verse doesn't mention "hell" either, so there's no way anyone could have made a connection between this particular "fire" and any version of "hell" back then (and there's nothing in the verse that even hints at an afterlife, so there's no way it could have been interpreted as referring to an afterlife punishment either). So what was this talking about? Well, the first thing to note is that it's a reference to specific sinners in a specific location – Zion – telling us that this is a judgement specifically meant for Israel, and the fire is simply a figure of speech for certain judgements of God against Israel. Why does God use fire as a symbol of judgement? Because the judgement comes directly from God, Who is referred to as a consuming fire Himself[900] in various parts of Scripture[901] (and I hope you don't believe that God is "hell," or the lake of fire, Himself, which we know He can't be since we already know that the lake of fire will be located in a valley/"hell" in Israel). The Hebrew Scriptures[902] are full of examples[903] of

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[900] For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. — Deuteronomy 4:24

[901] For our God is a consuming fire. — Hebrews 12:29

[902] Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. — Psalm 50:3

[903] Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. — Isaiah 29:6

this symbolism being used[904] to refer to judgements of Israel,[905] so to assume this one verse is a reference to the lake of fire is just reading one's preconceived doctrinal bias into the text. But the question does remain, who among Israel shall be able to dwell in the "fire" when God judges Israel? Well, the answer to that question is given in the very next verse (in Isaiah 33:15): *"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of*

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[904] He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about. — Lamentations 2:3

[905] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you. And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered morter, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD. — Ezekiel 22:17-31

blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." Those Israelites who walk righteously will be able to dwell among the fiery judgements themselves without being devoured, yet we know the righteous won't be cast into the lake of fire (only certain unrighteousness people are said to end up there[906]), so it should go without saying that this verse was never talking about the lake of fire to begin with. This also serves as a good reminder when reading the rest of the Bible that, just because you see the word "fire" in a passage (even if it's a passage about judgement), it doesn't necessarily mean it's referring to the lake of fire or any other "hell," but rather that it might simply refer figuratively to someone being judged in some way *without* ending up in the version of "hell" known as the lake of fire (especially if you don't specifically see the words "hell" or "the lake of fire" in the passage in question in the KJB).

In addition, it's also important to remember that, when we see a passage about judgement, being judged doesn't imply that someone will be punished without end anyway, or even that they'll be punished at all. First of all, judgement can be a good thing (as the judgement of the body of Christ at the judgement seat of Christ, among other scriptural judgements,[907] should make clear). But second of all, many of the punishments based on negative judgements throughout the Bible eventually ended (or were promised to be reversed in the future[908]), so

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

[907] With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. — Isaiah 26:9

[908] When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them: that thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them. When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. — Ezekiel 16:53-55

we'd have no basis for simply assuming that doesn't apply to the judgement referred to in this verse in Isaiah either, even if we didn't already know what Paul wrote about the salvation of all humanity, which proves it would have to anyway.

For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. – Isaiah 34:8-10

This is, of course, typical figurative, prophetic language, just like in the last passage we looked at (which was in the chapter immediately before this one in the book of Isaiah), and aside from the fact that neither "hell" nor the lake of fire are mentioned anywhere in this chapter either, the reference to the dust becoming *"brimstone"* and the land becoming *"burning pitch"* which *"shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof"* which *"shall go up for ever,"* not to mention the part of the passage saying, *"from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever,"* isn't even talking about people burning at all, but rather is talking about land (at least in a figurative manner, if not literally). This passage basically seems to just be a prophecy about the judgement awaiting the land the nations live in during the Day of the Lord's Vengeance, as the passage says, which is referring to the Tribulation. Yes, the land of Idumea is mentioned specifically in verses 5 and 6,[909] but the Edomites have pretty much been lost to history at this point, with no particular land left belonging to them, so Idumea is generally assumed to be have been

[909] For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. — Isaiah 34:5-6

used there as a single example of the judgement which will come upon *all* the nations of the world who stand against Israel during the Tribulation, as Edomites often did when they were still around, since they hated Israel more than any other nation (although it does also seem to be true that what was once the land of Idumea *will* be "a desolation" at that time as well,[910] presuming this itself isn't simply figurative language for the utter destruction that did fall upon the Edomites in the past). And since we know that the rest of the world which isn't Israel *isn't* going to be a desolate, burning wasteland for the entire 1,000 years that the kingdom of heaven exists in Israel (because we already know people will be living out there in the "outer darkness" during that time period, or else nobody would exist to rise up against Israel at the end of the thousand years one last time, as Revelation tells us will happen[911]), not to mention the fact that this entire planet is going to be destroyed after the thousand-year kingdom of heaven in Israel ends and will be replaced with a New Earth, we know that this isn't meant to be taken any more literally than the *"everlasting burnings"* in chapter 33 are meant to be, since the smoke which is going to *"go up for ever"* would have to eventually stop rising, if it were literal smoke, because there won't be any land left to burn after this earth is destroyed and replaced with by the New Earth, and that the *"for ever and ever"* of this entire judgement takes place for no longer than 1,000 years, give or take. This is all just telling us that either the land the nations live in will be judged harshly for a period of time, or that the people living in said land will be instead, but we know that the *"burning"* language in this prophecy is purely figurative based on what else we

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[910] Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it. — Jeremiah 49:17-18

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

know about the state of the rest of the world[912] during the thousand year period of time that the kingdom of heaven will exist in Israel.[913] But either way, there isn't anything in this passage which even implies that any humans will suffer without end (although, as we've already discussed many times now, we also know it couldn't imply that because 1 Corinthians 15:53-55 proves that immortality for humans *is* salvation, making the doctrine of Infernalism impossible to begin with).

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. – Matthew 13:24-30

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

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[912] From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. — Zephaniah 3:10

[913] In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance. — Isaiah 19:23-25

and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. – Matthew 13:47-50

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. – Matthew 25:31-46

I'm covering all three of these passages together because I believe they're talking about similar judgements which occur around the same time. And since pretty much every "orthodox" Christian I've ever spoken with also believes these are either similar judgements which take place around the same time, or

are even perhaps referring to the exact same judgement, it seems safe to do so (although, if you believe these are actually referring to separate judgements which *don't* actually take place around the same time, I'd be curious to hear how you do happen to interpret these passages).

If someone reads those passages over without taking the time to break them down, and ignores the fact that no version of "hell," or even the lake of fire, is mentioned by name anywhere in any of these parabolic prophecies, it's sort of easy to see why someone might assume they're talking about true believers going to heaven and non-believers ending up trapped in hell (especially if they aren't aware of what we've now learned about what heaven and the various "hells" are when referred to in the Bible, not to mention what we've now learned about Paul's teachings regarding the salvation of all humanity and how he taught that immortality for humans *is* salvation). But whatever the cause of the outcome mentioned in these passages is, I hope it's obvious by now to anyone who has made it this far into the book that Jesus' main point here had to be about getting to enjoy life in the kingdom of heaven on earth vs not getting to do so, just as pretty much *all* of His judgement teachings were about. As I mentioned earlier in this book, at the end of His explanation of the first parable, Jesus says the angels *"shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,"* and we now know that the kingdom of heaven is going to be here on earth, not in an afterlife realm, which means the identity of the "righteous/just/sheep" and the "wicked/them which do iniquity/goats" can't be what most Christians have assumed either. Of course, most Christians assume that the sheep, or the righteous, represent true believers, and that the goats, or the wicked, are everyone else, and while neither hell nor the lake of fire are actually mentioned by name in any of these passages, if people are being judged and going into fire for eternity, as the passages seem to imply when one doesn't consider the context and recognize the figurative language, most also assume that it must be talking about the Great White Throne

Judgement and the lake of fire. Of course, as most Christians are aware, but seem to forget when they read these passages for some reason, there won't be any true believers being judged at the Great White Throne, which means the sheep can't actually represent true believers at all if Jesus was talking about that particular judgement (those in the body of Christ will have already been "judged," so to speak, about 1,000 years before the Great White Throne Judgement, at the Judgement Seat of Christ, and will have been living in the heavens for all that time, while those in the Israel of God will have been living on, and reigning over, the earth that they inherited for the thousand years before that judgement occurs,[914] and there's no reason to think that either group would be judged after that period of time ends, especially since most of them will have been made immortal at this time, and immortality for humans is always connected with salvation in Scripture, as we now also know; besides, believers within the body of Christ will likely *participate* in judging those at the Great White Throne Judgement[915] – Christ is the judge[916] at that judgement, and it would take a very long time for one person to judge every single human being who ever lived, even if one excludes all those who have already experienced salvation, so it makes sense that the rest of His body will assist Him here – and no, the Great White Throne Judgement doesn't take place outside of space and time, but rather takes place in our physical universe after the dead have been physically resurrected into mortal bodies, which should be more obvious than it is to some, considering the fact that it's technically impossible for anyone who isn't God to be outside of space and time anyway, as well as that nothing can occur without space and time, so nobody could experience being judged if they weren't existing within space and time, considering the fact that movement

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[914] Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. — Revelation 20:6

[915] Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? — 1 Corinthians 6:2

[916] For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: — John 5:22

requires one to exist within space, and change and thought, not to mention feelings, require one to exist within time – which tells us that the way the KJB renders the end of Revelation 10:6 as, *"that there should be time no longer,"*[917] must just mean it's saying "that there will no longer be a delay," and that it's simply using "time" as metonymy for "a delay" in the verse, which is one of the various ways we still use the word even today, with another similar way we use it being how we say things like, "there's no longer any time to do that," without meaning that time has stopped existing; the fact that *"there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour"* during the Tribulation,[918] by the way, also confirms that heaven isn't a timeless location the way some people who aren't aware of what the Bible says heaven actually is believe it is, since an event can't take place for half an hour without time – and anyone who still continues to insist that there's no time in heaven had better have a solid scriptural basis to prove this assumption). Not to mention, there's no reference to a resurrection in any of these passages, which would be necessary to occur if these are about a judgement of everyone who has ever lived. Instead, all one needs to do is take a look at the verse in Matthew 25 which says it takes place *"when the Son of man shall come in his glory,"* and look at the context of the rest of the chapter, as well as the chapter before it, which makes it obvious that it's talking about the time that Jesus returns to the earth at His Second Coming, telling us that these passages must be talking about a judgement (or even multiple judgements) which takes place on earth shortly after the Great Tribulation ends, rather than the Great White Throne Judgement which takes place about a thousand years *after* this judgement.[919]

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[917] And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: — Revelation 10:6

[918] And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. — Revelation 8:1

[919] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. — Revelation 20:5

Of course, if life “eternal” and “everlasting” punishment literally meant that every single human living on earth were going to be judged and sent to afterlife realms called heaven or hell for eternity, as most Christians have mistakenly assumed would happen at the time the judgement in these parables takes place, that would cause other obvious problems. For example, it would leave nobody living on the earth for the next thousand years to reproduce, as we now know Scripture says will happen in Israel when the kingdom begins there (as well as on the New Earth, after the thousand-year age ends and our current planet is destroyed, as we’ve also now discussed). As I’ve mentioned before, the Bible teaches that those who have been made immortal will be like the angels and will no longer marry or reproduce at that time, and if all the non-believers are going to be sent to the lake of fire to die a second time at that point, with everyone else being given their immortality at that time, that doesn’t leave anybody else to fulfill the prophecies about the New Covenant, or even the New Earth, that are supposed to take place after the Tribulation ends. Not only that, it also

wouldn't leave[920] any Gentiles to fulfill[921] the many prophecies[922] about the nations[923] during the thousand years,[924] not to mention the fact that no Gentiles would be left to rise up against Israel at the end of the thousand years one last time if all the non-believers are cast into the lake of fire at this point, as I've already mentioned.

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[920] Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. — Zechariah 8:22-23

[921] And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. — Zechariah 14:16-19

[922] And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. — Isaiah 2:2-4

[923] In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance. — Isaiah 19:23-25

[924] And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. — Revelation 2:26-27

Hopefully you've also asked yourself why there's nothing in there about the sheep "asking Jesus into their hearts" or "accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour" in these passages, if you're still assuming this is talking about the salvation Paul wrote about (not that either of those are actually scriptural ways to be saved), or even about them believing that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, and why it seems like the positive outcomes in these parables appear to be dependent upon being just or doing good works rather than being said to be by grace through faith. Most people just brush those concerns aside, of course, because they "know" these passages have to be talking about what they've always been taught by their religious leaders that they are, and decide to believe – even though it doesn't actually say so in the passages – that the reason for the positive outcomes in these passages (especially during the judgement of the sheep and the goats) *has* to be figurative and *has* to be talking about these good works as proof of faith rather than good works being the actual cause of the sheep's reward as that passage says they are when interpreted literally (and then push the thought that "many non-Christians do the very things Jesus seemed to say would result in 'everlasting' life while many Christians don't" to the back of their minds and try to forget that fact as well), because if one were to read it literally it would become obvious pretty quickly that it just *can't* be talking about what one has always assumed it is at all (although one is then also forced to push the thought that, "if the *cause* of the rewards and punishments referred to as life 'eternal' and 'everlasting' fire is figurative, then there's no reason to believe that these rewards and punishments, or even their durations, aren't *also* figurative in this passage, especially based on the actual meaning of the English words 'everlasting' and 'eternal' in *other* parts of the KJB and the words they're translated from in Scripture," to the back of their mind as well, but most successfully do so). But even if this could all somehow be twisted into meaning the sheep are true believers who will go to heaven, and the goats are non-believers who will go to the lake of fire, we already know from what we've

previously covered that there's no basis for believing that any human is going to remain in the lake of fire without end (and that there's no reason to believe any human is conscious in it either), and we in fact know that everyone who dies a second time will have to be resurrected and quickened in order for death to actually be destroyed as Paul said it will be, so mangling the passage in such a manner doesn't actually help support The Popular Doctrine anyway.

But as for what these passages are *actually* talking about, in order to figure this out, one needs to first be aware of certain passages in the Hebrew Scriptures which are the key to understanding the biblical meaning of being said to be living in a "furnace," because this isn't talking about being in the lake of fire at all. Instead, if you look at passages such as Deuteronomy 4:20, which says, *"But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day,"* or Jeremiah 11:4, which says, "W*hich I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be*

your God," among various other references[925] in the Hebrew Scriptures[926] to living in a "furnace,"[927] it should be obvious that none of these passages refer to spending time burning in literal fire in an actual furnace made of iron, but are basically talking about time spent in parts of the world that aren't Israel (no Christian believes the "furnace" part of the parable is literal anyway, and if the "furnace" in the warning isn't a literal structure with fire burning inside of it, it stands to reason that the "fire" in the figurative "furnace" in this warning isn't literal fire either, but is simply a symbolic reference to judgement, as we've now learned that mentions of "fire" and "burning" very often are in the Bible). And

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[925] For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: — 1 Kings 8:51

[926] Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD. Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it. And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD. And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you. — Ezekiel 22:8-22

[927] Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. — Isaiah 48:10

so, what the first two parables are actually saying is that there will be righteous Israelites and unrighteous Israelites when Jesus returns, and some will wail and gnash their teeth (which is a figure of speech used in various parts of the Bible to refer to the extreme negative emotions of the living[928] rather than the dead[929]) because they've been forced to live in parts of the world that aren't the kingdom of heaven/Israel (these parts of the world being referred to parabolically as "the furnace of fire," also referred to in other passages as the "outer darkness," which we've already learned can't refer to the lake of fire, since *it* will be located in a valley *inside* the kingdom, and since Israel is where the kingdom of heaven will be located when it begins on the earth, those parts of the world far from the light of the King and His kingdom[930] will be in "outer darkness," also referred to hyperbolically in Isaiah 34 as a "*burning pitch*" which "*shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof*" going up "*for ever*"), unlike the righteous Jews who *will* get to live in the kingdom of heaven/Israel at that time (which is where everyone who heard Jesus when He spoke wanted to live when the kingdom fully arrives on earth in the future). It's actually very simple to grasp once you come to understand who Jesus' audience was and what His message was all about, especially when you also take all of Paul's references to the salvation of all humanity in his epistles into consideration. But when you assume that Jesus was talking about an afterlife for ghosts in another dimension rather than the life and death which physical bodies on this planet will go through, and think that Jesus was directing His message to everyone rather than specifically to Israelites, it's very easy to get confused about *all* of His sayings.

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[928] The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish. — Psalm 112:10

[929] All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it. — Lamentations 2:16

[930] Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. — John 8:12

As for the parable of the sheep and the goats, this judgement simply refers to certain Gentiles of the nations (based on Jesus' statement that *"before him shall be gathered all nations"*) being cursed[931] for not being a blessing[932] unto the least of Jesus' brethren during the Tribulation period, which this judgement takes place almost immediately after (Jesus' "brethren" obviously being a reference to faithful Israelites,[933] presumably those who will be taken into captivity among the nations during the Tribulation,[934] and not simply to random people who are suffering today), by being forced to reside outside the kingdom of heaven, as well as to other Gentiles of the nations getting to live *in* the kingdom in Israel at

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[931] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: — Matthew 25:41

[932] Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. — Genesis 12:1-3

[933] While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. — Matthew 12:46-50

[934] Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. — Zechariah 14:1-2

that time[935] as a reward for blessing the faithful Israelites who were persecuted during the Tribulation. We know from Zechariah 14:16-21 that there will be Gentiles not living in the kingdom of heaven at this time, consisting of *"every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem"*[936] at the end of the Tribulation,[937] meaning the Gentiles who didn't support Israelites during the Tribulation and hence won't get to enjoy 1,000 years of life "eternal" in Israel at that time, but who didn't die at Armageddon[938] because they weren't a part of

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[935] So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD. — Ezekiel 47:21-23

[936] And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. — Zechariah 14:16-21

[937] And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. — Revelation 19:19

[938] And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. — Revelation 16:12-16

the army that gathered against Jerusalem there.[939] So we know from this passage that the goats definitely won't actually be killed in the lake of fire at this judgement, because if they were, there wouldn't be anyone left to fulfill that prophecy, not to mention the prophecy in Revelation which tells us that every nation will be involved in rising up against Israel one more time in the future, long after this judgement, as well.[940] This, of course, also means that the reference to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels isn't any more literal than the "furnace of fire" is, but rather that it's simply a figurative reference to the parts of the planet outside the kingdom of heaven where these people are sent to live as their punishment (the parts of the planet that are referred to as a

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[939] And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. — Revelation 19:11–21

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

"furnace" for exiled Israelites at that time, or, again, as the land which was referred to as a figurative "*burning pitch*" which "*shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof*" going up "*for ever,*" which makes sense, considering the fact that what we've seen so far tells us that "fire" rarely, if ever, speaks of the "hell" known as the lake of fire when either that specific location isn't also referred to by name in a passage using the word, or the word "hell" itself isn't used in the passage in the KJB), since people living in those parts of the world – or at least their descendants who don't get saved during that time,[941] one thousand years later – will give in to temptation by Satan to rise up against Israel one last time at the end of the thousand years, having been "*prepared for the devil and his angels*" so they can tempt these people to do so (keeping in mind the "Mountain Peaks" aspect of prophecy when reading this passage if it sounds confusing that it could be talking about the distant offspring of those who didn't help Israelites during the Tribulation who are ultimately the ones "*prepared for the devil and his angels*"). This also means that the urban legend which many Christians repeat, that "God created hell for the devil, not for humans, but humans sinned so He had to punish them in hell too," is based on a complete misunderstanding of this passage, and actually has no scriptural basis at all, since this passage isn't even talking about hell, or about it being prepared for the devil, to begin with. Simply put, those labelled as "goats" in this prophecy will spend the rest of the impending thousand-year age that the kingdom of heaven exists in Israel (or at least the rest of the time they're alive during that age, although their descendants are also included in this age-pertaining punishment, figuratively translated as "everlasting" punishment in the KJB) in the age-pertaining "fire," meaning the parts of the world outside of Israel. And at the end of the thousand years, the descendants of the original "goats" will be tempted by the devil to rise up and attack Israel one last time, just prior to the Great White Throne Judgement.

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[941] And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. — Isaiah 49:6

And don't worry, this interpretation of the judgement of the sheep and the goats isn't teaching salvation by works either. In fact, it isn't technically talking about salvation at all, at least not the Pauline type of salvation – because the sheep won't be quickened at the time they enter the kingdom they were predestined by God to enter[942] – but is essentially just talking about a reward for blessing Israelites (and just as we now know that salvation isn't necessarily required to get to enjoy life on the New Earth, we also now know that it isn't necessarily required to get to live in the kingdom of heaven either, at least if one is a Gentile).

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. – 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

This passage is obviously also talking about Christ's Second Coming (compare the details of verse 7 here[943] to the details mentioned in Matthew 25:31[944] if there's any doubt in your mind), which means that what I've already written about "fire" in the parables we just looked at applies to this passage as well. Paul was simply pointing out the sort of punishment some of those who will be alive at the time Jesus returns will have to endure, and it's just as figurative as

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[942] Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: — Matthew 25:34

[943] And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, — 2 Thessalonians 1:7

[944] When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: — Matthew 25:31

when Jesus spoke about it (referring to not getting to live in the kingdom of heaven when it begins on earth, including both *"them that know not God,"* meaning the Gentile "goats" of Matthew 25, as well as them *"that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,"* meaning Israelites who are not a part of the Israel of God and are exiled to live in the figurative "furnace of fire" at that time). Besides, almost no Christian takes the word "destruction" in this verse literally (since most somehow manage to interpret this word as a figure of speech referring to being tortured in the lake of fire without end), and if *that* word is figurative and not literal, there's no good reason to believe that the word "everlasting" before it is any more literal than it is (and based on everything we've already learned from Paul's epistles about the salvation of all, as well as what we now know about the meaning of "everlasting" in the Bible versions that use the word, we know it can't be anyway).

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) – Philippians 3:18-19

We know that anyone who experiences "destruction" will still eventually also experience salvation, based on what Paul taught in the rest of his epistles. This means that the "end" which the enemies of the cross of Christ that Paul is condemning here can only be an "end" from a relative perspective, since we know the "end" they'll experience from an absolute perspective at the end of the ages will ultimately be salvation (and the same goes for how "destruction" must *also* only be a relative term here as well, based on all the facts we've now learned).

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. – Matthew 10:28

Notice the word "destroy" there, which, just like the word "destruction" in the last couple passages we looked at, we have no basis for interpreting figuratively in the manner most Christians do either (in the sense that to be "destroyed" somehow figuratively refers to suffering without end in the lake of fire, although it is indeed a figurative term, as we now know, since all destruction that humans experience is going to be only temporary, based on what Paul taught us). But even if we didn't know about all of Paul's teachings on the eventual salvation of all humanity, and how he taught that immortality for humans *is* salvation, I'd still argue that it would make far more sense to interpret it in a way that lines up with what Jesus was *actually* teaching throughout His earthly ministry: about the kingdom of heaven beginning in Israel in the future, and how to either get to live there when it begins, or end up missing out on it at that time because their corpse is being burned up in the Valley of Hinnom (which is the "hell" He was referring to in this verse, and as we now know, anybody who ends up as a corpse in that location will miss out on enjoying "everlasting"/age-pertaining life in the kingdom during the thousand-year age that it exists in Israel). With that in mind, I'd suggest that this verse is simply saying that Jesus' Jewish audience at the time He gave the warning (along with those Israelites who live through the Tribulation, and even any who live between those two periods of time) should not fear men who might kill them for their faith in Jesus, because God will still resurrect them to live in the kingdom of heaven when it begins on earth if they're martyred. But if they die without that faith, on the other hand, or have rejected Jesus in order to temporarily save their lives, God will *not* resurrect them at that time, which means they'd miss out on the greatest desire of their soul (this is what the figurative language of having one's "soul destroyed in hell" means, or at least this is a far more scripturally consistent interpretation of the phrase than what most Christians assume it means, as should be obvious by this point), which for anyone listening to Jesus would have been (or at least should have been[945]) to get to live in that kingdom when it begins in Israel in the

[945] But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. — Matthew 6:33

future. Like Judas,[946] it would have been far better for them to have died in the womb or in childbirth than to have been born at all, since babies who die in childbirth will at least be resurrected at the Great White Throne Judgement so they can grow up on the New Earth, while Judas will likely end up in the lake of fire when he's resurrected, at least prior to the time Christ destroys death (yes, even Judas will have been resurrected and quickened at that time, but he'll have missed out on so much in the meantime). This is a parallel passage to Luke 12:5 by the way, which, in the KJB, says, *"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."* As we know from what we learned in chapter 2 of this book, being cast into the Valley/"Hell" of Hinnom was considered to be extremely shameful to Israelites, and, as we just discussed, was a guarantee that they'd miss out on life in the kingdom of heaven while it exists on earth for 1,000 years after the Tribulation (and I shouldn't have to point out that there's nothing in the verse saying one's stay in this particular "hell" would be permanent either, even if Jesus' audience at the time may or may not have mistakenly *assumed* it would be, due to being unaware of all the facts Paul later taught us).

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. – Matthew 10:32-33

This statement almost certainly has to do with who will get to be resurrected to live in Israel when the kingdom begins there vs who won't be, based on the last passage we just looked at (which was stated just moments before this one), as well as about any Israelites who will be living when Jesus returns and whether they get to enter the kingdom or don't get to, and doesn't tell us anything about what happens to anyone *after* the thousand years come to an end, so it doesn't really help support The Popular Doctrine.

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[946] The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. — Matthew 26:24

When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever. – Psalm 92:7

Just like the other passages referring to being destroyed that we've looked at, we know that being *"destroyed for ever"* in this verse can't be referring to never-ending torment in hell either, at least not without reading one's doctrinal bias into the phrase, and we also know from everything we've learned from Paul's epistles about the salvation of all that nobody remains dead (or even dying) at the end of the ages, so the "for ever" here has to be as figurative as it is in any other passage we've already looked at, and by now it should be clear that this just means they'll miss out on getting to live in the kingdom of heaven, but not that they won't eventually experience salvation at the end of the ages, when the figurative "for ever" comes to an end.

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? – Matthew 23:33

All this verse says is that the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking at the time[947] would have their corpses destroyed in the Valley/"Hell" of Hinnom, and they almost certainly did in AD 70 after being killed by the Romans (presuming this wasn't a reference to the lake of fire after the Great White Throne Judgement; while the prophecies about having one's corpse consumed in the Valley of Hinnom are referring to dead bodies being destroyed in a literal, geographical location, we do have to take the aforementioned "Mountain Peaks" of prophecy into consideration with such references as well, because they are sometimes referring to a location on our current planet, and sometimes referring to a location that will exist on the New Earth instead, if not

[947] But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. — Matthew 23:13

referring to it happening in both locations, depending on the person). It doesn't say they'll be in this particular hell without end, however, nor does it say they'll be conscious while they're in it (and we know from what we've already learned earlier in this book that they won't be), so this really isn't a helpful verse for anyone trying to teach never-ending torment in hell either.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. – Matthew 7:13-14

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. – Matthew 7:21-23

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. – Luke 13:23-30

Of course, there's nothing about hell or the lake of fire in these passages, but they're quoted so often to defend never-ending punishment that I thought I should include them regardless. That said, based on everything we've covered so far, you should really be able to interpret these for yourself by now. But for those who do need an explanation, Jesus is simply talking about certain people who won't be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven after He returns, because they've continued to live particularly sinful lives (this also makes it clear that this isn't a warning for members of the body of Christ, because there is *no* condemnation for us,[948] and nothing can separate us from the love of God,[949] not even sin, since where sin abounds, grace much more abounds[950]). He obviously isn't talking about ghosts not being allowed to live in an ethereal afterlife realm called heaven when they die, based on everything we've already covered, and He likely isn't even talking about unbelievers (I'd think that anyone who can do the things in His name that the people He was condemning were able to do are probably Jewish believers, but it wasn't lack of belief He condemned them for anyway; rather, it was for their iniquity). Jesus' statement that many *"shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God"* in the passage in Luke also confirms that this all takes place on earth. So, in answer to the disciple's question, yes, there are relatively few that will be saved, at least when it comes to the sort of salvation Jesus preached about during His earthly ministry. This doesn't mean they can't later experience the sort of salvation Paul taught about,

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[948] There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. — Romans 8:1

[949] For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 8:38-39

[950] Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: — Romans 5:20

however, because it's an entirely different sort of salvation, as I've already explained.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. – John 14:6

Like the last passage, this one doesn't mention hell or the lake of fire either, but I thought I should quickly cover it as well, since many Christians like to use it to prove that non-Christians are going to be permanently punished in hell. Aside from the fact that Jesus was talking to Jews in this verse, which tells us that it's technically about the sort of salvation Israelites were looking forward to (which, again, involves getting to live in Israel after He returns, not "going to heaven" as ghosts after one dies), if anybody comes to the Father *after* the thousand years are finished, as Paul promised everyone eventually will, it would still be "by" (or "through," meaning "because of") Christ.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. – Acts 4:12

Once again, there's nothing about "hell" or the lake of fire in this verse, and this statement was made by Peter to the religious leaders of Israel, so we already know it can only refer to the sort of salvation that pertains to Israelites (getting to live in the kingdom in Israel after Jesus returns, in other words), and has nothing at all to do with the sort of salvation Paul later taught about to the nations.

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

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. – John 3:36

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. – 1 John 5:12

The vast majority of Christians out there already interpret basically every part of these passages extremely figuratively, reading "going to heaven" into the word "life," and "being punished without end in hell" into the word "perish," for example. Based on everything I've written already, though, it should really be quite clear by now to anyone who has been paying attention that these verses are simply saying that those Israelites who *"believeth not the Son"* won't get to enjoy life in Israel after Jesus returns (and while it's too big of a tangent to dig into the details of it right now, references to "the world" in the writings of John that aren't talking about specific ages are generally, if not always, referring to "the world" of Israelites, not the whole planet or every human to ever live, based on who Jesus said the intended audience of his earthly ministry was: I.e., the lost sheep of the house of Israel). And how does an Israelite *"believeth on the Son,"* as the KJB puts it? Well, it simply means they believe that Jesus is Israel's Messiah (or Christ) and the Son of God, as John wrote at the end of the same book: *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."*[951] Now, I trust you noticed what John *didn't* write in that verse. You see, if the people John was writing to are required to believe that Christ's death was ***"for our sins,"*** and if they have to trust in His death ***"for our sins"*** in order for them to have *"life through his name,"* then John left out a very crucial piece of information for them in that verse where he told his Jewish readers *exactly* what *they* have to believe in order to have *"life through his name."* Because, yes, his book did explain that Christ died, but A) it didn't explain that His death was ***"for our sins,"*** and B) it also didn't explain that this aspect of His death (the *"for our sins"* aspect) was necessary to be trusted in the way it is for those who are saved

[951] But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. — John 20:31

when they believe Paul's Gospel. So I hope you've figured out that this is because that particular belief wasn't necessary to experience the sort of salvation Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry, realizing that John certainly *would* have included it in that list of things they have to believe in order to experience the sort of salvation that John was writing about if it actually *was* a necessary thing for his readers to believe in order to experience the sort of salvation that he was writing about, since it wouldn't make sense for him to leave out such important information about what his readers needed to believe in order to "have life" if that was the main reason he wrote the book, as he claimed it was in John 20:31 (especially since John wrote this *after* Jesus' death and resurrection).

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. –John 3:1-7

Modern-day Evangelicals are obsessed with this passage, insisting that everyone has to choose to be "born again" if they want to experience salvation. Unfortunately, just like Nicodemus, they have absolutely no idea what Jesus meant by the term.[952] To get the obvious out of the way first, nobody can

[952] Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? — John 3:9-10

choose to be born a first time, and this second birth is no different[953] since it happens to those who *"received him [Jesus]"* and were *"given power to become the sons of God"* not *"of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,"*[954] so it's obviously not something any individual can choose to experience out of the strength of their own will power, but is instead something that is ultimately decided for them by God (once again demonstrating that receiving something isn't necessarily based on a choice we make ourselves).

But equally important to know, unless you're an Israelite, you can't be "born" a second time, because you haven't been "born" a first time, at least not when it comes to the sort of "birth" that Jesus was referring to there. Remember, Jesus wasn't talking about the same sort of salvation Paul primarily wrote about (in fact, throughout Paul's epistles, he never even once spoke about a new birth; instead, he taught about a whole new creation altogether – or *"a new creature,"* as the KJB puts it[955] – which is even better than being "born" a second time), but was referring to getting to live in the part of the kingdom of God that will exist for 1,000 years in Israel, so from that fact alone it should be obvious that this statement is only relevant to Israelites and not to Gentiles. But to make this even more clear, Jesus' question (*"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"*) in response to Nicodemus thinking that any of this was about biological childbirth tells us that this Pharisee should have already known exactly what Jesus was talking about based on the Scripture available to him at the time. This tells us that we have to look to the Hebrew Scriptures in order to

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[953] The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. — John 3:8

[954] He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. — John 1:11-13

[955] Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — 2 Corinthians 5:17

determine exactly what Jesus meant, and that if an explanation of what this figure of speech means can't actually be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, it also can't possibly be what Jesus meant by it.

So what was it in the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus was referring to here? Well, Jesus was talking about a nation that was figuratively said to have been "born" a first time by Moses in Exodus 4:22 when he said, *"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn"*[956] (along with similar statements he made in Numbers 11:12[957] and in Deuteronomy 32:18[958]). That would be the first "birth" of those whom Jesus was referring to in this passage, telling us that it only applies to the nation of Israel. As for the second birth, this also has to be something spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures if Nicodemus should have known this already as "*a master of Israel,*" so we have to look to passages that refer to Israel being born another time, and this would be Isaiah 66:8 which asks, *"shall a nation be born at once?"*,[959] prophetically referring to something that will happen to the nation of Israel in the future. Simply put, Jesus was talking to Nicodemus about Israelites fully experiencing their New Covenant (which never applied to Gentiles, since we didn't have an old covenant to be replaced with by a new one to begin with) and the rebirth of the favoured nation of God when they're returned to their land completely and are finally able to walk in God's statutes

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[956] And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: — Exodus 4:22

[957] Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? — Numbers 11:12

[958] Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. — Deuteronomy 32:18

[959] Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. — Isaiah 66:8

properly,[960] meaning they'll finally keep the Mosaic law perfectly because they'll have been sprinkled with *"clean water"* and will have the law written on their new hearts (and this is why Jesus said they need to be born not just of the Spirit, but also of water,[961] to let Nicodemus know that He was referring to that prophecy in Ezekiel 36, and Nicodemus would have – or at least should have – also realized that this prophecy was connected with the prophecy about the

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[960] Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. — Ezekiel 36:22-32

[961] Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. — John 3:5

New Covenant in Jeremiah 31[962]), which we know – thanks to the Greek Scriptures – will all take place around the time of the end of the Tribulation, when Jesus returns and the thousand-year kingdom begins.

This is also why Jesus specifically said, *"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."* Unfortunately, people who aren't using the *King James Bible* are unlikely to be aware of this, because most other Bible versions don't use the precise grammar in their translations of that passage the way the KJB does, but as I explained in an earlier chapter, "thee" is a singular word and "ye" is a plural word in the KJB, which means Jesus was simply saying: "Marvel not that I said unto thee [Nicodemus], Ye [the nation of Israel] must be born again" (and yes, this is backed up by the original Greek as well).

Now, it is true that Jesus said, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"*[963] and combined with the fact that they make the exact same mistake Nicodemus made in assuming the first "birth" was biological (which is what led him to ask his question about entering "*the second time into his mother's womb*"), this has led Evangelicals to assume that individual Gentiles today have to choose to be "born again" or they won't be able to go to heaven, but we already know that going to heaven is only for the body of Christ, so this

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[962] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. — Jeremiah 31:31-34

[963] Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. — John 3:3

can only be referring to getting to live in the part of the kingdom of God that will exist on earth for 1,000 years rather than in the part of the kingdom of God that will be in heaven.[964] Simply put, Jesus was just referring to the specific Israelites[965] God chose to be a part of Israel's second birth when it occurs (since Jesus didn't specify that He was referring to or including the nations in this statement the way He did in Matthew 25:32,[966] and because we know that His teachings during His earthly ministry were pretty much only to Israelites anyway,[967] which means that nearly everything written in the book of John was only relevant to Israelites as well – not to mention the fact that Gentiles weren't "born" a first time in the manner that Jesus was referring to there, so there's no way they could be "born" a second time as well – it should be pretty obvious that His statement should be understood as meaning: "Except a [Jewish] man be born again..."), including a few who can be said to have "experienced" at least a *taste* of the second birth earlier than the rest (as a sort of early, first sort of fulfillment of the prophecy, since the prophecies to do with "the last days,"

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[964] If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? — John 3:12

[965] For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. — Romans 2:28-29

[966] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: — Matthew 25:32

[967] But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. — Matthew 15:24

meaning the Day of the Lord, *did* have a beginning of sorts after Pentecost,[968] although we know that it was really more of a false start, since it all came to a grinding halt after Israel as a whole rejected Jesus as their Messiah and as the Son of God, which we can see from the fact that the *rest* of the reference that

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[968] And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: — Acts 2:1-18

Peter made[969] to this fulfillment of Joel's prophecy[970] still hasn't taken place yet, at least not as of the time this book you're reading was written, which means that the whole thing will start up once again when the Day of the Lord finally begins in earnest – for those who don't know, Daniel's 70th week[971] had a potential beginning with Jesus' baptism, and it would have then ended with the kingdom of heaven coming fully into effect in Israel seven years later, but the stoning of Stephen put an end to it, stopping this heptad from being the *actual* 70th week and pushing it into the future, although that's a much bigger topic than I have the space to get into here, so I'm going to leave it at that and let you dig deeper into the topic if you're curious), such as those[972] Peter wrote to[973] in his first epistle[974] (where he called back to prophecies about this from Exodus

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[969] And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. — Acts 2:19-21

[970] And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. — Joel 2:28-32

[971] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophecy_of_Seventy_Weeks

[972] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, — 1 Peter 1:3

[973] Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. — 1 Peter 1:23

[974] But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; — 1 Peter 2:9

19:6[975] and from Psalm 22:30-31[976]), although it would have only been experienced by the Israelites who were saved under the Gospel of the Kingdom during that time, and not by anyone else after the "nearness" of the kingdom to Israel went into abeyance (at least not by anyone else other than in a proleptic manner; perhaps Jewish members of the Israel of God – including those who aren't even aware they're of Israelite descent – can be said to be "born again" in a proleptic manner, similar to the way members of the body of Christ are said to have been quickened in a proleptic manner, even though we're not literally immortal at the time this book was written, although I couldn't say for certain that this is the case, so I'll leave it at that).

Of course, even then, we know that an Israelite only needs to be "born again" to *"see the kingdom of God"* during the first thousand years of its existence on earth, since the Mosaic law (and hence the New Covenant) will be irrelevant after those thousand years have been completed, after heaven and earth have passed away, which means the "born again" figure of speech will no longer be relevant either. This tells us that Israelites who missed out on getting to enjoy life for 1,000 years in the kingdom of God on this earth will finally have an opportunity to enter the kingdom of God on the New Earth (when it will be centred within the New Jerusalem). Some will try to argue that Jesus' *"except a man"* statement means this *has* to apply to all humans, of course, but they're ignoring the context and audience of the passage (Israelites). This is just like Paul's *"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"* statement to *his* audience (the body of Christ), which we now know is only referring to the part of the kingdom of God that will be in outer space, because we know that flesh and blood *will* inherit the part of the kingdom of God that's going to exist on

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[975] And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. — Exodus 19:6

[976] A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this. — Psalm 22:30-31

earth during the thousand years (since not everybody who gets to live in the kingdom will have been quickened at that time), as well as on the New Earth (at least until the end of the ages), and there's no reason the word "man" and "kingdom of God" can't be just as context-defined here as "flesh and blood" and "kingdom of God" are in that passage (and, based on the scriptural references I included in the footnotes of this paragraph, as well as the other arguments I presented, it should be obvious that it is).

And just as a quick but somewhat related aside, I should point out that Nicodemus and Jesus were likely speaking either Hebrew or Aramaic rather than Greek when they had this conversation, and that it would have then been translated into Greek from whichever language they were speaking when their discussion was recorded in the book of John. I bring this up because the Greek adverb ἄνωθεν/"an'-o-then" that the English "again" part of "born again" was translated from in the KJB can legitimately be – and, honestly, is even more commonly – translated in English as "from above" (although not always[977]), and some Christians believe this means that Jesus actually said "born from above" rather than "born again." However, I don't believe that anybody at all could ever hear "born from above" and possibly somehow think the speaker was literally talking about a second biological birth the way that Nicodemus thought Jesus' statement was referring to, even as a misunderstanding of what the speaker was saying, whereas someone who hears "born again" could be forgiven for mistakenly assuming that's what the speaker meant. Nicodemus' use of whichever word was translated into Greek with the adjective δεύτερον/"dyoo'-ter-on" – literally meaning "the second time" – seems to tell us that the context of the term he was responding to was "second," or "again," anyway, so I maintain that "born again" is indeed the only English translation that makes sense, unless, perhaps, the writer of the book of John specifically used ἄνωθεν as

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[977] But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? — Galatians 4:9

a double entendre in his Greek translation, since the second birth of Israel would indeed be sent "from above" rather than generated by themselves. But either way, the original statement Jesus made in whichever language they were speaking (even if it actually was Koine Greek, as some Christians believe they were speaking) was almost certainly referring *primarily* to being "born again" and not being "born from above."

So no, unless you're a member of the Israel of God, you haven't been "born again" (and even then, it would only currently be in a proleptic sense at this time, at least as of the time this book was published), and neither can you be (since you weren't "born" a first time in the manner Jesus was speaking about), nor do you need to be, since the salvation of those in the body of Christ won't be enjoyed in the same part of the kingdom of God that Israel is looking forward to living in when it begins in earnest on the earth, and keeping the New Covenant in the way that being born again refers to is entirely irrelevant to us anyway, because we're not going to follow the Mosaic law perfectly in outer space (since we're not under law to begin with) the way Jeremiah said those in the house of Israel and the house of Judah will when the New Covenant comes fully into effect.

I realize that Evangelicals and many other Christians have various ideas about what it means to be "born again," but if their ideas can't be shown to be laid out in the Hebrew Scriptures, they have no basis for the claims, because otherwise Jesus wouldn't have criticized Nicodemus for not knowing what He meant by the term. And I know, you've almost certainly heard "testimonies" by certain Christians about how they were supposedly "born again" and became a whole new person, walking away from a life they considered to be sinful, thanks to God changing them when they "got saved" (and, in some cases, it's true that they were leading particularly sinful lives, although it's also true that most Christians misunderstand even more of the Bible than just the topics we've been discussing, and misinterpret large parts of it to be teaching that many

things are sinful which actually aren't sinful at all, but that's a discussion for another chapter). And yes, God was indeed behind the change, at least from an absolute perspective, because God is behind absolutely *everything* that happens (since all is of God). But from a relative perspective, their changed lifestyles had nothing to do with being "born again" at all, since we know from what we just covered that being "born again" is only for the Israel of God (and that's not to say the lives of Israelites who are "born again" won't change drastically, but that's because they'll finally be able to keep the Mosaic law perfectly when it happens, which isn't something Gentiles are meant to keep, and members of the body of Christ certainly aren't, whether they're Jewish or Gentile, which is another clue that being "born again" isn't for us).

So when you hear a Christian's "testimony" about how getting "born again" changed them, and are tempted to think it means you should remain a member of (or return to) the Christian religion (or to join it, if you've never been a member), remember that *many* people who have hit rock bottom have realized how destructive their lifestyles were and dramatically changed their lives for the better *without* becoming Christians at all (and that people who join other religions have similar "conversion experiences" to the ones Christians talk about as well), so joining this religion isn't proof of anything other than that they decided something in their life needed to change. And if "fruit" is evidence of having believed the truth, just remember all the negative "fruit" of all those "orthodox" Christians you've met throughout your life (and even those who might seem to be living better lives now in some ways than they were before they converted all have "secret sins" they hide from the rest of us, so remember that you're only seeing the "fruit" they've made public). As nearly everybody who hasn't been blinded by the "light" of many of the leaders of the Christian

religion[978] knows, this religion's fruit is anything but good, so don't be tempted to return to it if you've already been saved from it, or to give it a try if you've been blessed enough to never have been imprisoned by it (and if you're still a member, get out as quickly as you can). Those of us who have escaped the Christian religion (as well as many of those who were blessed enough to never join it) know very well that, while nearly everything "orthodox" Christians think is sinful actually isn't, almost all of the actions and attitudes that they live by are extremely wrong (and often quite evil, all the while calling their actions and teachings both righteous and good[979]). As nearly everyone who looks in at it from the outside can see, pride, hatred, malice, envy, greed, fear, paranoia, arrogance, hypocrisy, anti-intellectualism, lies, and all manner of other actual sins[980] are the hallmarks of the Christian religion, but most Christians within the religion somehow just can't see what is plainly evident to the rest of us. That said, where sin abounds, grace much more abounds, so even "orthodox" Christians can technically experience God's grace (and eventually all of them will, of course). But as far as those who don't embrace His grace go, I really wouldn't want to be a religious leader or "orthodox" Christian "evangelist" at the final judgement, and those who willingly follow these leaders are in for a world of sorrow at that time as well (yes, it's likely that *many* Christians will actually end up at the Great White Throne Judgement, since not all Christians are currently saved – remember, "Christian" basically just means someone who

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[978] For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. — 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

[979] Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! — Isaiah 5:20

[980] This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. — 2 Timothy 3:1-5

believes that Jesus is the Christ, and doesn't mean that one using the label is currently in the body of Christ or in the Israel of God, even if they *might* have been true members of the Israel of God at one time, as I'll discuss shortly). If the citizens of the cities that rejected Jesus' disciples are going to be judged more harshly than those of Sodom because they had the light revealed to them,[981] how much more severely are those in the Christian religion who have the completed Scriptures going to be judged for ignoring, and even rejecting, the truths found therein, following the myths of their religious leaders instead, because they prefer to have their self-righteous ears scratched?[982] (And this is probably a good time to point out that most, although not all, members of the body of Christ actually avoid the label of "Christian" these days, and some will even *reject* the label of "Christian" – so as to not be confused with those in the religion that primarily uses the label today, which is a religion that some of us suspect began with people like Phygellus and Hermogenes and others who turned away from Paul,[983] creating the adulterated "gospel" of the Christian religion by merging parts of each of the two legitimate Gospels into one[984] – and simply call themselves members of the body of Christ or believers, although they're sometimes also called "Concordant" believers or "Concordant" Universalists, for reasons I'm not going to get into at this point, as well as

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[981] But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. — Luke 10:10-12

[982] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. — 2 Timothy 4:3-4

[983] This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. — 2 Timothy 1:15

[984] I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. — Galatians 1:6-7

Biblical Universalists, and also as Pauline Universalists, of course; that said, "Christian" can technically be defined as "someone who believes that Jesus is the Christ," as I mentioned earlier, so, at least from a certain perspective, they *are* still Christians whether they use the label or not.)

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. – John 6:53-55

Of course, even if Jesus *did* literally mean for His listeners to eat His flesh and drink His blood in some manner, what He said there would have only been for members of the Israel of God, not the body of Christ, since it's a statement He made during His earthly ministry. As we now know, *our* salvation is based 100% on what Christ accomplished, and not on any actions we take, so the idea of partaking in rituals related to communion bread and wine the way Roman Catholics and various other Christians believe one should would contradict everything Paul taught us about salvation (general *or* special). And since our dispensation has no rudiments (meaning elements) or ordinances,[985] because we are complete in Christ[986] (who is the end of all religion for those in His body), returning to the shadows and types of rituals and rites in any way whatsoever would rob us of the full enjoyment of both our possessions and freedom in Christ. That said, the idea that Jesus was literally referring to eating His flesh and drinking His blood when He spoke to the Israelites is obviously a misunderstanding of His words, as He made clear by using the *exact same Greek*

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[985] Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, — Colossians 2:20-23

[986] Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: — Colossians 2:8-10

phrase translated as *"hath everlasting life"* in verse 47 of the same chapter to say they gain it by believing on Him,[987] and as *"hath eternal life"* in verse 54 to say they gain it by "eating His flesh" and "drinking His blood," telling us that these are one and the same action, only stated metaphorically the second time He says it, in order to scare away those who were not among the elect, since they also missed this fact,[988] after which Peter, who *was* among the elect, confirmed that Jesus really was just referring to believing on Him,[989] which for them meant to believe that He's their Messiah and the Son of God. It seems that interpreting Jesus' statements too literally is a pattern in the book of John, and not just something Nicodemus did. Besides, by comparing 1 Corinthians 15:50[990] to Luke 24:39[991] we can see that, while Jesus' quickened, glorified body *is* made of *flesh and bone*, it doesn't have any *blood* in it anymore anyway, so the communion elements wouldn't be turning into His *current* body at all, even if it somehow could (although, since the Israel of God is forbidden from consuming *any* type

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[987] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. — John 6:47

[988] These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. — John 6:59-66

[989] Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. — John 6:67-69

[990] Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. — 1 Corinthians 15:50

[991] Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. — Luke 24:39

of blood with their mouths *whatsoever*,[992] we know that Jesus wouldn't have literally commanded them to do so anyway, since otherwise He'd have been commanding them to sin, confirming that this had to have been a figurative statement – and just as a quick aside, that passage in Leviticus speaks only of "eating" blood, and doesn't refer to receiving blood transfusions at all, which *is* confirmed by the original Hebrew, so Jehovah's Witnesses[993] have all been lied to when they're told they're not allowed to receive blood in *that* manner).

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. – Romans 10:9-10

Similar to the above passages written by John, misunderstanding what Paul wrote in this passage has caused a lot of confusion and consternation among many people, and has also led to some pretty bad doctrines (such as the idea that "Lordship Salvation" is meant for members of the body of Christ, as just one example). As we learned in the first chapter of this book, however, there are different types of salvation referred to in Scripture, and different ways of experiencing "everlasting life." By now you should be well aware that anyone to

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[992] And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off. — Leviticus 17:10-14

[993] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah's_Witnesses

whom God has given the faith to truly believe that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day will experience "everlasting" life in the heavens (rather than in Israel, which is where those who experience the salvation Jesus preached about will enjoy their "everlasting" life). This means that, while it isn't the choice to believe in Christ's death for our sins, as well as His subsequent burial and resurrection, that saves someone (our special salvation to "everlasting" life is based on God's sovereign election[994] of those of us in the body of Christ long before we were even born,[995] and has nothing to do with any decisions we make at all, as we've already determined), if someone does truly understand what it means, and also believes, that He did die for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, they are among those whom God has chosen for membership in the body of Christ, and will get to enjoy "everlasting" life in the heavens after they're caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. One thing you'll notice that Paul *didn't* say his readers did when they were saved, however, is confess Jesus as Lord (or *"confess the Lord Jesus"*), and yet verse 10 of Romans 10 seems to make it clear that the salvation written about there *is* at least partly based on this confession. Now, this doesn't mean that Jesus isn't Lord to us, of course, since we're told elsewhere that He is,[996] but His Lordship isn't something Paul said his readers confessed at the time they were brought into membership in the body when he explained what they did when they were saved (nor did he say it's something that they or we have to confess in order to be brought into the body; in fact, it's simply having faith that he considers to be the important thing we do, as he makes clear all throughout the rest of his epistles, so there's no good reason to take this one reference to confession being necessary for

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[994] Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. — 1 Thessalonians 1:4

[995] According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: — Ephesians 1:4

[996] But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. — 1 Corinthians 8:6

salvation that happens to be sitting in the middle of a series of chapters which were primarily about Israel and their salvation and applying it to us, especially when it would contradict everything else we know about our salvation).

Likewise, while Romans 10:9-10 says that someone who experiences the salvation that confessing the Lord Jesus and believing God raised Him from the dead brings will indeed believe God resurrected Jesus (just as those in the body of Christ believe), which means they would obviously also have to believe that He died (just as those in the body of Christ also believe), there isn't anything in that verse about His death being *"for our sins"* or about that fact being something one has to trust in for their salvation, which is a crucial part of what *we* believe when *we're* saved (there's nothing about His burial there either, I should add, which was also an important element of Paul's Gospel, as we now know). The most important part of the belief connected to the sort of salvation Paul is talking about in Romans 10 is Jesus' resurrection, not His death *for our sins*. It might not seem like it to most, the first time they read this passage, but these are important distinctions between these two different sets of belief connected with two different types of salvation.

As I've already alluded to, something we need to keep in mind is that Romans chapters 9[997] through 11[998] are primarily about Israelites (they aren't 100% about Israelites, but a focus on Israelites is a large part of those chapters, including in

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[997] I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; — Romans 9:1-4

[998] I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. — Romans 11:1

the section in question[999]), and Paul's point about confessing and believing in that passage was connected to what Israelites have to believe in order experience the sort of salvation John wrote about, which is that Jesus is the Christ, meaning Israel's Messiah, and that He's the Son of God. This sort of salvation/"everlasting" life has nothing to do with the salvations Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (general or special), nor does it have anything to do with residing in the heavens during the impending ages, but is actually about getting to live in the part of the kingdom of God that will be on planet earth, meaning living in Israel after Jesus returns. Belief that Christ's death was *"for our sins"* wasn't a requirement for salvation in any message that Jesus or anyone else preached prior to Paul proclaiming that it was necessary to be believed in order to be considered a member of the body of Christ, as we've already discussed (it couldn't have been, since even Jesus' disciples didn't understand that He was going to die or be resurrected until after it had all taken place, which means they also couldn't have really known many, if any, details about what His death would accomplish prior to Paul apparently trying to explain it to them[1000]), and Jesus' resurrection was primarily an important part of what they had to believe because it proves He's still able to be their Messiah since He's no longer dead (with the confession part being connected to Him being the Son of God).

Of course, most Christians mistakenly assume that the whole Bible is to and about everyone, but by now it should be pretty clear to anyone who has made it this far into the book that there are two entirely different sets of messages for

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[999] Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. — Romans 10:1

[1000] And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. — 2 Peter 3:15-16

two entirely different groups of people in the Bible (one for the body of Christ and one for the Israel of God), as well as multiple different types of salvation written about in there, so don't worry if you haven't verbally spoken the words "Jesus is Lord," or "confessed the Lord Jesus" with your mouth (especially if you have a disability making it so you physically aren't able to speak and, as such, can't verbally confess *anything*). One day you, and everyone else, will, of course.[1001] But in the meantime, the only way to experience the special form of salvation Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 15:2 is for God to choose you for membership in the body of Christ; and if He has, He'll give you the faith to understand and believe what it means that Christ died *for our sins*, that **He Himself** was buried, and that He rose again the third day, at some point prior to your death or to the time Christ comes for His body.

When discussing the meaning of this passage, however, some Christians will try to point out that Paul then wrote (in verses 11 through 13 of Romans 10), *"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,"* in order to try to claim that his statement in the passage about there being no difference between the Jew and the Greek proves this whole chapter must be about the same type of salvation he preached to the Gentiles, and that there is, in fact, only one Gospel. Aside from the facts we've already covered throughout this book which prove that assertion wrong, though, this is also a good example of how almost no Christian actually takes the entire Bible at face value despite claiming to do so, since almost no Christian actually believes what the words in verse 13 (*"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"*) say when taken at face value. I mean, if they took the words in the verse on its own at face value, they'd have to agree that every single Roman Catholic,

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[1001] That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. — Philippians 2:10-11

every single Baptist, every single Eastern Orthodox Christian, not to mention every single Jehovah's Witness, every single Mormon,[1002] and even every single "Christian" Gnostic[1003] is saved and is in the body of Christ, or at least every one of them who calls *"upon the name of the Lord"* (which would seem to be pretty much all of them) is, and I know that almost *no* Christian believes all of these people are in the body of Christ (and this is one of the few times I'd have to agree with them). Instead of meaning that all of these people are saved (at least saved right now – we know they'll all be saved later, based on what we've now learned throughout this book), I'd suggest that the "calling upon the name of the Lord" part of the passage was simply a case of Paul using the Hebrew Scriptures[1004] to support the part of his statement in verse 9 in the KJB which said, *"if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus ... thou shalt be saved"* (and yes, the original passage from Joel that Paul was referencing was technically referring to God, but we also know that Jesus has now been made Lord by God,[1005] so it can apply to Him now too, at least from a relative perspective), in order to point out that, yes, Jews who aren't in the body of Christ can indeed also be saved, just like Gentiles who aren't in the body of Christ can be as well (referring to Gentiles like Cornelius and his household), presuming they happen to believe and obey the Gospel of the Circumcision, of course. And on a related note, I should also say that the statement about calling upon the name of the Lord in Romans 10:13 is a good one to point Christians to – at least those Christians who insist that certain verses in the Bible which would contradict other verses when taken at face value should still be taken at

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[1002] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormons

[1003] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism

[1004] And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. — Joel 2:32

[1005] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. — Acts 2:36

face value anyway because they believe that *all* passages in the Bible should be taken at face value, especially in the less literal English translations – in order to demonstrate that they *already* don't actually always do so anyway (unless they actually believe that every Jehovah's Witness and Mormon is currently in the body of Christ, I suppose), but rather that context (including the context of Scripture as a whole) always needs to be considered when interpreting the Bible, because this verse proves that taking Bible verses on their own at face value can lead one astray quite badly.

And with all *that* being said, I'm going to *also* say that I actually *do* think that "*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" **is** indeed true for Gentiles today too, even if **only at the time one does so**, which means that basically *every person* who confesses the Lord Jesus (believing Him to be the Christ and the Son of God), and of course who believes in their heart that God has raised Him from the dead, *does* get saved **at the time they do so** (yes, including Roman Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists[1006] and Independent Fundamentalist Baptists[1007] and Pentecostals[1008] and Jehovah's Witnesses and even Mormons). The problem is, they're being saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision, and if they don't then follow up their salvation with the good works that are still required to maintain one's salvation under this Gospel (such as water baptism, not to mention following any other commandments that they're still required to follow at this time, based on what commandments are still able to be followed without a physical tabernacle or temple[1009]), they very

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[1006] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventist_Church

[1007] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Baptist

[1008] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostalism

[1009] And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. — Exodus 12:48-49

well might *lose* their salvation and fall under the category of the type of person to whom Jesus will say, *"depart from me, ye that work iniquity,"*[1010] after He returns (if they happen to be alive at that time – if not, they might get to go on to the New Earth rather than end up in the lake of fire, presuming they aren't among those mentioned in Revelation whose names won't be written in the book of life, but they'll have lost the opportunity to get to live in the kingdom of heaven for 1,000 years, unless, perhaps, they're Gentiles who happened to help out the believing Israelites who are persecuted during the Tribulation, of course, but that's technically not considered to be salvation). So basically, I believe that nearly all Gentile Christians have proselytized into the Israel of God and gotten saved the way that Cornelius and his household did (at least those Christians who don't instead join the body of Christ, and those who *do* join the body of Christ *can't* ever lose their salvation), but I also believe that many of them might not *remain* saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision the way that Peter did, which is why many Christians might not actually be saved (or at least might not actually be saved *anymore*, even if they *were* saved at one time; although they *will* eventually experience the *general* salvation connected with Paul's Gospel – because of Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third day – of course, even if they also missed out on the *special* salvation connected with *both* Gospels). And with that *also* being said, this all means that some Christians saved under this Gospel actually *do* remain saved (such as those who perhaps have been taught that God is a three-in-one being yet haven't fully internalized and *accepted* this doctrine as truth, perhaps not even realizing that they *don't* fully believe it to be true, as just one example – although, as I said earlier, I also suspect that God might be merciful when it comes to those who misunderstand what the full requirements for salvation

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[1010] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. — Matthew 7:21-23

under *this* Gospel actually mean, so it could be that even those who *do* fully believe the "orthodox" idea that God is a three-in-one being *don't* lose their salvation for that mistake). As for who *is* actually in and out, though, that's for God to decide, not me. but it does mean that, while I don't believe *all* Christians are necessarily currently saved, I suspect that a fair number of them likely actually *are* still saved, at least as far as the Gospel of the Circumcision goes (although whatever that number might be, I wouldn't even try to guess, but it does mean that I try to give *all* people who call themselves Christians the benefit of the doubt, and am willing to fellowship with them, similar to the way that Paul fellowshipped with members of the church called the Israel of God too,[1011] even if I believe they're quite mistaken about a *lot* of their doctrines, just as many members of the Israel of God *also* were in Paul's time in *other* – and, yes, sometimes even *similar* – ways; of course, whether they'll fellowship with a "heretic" like me is a whole other question).

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. – Romans 9:1-5

I'm including this passage in the list of "proof texts" because I've heard it asked, "How could Paul be willing to give up his salvation in exchange for the salvation of his kinsmen – if it actually was possible to make such a trade – if everyone will be saved?" Of course, based on everything we've already covered, we now know that Paul taught about different types of salvation at different times, and it

[1011] And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. — Galatians 2:9

should be obvious that this passage can only be referring to the special form of salvation which only a few will experience, meaning he'd be willing to give up his position as a member of the body of Christ if it meant all Israelites could join the Israel of God (remember, this is in Romans 9, which is largely about Israelites and their sort of salvation, as we just discussed when looking at the last passage), because he cared about his kinsmen that much. And since we already know that not everyone will experience either of those types of salvation, this passage isn't actually problematic at all when it comes to the type of salvation everyone experiences because of what Christ accomplished. But on top of that, few seem to consider the question of, if Paul actually *did* believe in never-ending torment, do you actually think he'd really wish to lose his salvation, even if it meant that every other Israelite would be saved? Can you imagine that anyone would be willing to suffer fiery torture without end for any reason at all whatsoever? Anyone who has burned themselves even for a moment would know the answer to that question is a resounding "no" (those who believe in never-ending torment have to admit that not even Jesus was willing to make that sort of trade, yet some want to suggest that Paul was more generous than Him, or at least would be if their soteriological assumptions were correct), but they might be willing to trade their future glorified position in heaven for the benefit of those they care about, knowing that they'd still experience immortality on the New Earth eventually, so this passage actually tells us quite definitively that Paul did *not* believe in the idea of never-ending torment. And since it's also pretty unlikely that someone would give up their existence altogether, never to be resurrected again, this is yet another passage supporting the idea that Paul believed in the salvation of all. This also tells us that the common Christian assertion that "God doesn't send people to hell, but rather people 'choose to go to hell' themselves" can't be true either, at least not when it comes to the inescapable torture chamber version of "hell" that most Christians mistakenly believe in, because nobody would actually choose to allow themselves to be burned without end. And those who would then reply to this by saying, "they choose to go to hell by rejecting Christ," aren't thinking

things through, because unless someone can choose to avoid the Christian version of "hell" *after* their judgement as well, it would still be God forcing them into the mythical torture chamber against their will, if such a place existed, so this attempt to absolve God of being responsible for forcing untold billions into an inescapable place of suffering really doesn't work the way they think it does at all.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. – 1 Thessalonians 4:13

I've heard Christians use the line about those who have "no hope" here to try to prove that these people without hope can't ever be saved, but Paul was simply referring to people having no expectation in their minds (which is what the Greek word ἐλπίς/"el-pece'," translated as "hope" in this passage, literally means) of a future resurrection and salvation, not to having no possibility of resurrection and salvation. And he was referring to the sorrow of living people due to them not expecting their dead loved ones (who could be deceased members of the body of Christ even) to be resurrected, because they didn't believe in a future resurrection of their dead loved ones. He wasn't talking about the sorrow of people who were already dead at all, or how *they* have no hope/expectation in *their* minds (which they can't have, because they're dead and can't have any thoughts at all), so anyone who tries to use this verse to prove never-ending punishment isn't reading the text very carefully.

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. – Matthew 18:3

Just like all the other passages we've covered, there should be no reason for me to point out that there's no mention of hell or the lake of fire in this verse either, and I shouldn't have to repeat that Jesus was simply talking about not getting to

live in Israel after He returns when He said certain people would not enter the kingdom of heaven unless they've been converted, so I'll just leave it at that.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Romans 6:23

Just like the last few passages we looked at, this verse doesn't mention hell or the lake of fire directly, so one has to read the idea of never-ending torment in hell into the word "death" here if they want to continue believing in such a thing, which by now should be obvious that there's no basis for doing, since the concept doesn't even exist in the Bible to begin with, at least not in any of the passages we've looked at so far (and is clearly contradicted by the rest of Paul's writings anyway). All Paul is saying in this summarization of chapter 6 of the book of Romans is that the consequence of sin is eventually remaining dead permanently, as we learned previously, or at least it would be if Christ hadn't died for our sins. Because He did, however, instead of experiencing that permanent death state, members of the body of Christ will instead get to enjoy what is figuratively referred to as "eternal" life during the impending ages, although the life technically *will* be literally eternal for believers from that point on, since we won't ever die again, having been made immortal at the time we begin our "eternal" life when we're caught up in the air to be with Christ in the heavens. So even if Paul technically was just referring to the life we'll get to enjoy during the final two ages when he wrote that, if one wants to look at it this way, we could say that we literally *do* get eternal – or everlasting – life, even while "everlasting" punishment will eventually come to an end (because, yes, everyone else will also eventually get to enjoy immortality too, at a later time, also thanks to Christ's death for our sins, but Paul was talking specifically about members of the body of Christ in that chapter, which is why he spoke of "eternal" – or, more literally, "age-pertaining" – life there rather than simply mentioning immortality instead, because the figurative "eternal" life has other benefits as well, benefits that unbelievers don't get to enjoy).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. – 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. – Galatians 5:19-21

Inheriting the kingdom of God in these passages should not be confused with salvation. Paul was writing to members of the body of Christ who were already saved, and who couldn't possibly lose their salvation no matter how hard they tried[1012] (as Paul said in that passage in Romans, if you're called for membership in the body of Christ, you *will* be justified, with no other qualifications included in that passage), so the inheritance here was simply about reigning with

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[1012] For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 8:29-39

Christ,[1013] and perhaps also about receiving other rewards.[1014] It couldn't have been about salvation for those in the body of Christ because our special salvation isn't based on our actions – even if we stop believing in Him for some reason, He'll remain faithful to us from a salvation perspective since He can't disown, or deny, Himself,[1015] and the body of Christ is now a part of Himself. Now, it might be that we *can* lose out on reigning with Him by denying Him in order to avoid suffering, but whether we can or not, we still remain His body, and He won't amputate and disown His own body parts, and body parts can't amputate themselves either. So even if a member of the body of Christ doesn't *"inherit the kingdom of God,"* they'll still experience their quickening in heaven at the same time the rest of the body does, since a person doesn't need an inheritance in order to live somewhere (it just means that the person without the inheritance doesn't "own" a specific location or possession, so to speak,

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[1013] If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: — 2 Timothy 2:12

[1014] And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. — 1 Corinthians 3:1-15

[1015] If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. — 2 Timothy 2:13

telling us that the worst it could possibly mean for us is that one of us might miss out on having an allotment of territory in the kingdom to rule over, and could perhaps miss out on receiving certain other rewards as well – although verses 11 and 12 of 1 Corinthians 6[1016] do also seem to possibly suggest that members of the body of Christ might not even be able to be considered to fall under the labels of those listed in these passages we're considering; that said, I'm not dogmatic about this since I haven't studied the topic in depth enough to be able to say with any certainty that this is what verses 11 and 12 are definitely saying, so I leave it to you to dig deeper to decide for yourself).

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. – Philippians 2:12

This verse is used not only to try to defend salvation by works for the body of Christ, but also to claim that, if someone has to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, the possibility exists that they might end up not being saved in the end. My personal suspicion as to what this verse means is that Paul was instructing his readers to make sure – or to work out in their minds whether – they've truly believed his Gospel and hence really are saved (referring, of course, to the special "eternal" life sort of salvation which is only for the body of Christ, not the general salvation that everyone is guaranteed to eventually experience). However, whether or not this is the actual meaning of the verse, whatever it does mean, just as it can't be telling people to do works in order to be saved, because that would contradict all the passages where Paul explained that salvation under his Gospel *isn't* based on works (and that anyone who does try to be saved by works under his Gospel will be accursed), it also can't mean

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[1016] And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.
— 1 Corinthians 6:11-12

that anyone will miss out on the general salvation he taught about, because that would contradict everything else he taught about his Gospel we've already covered in this book.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. – Revelation 3:14-19

A lot of people worry that they're a "lukewarm" believer, and that God will "spue" them out of His mouth, sending them to hell to suffer without end. Of course, we already know what "hell" refers to in Scripture now (in fact we now know what all of the "hells" mentioned in the KJB are), and that it isn't what most people have always assumed it is, but something else important to note is that this passage is referring to a whole local church, not to any individual, so it's that local church itself that's at risk of judgement, and isn't talking about any individuals being at risk of "hell" to begin with (and I personally believe it's a local church that will exist during the Tribulation, although that's a discussion for another time; but regardless, since Revelation wasn't written by Paul, the local churches John wrote to have to be a part of the Israel of God rather than the body of Christ, so it isn't relevant to most of us anyway).

These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. – 2 Peter 2:17

I'm not going to get into all the details of this particular passage, because it's enough to point out that the sinners in question aren't literally wells, nor are they literally clouds, so the "for ever" here should be taken about as literally as the rest of the verse (and about as literally as the other times it's used in judgement passages in the Bible that we've covered as well), which means we can't really use this verse to prove any particular soteriological perspective when it comes to the duration of one's judgement.

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. – Jude 1:5-13

The "everlasting" chains in this passage don't help defend any specific doctrine of salvation either, because this passage tells us they only lock up the fallen

angels *until* ("*unto*") their judgement (the "everlasting" in "everlasting chains" is translated from a whole other Greek word – ἀΐδιος – rather than the typical αἰωνίων that "everlasting" is normally translated from in the Greek Scriptures in the KJB as well, which doesn't actually change anything as far as anyone's soteriology goes, but I thought I'd mention it because it's one of the two cases of this word being used in the Greek Scriptures, with the other being used – and translated as "eternal" in the KJB – in Romans 1:20[1017] as I mentioned back in chapter 4 of this book). And the reference to Sodom and Gomorrha suffering the vengeance of "eternal" fire doesn't help either because neither of these cities are currently still burning, and we already know that Sodom will also eventually be returned to her "former estate" anyway[1018] (and if Jude was just referring to the citizens of the city, Ezekiel 16:55 would then likely also have to be referring to its citizens). And as far as the "wandering stars" go, the lake of fire doesn't seem like it could be described as a place of "blackness of darkness" (aside from the fact that it will be in a valley in the open air in Israel, underneath the sun and moon, the lake of fire would be anything but dark unless we aren't taking the "fire" part of its title literally, and if one chooses to interpret the "fire" part figuratively, there's no reason to interpret the supposed duration of the punishment, as the KJB translates it, literally either), and I'm assuming I don't have to point out that they aren't literally clouds or trees or waves or stars, which means we're outside the territory of literalism to begin with here, telling us that we once again have no basis for interpreting "for ever" any less figuratively than we would these words either, nor do we have any way to use this passage in the KJB to support any particular soteriological perspective when it comes to the duration of one's judgement either.

[1017] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: — Romans 1:20

[1018] When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. — Ezekiel 16:55

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. – Revelation 14:9-11

This passage is obviously extremely figurative. It can't simply be about being cast into the lake of fire because the lake of fire will be located in a valley down here on earth after the Tribulation ends, not up in heaven where it would presumably have to be in order to be tormented in the presence of "the holy angels" and the Lamb, if we were taking it literally. And for those who would suggest, for some reason, that it's about those who worship the beast during the Tribulation getting cast into the lake of fire *after* the Great White Throne Judgement, 1,000 years later rather than immediately after the Tribulation, the lake of fire will be *outside* the New Jerusalem on the New Earth, not inside it where it would have to be for those words to make sense from a literal perspective. Plus, we know from everything we've now learned in this book that no humans will be conscious in the lake of fire anyway (and, again, that immortality for humans *is* salvation, per what 1 Corinthians 15:53-55 tells us, making Infernalism impossible to begin with, as I've now pointed out numerous times throughout this book), so the reference to torment here tells us it *can't* be about suffering consciously in the lake of fire, either permanently or even just for a long period of time, but that it must be referring to something else altogether rather than to the lake of fire. As for what it means, considering everything we've already learned about the word "fire" when it's used in passages that don't also specifically refer to "hell" or the lake of fire by name in the KJB (and this passage doesn't use either of those names), it makes far more

sense to interpret this passage as simply being extreme hyperbole (since Revelation is an extremely figurative book in many places) about the judgement of those who take the mark and worship the beast, and the intense suffering they'll go through while still alive during the Tribulation for doing so, as described just two chapters later.[1019] This is similar to the way that when the great whore of Babylon is judged[1020] – which I don't believe any Christian interprets as referring to an actual human suffering or even being burned in actual fire, but rather as a satanic religious, political, and/or economic system being utterly destroyed – and when "her" "smoke" "rises up" *"for ever and ever,"* we know there isn't going to be any literal smoke rising because there's nothing literally even being burned, so the concept of smoke rising *"for ever and ever,"* as the KJB renders the particular Greek phrase it's translated from, seems

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[1019] And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. — Revelation 16:1-11

[1020] And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. — Revelation 19:1-3

to simply be apocalyptic language referring to an intense judgement in whatever manner it might happen to occur in.

Either way, though, that was quite literally the *only* passage in the Bible I'm aware of which even *suggests* that any human might be conscious while being punished *"for ever and ever"* (since the only other passage to mention a judgement of conscious beings for that particular "duration" in the KJB was referring to the punishment of spiritual beings, not humans, and we now know that even those particular beings will have to be set free in order to be reconciled to God the way Paul said they will be, so there's no reason to assume the *"for ever and ever"* in this passage in the KJB is any more literal than the one that talks about how long *their* punishment will last, not to mention any longer than the limited number of years the *"for ever and ever"* mentioned in the judgement of the land the nations will be located in after the Tribulation ends[1021] will last in the future either; and unless one decides to read their theological assumptions into the text, in order to apply it to more people than are actually mentioned in it, this passage can really *only* be applied to humans who worship the beast and take his mark anyway, which is an extremely small percentage of every non-believer to ever live throughout history, so it doesn't help support the idea that anyone else who doesn't choose to get saved will suffer without end either – and while it's true that those who worship the beast during the Tribulation *will* end up in the lake of fire for a time, since their names *aren't* going to be in the book of life,[1022] the fact that the same passage in Colossians which tells us that even the evil spiritual beings who will be

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[1021] For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. — Isaiah 34:8-10

[1022] And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. — Revelation 13:8

tormented *"for ever and ever"* will eventually be reconciled to God has to mean that all humans, even those who take the mark of the beast, will have to be reconciled to God some day too, in order to not contradict that passage in Colossians, along with all the other passages about the salvation of all humanity, and how immortality for humans *is* salvation, that Paul included in the rest of his epistles which we've now looked at as well), and this is quite problematic for the commonly-believed doctrine of never-ending torment in hell, because *that's it*. No other passage I'm aware of that one might think is talking about the "hell" where the lake of fire will be located implies that they'll actually be alive and suffering while in said location, so they don't actually help defend the Infernalist variation of The Popular Doctrine (although please correct me if I'm wrong and missed one, but please also first consider whether anything I wrote in this book would apply to it as well), and to interpret this extremely figurative reference to the judgement that a very specific – and relatively small – group of people (those who took the mark during the Tribulation) will experience as referring to suffering consciously in the lake of fire makes no sense either, because even if they could (which we now know they can't anyway), they'd be the only ones the Bible says would, at least if we're taking the rest of the Bible into consideration.

In fact, prior to reading this single passage in John's book describing his vision on Patmos, nobody who was reading the books of the Bible in their current order would have ever had any scriptural reason to interpret *any* of the other passages we've looked at as meaning that any humans would be conscious in the lake of fire – especially in light of what Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote about carcases in that location, not to mention what Paul wrote about immortality and salvation – or even that their corpse could never be resurrected from their second death and be quickened (and hence saved) after burning up in it, since no passage which mentioned either "hell" or the lake of fire by name in the KJB said anything of the sort. And so, somebody studying the Bible carefully from beginning to end who had never actually heard of the doctrine of never-ending

torment in hell for non-believers couldn't possibly come to the conclusion that any humans would be conscious or suffering while in the lake of fire, at least not before reaching this particular passage more than halfway through the final book in the Bible. And if they're being honest with themselves and taking the rest of Scripture into consideration when they get to this passage, they'd realize that it would make no sense to think *this passage* was referring to that either, since no other passage we've looked at even hinted at such a fate, and because it would contradict everything else they'd already learned as well, which means that to use this one extremely figurative passage located near the very end of the Bible to reinterpret all the references to judgement that came before it in Scripture into meaning all unbelievers (or really anyone at all) will be suffering without end in hell ignores basically every hermeneutical principle I'm aware of, and would contradict too many other things in Scripture we've already looked as well, so there's just no good scriptural excuse for doing that (especially because nobody prior to the time that John wrote the book of Revelation could have ever understood *any* of the other judgement passages to *actually* mean that anyone would be tormented without end either, based on what we've now learned). And so, even though some people will miss out on "everlasting" life, and might even end up in "everlasting" hell fire (or perhaps simply end up experiencing some other form of judgement, figuratively spoken of using the word "fire," as often happened in the Bible), we now know that they, and everyone else, will eventually *leave* hell (whichever hell or hells they might end up in) and experience salvation, thanks to God and Christ.

But the fact that not everyone gets to enjoy "everlasting" life is also something that should concern my readers, because there are certain qualifications for getting to do so, as I've mentioned before. There are, of course, various types of "everlasting" life available to be experienced, depending on when one lives, anyway. You might get to enjoy the "everlasting" life that involves living in Israel after Jesus returns if you happen to live through the Tribulation and take care of Israelites who are persecuted during the second half of it. This isn't in an

immortal body, however, although I think it stands to reason that whoever does get to enjoy this sort of "everlasting" life will likely be given access to the tree of life and will never die. The members of the Israel of God who haven't lost their salvation will also be given "everlasting" life after Jesus returns (and will get to reign over the rest of the world from Israel), and those of them who died prior to – and are resurrected 75 days after – the end of the Tribulation will even get to enjoy their "everlasting" life in immortal bodies upon their resurrection (while those who "endure to the end" of the Tribulation will get to remain alive in a semi-mortal state thanks to the tree of life, although they, as well as those who helped persecuted Jews during the Tribulation, will eventually be made truly immortal too, along with everyone else, at the end of the ages, when Christ finally destroys death completely).

However, there's a final group of people who also get to experience "everlasting" life, and this entire group *will* get to enjoy it in immortal bodies (and these bodies will be even more glorious than the immortal bodies of those in the Israel of God[1023]). These people, of course, are the members of the body of Christ. This is an extremely small group of people, though, and technically only those relatively few people who have been ordained to "eternal" life, meaning those to whom God has elected to give the understanding of what it means and the faith to believe that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, will actually be immersed into His body. However, while whether we experience this sort of "everlasting" life or not isn't something we ultimately get to decide for ourselves (nobody chooses what they believe – they either hear or read something and believe it, or they hear or read it and don't believe it, and nobody can choose to force themselves to believe something that they think isn't true, at least not without some serious

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[1023] There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. — 1 Corinthians 15:40-41

self-induced brainwashing, likely requiring powerful drugs; although, if they didn't think it was true, they'd have no reason to try to force themselves to believe it in the first place, so we couldn't really blame them for not believing it anyway), at some point in their life, anyone included in this group *will* have believed (which first requires actually understanding) all the elements of what it is Paul said that members of the body of Christ believe when they're saved, which means God *will* have given them an understanding of, and belief in, the following facts before they die or before Christ comes for His body: 1) That *"Christ died for our sins"* means that sin has now been dealt with for everyone, and so nobody's sins are being held against them at all anymore (the good and evil works[1024] of non-believers will still be judged at the Great White Throne,[1025] of course, but sin and evil are two entirely different concepts, as I've already mentioned, and should never be confused as being the same thing, although it is true that a lot of evil actions are indeed sinful), and everyone will eventually experience salvation because of this, and entirely apart from anything they do on their own at that, including even believing this good news. 2) That "*He was buried*" means Christ Jesus literally ceased to exist as a conscious being when He died, and that He Himself was placed in the tomb (and not just His body while He Himself went somewhere else, which also

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[1024] Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. — Romans 2:6-11

[1025] And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. — Revelation 20:11-13

means that He can't be Almighty God Himself). And 3) that *"He rose again the third day"* means, after spending three days truly dead, God resurrected Christ Jesus in the same physical body that He died in (although it's also a "spiritual" body now that it's been quickened/made immortal), and not that He simply now exists as a glorified ghost in another dimension (this final point was the whole reason Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15, after all). And so, if you've come to truly understand and believe the details I've just explained, then you can rest assured that you are indeed among the elect and have joined the body of Christ.

If you've made it this far and disagree with basically everything I've written, however (although I'd be very surprised if that ever happens, because at the time of the latest revision of this book, at least, literally every single Bible believer who I've confirmed actually read all of the chapters up to this one carefully without skipping over anything in them has told me they're now convinced that everyone indeed will eventually experience salvation, as I explained in the introduction of this book), I'm sorry to say that there's a good chance you'll have to wait until the end of the ages to experience your own salvation, since you likely aren't among those whom God has elected for membership in the body of Christ (although I'd like to hear how you answered all the questions throughout the book so far that I asked those who disagree with us, so please get in touch with me to let me know those answers, or at least let the person who sent you this book know your answers if it wasn't me). But, just like everyone else, even you'll get to enjoy salvation at that time (although, if you *do* happen to be a member of the Israel of God, you might still get to experience life "eternal" in the kingdom of heaven in Israel if you've obeyed the Gospel of the Circumcision to the best of your ability, or, if not, perhaps by helping the least of Jesus' brethren during the Tribulation instead, if you happen to be alive at that time). This also means that, if you want those of us who have come to understand and believe what I've written in this book so far to change our minds and believe what you do about the topics I've covered instead, you're going to have to do a good job of breaking down exactly where

we went wrong in our scriptural interpretations as I laid them out over the last eight chapters. You can't just expect those of us who have come to believe the doctrines I've covered in this book to take your word for it that we're wrong simply because you say we are, so you'll have to actually do the work of explaining how we've misinterpreted all of the passages of Scripture that I've exegeted in this book in order to prove us wrong if you want us to change our minds and believe what you believe instead (which doesn't mean just presenting us with various philosophical arguments, or appealing to our emotions, as those Christians who don't want to let go of their beloved doctrine of never-ending punishment tend to do when they realize they have no scriptural foundation for their assumptions, at least in my experience). So the ball's in your court, but I'm not going to hold my breath, because, as I've mentioned already, thus far literally nobody has ever even *attempted* to refute the arguments I've laid out in this book about the topics we just covered (although a number of people I've shared these interpretations with have been given the faith to believe the truth and are now in the body of Christ, as I said, and I pray that now includes you too).

But why did God seem to hide all this truth from so many, as seems to be the case when we consider the fact that so few people appear to be able to see much of it at all when they read their Bibles? To that I simply repeat the words of Proverbs 25:2 once again, in which we're told, "*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter,*" and then suggest that perhaps God did this to reveal the true nature of our hearts to us when we're finally judged, so that we'll be able to see just how evil our preferences for how others end up spending eternity can be (although it's also true that those who aren't among the elect *can't* believe most of what I've written anyway, because A) they're led by their desires rather than by the Spirit of God[1026] – the word

[1026] But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. — 1 Corinthians 2:14

"natural" is a figurative translation in 1 Corinthians 2:14 in the *King James Bible*, being translated from ψυχικὸς/"psoo-khee-kos'," a Greek word which means "sensual," as it's also translated[1027] more literally elsewhere[1028] in the KJB, and Paul was referring to those who are governed by their feelings rather than by God in that verse – not to mention B) their minds have been blinded,[1029] as you learned earlier in this book, and only God can open the eyes of their minds and get them to believe the truth, which won't happen for most people until they're standing before the Great White Throne for their judgement). And your reaction to everything you've just read almost certainly will be used to reveal the truth about the state of your own heart during your years as a mortal here on earth to you at that time.

All that being said, I know that this was a lot to take in, and the sequence of the events we've discussed might be a little fuzzy in your mind, at least based on the questions people who have read previous editions of this book have asked me after finishing it, so before I wrap up this chapter, I want to give you a short summary of the events yet to come (at least as of the time this book was last updated) in their correct order so you can hopefully see the bigger picture all at once.

Before the Tribulation begins (or at least by the midway point, although more likely shortly before it begins), the last trump will sound for the first time and the members of the true body of Christ (meaning everyone who *actually* understood and believed Paul's Gospel, which excludes *most* Christians from the running) who have died will be resurrected, and they, along with the still

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[1027] This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. — James 3:15

[1028] These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. — Jude 1:19

[1029] In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. — 2 Corinthians 4:4

living members, will be quickened and taken to the heavens (which means taken somewhere in outer space) at the event which English-speaking members of the body of Christ generally refer to as the Snatching Away.

Next comes the Tribulation itself, in which 144,000 Israelites (these won't be Gentiles, but will be taken from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, although many of them will quite likely not have known they were Israelites – of the 10 "lost tribes" – since they'll have grown up in Gentile nations) will proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom and help many other Israelites come to believe in Jesus as their Messiah and as the Son of God. While I'm not going to get into the scriptural basis of this, I'll also add that, near the beginning of the Tribulation, the Christian religion will probably become very popular, at least in North America (with Islam almost certainly becoming very prevalent in Europe instead), likely having been popularized by the one known as the false prophet and the one known as the beast (sometimes referred to as the Antichrist or the man of lawlessness), although it will be destroyed around the mid-way point, and many of its followers will be killed by spirits, with the false prophet then proclaiming the beast as the one to worship (a deep study of Daniel and Revelation should explain where I'm getting this idea from, although it's easier to see all this in the original Hebrew and Greek, as the KJB doesn't make this particularly clear, but I'm going to leave it at that and not attempt to prove this part of the summary here as it would take far too much more space to do so, although if you read A.E. Knoch's commentary on the book of Daniel,[1030] as well as his commentary on the book of Revelation,[1031] you'll learn what I'm referring to – and while you're reading his books, I'd highly recommend also reading his

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[1030] *Concordant Studies in the Book of DANIEL* by A.E. Knoch: https://s3.amazonaws.com/unsearchablerich/booksonwebsite/©CPC+Concordant+Studies+in+the+Book+of+Daniel.pdf

[1031] *The Unveiling of Jesus Christ* by A.E. Knoch: https://www.concordant.org/expositions/unveiling-jesus-christ

excellent book on the topics of evil and judgement as well[1032]). Also around the mid-point of the Tribulation, the beast will betray Israel, and many Israelites will become slaves among the Gentile nations (although many of the believing Israelites will escape to the wilderness outside Jerusalem at this time and wait out the rest of the Tribulation there).

Near the end of the Tribulation (most people believe right at the end of the seventh year of the Tribulation, but for reasons I'm also not going to get into here, partly due to lack of time and space and partly due to the fact that I believe it's meant to remain a secret to most people, I believe Scripture tells us that it will actually be about a year prior to the end of this seven-year period), Jesus will return to the earth – eventually touching down on the Mount of Olives the same way He left (although His arrival at the Mount of Olives *will* take place at the end of the seven years, even if His actual return was a year or so earlier) – and will cast the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire in the Valley of Hinnom in Israel (most likely referring to evil spirits possessing actual humans, with the humans presumably dying in the process, since mortal humans can't live while on fire), and many unfaithful Israelites will also end up dead and consumed in that valley around the same time as well (having ended up there either during or after the Tribulation).

At some point after His return, He'll send angels to gather all still-living Israelites from all over the world to Israel where they'll be judged, and those who believed their Gospel and endured to the end will get to live in the kingdom of heaven in Israel, while the others will be cast into the metaphoric "furnace of fire," meaning they'll weep and gnash their teeth because they'll have to live in the "outer darkness" of the rest of the world, far from the light of the kingdom.

[1032] *The Problem of Evil and the Judgements of God* by A.E. Knoch: https://s3.amazonaws.com/unsearchablerich/booksonwebsite/©CPC+The+Problem+of+Evil.pdf

He'll also gather the nations to Israel to be judged, shortly after the Tribulation ends, and those who treated believing Jews well during the Tribulation will get to live in Israel, while everyone else will also be forced to live in the "age-pertaining fire" (translated figuratively as "eternal fire" or "everlasting fire" in less literal Bible versions, but it's only temporary, and metaphorical at that, as we've now learned), which is the same "furnace of fire" that the non-believing Jews will have to live in, meaning parts of the planet that aren't Israel, where they (well, more likely their distant offspring) will be prepared for the devil and his angels to rise up against Israel one last time at the end of the thousand-year age.

Also, 75 days after the Tribulation ends, the last trump will sound a second time, and those dead members of the Israel of God (meaning all the righteous Israelites throughout history up to that point, as well as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and any of their righteous family members) will be resurrected and quickened (this is known as the resurrection of the just, as well as Israel's "first" resurrection). The still living members of the Israel of God will *not* be quickened at this time, however, but will remain alive during that age by eating of the fruit of the tree of life instead, which will likely be returned to the earth at that point, or moved from a hiding place to Israel if it's been on earth all this time. Either way, they'll remain on earth to help the 144,000 rule over the earth.

Satan is also cast into what the KJB calls "the bottomless pit" around this time, where he'll be bound for 1,000 years to plot his revenge, which he'll carry out when he's released at the end of the thousand-year kingdom of heaven, as already mentioned, although he'll once again fail, and this time be bound in the lake of fire for the remaining duration of the final two ages, known as the ages of the ages in Scripture in the original Greek.

Afterwards, earth and the rest of the universe will be destroyed, but a New Heaven and a New Earth will be created to replace them, and anyone who is

dead will be resurrected – but not yet quickened – for the Great White Throne Judgement (this Judgement might take place prior to the creation of the New Heaven and New Earth, but they both take place around the same time). At this time, "death and hell" (referring to the "hell" sometimes also known as "sheol," or "hades") are said to have been "cast into the lake of fire," which I believe is figurative language that just means the lake of fire will be the only place that the dead can reside from that point forward, as well as perhaps the only place in which one can die from that time forward as well (it's important to remember, however, that this is not a reference to the destruction of death that Paul wrote about, which will come at a much later time, possibly about 33,000 years later).

Some of those who were resurrected at this time (the worst of the worst) will then be cast into the lake of fire to die a second time, although I suspect most people will make it onto the New Earth to live through that final age in either mortal or semi-mortal bodies. During this age (as well as the one before it), the body of Christ is reconciling "fallen" celestial beings to God, and the Israel of God is bringing humanity under subjection to Christ.

Finally, at the end of this final age, after all still living humans and all celestial beings (including Satan) have been reconciled to God, Christ will resurrect anyone who is still dead in the lake of fire, if anyone is still left there at that time, and, with the final sounding of the last trump, this time He'll quicken them, along with all the mortal and semi-mortal humans (including the members of the Israel of God who haven't been quickened yet but were remaining alive as semi-mortals thanks to the fruit of the tree of life), which will be what finally destroys death, as Paul put it. He'll then turn all reign over to His God and Father, who will then be All in all (not just All in some), which means every human who will have ever lived will have been saved and reconciled to God by this point, and every celestial being will have been reconciled to God as well. I should say, details when it comes to the final age are not particularly clear (some of it is based on having to properly interpret parables, among other

highly figurative language), and there is good reason to believe that some people will be working on the New Earth without having died a second time in order to repay "the uttermost farthing" during the final age (don't confuse this for working for salvation, though, since this isn't actually connected to salvation, at least not the type of salvation connected with Paul's Gospel), or perhaps that those who died the second death will be individually resurrected (but not quickened yet) at various points during the final age as well, in order to complete their "sentences" of paying restitution to those they wronged (this, by the way, is what I think the purpose of the lake of fire on the New Earth is going to be, at least in part, because it keeps the dead in an unconscious death state until each corpse "residing" in it can be resurrected in a mortal body, with the worst of the worst being raised from their second death first, since they have the most debt to repay to those they harmed prior to their first deaths, with everyone else being resurrected in order of worst to least worst, so that everyone can essentially have paid off "the uttermost farthing" they owe at around the same time, at least if my theory about "the uttermost farthing" is correct), but what we do know for sure is that they'll all be resurrected and quickened by the end of it, at which point everyone will finally be saved.

Chapter 9: How should we then really live?

After learning the scriptural reasons *why* one should become a Pauline Universalist, the next question is generally what the Bible says about *how one should live* as a Pauline Universalist (or even as a member of the Israel of God), which is why I'm now going to discuss some of the most important details relevant to the daily life of a Christian (be they members of the body of Christ *or* the Israel of God), using the same principles of scriptural interpretation we used to prove that all humanity will be saved – especially when it comes to rightly dividing which parts of Scripture are to and about the body of Christ vs which parts aren't – because the fact of the matter is that nearly everything we've been taught by the leaders of the Christian religion when it comes to morality and life as a believer, and even to religious rules in general, is just as unbiblical as what we were taught by them about salvation and everything else we've covered in the previous 8 chapters of this book (although, if you haven't read the introduction and previous chapters yet, I'd advise you to go start from the beginning of this book before proceeding with this one, at least if you aren't already familiar with the core doctrines that we Pauline Universalists hold to, and don't already know why we believe what we do about the Bible, or else you're likely going to be extremely confused about a lot of things you read in this chapter, especially since the doctrines I explained in those chapters are necessary to be understood before one begins interpreting pretty much *any* of the Bible, including the passages we're going to be looking at in this chapter; at the very least, though, please read the first chapter of this book before reading this one).

You see, misunderstanding the actual meaning of *numerous* passages in the Bible has not only led most Christians to misunderstand what it says about soteriology, but has also led most of them to believe that *all sorts* of innocent actions are actually sinful and should be avoided, when there's really nothing wrong with most of these actions at all as far as Scripture is *actually* concerned, and so throughout this chapter I'm going to explain some of the most important facts contained in Scripture that most Christians do *not* understand about morality – facts which *will* show you how to enjoy the true biblical freedom that *only* Pauline Universalists tend to be fully familiar with (or at least *should* be fully familiar with).

Before looking at some of the specific actions that followers of the Christian religion mistakenly think we need to avoid, though, it should first be noted that the Bible *does* tell us plenty of things that God actually *would* prefer people not do without us needing to add to it (even if the list differs depending on which dispensation, or administration, one is living under; it's perfectly fine for members of the body of Christ to eat a ham sandwich, for example, even though it would be a sin for those under the Mosaic law, since members of the body of Christ – and Gentiles in general, for that matter – aren't under the Mosaic law the way that members of the Israel of God are, as we learned in the first chapter of this book). In fact, Scripture even provides a list of things that God actually hates, in Proverbs 6:16-19,[1033] and there's nothing at all about most of the things the morality police dislike on *that* list, including some of the biggest hangups religious conservatives have (although there are a number of things on that list which many of them do seem to enjoy, as I'm sure you've seen for yourself firsthand). What He does hate, however, is dishonesty, and I suspect that religious lies are the worst sort of dishonesty since they're lies

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[1033] These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren. — Proverbs 6:16-19

about God Himself. Basically, if a particular action isn't on one of the actual lists of actions God hates and/or forbids, insisting that it's sinful and making new rules that God Himself never made is really lying about what God wants, just like the religious leaders in Jesus' time did. And remember, it was those very same people who opposed Jesus, and who conspired to have Him (and, later, His followers) killed. That's right, it wasn't the pagans, atheists, or liberals who tried to eliminate Christ and His followers. Rather, it was the religious conservatives of His time who tried to squash Him and His teachings (and any others who taught them as well), just as they do today (as it was then, the greatest enemies of Christ and His true followers are still religious conservatives, even if these supposed "ministers of righteousness"[1034] call themselves Christians now).

All of that aside, though, worrying about morality (at least the way most conservative Christians understand morality) is a huge red herring, at least when it comes to the body of Christ. What followers of Churchianity don't seem to realize is that all of the "thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots" cause them to completely miss the point of Paul's teachings to begin with (since, as we now know, it's Paul's teachings that the body of Christ is supposed to concern itself with under the dispensation of the grace of God – and, again, if you aren't aware of this fact, you do need to go read the first chapter of this book or you'll go astray in nearly *all* of your interpretations of Scripture). Starting with a flawed presupposition about doctrines like sin and grace will cause one to think that they're supposed to be concerned with religious rules, when being a member of the body of Christ is actually about something else altogether. Basically, the Gospel that Paul preached isn't a religious proposition ("do this or else!"); rather, it's a proclamation ("it's already been done by Christ, so why not

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[1034] For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. — 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

believe this good news and stop trying to please God yourself?"), as you now also know, even if it's something that few Christians know, due to often having been taught and believing a confused "gospel" and hence not actually being in the body of Christ at all, despite assuming they are.

While most religions are a set of rules that people need to follow in order to A) live an enjoyable life, B) avoid suffering negative consequences (either imposed by followers of said religions in this life or by their deity or other beings in an afterlife, or by being reincarnated to live another mortal life again on earth after death), and C) make God happy, Paul promised that A) believers of his teachings are less likely to have a fun life than those who don't believe his message, since they'd be persecuted by those who do prefer religion (including the Christian religion) to the truth,[1035] B) explained that we don't have to do anything to avoid suffering a negative afterlife (or life after resurrection, to be more precise) since we've already been justified by faith regardless of what we do,[1036] and C) told us that God is already happy (the word "blessed" in 1 Timothy 1:11[1037] literally means "happy" in the original Koine Greek). Instead of following a bunch of rules the way followers of various religions (including the Christian religion) do, members of the body of Christ don't have to actively try to avoid sinning by our own strength at all (and, in fact, should actually not ever try to), because we're justified (and living) by faith, and are walking after the Spirit rather than after the flesh.

To hear most Christians talk about it, you'd think that sins are something the body of Christ should be actively trying to avoid committing. When the street

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[1035] Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. — 2 Timothy 3:12

[1036] Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. — Romans 3:28

[1037] According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. — 1 Timothy 1:11

preachers in my city give their sermons, the focus is always on sin and how our sinful actions will send us to an afterlife realm called "hell" if we don't get our sin dealt with by "getting saved" in the manner the preachers believe one needs to do so in (completely missing the fact that Christ's death for our sins in Paul's Gospel is a proclamation, not a proposition, as I just explained, and that sin has already been taken care of for everybody whether they believe it or not). And if you talk to them one-on-one, you'll discover they believe that, even *after* we "get saved" in the manner they believe one does, we still need to do our best to avoid certain actions these preachers consider to be sinful (as well as do certain things they consider to be commanded of us, I should add). Following rules is basically the foundation of their entire religion, and so when they attempt to interpret passages such as the following ones, they'll tell you Paul was explaining how we need to try to do good, spiritual acts while trying to avoid fleshly, sinful acts:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. – Romans 8:1-10

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. – Galatians 5:16-25

And while Paul is indeed telling his readers they shouldn't be walking after the flesh – not to mention what the consequences of doing so might be – in those verses, that he isn't telling people to try to actively avoid sinning should be very obvious to anyone who considers the context of the passages. Unfortunately, most Christians are so obsessed with religious rules that they've actually made Sin their lord (anthropomorphically[1038] speaking), which keeps them from being able to grasp what Paul actually taught about the topic of sin at all, and results in them walking after the flesh after all.

So what *was* Paul talking about in those passages? Well, if you ask any Christian who has studied Paul's epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, they should be able to tell you that a large part of both books is about how the body of Christ is not under the law,[1039] and how we shouldn't allow ourselves to be placed under it at all. The problem is, when they get to passages that talk

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[1038] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropomorphism

[1039] For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. — Romans 6:14

about "the flesh," most Christians immediately forget this fact and proceed to completely ignore the context of the passages, reading their love of religious rules into the passages instead. Following religious rules isn't even close to what Paul was talking about when he wrote warnings about walking after the flesh, however. In fact, the exact opposite is true. Even though the context of those passages should make it obvious, it can help to read an entirely different passage written by Paul, one which can serve as the key to understanding the other times he writes about the flesh. In Philippians 3:1-11, Paul is warning his readers against having confidence in their flesh[1040] – by which he means trying to be righteous by following rules – telling them they should instead be trusting in the faith of Christ for their righteousness rather than in their own actions (or even in their own faith, as we learned earlier in this book).

This, along with the context of not being under the law (and the fact that Paul also compares walking after the Spirit with not following the law in that passage from Galatians[1041]), should make it clear that Paul was actually telling members of the body of Christ to stop trying to follow (and enforce) *any* religious rules at all, because trying to follow religious rules is what it actually means to walk

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[1040] Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. — Philippians 3:1-11

[1041] But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. — Galatians 5:18

after the flesh (including trying to follow the 10 Commandments, which are indeed a part of the Mosaic law, as Paul made clear by referencing the 10th commandment[1042] when he wrote Romans 7:7[1043] as a part of his teaching that we shouldn't allow ourselves to be placed under *any* parts of the law). So if you are actively trying to avoid (or even trying to do) specific actions in order to please God, you're actually walking after the flesh, not to mention ignoring what Paul said about following ordinances and other commandments of men.[1044] And, as we know, he contrasted the concept of walking after the flesh with the concept of walking after the Spirit, and if walking after the flesh means trying to follow religious rules, walking after the Spirit must necessarily mean we *aren't* trying to follow religious rules, but are instead trusting that Christ will live the life He wants us to live through us,[1045] and that He'll end up doing the things God wants us to do and avoiding the things God wants us to avoid, Himself, through us. It's only when we start walking after the flesh, meaning we start worrying about religion and trying to follow rules and prohibitions, that we begin doing the very things that God doesn't want us to do, because trying

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[1042] Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. — Exodus 20:17

[1043] What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. — Romans 7:7

[1044] Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. — Colossians 2:20-23

[1045] I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. — Galatians 2:20-21

to follow religious rules (be it the Mosaic law, or any other form of religious rules) only leads to more sin.[1046]

At this point most Christians will protest and say that, while the body of Christ isn't under the Mosaic law itself, there are still other rules in the Bible we need to follow, but in making such claims they're ignoring everything Paul taught throughout his epistles. The reason we don't follow the Mosaic law isn't because there's anything wrong with the specific rules in the law themselves.[1047] The commandment against murder[1048] is not a bad rule in and of itself, for example, which means that it isn't simply the specific rules in the Mosaic law we aren't supposed to follow, but rather it's *trying to follow religious rules in general* that we aren't supposed to do.

Which brings us to the next protestation most Christians will make. "What about the long list of sins Paul mentioned in that passage in Galatians we looked at? Wasn't he telling his readers to do their best to avoid those specific actions?" The answer to this will shock most people, but no, he most certainly wasn't. If walking after the flesh means trying to follow religious rules, how could Paul possibly then turn around and say, "But make sure you don't break *these* specific religious rules, okay?" Instead, if you look at the context, it becomes clear that he's warning his readers what will happen if they *try* to avoid sinning out of their own strength. Instead of becoming the holy, righteous people they hope that avoiding those specific actions will make them, those actions are instead exactly what they'll end up doing. Just as positive attributes like love, joy, and peace are the fruit of walking after the Spirit, the various negative

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[1046] Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: — Romans 5:20

[1047] But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; — 1 Timothy 1:8

[1048] Thou shalt not kill. — Exodus 20:13

actions Paul listed there are the fruit of walking after the flesh, meaning those actions are the fruit that will come forth from trying to follow religious rules.

And so, Paul's condemnation in Romans 10:2-3 can equally be applied to many members of the Christian religion today: *"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*

Bottom line, if you hear someone tell you that one must follow religious rules, especially if they're a part of the Mosaic law in any way, don't walk; run! It means that they are very likely a wolf in sheep's clothing, trying to lure you into their religious trap (presuming you're in the body of Christ anyway; if you're in the Israel of God instead, you can disregard this exhortation, as well as basically everything else I've said in the last few paragraphs, since you then *do* have to try to avoid sinning). At the very least, they are extremely confused and likely have nothing useful to teach you (at least from a spiritual perspective). Remember that, while not all things are a good idea, all things are technically permitted,[1049] and also that to the pure all things are pure[1050] (but those unbelievers in Paul's Gospel who are pretending to be in the body of Christ – likely lying even to themselves about their faith, not to mention often telling themselves that there's really only one Gospel while also completely failing to understand what Paul's Gospel actually means in the first place – have a defiled mind and conscience that causes them to consider pretty much nothing to be pure). Yes, if someone doesn't have faith that something is allowed, then it

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[1049] All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. — 1 Corinthians 6:12

[1050] Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. — Titus 1:15

would be a sin **for them specifically** to do it[1051] (although not because the action itself is necessarily actually sinful in and of itself), but the corollary of this verse must be true too: if that which is not out of faith is sin, then that which is out of faith is not sin. It is true that Paul used food and holy days as specific examples, but the principle still applies to everything.

Remember also that we should think of our old humanity (or our "old man," as the KJB puts it) as dead,[1052] and that we are to, in fact, reckon ourselves dead to Sin altogether,[1053] which means that Sin has no more dominion over us at all – anthropomorphically speaking – because we're not under law at all, but rather are under grace[1054] (and remaining under grace takes away all of Sin's power over us). To "reckon" isn't to try make something a fact, meaning to try to avoid sinning in this case, but rather it means to simply look at it as if it's *already* a fact, and to stop letting Sin reign over you by trying to avoid sinning. And yes, Paul did say, *"they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh"*[1055] (and yes, the word translated as *"have crucified"* – σταυρόω/"stow-ro'-o" – *is* in the Aorist tense in that verse in the original Greek, so it might be able to be said that it's an ongoing process as well, as some like to point out), but since he also told us to consider ourselves as already being dead to Sin, he obviously wasn't telling us to try to stop sinning there (since a dead body can't sin), any more than he was when he

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[1051] And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. — Romans 14:23

[1052] Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. — Romans 6:6

[1053] Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. — Romans 6:11

[1054] For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. — Romans 6:14

[1055] And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. — Galatians 5:24

said, *"I die daily,"* in another verse.[1056] The context of "flesh" in the first verse has to be referring to the same thing as it did in the rest of the passages we just looked at, meaning our self-righteous attempts to please God by following religious rules, and the context of the second verse was just physical death, with Paul simply speaking of how he risked physical death regularly thanks to the various persecutions and perils he faced in his ministry there, as he clarified in the very next verse after he made that statement[1057] (not to mention, as we've already discussed earlier in this book). And similarly, Jesus' command to *"take up one's cross daily"*[1058] doesn't refer to trying to avoid sinning either. Aside from the fact that this was directed specifically to those under the Gospel of the Circumcision instead of to the body of Christ, even if it could be considered a trans-dispensational truth, it wasn't talking about avoiding sin, but rather about being willing to face death for Him like He was about to do for us.[1059]

To be fair, the Bible does seem to teach that those believers who happen to be saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision do have to be careful to avoid rejecting what they've believed and falling back into sin so as to not miss out on their salvation, which means missing out on living in the thousand-year kingdom of heaven (if not more, although the "more" just refers to living in the New Jerusalem during part or all of the final age, not to the immortality that

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[1056] I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. — 1 Corinthians 15:31

[1057] If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. — 1 Corinthians 15:32

[1058] And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. — Luke 9:23

[1059] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. — Luke 9:24-26

everyone will eventually experience by the end of the ages), and unlike those of us in the body of Christ, they *are* required to keep the Mosaic law (at least the parts they're still able to keep without a temple, similar to the way Daniel and his fellow exiles lived in times past). But as far as those of us in the body of Christ go, while we may or may not all get to reign, we are safe as far as our special salvation goes, regardless of what we do, because Paul told us in Romans 8 that anyone God calls for membership in the body of Christ *will* be justified and glorified,[1060] as we've already learned, and because he told us not to allow ourselves to be placed under the law at all, since to do so is what it means to fall from grace. So at the end of the day, we just don't have to worry about Sin, or about trying to avoid sinning, if we're in the body of Christ, because we're now dead to Sin.

I should say, after reading all that, some people are still going to misunderstand everything I just wrote, thinking that I'm telling people we actually *should* go out and *purposely* commit sins, not to mention that we shouldn't walk worthy of the Lord,[1061] but that's not what I'm saying here at all (although it is imperative to remember that the pace at which we walk is entirely in God's hands[1062]). In fact, you definitely should *not* be going out and purposely committing sins (at least not actual sins; I'm not talking about the innocent actions that many Christians confuse for sins because they essentially misunderstand the entire Bible). I'm simply saying that we shouldn't be trying to avoid sinning of our own strength, but rather that we should be trusting God to keep us from sinning

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[1060] Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. — Romans 8:30

[1061] For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; — Colossians 1:9-10

[1062] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. — Ephesians 2:10

instead. This also means that if you *aren't* accused of encouraging people to sin, you probably aren't teaching the same things that Paul taught about sin and grace, since this false accusation seems to have also been levelled against him[1063] – which is why he wrote Romans chapter 6 in the first place – and so those who aren't accused of being "hyper-grace" or antinomian themselves probably aren't either). And while I need to move on at this point, there's still a lot more[1064] that can be said about[1065] this extremely important topic,[1066] so I want you to read the articles by Martin Zender[1067] – who goes into so much more detail[1068] on this topic[1069] than I was able to get into here[1070] – that I've linked to in the footnotes throughout this sentence.[1071]

Still, while worrying about sin is not something those of us in the body of Christ are meant to do, it can be helpful to know *why* some of the activities that conservative Christians think are sinful really aren't, and how one responds

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[1063] What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? — Romans 6:1-2

[1064] *Death of the Old Humanity, Part 1* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.6.pdf

[1065] *Death of the Old Humanity, Part 2* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.8.pdf

[1066] *Death of the Old Humanity, Part 3* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.13.pdf

[1067] *Death of the Old Humanity, Part 4* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.14.pdf

[1068] *Death of the Old Humanity, Part 5* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.15.pdf

[1069] *Death of the Old Humanity, Part 6* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.16.pdf

[1070] *Walking According to Spirit* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.26.pdf

[1071] *"FLESH" in Romans 8* By Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF4.27.pdf

emotionally to what they read in the rest of this chapter will be a good test of whether one is walking after the Spirit or walking after the flesh. Those who aren't walking after the Spirit will feel their pharisaical flesh crawling and their self-righteous souls getting stirred up because of some of the things that are about to be said, and, as such, they would be wise to consider reevaluating themselves, spiritually-speaking, and also question whether they're more interested in holding fast to the traditions they've been taught by their denominations and religious leaders, or in what Scripture actually teaches.

Perhaps the best examples of unscriptural traditions when it comes to morality are what most Christians have been taught regarding sex and lust. You've almost certainly been taught that premarital sex is a sin, and the primary reason that most conservative Christians are so against premarital sex is one little word: fornication. Depending on your English Bible translation, you'll find fornication criticized as a very bad thing that one should flee from,[1072] and if you look fornication up in an English dictionary you will indeed find that it *can* mean sexual intercourse between unmarried partners, although that isn't its only, or even its original, meaning, which is very important to keep in mind because the Greek word translated as "fornication" in the KJB is πορνεία/"por-ni'-ah," which does *not* literally mean "premarital sex" *at all* (that's not to say that premarital sex by certain people can't fall under the umbrella of πορνεία under *very specific circumstances*, but that isn't what the Greek word itself actually means, in and of itself).

Of course, some English Bible versions use the term "sexual immorality" to translate the word πορνεία instead, and that's not necessarily a bad translation, but you *do* have to be just as careful with *this* translation as you do with "fornication," since it's really just a broad and general term that doesn't tell us

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[1072] Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. — 1 Corinthians 6:18

anything on its own about what sexual acts would actually be considered to be immoral, and to automatically read “premarital sex” into “sexual immorality” is simply eisegesis based on an assumption rather than based on the original Greek, considering the fact that πορνεία just didn’t refer to the act of simply having sex outside of marriage at the time the Greek Scriptures were written (which tells us that assuming the word “fornication” means “premarital sex” in the KJB and other Bible versions that use this translation is *also* a mistake). And “premarital sex” isn’t what the Hebrew word translated as “fornication” in the KJB[1073] – זָנָה/“zaw-naw'” – meant either, since *that* word literally just meant “prostitution,” generally referring specifically to temple, or cult, prostitution when used in Scripture, which is why πορνεία and זָנָה are often also translated as “prostitution” or “whoredom.”

In fact, even the English word “fornication” itself originally meant something similar, since the word used to either literally just mean “to meet a prostitute under an arch” (the word originated from the Latin words “fornix,” “fornicare,” and "fornicatio," with “fornix” originally literally meaning “arch” or “vault” – prostitutes used to wait for their customers in ancient Rome under vaulted ceilings where they’d be safe from the elements, and so “fornix” eventually became a term for brothels because of this – “fornicare” referring to a man visiting a brothel, and "fornicatio," literally meaning "done in the archway," was used as a euphemism for prostitution), or simply referred to *the act* of “prostitution” in some form, and *not* simply to premarital sex, thus making “fornication” yet another example of the many words in the KJB that most people completely misinterpret today (the one I referred to in the first chapter

[1073] Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto. — 2 Chronicles 21:11

of this book that I said I'd discuss later, when we were looking at the word "convenient,"[1074] by the way).

And so, if your English Bible translation uses the word "fornication" (or even "sexual immorality"), it's very important to avoid assuming that the term is referring to premarital sex the way most Christians do, since it's almost always referring to prostitution of some sort instead. That said, one has to be careful here too, because the type of prostitution being referred to by the words πορνεία and זָנָה don't refer to the concept of simply trading money for sex as practiced by regular sex-workers today, but normally imply a more illicit affair taking place, especially when used in Scripture (it's important to keep in mind that sex work on its own – not to mention paying for sex – wasn't always considered to be the shameful act that it's considered to be by most people today), which is backed up by the fact that it's generally agreed upon by scholars that the most broad meaning of πορνεία is closer to "illicit sexual intercourse" than anything else, and if we take the term "illicit sexual intercourse" literally, it just means sexual intercourse that breaks the law. As we all know, at least as of the time this book was written, premarital sex on its own doesn't break the law here in the western world, and it certainly wasn't against the law among the Gentiles Paul wrote to when he told believers to avoid πορνεία either, telling us that πορνεία simply *can't* be referring to premarital sex on its own, at least not when it's used in Paul's epistles. Remember, he was primarily writing to Gentiles when he used that word, which means that whatever the Jewish uses of the word might have been at that time was mostly irrelevant in his epistles, outside of very specific cases where he referred to actions performed by certain Israelites as an example of forms of πορνεία to avoid when he used the word. Still, if one *does* dig into the Mosaic Law, they'll see that it wasn't ever spelled out as being illegal there either. While there were potential civil consequences for men who had

[1074] But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. — Ephesians 5:3-4

premarital sex with female virgins back in Bible times, depending on the context (note that there's no indication that premarital sex itself was considered to be a sin in Deuteronomy 22:28-29, for example[1075] – especially since the woman in question isn't actually punished at all, as she would have been if this passage was simply saying premarital sex is a sin, which it definitely doesn't state anywhere in the passage – and this is because it was referring to a property violation against the woman's father, since fathers would get less money for selling their daughters to husbands if the daughter wasn't a virgin; sadly, women were considered to be property in ancient cultures, including that of Israel, and were often basically sold from one "owner," her father, to a new "owner," her husband, through marriage), and a woman deceiving her husband into thinking that she was a virgin before marriage when she really wasn't could also result in harsh penalties, as Deuteronomy 22:13-21 tells us[1076] (since her husband would have paid more money for her if he believed she actually was a virgin, and you'll note that there's no penalty prescribed for the

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[1075] If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days. — Deuteronomy 22:28-29

[1076] If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. — Deuteronomy 22:13-21

man she lost her virginity to, since he hadn't necessarily sinned in sleeping with her), premarital sex on its own was *never* specifically forbidden or called sinful *anywhere* in the Hebrew Scriptures. Of course, premarital sex (or other forms of sex outside of marriage) technically *could* fall under the broad label of πορνεία in some parts of the world (and still can today), but it could (and can) only legitimately do so in regions where this actually was or is considered to be illegal (such as in parts of the Middle East today, for example). Outside of those more conservative regions of the planet, however, it wouldn't be considered to be wrong by the law and hence wouldn't be a sin to do so.

But that still raises the question, what sexual acts actually *would* be considered illicit when the word πορνεία was used in Scripture? Well, it would, of course, cover any of the specific sexual prohibitions that *actually were* mentioned in the Mosaic Law, or at least it would for those who were required to follow said law (i.e., members of the Israel of God):

None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord. The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her

nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord. Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. – Leviticus 18:6-23

And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them. If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you. And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it is a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity. And if a man shall lie with a woman having

her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness; he hath discovered her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people. And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, nor of thy father's sister: for he uncovereth his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity. And if a man shall lie with his uncle's wife, he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness: they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless. – Leviticus 20:10-21

And without even having to go any further, the passages I just quoted prove that premarital sex is not a sin all on their own, because if it were a sin, God wouldn't have had to have gone to the trouble of forbidding sex with animals – or even with other people's wives – since all He'd have to have said is, "Don't have sex with anyone you aren't married to," which is a commandment He never *actually* gave *anywhere* in Scripture. (I should also quickly point out that you won't find masturbation, enjoying the way someone's body looks, or fantasizing about someone in a sexual manner listed anywhere in that list of sexual prohibitions either, which is something important to keep in mind as well – and no, none of these things are what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 5:28,[1077] despite the fact that this is what most Christians have misinterpreted that verse to mean, but we'll get to the real meaning of that verse shortly.) The fact that God also never forbade men from having concubines, who were not wives but who were women that men had sex with, and in fact never once condemned the many men in the Bible who were considered to be righteous (relatively speaking) yet had concubines, also makes this quite clear, since sex with those concubines would have been "premarital" sex (or really "extramarital" sex, but that's basically what Christians mean when they refer to "premarital" sex, because otherwise they'd be okay with a divorcee having sex with someone they're not married to, since that sex would no longer be able to

[1077] But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. — Matthew 5:28

be classified as "premarital," at least for the divorcee). It also makes it obvious that Christians who claim having sex with someone means one is automatically married to that person haven't thought things through particularly well either, I should add, since concubines would have then been called "wives" in Scripture instead, if that was the case, considering the fact that God considered polygamy to be acceptable and men to legitimately be said to have multiple wives in the Bible.

As far as those of us in the body of Christ go, however (since we aren't under the Mosaic law the way those in the Israel of God are), while the word πορνεία *literally* means "illicit sexual intercourse," we have to look at context to determine what sort of sexual activity is being called illicit in Paul's epistles (and not just automatically jump to the conclusion that it's premarital sex being referred to, the way most Christians assume it is), and the Hebrew Scriptures actually do help us here because they reveal that it largely referred to sexual idolatry (meaning sleeping with temple – or cult – prostitutes) when Paul used the term, as demonstrated by 1 Corinthians 10:8[1078] where Paul used the word to

[1078] Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. — 1 Corinthians 10:8

refer back to the cult prostitutes of Moab mentioned in Numbers 25:1-9[1079] (who used sex as a part of worshipping other gods since, in Bible times, Satan used sex to lure people into idolatry, although, now that cult prostitution is basically no longer a thing, he now uses avoiding the forms of sexuality that conservative Christians disagree with as a new supposed "proof of righteousness" instead; and just to quickly get the supposed discrepancy between Paul's 23,000 in 1 Corinthians 10 and the 24,000 in Numbers 25 there out of the way, it's simply that Paul chose not to include the "heads of the people" of verse 4 who were hung – amounting to 1,000 people – but referenced only the 23,000 common people slain with the sword, as mentioned in verse 5). Paul presumably (or at least hopefully) would have also been speaking against the rape of the women forced to participate in temple prostitution in his time when he spoke against πορνεία,[1080] not just the idolatry aspect of it, but the connection to idolatry was a large, if not the largest, part of it.

That said, it could also be used in reference to sexual practices that actually were considered illicit by the culture in question, practices such as incest, for

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[1079] And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. — Numbers 25:1-9

[1080] *Translating Sex: Issues with the Translation of Sexual Terms in 1 Corinthians* by Roy E. Ciampa: https://www.viceregency.com/TranslatingSexPaper.pdf

example – which is an action that Paul was appalled to hear some of his Corinthian readers were participating in, being an action which even the heathen in their society at the time would not have allowed anyone to hear they'd done themselves – using the same Greek word.[1081] This particular instance of πορνεία also demonstrates quite conclusively that premarital sex was not considered to be a sin. If it were, the Corinthian believers would never have even considered letting things go this far; they would have stopped long before accepting, and seemingly even taking pride in,[1082] this relationship happening among their church members if Paul or anyone else had previously taught them that sex outside of marriage fell under the category of πορνεία-based sins, and he also apparently forgot to tell them it was a sin in this epistle as well when he was telling them to avoid such forms of πορνεία, so anyone who claims it is sinful is just eisegeting their own moralistic bias based on their preconceived religious traditions into their interpretation of the word πορνεία in this and other parts of Scripture rather than exegeting what Scripture actually means by the word.

Of course, some try to argue that Paul *did* tell them to avoid premarital sex a couple chapters later, when he wrote, *"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own*

[1081] It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. — 1 Corinthians 5:1

[1082] And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. — 1 Corinthians 5:2

husband," as a part of 1 Corinthians 7:1-7[1083] (or at least that's how the KJB translates verses 1 and 2), supposedly telling them to get married rather than have premarital sex, but that's not what he's actually trying to get at there at all. It would take a much longer study to get all the way into the full meaning of this chapter, but along with actually taking the context of the passage into consideration, there are also idioms in the original Greek text that aren't obvious if you're not aware of them[1084] (for instance, the phrase "not to touch" in the KJB was a translation of a figure of speech that literally meant "not to have sex with," at least when used in the context of this passage, and the word "have" was euphemistically referring to having sexual intercourse in that passage as well), so what Paul meant there was essentially: "Now, regarding what you wrote to me – where you said, 'It is ideal for a man to avoid having sex with a woman' – well, whether or not that's true, in order to avoid the temptation that would almost certainly arise to have sex with temple prostitutes instead, let every man continue having sex with the wife he's already married to, and let every woman continue having sex with the husband she's already married to as well." Basically, these verses were just talking about married Corinthian believers who had come to the conclusion that it would be more righteous or holy to avoid sexual intercourse with their spouses altogether (quite possibly because of outside Gnostic influences), but Paul warned them

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[1083] Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. — 1 Corinthians 7:1-7

[1084] *1 Corinthians 7:1 in the NIV* by Gordon D. Fee: https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/23/23-4/23-4-pp307-314_JETS.pdf

that they should not stop sleeping with their already existing spouses or they could end up inadvertently committing idolatry, as their biological urges would very likely lead the men to sleep with temple prostitutes instead (because they were the easiest people to find sex with aside from with one's spouse, since people generally didn't have romantic relationships back then as we do today; marriage was more of a business arrangement until very recently, so outside of marriage and adultery, the easiest and most common way for a man to have sex in that time and place was with a temple prostitute), and the women could even end up committing adultery. Yes, avoiding marriage is honourable if one can handle it (the reason for this isn't because sex is somehow dirty or less than righteous and something that should be avoided in general, however; it's simply because it helps one hold lightly to the things of this earth so they can focus solely on the things of God instead of the concerns of a spouse[1085]), but as the writer of Hebrews put it (even if this is a Circumcision writing, I doubt anyone would disagree that this is a trans-dispensational truth which applies to those under both Gospels), marriage (and sex in marriage) is just as honourable,[1086] and one shouldn't defile their marriage bed by sleeping with temple prostitutes or by committing adultery (both of which would be temptations if a married

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[1085] But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. — 1 Corinthians 7:29-35

[1086] Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. — Hebrews 13:4

couple stopped sleeping with each other in an attempt to keep each other and themselves pure).

So contrary to what most have been taught, Paul wasn't telling single people to find marriage partners rather than commit the supposed sin of having premarital sex in 1 Corinthians 7:1-7 at all (they generally didn't have boyfriends and girlfriends like we do today anyway, so the idea of unmarried, romantic "couples" having sex probably wouldn't have even crossed Paul's mind); the context of this chapter and the previous chapter makes it pretty clear that he was talking to people who were already married in the first seven verses, telling them that the husbands risked going to temple prostitutes if married couples stopped sleeping with each other (to be clear, it wasn't visiting sex workers that Paul was concerned with, but the fact that visiting the type of sex workers who would have generally been available in Corinth would result in idolatry since these were temple prostitutes, which would necessarily involve the men visiting them in worshipping other gods in the process; I'll go into a little more detail on this point shortly, but married men were, in fact, free to have sex with other women as long as it didn't result in some form of πορνεία-based sin or in adultery with an already married woman).

As for those who were once married and wished to remarry (even if Paul's advice in the next two verses might technically also be perfectly valid for those who *haven't* ever been married yet, the word "unmarried" in 1 Corinthians 7:8-9[1087] actually refers specifically to widowers, which – for those who aren't aware of the patterns in the Greek that makes this even more clear – should really be more obvious to more people than it seems to be, considering the fact that to say, "the unmarried and the widows," and to be referring to *everyone* who is currently unmarried, would be entirely redundant, making

[1087] I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. — 1 Corinthians 7:8-9

about as much sense as saying “the dogs and the beagles,” so obviously that can’t be what Paul meant; while there technically *is* a Greek word for “widower,” it doesn’t seem to have been used in the time period that Paul wrote this epistle – in fact, it appears that it was rarely used at all, even when it was used, at least from what I’ve learned in my studies – and instead the Greek word for people who were unmarried in general, ἄγαμος/“ag'-am-os,” seems to have been used in its place at that time, and if Paul *was* simply referring to those who have never been married when he used that word, then widowers would have been left out of this instruction, and if he’d instead been using it to include both those who have never been married *and* widowers, he then wouldn’t have used the term “widow” in the verse as well, so the only logical way to interpret this passage is as meaning “the widowers and the widows,” which is confirmed by the patterns in the original Greek anyway), while he’d prefer for them to remain unmarried like him rather than get re-married (in fact, while it’s not conclusive, the phrase *“it is good for them if they abide even as I”* in the verse is quite possibly a hint that Paul himself was a widower, especially since it was considered shameful for a Pharisee – which Paul had been previously – to have never married by the age of 20), so they can focus on the things of the Lord rather than on a spouse, he does still say that getting re-married is better for them than burning with whatever desire he was referring to there if they can’t control said desire. As for *what* sort of desire he was referring to there, it seems likely that he would have simply been referring to the desire to get re-married, although it could be that he thought those who had been married previously would have *more* desire for continued sexual intercourse than those who had never been married and that they would seek it out from temple prostitutes if they didn’t find new marriage partners to sleep with. But either way, since sex outside of marriage hadn’t actually been condemned anywhere else in Scripture prior to his writing this epistle, at least as long as it wasn’t illegal or idolatrous, and since there’s no reason to believe that Paul would have been suddenly adding a new sin that had *never* been mentioned previously in Scripture to the list of already existing sins mentioned there, he clearly wasn’t simply saying that

sex outside of marriage is a sin in this passage. And as far as those of us in this day and age go, at least here in the western world, there are other ways for widows and widowers to have sex without resorting to visiting temple prostitutes, although if they *are* "burning" to get re-married, they certainly should consider that option (but either way, people who were never married aren't even being spoken to in verses 8 and 9, nor are they told elsewhere to marry rather than have sex outside of marriage, so there's no reason to believe there's something wrong with *them* having sex before marriage either).

Of course, in addition to these more literal interpretations of πορνεία, there was also a figurative meaning to the Greek word (and its Hebrew equivalents in the Hebrew Scriptures), having nothing to do with physical sex at all, but simply being a metaphor referring to outright idolatry. The one thing it and זָנָה *never* meant in Scripture, however, is simply "premarital sex" on its own, or at least by now it should be obvious that there's quite literally zero scriptural basis for claiming they did (which means there's no basis for the claim that "fornication" – or "sexual immorality" – means "premarital sex" in our English Bible translations of these words either), despite the fact that your parents and pastor might prefer you believed they did. Of course, they likely only think they want you to. If they understood just how many STDs and unwanted pregnancies this teaching is responsible for, they might change their minds (unless they're the vindictive sort who want those they consider to be sinners to be punished physically for defying their rules; sadly, there are Christians out there with this mentality). The idea that premarital sex is sinful causes many parents to actively make sure their kids don't learn about protection and birth control, but since pretty much an equal number of Christians have premarital sex as non-Christians (the religious can't fight nature and biology any more than the rest of the world can), only without any knowledge of how to minimize the potential risks, young people in conservative areas or with religious parents tend to end

up with more diseases[1088] and unwanted pregnancies[1089] than those who don't, and if you're going to judge a doctrine or religious teacher by its or their fruit, it's easy to see that the conservative Christian view on premarital sex is rotten to the core.

Even with everything we just covered, though, many Christians will still try to defend their indefensible claims about premarital sex, by pointing us towards Jesus' comment about "lust" and "committing adultery in one's heart" in Matthew 5:28,[1090] attempting to convince us that this makes premarital sex sinful by default since you wouldn't have sex without sexual desire (they like to use this argument to condemn masturbation and pornography too). However, because so few understand the difference between the teachings relevant to the body of Christ vs the teachings relevant to the Israel of God, not to mention what Scripture says in its original languages, they don't realize that He was actually speaking about something else altogether in that passage from what most people assume. In fact, when you discover what "lust" really refers to in Scripture you'll realize that it's actually often encouraged, and that it's also time to reconsider your thoughts on pornography as a general concept as well.

To put it plainly, to "lust," in Scripture (with ἐπιθυμέω/"ep-ee-thoo-meh'-o" being the verb form of the word in Greek, and ἐπιθυμία/"ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah" being the noun, as well as חָמַד/"khaw-mad'" being the Hebrew verb), doesn't simply mean to have sexual attraction to someone the way that most people who read

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[1088] *How Abstinence-Only Sex Ed Is Driving Up STD Rates* by Jenelle Marie: https://www.yahoo.com/news/abstinence-only-sex-ed-driving-std-rates-203137849.html

[1089] *The States With the Highest Teenage Birth Rates Have One Thing in Common* by Matt Essert: https://www.mic.com/articles/98886/the-states-with-the-highest-teenage-birth-rates-have-one-thing-in-common

[1090] But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. — Matthew 5:28

this word assume it does, but is rather a synonym for coveting something,[1091] or strongly desiring to own or obtain something or someone, and sometimes lusting/desiring is a good thing (the Lord's statutes and judgements are to be lusted for/desired more than gold,[1092] and even Jesus "lusted/desired" according to Luke 22:15[1093] – with these passages both using those Hebrew and Greek words I just mentioned – and Paul himself, in fact, encouraged ἐπιθυμέω at times as well, such as in 1 Timothy 3:1,[1094] for example; simply put, there's nothing about sexuality inherent in these Hebrew and Greek words that are sometimes translated as "lust" in Scripture, even though they *can* refer to a strong desire to obtain someone sexually, of course, depending on the context of the passage they're included in). What Scripture *does* condemn when it comes to lust is desiring to take something that already "belongs" (so to speak) to someone else, such as someone else's property (or wife, since, again, women were considered to be men's property back then, unfortunately), which is what the 10th Commandment is all about. But to "lust" in the modern sense of the word, meaning to enjoy the way someone looks, or even to fantasize sexually about someone, isn't what is being criticized when ἐπιθυμέω actually is spoken against in Scripture; intent to take someone else's "property" without permission also needs to be there for the coveting to be wrong (otherwise, accepting something you desire as a gift, or even finding your own spouse sexually appealing, would

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[1091] What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. — Romans 7:7

[1092] The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. — Psalm 19:7-10

[1093] And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: — Luke 22:15

[1094] This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. — 1 Timothy 3:1

also technically be wrong). So for ἐπιθυμέω over a woman to be considered "committing adultery in one's heart," in addition to needing to have intent to actually possess her (meaning the man in question would have to intend to follow through with the act if he could), she would have to also belong to someone else already, which is, thankfully, not possible in the western world today since women are no longer considered to be property. And, of course, that passage only applied to Israelites, and even then only to some of them (it was a part of the Sermon on the Mount, which was all about elaborating upon the Mosaic law, something that never applied to Gentiles, and doesn't apply to Jews saved under Paul's Gospel either, so even if Jesus did mean what most Christians assume He did here, it wouldn't apply to most people anyway).

But even if those saved under the Gospel of the Uncircumcision did somehow fall under this particular point in Jesus' sermon (which they don't, but for the sake of argument, let's pretend they do), the word "adultery" in that passage really tells us everything we need to know about the context of the passage. By definition, a man (even a married man, which should be obvious based on the fact that Scripture allows for Jewish men to have concubines) couldn't "commit adultery" with a woman who wasn't married (or at least betrothed) back then, since in Bible times the word translated as "adultery" in our English Bibles (μοιχεύω/"moy-khyoo'-o" in the original Greek, and נָאַף/"naw-af'" in the original Hebrew) didn't have the same meaning as the English word "adultery" does today, and was actually a property violation rather than a purity violation back then[1095] (as is also demonstrated by the fact that Jesus didn't condemn women for lusting after men in that verse,[1096] sexually or otherwise, because it wasn't possible for a woman to do so in the biblical sense of the word, since a wife was always the property of a husband and never the other way around at that time,

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[1095] *Biblical Discussion of Adultery* by Dave of Liberated Christians, Inc.: https://www.libchrist.com/bible/adultery.html

[1096] But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. — Matthew 5:28

and hence a woman couldn't own a man through marriage; so if this verse actually *was* a condemnation of "lust" in the manner we use the word today, it would mean that only men could commit this sin, but that women could lust after men without sinning, which obviously makes no sense, telling us that it can only be referring to what I just explained, especially since there was never any condemnation of "lusting" in the modern sense of the word by either men *or* women *anywhere* in the Hebrew Scriptures). In fact, while "adultery" by its modern, English definition is certainly possible to commit (and is something one shouldn't do, since it isn't a loving action), it's quite impossible for anyone today in the western world to commit adultery in the manner the Bible uses the term, because women are no longer considered to be property. So no Gentile (or Israelite in the body of Christ) has to worry about even accidentally committing this particular sin here in the western world – or anywhere else that women are no longer considered to be property – today. (And just as a quick but related aside, this also means that in most parts of the world today, married couples with "open marriages" technically aren't committing the sin of μοιχεύω either, since the wives in a modern marriage aren't "owned" by their husbands, and so as long as it's completely consensual for everyone, and also not against the secular law where they live, of course, there's no scriptural reason to say it's forbidden.)

Few Christians seem to remember, especially when reading passages about sexuality and lust, that it's extremely important to interpret a passage of Scripture using the definitions of the time it was written rather than basing our interpretations on modern definitions of English words (using modern definitions rather than the definition of a word at the time it was written is how we ended up with all of the confused and unscriptural doctrines of the Christian religion we've been discussing throughout this book in the first place). It's also important to remember that, prior to this sermon by Jesus, neither sexual fantasy nor enjoying the way someone looks (sexually speaking) had ever been condemned anywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures (or anywhere else in the

Greek Scriptures either, for that matter; and before someone brings up Job 31:1,[1097] they need to remember that this was spoken during his defence of his self-righteousness, which isn't an example anyone should be bragging that they're following, especially since Job's personal decision there wasn't based on any rule laid out anywhere in Scripture anyway), as I just mentioned. When one realizes all this, it becomes apparent that Jesus wasn't creating a new law for Israelites to follow (or informing them of a sin that God had somehow forgotten to inform them of until that point), but was simply expanding on a rule His audience was already familiar with (the 10th Commandment), pointing out that for a Jewish male to covet his neighbour's wife with the intention of actually having her would basically be the equivalent of breaking the 7th Commandment[1098] as well, but there's absolutely no reason to believe He was even hinting that finding other people sexually appealing, or admiring their bodies (or even fantasizing about them) was at all wrong.

In fact, those who do try to force sexual desire out of their (and others') lives are actually demonstrating a symptom of a far more pernicious form of lust than any mentioned already, one which affects (and infects) Christianity to a fatal degree. This, of course, would be the religious lust[1099] known as self-righteousness.[1100] So if a religious leader tries to convince others that simple sexual attraction and fantasy (or even premarital sex) is sinful, it would be wise to question any and *all* of their teachings, since they're demonstrating how little they likely know about Scripture. Of course, another reason that religious conservatives are so opposed to "lust" (and anything even related to premarital

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[1097] I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? — Job 31:1

[1098] Thou shalt not commit adultery. — Exodus 20:14

[1099] *The truth about sexual lust; Part 13. — Religious Lust, Part 1* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF6.24.pdf

[1100] *The truth about sexual lust; Part 14. — Religious Lust, Part 2* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF6.25.pdf

sex) is simply basic erotophobia. Thanks to the harmful purity culture that conservative Christianity has inflicted upon the world,[1101] too many people grow up with the idea that sexuality (anything from simple sexual desire to any form of sexual activity itself) is inherently dirty and shameful. Most Christians will deny this and claim that sexual thoughts and acts are only "dirty" or sinful when they're outside the context of a monogamous, heterosexual marriage, but aside from misunderstanding what the Bible says about sexuality in the first place, they also don't realize just how deeply the effects of purity culture have rooted into their subconscious, eventually blossoming into full-blown erotophobia, which in turn forces them to have to believe that their misinterpretations of Scripture are true because anything else could allow the sexuality they so fear to enter their lives.

It's also important to keep in mind that something generally has to be spelled out as a sin in the Hebrew Scriptures or else it's very unlikely to actually be a sin. Neither Jesus nor Paul (nor anyone else writing any of the Greek Scriptures, for that matter) were adding new sins to the list of sins when they wrote or spoke about these topics, nor were they revealing actions that were actually always sinful but which weren't recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures (if they were, that would mean the Israelites under the Mosaic law had no way of knowing what was *actually* expected of them until these new sins were first revealed – long after the giving of the law or even the writing of the final book of the Hebrew Scriptures – and that God didn't tell them how to truly avoid all sins until that time), so these passages in the Greek Scriptures have to be interpreted in light of what came before (and while the cultural context at the time does need to be considered as well, aside from the fact that Paul wouldn't have been adding new actions to the definition in the first place, especially not without explaining exactly what the precise actions were and why they were

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[1101] *Purity culture harmed thousands of evangelical teens; what did the Church get wrong about sex?* by Leah MarieAnn Klett: https://www.christianpost.com/news/purity-culture-harmed-thousands-of-evangelical-teens-what-did-the-church-get-wrong-about-sex.html

sinful, it's not like premarital sex was considered wrong by the Gentile culture of those he was writing to anyway, so there's literally no reason to assume it was suddenly being included in the definition of πορνεία in Paul's epistles). And since the Hebrew Scriptures didn't call premarital sex a sin, but did call idolatrous sex and incest sins, it stands to reason that one or more of these have to be what Paul was actually talking about (especially since, for Paul to suddenly add new sins that had never been included in the definition of the word πορνεία into its definition would mean he'd have to be very careful to explain what these new sins are, exactly, that were now being included in its definition, if he expected anyone to understand that these actions were *now* considered to fall under its definition and be sinful, which Christians have to admit is something he didn't do in any of his epistles, since there's no verse anywhere in Scripture where Paul says, "premarital sex is included in the list of actions referred to as πορνεία"). Likewise, Jesus said that His yoke is easy and His burden is light,[1102] and since we know that A) "lusting" the way religious conservatives interpret the word (enjoying the way someone looks, and even fantasizing about them sexually) had never been condemned in the Hebrew Scriptures, and B) there's no way that avoiding "lusting" in the manner that today's religious conservatives understand the concept could ever be considered to be easy, or a burden that is light in any way whatsoever (anyone who isn't asexual or doesn't have a hormonal imbalance – and no judgement to anyone who is or does – who is being truly honest with themselves knows I'm right), it has to mean something other than what most people assume (which it does, as I've already covered). And yes, I realize that Jesus' statement there was technically to the Israel of God, not the body of Christ, but if His yoke is easy for them, just think about how much easier it must be for those of us who aren't under the Mosaic law at all.

[1102] Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. — Matthew 11:28-30

This also means that those who try to avoid – as well as try to convince others that they need to avoid – their completely normal biological drives are trying to ignore not only what Scripture actually teaches, but the natural instincts God gave us as well, and this is why those who teach the conservative religious perspectives on lust and sexuality are the true perverts, since they're perverting the natural desires God gave us by trying to avoid them, as well as perverting what Scripture actually says about these desires and the actions related to them.

Now, there's a lot more that can be said about this complex topic (and I recommend digging more into it for yourself to learn other details that I didn't get into here[1103]), but the bottom line is that there's literally no scriptural reason to assume that consensual sexual relations between an unmarried couple today – as long as no worship of other deities is involved, and it isn't actually illegal where they live – is wrong, or that any of the actions connected with what most Christians today think of as "lust" are wrong either, and anyone who tells you otherwise is guilty of reading their assumptions, and even perverted desires in some cases, into Scripture.

Premarital sex and lust aren't the only activities that religious leaders incorrectly consider to be immoral and have insisted that people shouldn't participate in, however. There are so many other traditional religious ideas about supposed sins that aren't actually in the Bible but which you've no doubt been told you must abstain from – not to mention actions that they say are sinful to *avoid* participating in – as well. I'm not going to get into all of them, but I'll cover some of the most common actions they talk about throughout the rest of this chapter.

Perhaps the action that is most connected with what we've just gone over has to do with the commonly misunderstood word "modesty." As you know, most

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[1103] *PORNEIA: The Making of a Christian Sexual Norm* by Kyle Harper: https://www.academia.edu/1368753/PORNEIA_The_Making_of_a_Christian_Sexual_Norm

Christians assume that revealing too much skin or the outline of one's body is both immodest and a sin. Biblical modesty, however, is the opposite of vanity, not nudity. Nudity was extremely common in Bible times, yet never called a sin in the Bible. God did not condemn Adam and Eve for being naked (in fact He created them naked and saw them as being "very good,"[1104] and if nudity wasn't inherently sinful before the fall then there's no reason to claim it suddenly became sinful after the fall), but rather asked them who told them they were naked after they sinned and realized they were. He didn't say, "Oh no, your nakedness has been exposed! How could this have happened?!" (He made them that way and left them to enjoy the garden in that state, so it would have been strange to suddenly consider their nudity to be wrong just because they'd sinned when He didn't consider it to be wrong a moment prior to their sin.) The reason they sewed and put on clothing was because they were suddenly ashamed, not because they were suddenly naked (and the reason God made new clothes for them out of animal skins[1105] was because the dead animals covering them were a type of Christ covering sin, not because they suddenly needed clothing – they already had clothing at that point, after all[1106]).

The truth is that sin distorts our perceptions and makes people feel ashamed of their bodies, just as it makes them feel guilt and shame over all sorts of innocent things. Puritanism over our physical bodies is not a scriptural virtue, but it is a form of gnostic dualism, which is enough to tell us we should be avoiding that

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[1104] And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. — Genesis 1:31

[1105] Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. — Genesis 3:21

[1106] And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. — Genesis 3:7

kind of prudishness. In fact, God even sent Isaiah out to prophesy naked,[1107] so obviously nudity just can't be considered sinful or else God would have been commanding Isaiah to sin. Modesty is still important, but it's about not showing off wealth, position, or power rather than about not showing skin or curves. When Paul called for women in the church called the body of Christ to dress modestly, he meant to dress *"with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."*[1108] It had nothing to do with their bodies and everything to do with their attitudes. Basically, he was telling them not to wear fancy outfits that would make them appear more important than those who weren't able to appear as wealthy as them. Similarly, Peter wrote to the church called the Israel of God telling them that they should not let their adorning be *"outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."*[1109] Nobody in their time would have looked twice at somebody showing a bit of skin, or even at being completely naked, and Scripture certainly didn't condemn it, so neither should we. But the Bible *is* clear that we should not try to make ourselves look better or more

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[1107] At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. — Isaiah 20:2-4

[1108] In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. — 1 Timothy 2:9-10

[1109] Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. — 1 Peter 3:3-4

important than those around us with expensive clothing and lavish hairdos, so true modesty (which is based on humility) is something we should certainly aim for. And as for the concern that not dressing like a prude might cause men to lust, we've already covered what "lust" really means, and that the idea of "lust," as religious conservatives understand the concept, isn't actually a problem at all. So if someone tries to use that argument, they really need to read this book and learn that for themselves so they can finally abstain from their perverted assumptions about modesty.

This all means that there's no basis for the idea of pornography and masturbation being sinful either, contrary to what many Christians claim. If God was okay with people being naked in public, viewing naked people couldn't be a sin either, even on paper or on a screen, and we already know that there's no command against fantasizing sexually about someone, since the form of "lust" that Jesus condemned had nothing to do with that at all, as we've now learned. And there's nothing in Scripture condemning masturbation either (no, the sin of Onan wasn't masturbation, but was just not providing his dead brother's wife with a child as God specifically commanded him to do,[1110] and which was later

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[1110] And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him. And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him. And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord: wherefore he slew him also. — Genesis 38:1-10

also required under the Mosaic law[1111] – a law the body of Christ is not under), so the idea that either of these things are sinful is just more extrabiblical conservative puritanism. In fact, not only is masturbation harmless, it's actually good for one's health.[1112] And it's definitely the safest form of sex, so Christian leaders should really be recommending it, along with pornography to assist with it for those who find porn useful for such purposes (especially because multiple studies[1113] have demonstrated that where porn usage increases, instances of rape and other forms of sexual violence actually decrease[1114]). And I know some Christians will point to Romans 13:14, which says, *"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."* But if we're going to apply this to actions that aren't actually condemned as sinful anywhere in Scripture, this would really have to apply equally to *anything* one finds physically pleasurable (from watching a sunset to playing games to even eating a tasty meal that one enjoys), so limiting that verse to things which actually are sinful is the only way to go if we want to avoid descending into absurdity and even harmful cult-like behaviour.

Another very common assertion by conservative Christians is that being gay (or being a homosexual) is forbidden in the Bible, but the truth is, Scripture says nothing about the topic of being gay at all. That might seem like a strange

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[1111] If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. — Deuteronomy 25:5

[1112] *What Religion Gets Wrong About Masturbation* by Phil Zuckerman: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-secular-life/202010/what-religion-gets-wrong-about-masturbation

[1113] *How the Web Prevents Rape* by Steven E. Landsburg: https://slate.com/culture/2006/10/proof-that-internet-porn-prevents-rape.html

[1114] *More Porn, Less Rape? The Controversy Revisited* by Michael Castleman: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/all-about-sex/201707/more-porn-less-rape-the-controversy-revisited

statement, since I'm sure you can think of plenty of verses which you believe talk about the topic, but like many of the things discussed in this book, this is an assumption based on a misconception. Remember, "homosexuality," or "being gay," is simply the state of being attracted (sexually and/or romantically) solely to others of the same sex as oneself, and doesn't inherently have anything to do with actually having sexual intercourse with someone of the same sex at all, or even touching them in a romantic or sexual manner, for that matter (someone who is gay might never have sex with anyone of the same sex, and someone who is heterosexual or bisexual very well might; in fact, I've been told that a lot of gay porn is actually filmed with straight actors, who do it not because they have any attraction whatsoever to people of the same sex, but rather do it for the money), and simply being attracted to somebody isn't a sin, in and of itself (even if all forms of same-sex relations *were* sinful, being tempted is not a sin, since even Jesus was tempted and He never sinned,[1115] and the fact remains that sexual attraction to people of the same sex was *never* condemned in the Bible anyway, whether or not being sexual in any way with someone of the same sex actually was). That said, as far as same-sex relations go, the absolute most one could possibly argue is that the Hebrew Scriptures *might* forbid anal sex between males outside the context of rape and/or idolatrous prostitution (which is always wrong, and is quite possibly what's actually being forbidding, according to many scholars, although there are other possible interpretations of the passages generally interpreted as forbidding it too[1116]), but even if so, this would only apply to those who are under the Mosaic law, since the Hebrew Scriptures are the only part of the Bible where it *might* have forbidden it on its own outside the context of rape and/or idolatry; it's never forbidden on its own anywhere in the Greek Scriptures, as I'll discuss shortly.

[1115] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. — Hebrews 4:15

[1116] *Leviticus and Paul on Homosexuality* by Andrew P.: https://universalistheretic.blogspot.com/2022/11/leviticus-and-paul-on-homosexuality.html

And regardless of whether it actually does forbid anal sex between men or not, it doesn't say anything about love, romantic relationships, or any *other* forms of sexuality between males. Because, presuming it actually is simply referring to sexual intercourse between men on its own, and isn't referring to temple prostitution or something else altogether the way many believe it is, the passage about a man lying with another man in Leviticus 18:22[1117] could then have *only* been referring to anal sex between men and nothing more. For those who disagree with me here, though, if *other* forms of sexuality between people of the same sex – such as oral sex, for example – were *also* sins, there would have then *also* been a verse in that chapter forbidding women from participating in sexual acts with other women as well. And since there isn't, there's literally no good reason to believe it's including *other* sexual (or even simply romantic) acts between men either (although the fact that the Bible never forbids *heterosexual* anal sex also suggests that there isn't anything wrong with the act in and of itself, which lends support to the idea that it isn't wrong for men to do it with other men either, telling us that one of the alternative interpretations of Leviticus 18:22 is *also* far more likely to be correct as well). In fact, the Bible never actually says anything *anywhere* about romantic love and/or sexual activity between females and other females. The passage in the book of Romans

[1117] Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. — Leviticus 18:22

about idolatry which many mistakenly use to argue against homosexuality[1118] can't actually be condemning women lying with other women the way many believe it is. Instead, it's most likely referring to women having sex with animals (an action which actually *was* forbidden in the Hebrew Scriptures[1119]) when the context of worshipping the creature in that passage is taken into consideration – although some argue that it instead refers to women participating in a certain sort of shrine prostitution,[1120] which is also possible, but either way, the idea of women being sexual and/or romantic with other women hadn't ever been forbidden in Scripture. You see, since the prohibitions in the Hebrew Scriptures that most people think literally forbid men from lying with other men don't include women in the passages, all while being next to other rules which *do* forbid women from specific sexual actions, even if the commandment in

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[1118] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. — Romans 1:21-32

[1119] Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. — Leviticus 18:23

[1120] *Does Romans 1:26 condemn lesbians?* by Rick Brentlinger: https://www.gaychristian101.com/does-romans-126-condemn-lesbians.html

Leviticus 18:22 *did* mean what most Christians assume that it does, it simply can't be applied to both sexes without ignoring important hermeneutical principles, which means there's no justification for claiming it was all of a sudden being forbidden by Paul in Romans either (again, Paul didn't make up new sins that were never previously mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures). And, of course, there's also the fact that the sexual actions mentioned in this passage in Romans were actually referring to negative *consequences* rather than to prohibitions. Paul's point in this passage wasn't that he was telling people to avoid certain sexual sins, but rather that the sin of idolatry would lead certain people to certain negative consequences, such as straight men performing acts which went against their actual *heterosexual* nature (or more likely led – past tense – them to do so, quite possibly referring to "sacred orgies" which included intercourse performed in worship of other gods in "Old Testament" times). Either way, though, anyone who makes the claim that romantic and/or sexual relationships between women are sinful is *actually* the person who is sinning – not to mention anyone who condemns romantic and/or sexual relationships between men which *don't* include anal sex, and even condemning that act is probably just as wrong – because they're guilty of adding their own assumptions and rules to Scripture the way that the Pharisees did during Jesus' earthly ministry, and that's not something which *anyone* should be doing[1121]

[1121] Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. — Mark 7:1-9

(sadly, certain members of the body of Christ have carried some of their conservative, religious prejudices from their time as members of the Christian religion with them into the body of Christ when it comes to this and other issues related to sexuality, continuing to copy the Pharisees in this manner exactly as "orthodox" Christians do, but hopefully any of them who read this book have now learned to reject their previous religious ways completely and follow *only* what Scripture teaches for their doctrine).

As far as the rest of the passages in the Greek Scriptures that people normally use to argue against same-sex relations go, those passages are also terribly misunderstood. I'm not going to get into all the details here (although others have done a good job of digging deeper on the subject, so I recommend looking at some of their studies on the topic[1122]), but when Paul wrote about same-sex relations in his other epistles, it's very likely only idolatrous prostitution between males that he's specifically condemning (much like the πορνεία issue between men and women was in many cases when he wrote against it). Most Bible versions say things like, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind ... shall inherit the kingdom of God."*[1123] That translation from the KJB makes it somewhat confusing if you aren't aware of the Greek words it's translated from, since the word "fornicators" there is πόρνος/"por'-nos" in the Greek, referring simply to a man who has illicit sex with a woman, specifically a man who has sex with a female temple prostitute (a πόρνη/"por'-nay" in the Greek) in this particular

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[1122] *The Bible, Christianity and Homosexuality* by Justin Cannon: https://www.gaychurch.org/homosexuality-and-the-bible/the-bible-christianity-and-homosexuality

[1123] Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. — 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

case, based on the context of the latter part of the chapter[1124] (the context of a passage is always extremely important to consider when trying to determine the meaning of a part of Scripture, or even of a specific word within it), which is men committing idolatry and worshipping other deities by joining themselves with a temple prostitute (or a "harlot," which is what the KJB translates the word πόρνη as). With that in mind, and based on the fact that sexual intercourse on its own was never forbidden between unmarried men and women, apart from specific circumstances primarily involving idolatry, as we just learned (which tells us there's basically no reason to assume there's something wrong with sex between men and other men either; and definitely not between women and other women, which I trust you've noticed is *not* a situation mentioned in this passage, a passage that is *very* specific about which gender – or at least which sex – a person committing each sexual sin listed in it is, as is made particularly evident in the original Greek: while certain types of male/female and male/male relations are condemned in it, female/female relations aren't even *hinted* at, and they certainly *would* have been mentioned here if they actually *were* forbidden), it stands to reason that the two Greek words which are used for same-sex relations between men in this passage are also referring to an idolatrous form of same-sex relations between men. When we again consider the context of the rest of the chapter, it suggests that the two words are almost certainly referring to temple prostitution, just like πόρνος and πόρνη are. The first word is μαλακός/"mal-ak-os'," likely referring, at least in this case, to a male temple prostitute (the word can technically be used to mean other forms of same-sex relations as well, which is likely why it was translated as "effeminate" in the KJB, but based on the context of the passage it seems

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[1124] What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. — 1 Corinthians 6:16-20

pretty likely to be what Paul meant when he used the word in his epistles), and the second word being ἀρσενοκοίτης/"ar-sen-ok-oy'-tace," which the KJB rendered as "abusers of themselves with mankind," and is a word some people believe that Paul actually had to make up (it doesn't appear to occur in any Greek writings prior to Paul's use of it in his epistles, at least none from before that time have been discovered that I'm aware of as of the time this book was first written) because there didn't seem to be an equivalent word to πόρνος for a man who slept specifically with male temple prostitutes (and those who want to argue that, because the compound word ἀρσενοκοίτης is made up of two Greek words which, when placed next to each other in a sentence, would mean something along the lines of "man-bedders," euphemistically speaking, it *must* simply refer to "men who have sexual relations with one another" – despite the fact that there were already existing Greek words Paul could have used instead rather than making one up – have to *also* believe that the insect we call a butterfly is actually either a stick of butter that flies or a fly made out of butter, based on the same logic). So, to break it down, I would argue that a πόρνος would almost certainly be a male who sleeps with female temple prostitutes in Paul's epistles, a πόρνη would be said female temple prostitute, an ἀρσενοκοίτης would likely be a male who sleeps with male temple prostitutes, and a μαλακός would then be said male temple prostitute. Bottom line: it seems to make sense that it's all about committing idolatry, and doesn't seem to have anything to do with simple sexual desire or same-sex relations outside of temple prostitution and the worship of other deities (at least in the Bible; knowing how some of these words might have been used outside of Scripture can be helpful, but considering consistent context – not only of the specific section a word is used in, but of Scripture as a whole – can be even more important when it comes to biblical interpretation, since words can mean different things in different parts of Scripture, as well as mean different things from the way they were used outside of Scripture at times too). Even if someone does decide to ignore all of the above, however, they should be warned that Scripture is very clear that it's the anti-gay conservatives who are actually guilty of "the sin of

Sodom"[1125] (which, contrary to the popular misunderstanding of the term, had nothing[1126] to do with homosexuality[1127] at all[1128]) today, and I wouldn't want to be in the shoes of these religious conservatives at the final judgement. Even if only indirectly, homophobic (not to mention transphobic) conservatives are responsible for a large number of homeless youth,[1129] as well as for numerous suicides,[1130] not to mention all the assaults against, and even murders of, people who are different from them when it comes to their sexuality (and even their gender identity), and pretty much each and every conservative (whether they're religious or not) is going to have to answer for their culpability in these horrors when they're standing at the Great White Throne Judgement. Because even if they're only indirectly responsible, they all still have a responsibility for all of this suffering nonetheless.

What about gay marriage, though? Even if the Bible is actually okay with people being gay, as we can now see is the case, didn't God declare marriage to only be between one man and one woman? Well, while the context of the passage

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[1125] Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. — Ezekiel 16:49-50

[1126] *What Was the Real Sin of Sodom?* by Patrick S. Cheng: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-was-the-real-sin-of_b_543996

[1127] *The Sin of Sodom: A Study in Homophobic Interpretation* by Andrew P.: https://universalistheretic.blogspot.com/2022/11/the-sin-of-sodom-study-in-homophobic.html

[1128] *Anti-gay Evangelicals admit the Sodom story is NOT about homosexuality* by Rick Brentlinger: https://www.gaychristian101.com/Sodom.html

[1129] *Homeless rates for LGBT teens are alarming, but parents can make a difference* by Jaimie Seaton: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2017/03/29/homeless-rates-for-lgbt-teens-are-alarming-heres-how-parents-can-change-that

[1130] *Homosexuality and Suicide: LGBTQIA+ Suicide Is a Serious Issue* by Natasha Tracy: https://www.healthyplace.com/gender/glbt-mental-health/homosexuality-and-suicide-lgbt-suicide-a-serious-issue

typically used to defend this idea was technically about divorce,[1131] one could still perhaps say that this is the *ideal* when it comes to marriage, at least from a spiritual perspective. The reason for this is because marriage between a man and his wife was meant to eventually be used for typology, though, to picture Christ and His body (even if this mystery, meaning secret, wasn't known until Paul revealed it to the body of Christ[1132]).

This form of marriage being used as typology doesn't mean that *other* forms of marriage aren't considered acceptable to God, however. Nearly every Christian I've met is well aware of the fact that polygamy and other forms of non-monogamy *were* considered to be an acceptable practice for people by God in the Bible, with the possible exception of local church overseers/elders (which are referred to as bishops in the KJB[1133]) and deacons[1134] (although there's good

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[1131] The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. — Matthew 19:3-6

[1132] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. — Ephesians 5:25-33

[1133] A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; — 1 Timothy 3:2

[1134] Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. — 1 Timothy 3:12

reason to believe that the passages about "bishops" and deacons are actually just saying that an elder or deacon should have at least one wife – meaning they should not be single – not that they can't have more than one wife, but I'm not going to get into that debate here, and will leave it up to you to dig deeper into that argument if you're curious about it). God even told David that if he had wanted more wives, rather than taking someone else's wife, he should have just asked God for more,[1135] and if polygamy is a sin, it means that God would have been offering to help David sin, which is not something God would have done.

And so, if God considered a form of marriage *other* than monogamous marriage to be acceptable – even if perhaps not the ideal – and since we now also know that homosexuality is not a sin in and of itself, we can surmise that God doesn't seem to be *too* concerned with whether a marriage *is* the ideal form mentioned by Jesus and Paul in those passages we just looked at or not. So, even if you don't personally agree with gay marriage because it isn't a traditional form of marriage practiced in Bible times, at the very least we can't argue against it because it isn't the ideal form of marriage. Besides, even if you don't believe gay marriage *is* a true form of spiritual marriage (if there even is such a thing), if it's legal where one lives, it *is* still a *legal* marriage, so I believe you can still go celebrate the love and commitment of those getting married to someone of the same sex if you want to.

But bottom line, those religious conservatives who claim they're fighting to promote "traditional marriage" really aren't. If they were, they'd be promoting polygamy at the very least,[1136] since it was a very traditional form of marriage in Bible times too, and was one that God allowed for, as we've now learned. (And I

[1135] And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. — 2 Samuel 12:8

[1136] *The Truth of Polygamy — A Brief Presentation* by Brian R. Kelson: https://studyshelf.com/BSN/Issues/bsn746.pdf#page=3

should add, if monogamy was actually natural, cheating wouldn't be so common in so many relationships – yes, even in Christian relationships.) Besides, we also now know that marriage in Bible times was more about ownership of a woman than it was about love or partnership the way it is today, so technically (and thankfully) almost *no* marriage that anyone participates in today (at least here in the western world) qualifies as a so-called "biblical" (by which I mean a form of marriage that isn't actually condemned in the Bible) – or traditional – marriage anyway.

Whether a Christian sees this next prohibition as sinful depends a lot on where one lives, but many Christians believe that swearing is indeed a sin as well, and at the very least, many of them will say that *"evil communications corrupt good manners"*[1137] in order to discourage the practice. The only thing that looking down on profanity does, however, is demonstrate what an unspiritual (and likely hypocritical) snob one is.[1138] I'm not going to exegete all the passages in the Bible about language, though I will quickly point out that saying "oh, my God" isn't taking the Lord's name in vain, since "God" isn't even close to being the Lord's name (His actual name is Jehovah, at least as it's been transliterated in English[1139]), but is actually just a title, similar to the title of "President" (and the commandment in question[1140] – which is technically a part of the 10 Commandments, and as such isn't directed to the body of Christ anyway, although taking the Lord's name in vain is still good to avoid doing – isn't even talking about profanity; it's basically referring to perjury after swearing not to

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[1137] Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. — 1 Corinthians 15:33

[1138] *The Case of Cussing Christians — An unapologetic look into God's opinion of what constitutes vile language* by Martin Zender: https://www.martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF2.15.pdf

[1139] And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. — Exodus 6:3

[1140] Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. — Exodus 20:7

while using the Lord's name in your oath). Instead I'll point out the hypocrisy, not to mention haughtiness, of having trouble with profanity. All profanity means is "outside the temple," i.e., anything that isn't sacred. I won't get into the problems with the secular/sacred dualism most Christians hold to (which is essentially Gnosticism), but technically anything non-religious (such as eating a hamburger) is, by definition, "profane," not just certain words.

However, pretending for a moment that certain words somehow *are* more "profane" than others, the idea that words can be bad in the first place quickly becomes comical when you begin to deconstruct the idea. I mean, it's not like the Bible has a specific list of "forbidden words" included anywhere in it, so what makes a specific word wrong to say? Is it the particular combination of letters, or the specific sound the word makes when spoken, that makes a word wrong to use? It's obviously ridiculous to think so, since otherwise words like "damn," "hell," and "ass" shouldn't be read in the Bible, or spoken aloud in a sermon, as they'd be just as inherently bad in Scripture or sermon as when used in everyday parlance. But maybe it's the meaning behind the word that makes it wrong? Well, if so, simply saying "have sexual intercourse" or "sleep with" (or "rats" or "ouch" any other number of expressions) would be just as bad as saying "fuck"; and saying "crap" or "faeces" would be just as bad as saying "shit," as would saying the words "droppings," "dung" (which is a word actually used in the KJB itself[1141]), or even "waste" (which is also a word used in the KJB[1142]). But maybe it's the intent behind the words. For instance, is it okay to say "fuck" if you're referring to sex with your partner, or just using it as a playful adjective, but wrong to use in anger against another person? I'm okay with this, but only inasmuch as I am with the idea that we shouldn't be

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[1141] Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, — Philippians 3:8

[1142] And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? — Mark 14:4

saying *anything* with the intention of hurting another person (whether in anger or not), regardless of what words we're using (in fact, this is a biblical principle[1143]).

And on top of all this, there are many words that are considered "swearing" in one part of the world that wouldn't even be blinked at in others (or that are considered to be "swearing" today when they weren't necessarily seen that way in the past), so is it wrong to use a word in one location simply because it's traditionally considered "vulgar" in that area and time period, while not wrong to use it in other parts of the world where nobody is currently offended by the word? If so, that means it's the act of offending people that would be the actual sin there, and we could never do anything that might offend another person (including evangelism, which offends all sorts of people). Just as the existence of so-called "swear words" in our English Bibles proves, this also means that no word is inherently wrong to use in and of itself, but is instead only considered wrong by certain people because they've decided the words are wrong, meaning these people have created an extrabiblical doctrine making it immoral to use words they don't like. The reality is, getting offended by these "vulgar" words implies that you think you're too good to hear everyday, common language, and that you probably need to be brought down a peg or two. Honestly, the old childhood saying about sticks and stones is true, and words can only hurt you if you allow them to. But, if you really insist on being offended by certain words, how about choosing to be offended by those words intended to hurt people who don't happen to share your particular values or preferences or skin colour instead of words that simply add a bit of colour to everyday speech. However, I'll make a compromise. Get offended by the many injustices and atrocities being committed not only around the world but even in your own backyard, and I mean offended enough to actually do something

[1143] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. — Matthew 5:22

about it, and I'll try to pretend you're not a snob when you turn up your nose at everyday language. In fact, I won't even say the word "uterus" around you if that helps.[1144]

That said, I should also point out that the reference to evil communications corrupting good manners from 1 Corinthians 15 that I mentioned earlier has nothing to do with swearing, or "profane" language, at all either. Instead, at least from what I've been able to determine in my studies, the Greek phrase translated that way in the KJB was actually a well-known saying (possibly originating from a play, although its actual first usage is technically uncertain) in Paul's time that essentially just meant something along the lines of, "Bad teachings result in bad actions," and Paul's readers would have almost certainly recognized the quote and known that he was telling them to stop listening to false doctrines because they can lead you astray – specifically the false doctrine about the resurrection of the dead not being true in this case, as that was the context of the chapter Paul quoted the popular line in (and he definitely would have been referring to the topic at hand rather than have gone onto an entirely unrelated aside about profane language there). This is a case where one might need to be aware of the historical context of a passage in order to understand it, because the literal meaning of the words on their own are unlikely to help one understand the actual intent of the writer without knowing a bit of background information, especially with the way it's translated in the KJB (I should also say that this passage is kind of like the *"abstain from all appearance of evil"* verse in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, which people also misinterpret in similar ways because they're unaware of the context of verses 20 to 21 before it,[1145] not realizing that this somewhat unclear translation in the KJB was an exhortation about

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[1144] *Is "Uterus" a Dirty Word?* by Twinkle Um: https://skyenoor.wordpress.com/2011/04/08/is-uterus-a-dirty-word

[1145] Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. — 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22

prophecy by Paul, where he was telling his readers to hold fast to the good prophecies, but to avoid any that appear evil).

Those aren't the only supposed prohibitions that many Christians are confused about, though, since many of them also believe that drinking alcohol is not allowed. And while it might not be pro-intoxication[1146] or in favour of over-drinking,[1147] the Bible actually recommends,[1148] and in some places even commands,[1149] the consumption of alcohol for certain people (and God certainly wouldn't have commanded it if it were a sin). And in fact, under the Old Covenant, wine was considered to be a blessing,[1150] with the absence of wine being considered to be a curse.[1151] Besides, as we all know, Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine (and yes, it was wine, not grape juice, as John 2:10 makes pretty obvious,[1152] not to mention as the fact that the Greek word for wine in this account – οἶνος/"oy'-nos" – is the exact same word used in

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[1146] And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; — Ephesians 5:18

[1147] The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; — Titus 2:3

[1148] Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. — Proverbs 31:6

[1149] And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, — Deuteronomy 14:26

[1150] And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. — Deuteronomy 7:13

[1151] Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. — Deuteronomy 28:39

[1152] And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. — John 2:10

Ephesians 5:18 where Paul warns against getting drunk on wine also makes clear, unless you think he was warning against getting drunk on grape juice). And, of course, Jesus used wine to represent the new covenant in His blood,[1153] so it should be pretty obvious that drinking alcohol in moderation is certainly allowed.

And while I'm not sure that marijuana usage (along with the consumption of other plant-derived drugs) is particularly wise, at least for non-medicinal purposes, the Bible doesn't seem to specifically condemn partaking of cannabis, so that appears to be something best left to one's own conscience. That said, yes, it's *possible* that the Greek word φαρμακεία/"far-mak-i'-ah" – translated as "witchcraft"[1154] or "sorceries"[1155] in the KJB – *might* include the usage of marijuana and other plant-derived drugs, based on the connection of the word to drugs, potions, and poisons, but it's generally believed that the word is referring more to idolatry or forms of spiritism (or just to negative things in general, such as poisoning someone, for example) when used in Scripture, so I personally think it's extremely unlikely (although not impossible) that using marijuana would fall under the biblical condemnation of "sorceries." Still, many conservative Christians seem to think (even if, perhaps, not as strongly today as they might have used to) that it should be illegal to grow marijuana plants, and

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[1153] And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. — Luke 22:14-20

[1154] Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, — Galatians 5:20

[1155] Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. — Revelation 9:21

that these plants should be removed wherever they're found growing. But to make this sort of claim is really to claim that God made a mistake in creating these plants and allowing them to grow in the first place, which seems somewhat blasphemous to me.

And finally, at least as far as the specific prohibitions we're going to discuss go, most Christians definitely believe that abortion is condemned in the Bible as murder, and hence is a sin. However, regardless of one's feelings on abortion, and even whether abortion actually is a sin or not, it's important to know that, because murder is a legal term, abortion *can't* legitimately be defined as murder in any place where it's not illegal.[1156] Yes, abortion might involve killing, and the killing could even theoretically be a sin – I'm actually not making a definitive judgement one way or the other as to the morality of the act at this point – but regardless of whether or not abortion *is* a sin, killing can only be classified as murder if the killing is unlawful under one's secular, human government, because otherwise capital punishment and the killing of enemy combatants in war would also have to be called murder, as would killing in self-defence, and so the claim of many anti-abortionists that abortion is murder (at least in most of the western world, or at least as of the time this book was first written) isn't something even worth taking into consideration. Now, some have tried to get around this fact by saying, "It doesn't matter how humans define the word; the only thing that matters is how God defines it." Well, "murder" is an English word, and like all words, if we aren't all using the same definition when we use it, the word becomes entirely meaningless as far as a discussion goes, and there's no point in even using that word to begin with.

That said, even if we were going to redefine the word based on what Scripture says about the topic, something most Christians today aren't aware of is that abortion isn't actually condemned, or even ever discussed, in the Bible at all,

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[1156] *Abortion Is Not Murder* by Jennifer Wright: https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a19748134/what-is-abortion

which means the idea that God calls it murder doesn't appear to be true anyway. Of course, most Christians believe the Bible does condemn abortion, so we should quickly take a look at the passages which they use to defend this claim:

Thou shalt not kill. – Exodus 20:13

This commandment (which, I should note, is technically only a commandment for the Israel of God and not for the body of Christ or any other Gentiles – being a part of the Circumcision writings – although it's still a good thing for everyone to avoid doing what this verse forbids for reasons *other* than the fact that God gave this commandment to Israel) can't be used to condemn abortion if anyone wants to support the death penalty or war or self-defence or cops carrying guns in the line of duty, as we've already discussed (and I should also point out that, if someone *actually* took the English translation of this commandment literally, anyone the commandment applied to also couldn't kill animals either, since the verse doesn't specify that it's only limited to humans). Simply put, this verse obviously means "thou shalt not murder" (with the English word "kill" being used as metonymy for "murder" in this verse, which is confirmed by the fact that "murder" is indeed one of the definitions of the Hebrew רָצַח/"raw-tsakh'" that it's translated from), because if that isn't what it means, God would have been telling the Israelites to sin when He told them to kill certain people back in "Old Testament" times (not to mention when He commanded them to sacrifice animals under the rest of the Mosaic law). And since murder technically means "illegal killing," if abortion *is* legal, then, again, it can't actually be labelled as murder.

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. – Jeremiah 1:5

All this verse really tells us is that God "knew" Jeremiah before he was even conceived, having nothing to do with Jeremiah as a fetus at all. And unless this mean we exist as spirit babies before we're born, all it does for those of us who aren't Mormons is explain that God foreknew Jeremiah's existence and planned for him to become a prophet before his conception, long before he was ever a fetus or baby (and what God plans for *will* happen, as we've now learned).

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. – Psalm 139:13-16

This passage is just more of what Jeremiah 1:5 essentially said, explaining God's foreknowledge and predestination, and doesn't mention abortion at all.

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. – Luke 1:39-42

Apparently fetuses in the womb (the Greek word βρέφος/"bref'-os," referred to as "babes" in this passage in the KJB, doesn't strictly mean "baby," as it's also used for embryos and fetuses) can leap when the Holy Spirit causes them to do so, although what that has to do with abortion being wrong I'm not sure.

And with that being said, I'm all out of passages, unless there's been some new ones brought up that I'm unaware of since I last studied the topic. Still, at least we know that God loves children (already born or otherwise) and would never do anything to harm them, right? Well…

For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. – Genesis 7:17-23

Huh. It seems that God Himself kills babies (and there's no way there weren't any pregnant women alive at the time of the flood, so it appears He kills fetuses too). But that's different; God can kill whoever He wants, right? At least He'd never want humans to kill fetuses or children…

Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys. – 1 Samuel 15:3

Well, apparently God not only kills children, He commanded humans to kill children in the past as well (and, again, there's no way there weren't any pregnant women among that group of people, meaning He commanded certain pregnancies to be aborted in the past, which means abortion can't be a sin or else He'd have been commanding the Israelites to sin). So the idea that God

believes all fetuses have "a right to life" and wants them all to be born just isn't a defensible claim, at least not based on the Bible, which means the idea that God calls abortion murder doesn't appear to be true anyway, and that people will have to decide about the morality of the act for themselves based on entirely extrabiblical perspectives (if you disagree, however, please let me know what passages I missed that prove otherwise), outside of one very telling verse that we haven't looked at yet (at least in regards to this topic):

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. – Genesis 2:7

This verse tells us that it was when God breathed the breath of life into Adam's nostrils that he became conscious, figuratively referred to as becoming "a living soul" in this verse (keeping in mind that "souls" don't exist as ontological objects, since we've already learned earlier in this book that the word is simply used as metonymy for a human existing as a conscious being in this verse). Now, I can't definitively prove that the time every subsequent human became "a living soul" was at the time *they* breathed their first breath on their own, the way it was for Adam, but this is far more scriptural of an assertion than any of the arguments *against* abortion based on the Bible are, so I'll just leave that there for you to consider. (And to quickly get the inevitable questions about how fetuses seems to be able to react to outside noises, songs, voices, and such out of the way, if it's true that babies become "living souls" upon their first breath, these would then simply have to be unconscious, autonomic reflexes programmed into developing fetuses; many of us Pauline Universalists would say that, in reality, the "life" of the yet-unborn fetus is the life of the mother, and that it "lives" its mother's life, so to speak, rather than its own – and this applies to the oxygen it receives as well, since it receives its mother's breath through its umbilical cord while gestating rather than having its own breath of life prior to birth.)

Still, based on other doctrines they hold to, it's surprising that most Christians aren't the most pro-abortion group of people out there. Why? Well, most Evangelicals, aside from certain Calvinists, believe in a doctrine called "the age of accountability." A child supposedly reaches the age of accountability when they are old enough to understand the difference between right and wrong and can be held accountable for their sins. Up until they reach this age, children who die supposedly go to heaven as ghosts (or so the doctrine goes, although, as we also already learned earlier in this book, people actually cease to exist as conscious beings when they die) because they're too young to understand the consequences of, and hence be held responsible for, their actions. However, once someone reaches this age (which supposedly varies from individual to individual) they will end up in an inescapable place called "hell" if they happen to pass away without first becoming a Christian (or they would if the commonly-believed doctrine of never-ending torment were scriptural).

Now, I'd estimate that more than 90% of the human population would suffer in the version of "hell" that most Christians believe in without end, if the Infernalist view that this is the fate of non-Christians who die in their sins were true, so if never-ending torment for non-believers past the age of accountability did happen to be true then perhaps abortionists should be considered the greatest missionaries there are since they'd probably be responsible for helping more souls avoid the popular Christian idea of "hell" than all of the missionaries alive today combined. Not only that, shouldn't those Christians who have babies be thought of as the greatest monsters there are, seeing as they're willing to risk the souls of their offspring simply to satisfy a desire (either for children, or simply for sex for those who believe that birth control is wrong)? If there was a greater than 90% chance that your child will end up tortured without end if they reach the age of accountability (the odds might vary depending on where and when you happen to live, but they're still pretty grim), wouldn't you be much better off killing them before they get that old? If you believe in never-ending torment in "hell" for those past this age, then would not someone who

killed their children so they would be sure to avoid such a terrible outcome be one of the best examples of good parenthood we have? Sure, it might be a sin to commit murder, but sins can always be forgiven while you're still alive, and her children are now guaranteed a place in heaven, or so the logic should go if the Infernalists are correct (especially since we've already determined that abortion *can't* legitimately be considered to be murder in most cases).

If a parent allowed their child to participate in any activity where their kid has a 90% or greater chance of dying, or even just getting seriously injured, one would (rightly) consider that parent to be negligent and report that parent to the child protective agencies, and yet how many Christian parents are willing to gamble their children's soul with a fate far worse, and infinitely longer, than simple death or injury? And as we've already learned, abortion generally can't be classified as murder, so, again, women who have abortions, and even the doctors who perform them, should be seen by Christians who believe in never-ending torment as the greatest heroes ever for saving so many souls.

No matter how horrible this might sound to you, I challenge you to show me where I'm wrong. I've made this challenge before and have yet to have anyone correct my logic, and I don't expect to have it happen anytime soon either.

That said, since all mankind will be saved because of what Christ accomplished, nobody is going to end up suffering in hell without end, which means I'm obviously not suggesting anyone *actually* kill their children here. I'm simply making this point to challenge yet another inconsistency in what could be called common Christian ideology.

Of course, most people today also aren't aware that abortion (at least if performed during much of the first two trimesters) was not actually considered

to be immoral by most Christians throughout much of history either[1157] (at least among Christians who hold to *Sola Scriptura*, and the theological perspectives of those who don't hold to *Sola Scriptura* are rarely even worth considering). This doesn't necessarily matter as far as one's consideration of the morality of abortion goes, since those of us in the body of Christ don't base our theology on what religious Christians have historically considered to fall under the purview of "orthodoxy" or "orthopraxy" anyway (because we consider the doctrines of the Christian religion to be entirely wrong about nearly everything), but it is still useful for us to know that, until relatively recently, Evangelicals and other Protestants have actually been mostly okay with abortion,[1158] and that it was only due to the machinations of certain politically-minded Evangelicals – who decided to join forces with the Roman Catholics in their fight against abortion (although it appears that even Catholic opinions on abortion have changed over the years[1159]) in order to create the movement sometimes known as the Religious Right so they could gain political power (mostly so they could fight against desegregation and continue to promote racism,[1160] at least in the United States, although the rest of the Evangelical world tends to follow what American Evangelicals do) – that nearly everyone has been swayed into incorrectly assuming abortion has always been thought to be a sin by all Christians.[1161]

[1157] *The Truth About Christianity And Abortion* by Christina Forrester: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-truth-about-christianity-and-abortion_b_58f52ed7e4b048372700dab5

[1158] *How Evangelicals Decided That Life Begins at Conception* by Jonathan Dudley: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonathan-dudley/how-evangelicals-decided-that-life-begins-at-conception_b_2072716.html

[1159] *The Bishops Are Wrong About Biden — and Abortion* by Garry Wills: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/27/opinion/biden-bishops-communion-abortion.html

[1160] *The Real Origins of the Religious Right* by Randall Balmer: https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/05/religious-right-real-origins-107133

[1161] *The 'Biblical View' That's Younger Than The Happy Meal* by Fred Clark: https://www.patheos.com/blogs/slacktivist/2012/02/18/the-biblical-view-thats-younger-than-the-happy-meal

And it's also important to note that a large number of Christians who today claim the "Pro-Life" label are only actually against abortion when it comes to other people's abortions, thinking that the abortions they themselves have had are somehow okay, but that everyone else's abortions are wrong and should be illegal, basically telling us that they believe the only moral abortions are the abortions they have,[1162] as well as that a large reason they're fighting against abortion is actually because they want to punish other women for enjoying sex, and to ensure that those women suffer long-lasting consequences for their actions (they'll argue that it's actually because they think abortion is immoral and that they believe in "the sanctity of life," but their hypocrisy, along with the way they treat those who have been born – especially in the United States, where religious conservatives only appear to care about the unborn until they're born, after which it's up to those who are born to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, as far as these conservatives seem to be concerned – reveals the real truth about them to the rest of us: that they don't actually believe in "the sanctity of life," or in ethical practices at all, for that matter).

But what are the scientific facts when it comes to abortion? Well, from what I've been able to determine, the brain physically can't have consciousness until at least 24 weeks of gestation have passed (and perhaps even more[1163]) because it doesn't have the structures necessary to develop consciousness or sentience (at least based on what I could find when researching this topic). Therefore, since only about 1% of abortions take place after the 21st week, abortion in the overwhelming majority of cases doesn't seem to kill something that was ever a conscious being, and hence doesn't seem to be the killing of something that was ever a "person." Sure, it might kill something that has human DNA, but the root

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1162 *"The Only Moral Abortion is My Abortion"* by Joyce Arthur: https://joycearthur.com/abortion/the-only-moral-abortion-is-my-abortion

1163 *When Does Consciousness Arise in Human Babies?* by Christof Koch: https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/when-does-consciousness-arise

of a human hair that has been plucked from a human head also has human DNA and nobody would call its removal from someone's head the killing of a human person because it was never a conscious human itself, and if a fetus was never a conscious being either, there's no legitimate way that I'm aware of to say a "person" is being killed in an abortion performed within that timeframe (in addition, scientists believe that it takes even longer than that – not until at least the 29th week – before a fetus could feel pain,[1164] in case that's a concern you might have). And yes, at this point, many people will try to argue that Jews and many slaves weren't considered to be legal "persons" by the Nazis and certain slaveholders in the past either, but this is just an attempt to distract from the fact that most fetuses were never conscious beings even once prior to an abortion, whereas the Jews and slaves in question were, which means this is nothing more than a bad faith argument with no bearing on the topic at all.

It's also important to note that abortions in the third trimester almost only ever take place because something has gone horribly wrong and the baby is going to die anyway (often in an extremely painful manner), and many times because the pregnant mother will jeopardize her health (and even her life) if she continues with the pregnancy as well. Almost no woman goes through months of pregnancy only to abort it near the end unless something is very wrong, and few doctors would do so for any other reason either (and no, the mythical "post-birth abortions" that some people bring up in order to win elections aren't actually a real thing either), so these are all facts to keep in mind whenever someone insists that abortion is definitely wrong.

Now, some like to argue that a fetus has a soul, and that killing a "living soul" would be wrong. Well, whether or not fetuses have souls, killing someone or something that has a soul isn't necessarily wrong anyway. We kill animals for

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[1164] *7 persistent claims about abortion, fact-checked* by Jaclyn Diaz, Koko Nakajima, and Nick Underwood: https://www.npr.org/2022/05/06/1096676197/7-persistent-claims-about-abortion-fact-checked

food (and animals obviously have souls – or, to be more precise, *are* "living souls" – which is a fact the Bible clearly agrees with as well, I might add, since the word translated as "life" in Genesis 1:30[1165] is the same Hebrew word – נֶפֶשׁ/ "neh'-fesh" – which is translated as "soul" in other passages[1166]), and God commanded the killing of lots of people in Bible times, as we've already discussed, not to mention killed plenty of them Himself, so killing "living souls" is obviously not something God forbids, nor considers to be inherently wrong. So even if fetuses actually were "living souls" (and the assumption that they are "living souls" is not only far from proven, but seems scripturally unlikely too), it wouldn't necessarily even matter.

All that being said, I'm not here to tell you that you should (or should not) have or perform abortions. This is a very personal matter, and one that people have very strong feelings about. The only thing I'm here to do is to remind you that, regardless of the conclusions you've *personally* come to as far as the sinfulness of **you yourself** having or performing an abortion goes, A) there's nothing in the Bible that *actually* calls it a sin, which means that you can't say the Bible forbids it, or that it would definitely be a sin for **others** to do so (at least not without committing the sin the Pharisees during Jesus' earthly ministry did, similar to what I mentioned earlier about condemning sexual desires and practices that aren't actually condemned in the Bible either), and B) if you're in the body of Christ, you aren't called to condemn the rest of the world for what they do, or to try to influence it to straighten up their walk anyway. All you're called to do is walk after the Spirit, and let the rest of the world make their own decisions about morality, and that goes for *all* the topics we've discussed in this chapter, not to mention the many other actions that certain Christians believe

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[1165] And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. — Genesis 1:30

[1166] And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. — Genesis 2:7

should be avoided, including listening to certain types of music, watching certain movies or television shows, playing cards or various other types of games, viewing or participating in sports, gambling, or even dancing, to name just a few of the various things that certain religious people think everyone needs to avoid, despite not being forbidden *anywhere* in Scripture.

Still, if you really want a general principle of morality to live by under the dispensation of the grace of God, I can give you the philosophy of morality I myself live by (just don't take this as a rule; it's simply my own principles that my conscience, faith, and common sense led me to). In no particular order, I ask myself a number of questions, such as, "Is it loving to do so?" If it's done (or avoided) out of actual love or compassion, odds are high that it's fine to do. I'll also consider whether it's harming anybody unnecessarily against their will. This is because certain actions can harm people without being sinful, actions such as defending someone against an attacker, for example, or a doctor amputating a limb to protect against the spread of a disease, based on the definition of "evil," which we now know is really just "to cause something to be damaged or broken," so sometimes harmful/evil actions are necessary (and the "against their will" part is because something such as piercing someone's ears when they want it done is technically causing them "harm," or is at least damaging their body – even if only the tiniest bit – but it's not to a fatal or even serious degree, and it's their desire to have it done, so a professional piercer can rest assured that they aren't sinning by causing this sort of harm or damage, so long as they have faith that it is okay, of course[1167]). But if an action would result in unnecessary harm to somebody against their will, it should likely be avoided. Another consideration is whether an action would get one in trouble with the police or break a secular law of the land. If it would, it's probably best

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[1167] Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. — Romans 14:22-23

to do something else instead, since Paul advises us to obey the government.[1168] Of course, I also look to Scripture to see whether Paul has spoken against a specific action I might be wanting to do. While his teachings were exhortations rather than commandments (meaning they were good ideas to follow, but not required of us, for the most part), it's still a good idea to see what he had to say about things if you're in the body of Christ (and as for those who are members of the Israel of God instead, they should be looking to what the Circumcision writings say they should do and not do). And last (but definitely not least), I think about whether it's an idolatrous action that would result in the worship of another deity (or the worship of anything/anyone other than God). If so, I definitely don't do it. But if something is loving, isn't harming others unnecessarily against their will, isn't illegal, doesn't go against properly interpreted Scripture, and isn't idolatrous, I have the faith that it's generally perfectly fine to do so. If you don't have the same sort of faith about a specific action, however, it would be a sin for you to do it, and you should avoid any actions that would go against your own conscience until you have legitimately changed your mind about them being wrong (just don't judge another person for their actions – presuming they aren't actions that harm others unnecessarily against their will, aren't illegal, and aren't idolatrous – if it isn't going against their conscience).

At this point, I should probably say that when most Christians learn about my theology as it pertains to issues of morality, they tend to accuse me of moral relativism. While the reason they make this accusation is generally due to not having actually dug into why I believe what I do (since they assume I'm ignoring what the Bible teaches, when in reality I believe what I do about morality 100% *because* of what I believe the Bible really teaches), they are right about one

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[1168] Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. — Romans 13:1-2

thing: I am indeed a moral relativist. And if they truly recognized God as God,[1169] they would be moral relativists themselves too.

Of course, just as with nearly everything I've written in this book, this probably sounds strange to most people who read this assertion for the first time. But as always, if you think it over carefully you should realize that it's the truth. I mean, think about it: If morality is absolute rather than relative, it means that there are certain actions which are *always* inherently wrong to do, no matter who the person is, and that would have to include God if the action is inherently wrong in and of itself (this would apply to avoiding actions which are always wrong to abstain from as well, I should add). In fact, if any actions were *always* wrong from an absolute perspective (which would be the case if morality wasn't relative), it would mean there's a "moral law" (for lack of a better term) which is greater than God Himself, a law which even God would be obligated to follow. And if there is something greater than God (even a "law"), then God would not truly be sovereign because He'd be obligated to follow said "moral law," and couldn't decide not to do so.

It's only when morality is relative to what God decides it is that He maintains His sovereignty. Ironically, most Christians who protest moral relativism actually already believe that God is the basis for morality, not realizing that they're actually teaching moral relativism when they say this. If this still doesn't sound right, though, let's take a look at an example to really demonstrate the fact that most Christians are already moral relativists (even without realizing that they are).

Perhaps the best example of the moral relativism that pretty much all Christians hold to is the topic of killing other human beings. Is killing always morally

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[1169] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. — Romans 1:21

wrong, in and of itself, or is it relative to the situation one finds themselves in? Well, if killing humans is always wrong, with no exceptions, then killing people in war, or in the defence of others, or even in self-defence, would, by definition, be immoral. And not only that, it would be wrong for God to ever kill anyone as well, if killing humans is always wrong, with no exceptions, which means that all the times God is said to have killed people in the Bible, not to mention all the times He commanded the Israelites to do so, would have been examples of God sinning (or commanding others to sin). So I trust it's now clear that killing is only "wrong" under the specific circumstances that God tells us it's wrong to do so, which means that the morality of killing humans is relative to God's desire and commands rather than being absolutely wrong (and that the Bible actually does support situational ethics). And if you agree with me on that, welcome to the world of moral relativism.

Before moving on, though, I should reiterate something I wrote earlier in the chapter, which is that some people who have made it this far will have felt their pharisaical flesh crawling and their self-righteous souls getting stirred up because of some of the things they've just read. and if that's the case for you, it means you really need to reevaluate whether you're more interested in holding fast to the traditions you've been taught by your denomination and religious leaders, so that you can continue walking in accord with flesh, or in what Scripture actually says, so that you can begin walking after the Spirit instead.

This all goes even more-so for condemnation of those who *aren't* in the body of Christ, by the way. Because, as Paul essentially asked in 1 Corinthians 5:12, what business is it of ours to judge those outside the church called the body of Christ?[1170] And so, regardless of one's views on morality, whatever the Bible might actually say about the topic as it applies the body of Christ, it's limited to the body of Christ, contrary to what so many Christians seem to believe

[1170] For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? — 1 Corinthians 5:12

(although most of the members of the Christian religion are technically a part of the very world they condemn, since they're not in the body of Christ, and many of them aren't even in the Israel of God, so it actually might make sense for them to judge the world they're a part of, but they're judging it based on their horrible misinterpretations of Scripture, which doesn't help). Trying to force those who are not a part of the body of Christ to live a supposedly "righteous life," by legal means or otherwise, is not even slightly justifiable, since nowhere in the Bible is it even hinted at that we're called to influence (much less force) our cultures to become more conservative or to follow religious laws. In fact, the only thing those of us in the body of Christ are asked to do when it comes to the government is to obey the secular laws and to pay our taxes[1171] (even when these laws harm us and should not exist in the first place).

Slavery is a good example of this. Contrary to what many people think, when Paul told slaves in the body of Christ to obey their masters,[1172] since he was all for trying to gain freedom if it could be done legally,[1173] and this exhortation was only for members of the body of Christ anyway, he obviously wasn't promoting

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[1171] Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. — Romans 13:1-7

[1172] Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; — Ephesians 6:5

[1173] Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. — 1 Corinthians 7:21

slavery as a good thing that society in general should be practicing. It's simply that he was exhorting believers to obey the law, whether it's an unpleasant law,[1174] whether the authorities making said laws are ungodly, and even whether we might think the laws themselves might be ungodly[1175] (which isn't to say that those who are *not* members of the body of Christ shouldn't do what they can to make the world a better place where possible, including fighting to completely eliminate slavery; and if that's something you really want to do as a member of the body of Christ, you technically can, but it isn't something we're called to do in Scripture).

Yes, it is true that, in a democracy, "we the people" technically help determine the secular laws to a certain (in practice, extremely limited) extent, but there's still zero excuse for trying to create laws based on religious morality (especially when we consider the fact that most religious morality isn't at all scriptural, as we've now learned from this chapter), or for trying to turn one's nation into a theocracy (the world will be a theocracy in the future, but not until Jesus returns to the earth, and no attempt to create a theocracy in the meantime will ever provide anything other than horrific results, at least based on every attempt to do so by Gentiles thus far). And culturally, there also isn't any reason to go around putting down non-believers for doing things that go against one's moralistic sensibilities (particularly, again, since most of the things that religious conservatives think are sinful aren't actually even slightly sinful to begin with), for trying to pressure the rest of the world into acting the way religious conservatives want them to, or for any number of the cruel or unnecessary actions that too many of those who are religious conservatives seem to feel obligated to perform against those in their communities and countries – actions such as trying to get people fired, kicking people out of their homes, or not

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[1174] *No authority except under God* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF6.31.pdf

[1175] *God's use of ungodly authorities* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF6.32.pdf

being willing to sell things to people, all based simply on who they happen to be attracted to or what gender they identify as, for example; or actions such as trying to enforce prohibitions against consuming certain beverages or plants that God Himself made, or at least enforcing prohibitions against purchasing such things on certain days of the week (to name just a few of many examples).

Really, all that attempting to legislate religious morality, or even to pressure the rest of the world into following one's religious leanings, will do nothing but drive people even further away from the faith one no doubt wants them to embrace, and will also continue to cause everyone to misunderstand what the Gospel is actually about (hint: it's not about trying to be as big of an asshole as possible towards those who don't believe and act the way you do, as so many conservative Christians act like they think it is).

This is an important factor for parents to keep in mind too, by the way. Raising your kids to be good citizens who live loving, quiet, respectful, and peaceable lives is important,[1176] and they should certainly be brought up with the training and instruction of the Lord so that they'll understand what they need to know about God and Scripture,[1177] but trying to force people to live "godly lives" misses the entire point of Paul's teachings. You can't stuff the Holy Spirit into somebody (and if God hasn't elected your child for the special salvation, you aren't going to be able to convince them to believe the Gospel – either Gospel – and get saved now anyway), and trying to make people (children or grown adults) live according to religious rules will only cause them to sin and rebel all the more, as Paul makes quite clear (that was at least part of the purpose of the

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[1176] And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing. — 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

[1177] And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. — Ephesians 6:4

existence of the Mosaic law, after all). And even if those within Churchianity were correct about what is right and wrong (which they definitely aren't), getting people who aren't already saved (relatively speaking) to live "righteous" lives and stop sinning isn't going to get them saved, or make them any less lost, unless you believe that salvation actually is by works, so it just doesn't make any sense to begin with to try to force the rest of the world to live by religious standards since it won't help them in the long run anyway (at least not according to the most common soteriology of Churchianity), although I should say that avoiding morally evil actions is still good for everyone to do.

History is very clear about all of this as well, of course. When religious "morality" gains control of government, people suffer. There's almost nothing scarier, or more antithetical to freedom, than a theocracy or theonomy run by mortal humans (in fact, Paul made it clear that those of us in the body of Christ are to hold on tight to our freedom in Christ, and not allow ourselves to be put under religious bondage,[1178] although it's true that, in a theocracy, we might have no choice but to play along in order to remain alive, or at least to stay out of prison). When religious conservatives run governments without a liberal and secular hand to balance their policies out, people are censored, fired, expelled from their homes, imprisoned, tortured, and even executed simply for their beliefs (or lack thereof), as well as for the most innocent of actions. If someone challenges the religious status quo or does things considered sinful in a theocratic society, religious conservatives become extremely evil towards such heretics, apostates, and infidels (and even today in more secular countries you find religious conservatives trying to take or keep civil rights away from people who might live differently from them for no reason other than the fact that these differences might not line up with their religious beliefs).

[1178] Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. — Galatians 5:1

This is one reason I like to stay far away from religious conservatives in general (or at least only meet with them in public places). Perjury,[1179] assault, torture,[1180] theft, and killing[1181] are a major part of the heritage of nearly all conservative religions, including the Christian religion, and I have no doubt that many of them would bring that legacy back into practice if they could. That's not to say all religious conservatives would do this if they had the opportunity, but I still wouldn't want to take that chance. And regardless of their propensity towards violence, it goes without saying that most of them would definitely (and happily) fight against freedoms and civil rights for people who are different from them in various ways, particularly when it comes to sexuality and gender, and I see no good reason to have much to do with people who would be so heartless and cruel.

Religious conservatives sometimes talk about a culture war, and they are right, there is one happening. The problem is, they're on the wrong side of this battle, having exchanged the truth for an attempt at holding political power[1182] (although Daniel warned us that the Christian religion, along with all of the world's other false religions, will be utterly destroyed eventually – based on Daniel chapter 7, presuming A.E. Knoch interpreted the prophecy correctly in his commentary on the book of Daniel that I mentioned in the last chapter, which I personally do believe he did – and that God will kill many within this religion during the Great Tribulation, so they do this at their own peril).

Now, some members of the body of Christ will disagree with me on this next part, because there are a fair number of believers who do lean more towards

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[1179] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day-care_sex-abuse_hysteria

[1180] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition

[1181] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials

[1182] *The Lie: Recipe for Babylon — The Seduction of Religion and Politics* by Dan Sheridan: https://studyshelf.com/BSN/Issues/bsn412.pdf

conservatism when it comes to their political preferences, so please keep in mind that this paragraph is simply my own opinion and not necessarily the opinion of the majority of "Concordant" believers, or even other members of the true body of Christ who might not be "Concordant" in their theology, but in my personal experience (at least as a North American), conservatism appears to basically be about selfishness, greed, hunger for power, paranoia, racism, sexism, homophobia (among other forms of erotophobia), transphobia, and just having a lack of empathy towards one's neighbours in general, rather than loving one's neighbour. All of this ultimately leads to people trying to control the lives and actions of those who might be a little different from what they consider to be "the norm," and religion only makes conservatism worse since it leads people to believe their harmful mindsets and actions are sanctioned (or even commanded) by God. So if you've ever wondered why some people remain wary of religious (and even secular) conservatives, it should be pretty obvious at this point. All that being said, I should add that I'm not claiming political liberalism will save the world (or even your country). Scripture is quite clear that no human government can ever do that. Still, true liberalism is actually about compassion, empathy, and taking care of those in need (basically, the exact opposite of what conservatism seems to be about, at least as far as I've ever been able to see), and those living under truly liberal governments (and not just liberal governments in name only) tend to have much better lives in general than those living under more conservative governments do, so I'd much rather be in a more liberal part of the world any day of the week (which, thankfully, I am, at least at present).

But regardless, as you've already learned, members of the Christian religion are wrong about basically everything anyway, and since the vast majority of the members of the Christian religion are conservative, it stands to reason (at least in my mind) that there's literally no way conservatism can possibly be correct if nearly every single member of this religion holds to it. At the end of the day, however, members of the body of Christ are aliens here on this planet, since our

citizenship is in the heavens, so the politics of earth[1183] really aren't meant for us to begin with.[1184]

Followers of the Christian religion don't only tell us that certain things are forbidden that actually aren't, however. They also try to convince us that certain things are required that aren't either. If you do attend the traditional church services of the Christian religion and become a member of a particular local assembly, for example, you'll likely sit through a number of sermons meant to make you feel guilty if you don't give them a percentage of your money on a regular basis, sermons which completely ignore the fact that the tithe was meant solely for followers of the Mosaic law. Members of the body of Christ (whether Jewish or Gentile) are not supposed to follow the law of Moses, and those who do try to follow any of it are under a curse of being obligated to follow all of it, according to Paul[1185] (that means no more bacon or shrimp, or clothes with certain mixed fabrics, or doing chores or running errands on Saturday).

[1183] *God and Country — The Dangers of Contemporary Christian Americanism* by Jon Zens and Cliff Bjork: https://studyshelf.com/BSN/Issues/bsn223.pdf

[1184] Politician? or Paulician? by Alan Burns: https://www.studyshelf.com/art_burns_politician.pdf

[1185] For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. — Galatians 3:10

Of course, a truly biblical tithe is actually in the form of food, drink, or livestock, and only goes to the Levitical priests[1186] or to the needy[1187] (with the exception of the tithe that wasn't given away at all, but was rather consumed by the tithers themselves[1188]). Unless your pastors are Levites who perform animal sacrifices, they have no scriptural basis for demanding it from anyone (no, not even Abraham's tithe to Melchisedec helps their case, unless perhaps one's pastor is the king of Salem and they're tithing of the spoils they took from their enemies in battle[1189]). There's absolutely nothing in the Bible about the body of Christ having to give a tenth (or any amount) of their money to their religious leaders or organizations.

[1186] At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest. — Deuteronomy 14:28-29

[1187] When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; — Deuteronomy 26:12

[1188] And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, — Deuteronomy 14:24-26

[1189] For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. — Hebrews 7:1-4

Still, while tithing isn't a biblical idea for members of the body of Christ, what is recorded as having happened during Paul's time is members of local church assemblies giving financial gifts to those in need.[1190] And while this seems to have only been done for the sake of helping members of the Israel of God who were living in Jerusalem[1191] (perhaps because they were struggling due to a famine at that time[1192]), it is still good for us to help the poor.[1193] What believers didn't do at that time, however, was just give money to pastors who simply wanted to live off church members' hard-earned money or keep the power running in a church building.

Those church buildings and pastors themselves, by the way, are also potentially big problems, since modern church services and the buildings they take place in don't have any biblical justification for existing in the first place. The church known as the body of Christ in Paul's time didn't gather in chapels or temples.

[1190] Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. — 2 Corinthians 8:1-4

[1191] Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. — 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

[1192] And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. — Acts 11:27-28

[1193] Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. — Galatians 2:10

Instead, they met in the homes[1194] of members[1195] of their local assemblies.[1196] And a gathering wasn't a few songs and then a sermon by a pastor. There might have been songs, and even a speech or two, but the early church gatherings apparently included a meal and discussions, not just a bite of bread, a sip of wine (or grape juice), and a sermon.

"The Lord's Supper" for example, appears to have been a part of a real meal meant to demonstrate the communion, meaning the unity, of the members of the body of Christ[1197] – at least as it was partaken of by those in the body of Christ – and so it wasn't just a tiny snack they were partaking of.[1198] The idea that this was a ritual or ordinance which believers had to participate in for salvation or otherwise is a concept that arose later among those who apostatized from Paul's teachings by merging his Gospel with Israel's Gospel (thus creating the false "gospel" of the Christian religion), likely because they misunderstood certain things that Jesus was recorded as saying in John 6, as we discussed in a previous chapter.

Very few members of the body of Christ actually do partake of this dinner anymore, though, partly due to the fact that many actually believe – for reasons that I don't have the time to get into here – that it was meant to end around the

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[1194] Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. — Romans 16:5

[1195] Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. — Colossians 4:15

[1196] Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: — Philemon 1:1-2

[1197] For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. — 1 Corinthians 11:29

[1198] For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. — 1 Corinthians 11:21

time of Paul's imprisonment, and partly due to the fact that there are so few members of the body of Christ alive today that it's difficult to actually gather together in person anymore anyway. Still, while practicing the Lord's Supper as a ceremony would not be at all scriptural, choosing to share a meal together in a manner that demonstrates our communion with one another (so long as it isn't a practice that's enforced upon us, and we're actually sharing the meal with everyone in the church rather than selfishly consuming it all before everyone has arrived), meaning that it helps us recognize that we're all members of the same body,[1199] seems like the exact opposite of a religious ritual to me, and I see no problem with doing just that when gathering as a local church in one's home (if one is able to find such a church) if the group so desires.

As far as the rest of the "church service" goes, it appears they had actual conversations and dialogues rather than just a monologue by one preacher. This is demonstrated by how, when Paul spoke to the believers at Troas in Acts 20:7,[1200] the Greek word translated as "preached" in the KJB there is διαλέγομαι/ "dee-al-eg'-om-ahee," which literally means "to converse with someone," or "to argue or discuss something with someone," as is also made clear by the way the KJB translated this word as "disputing" in Acts 19:8.[1201] Still, this isn't to say that the occasional lesson or presentation isn't helpful, and there *are* plenty of great messages preached at the various conferences held by various "Concordant"

[1199] The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. — 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

[1200] And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. — Acts 20:7

[1201] And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. — Acts 19:8

Universalists, but it wasn't why the original members of the body of Christ were gathering together in the first century.[1202]

Just remember that church buildings and the current structure of the Institutional Church's weekend "services" didn't exist until some time later (in fact, the Greek word ἐκκλησία/"ek-klay-see'-ah" that the English word "church" is translated from simply refers to a "group" or "assembly" of people – it never referred to a building in the Bible – although it's also true that language evolves and words can have multiple definitions, with "church" being a good example of this occurring in English, and if it was a sin to use the newer definition of a word in addition to one of its older definitions, we'd all be in a lot of trouble). To be fair, though, it's not the buildings themselves that are the real problem; it's the "organization" and lack of real, spontaneous, Spirit-led fellowship, not to mention theological and spiritual dialogue between members. Yes, you will almost certainly hear the word "fellowship" in most traditional church meetings, but you also almost as certainly won't experience much (if any) there, despite how much so many pastors seem to love the word (it's hard to fellowship with the back of someone's head while sitting in pews listening to a sermon). But you can technically meet in a home and still be an Institutional Church, or rent a room in a building (or really even own a whole building) other than a home and be a relational, open church (as church gatherings that follow the pattern of the first assemblies are sometimes called[1203]). As nice as a home gathering is, it's really the fellowship and the discussions about Scripture that are the important factors. That said, if a local assembly *does* own a whole building that they meet in – even if they just call it a chapel or a hall – you should probably stay far away. Of course, the odd exception exists, but in general, you'd be much better off spiritually (and even physically) in a strip

[1202] *Problems and Limitations of the Traditional "Sermon" Concept* by Darryl M. Erkel: https://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/church-practice/traditional-sermon.php

[1203] *The Open Church* by James Rutz: https://www.amazon.com/Open-Church-James-H-Rutz/dp/0940232502

club than in a so-called "house of God"[1204] (as many mistakenly call these buildings). At least in a strip club nobody is deceiving you about what Scripture teaches when they try to take a percentage of your money. That said, if you somehow *do* find a local assembly teaching the truths covered in this book, and that assembly *does* own a church building, I certainly wouldn't discourage you from fellowshipping with them (and while it's probably not wise for newer members of the body of Christ to do so, at least until they're firmly grounded in the faith and won't be led astray, attending church services run by members of the Christian religion for the sake of evangelism – being "a sheep in wolf's clothing," in other words – might be an interesting thing to try out on occasion).

Speaking of teaching, the idea of a pastor or priest or any professional preacher who rules over a church isn't in the Bible either. Local churches were overseen by a group of unpaid elders,[1205] not run by one paid man (that's not to say that evangelists shouldn't be paid to evangelize,[1206] but elders and evangelists aren't necessarily always the same people). Again, exceptions exist (such as, perhaps, in extremely new local assemblies), but if you have one person leading (and basically performing the entire ministry in) a local gathering of believers, I would suggest not having much of anything to do with their gatherings if you value your spiritual well-being (and while not all clergy are dangerous or are con-artists – many are just confused – I'd suggest you do play it safe and be cautious when interacting with them, just in case, since a lot still are[1207]).

[1204] *Clanging Gong News, Volume 3, Issue 5* by Martin Zender: https://www.martinzender.com/clanging_gong/archives/Volume3-Issue5.pdf

[1205] *Is the One-Pastor System Scriptural?* by Mark Frees: https://web.archive.org/web/20210225190103/http://www.cnview.com/churches_today/is_the_one_pastoral_system_scrip.htm

[1206] Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. — 1 Corinthians 9:14

[1207] *Black Collar Crime Archives* curated by Bruce Gerencser: https://brucegerencser.net/tag/black-collar-crime

Also, just as a quick aside on the topic of spiritual things, the "charismatic" spiritual gifts that some pastors say one should have really aren't meant for those under the dispensation of the grace of God today either (meaning for those in the body of Christ). They might still be active for people saved in connection with the Gospel of the Circumcision, I should say (and based on certain testimonies I've heard from some people who I suspect are members of the Israel of God – even if they don't necessarily realize it themselves, not being aware of the difference between the two churches and their two respective Gospels – this very well might be the case), since these gifts were basically meant as a sign for Jews anyway. Even those in the body of Christ in the first century were mostly "speaking in tongues" as a sign for unbelieving Jews[1208] (who often required a sign to accept Jesus as their Messiah[1209]), but for those of saved in connection with the Gospel of the Uncircumcision, these gifts appear to have come to an end at some point, as evidenced by the fact that even Paul, whose simple handkerchiefs could heal those who touched them at one time,[1210] could no longer heal people by the end of his ministry,[1211] and even suggested that Timothy take some wine for his stomach and other ailments[1212] rather than seek the gift of healing as those saved under the Gospel of the Circumcision

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[1208] Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. — 1 Corinthians 14:22

[1209] For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: — 1 Corinthians 1:22

[1210] So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. — Acts 19:12

[1211] Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. — 2 Timothy 4:20

[1212] Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. — 1 Timothy 5:23

were instructed to do.[1213] That's not to say God can't or doesn't ever do miracles for those of us in the body of Christ anymore (and it definitely doesn't mean that God doesn't still guide us through His Spirit), just that they're the exception rather than the rule[1214] while the reason for the sign gifts has been mostly paused for the time being[1215] (so, until the final Gentile meant to enter the body of Christ does so, and God's focus returns to Israel and the Gospel of the Kingdom becomes the preeminent Gospel to be proclaimed on earth once again).

Aside from tithing (and "speaking in tongues," depending on one's denomination), there's one more unbiblical tradition that religious leaders will condemn you for if you *don't* do it on a regular basis, and that is regularly attending their gatherings, particularly on the day they believe to be the Sabbath. Almost anybody who has ever suggested they might stop "going to church" regularly has been given a guilt trip and has been told that we aren't supposed to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, completely misrepresenting the meaning of the passage in Hebrews 10:25 they use for this purpose[1216] (while also ignoring the fact that the book of Hebrews wasn't written

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[1213] Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. — James 5:13-18

[1214] *Where's Your Miracle?* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/intervention/wheres-your-miracle

[1215] *Why Spiritual Gifts Stopped* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/spirit/spiritual-gifts/why-spiritual-gifts-stopped

[1216] Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. — Hebrews 10:25

to the body of Christ anyway, but was written specifically to those referred to as Hebrews, aka Israelites). The Greek word ἐπισυναγωγή/"ep-ee-soon-ag-o-gay'," translated as "assembling" in this verse, is never used to refer to "gathering" in the sense that one would use when speaking of "going to church" when it's used in the Bible. In fact, the only other place in Scripture where ἐπισυναγωγή is used is when Paul was talking about the Snatching Away of the body of Christ in his second epistle to the Thessalonians,[1217] which tells us that the writer was warning his readers against forsaking the hope of being assembled together to Christ when He returns near the end of the Tribulation (also confirmed by the context, as told to us by the words *"as ye see the day approaching"* at the end of the verse), and wasn't speaking of "going to church" at all. That said, gathering with like minded believers, if you can find them, is still beneficial, so please don't think I'm saying that one shouldn't gather with the body if one can find other members nearby, be it on the Sabbath or on any other day.

As far as what day the Sabbath is goes, this is one where various sabbatarian denominations are partially correct, while also being quite wrong about it at the same time. The Sabbath is indeed Saturday, as they claim; nowhere in Scripture does it say that it was changed to Sunday (and Sunday is not the Lord's Day either; the Lord's Day – which anyone who understands how possessive apostrophes work should be aware is also known as the Day of the Lord – is an event that hasn't happened yet,[1218] at least not as of the time this book was written). But since those saved under the Gospel of the Uncircumcision are not under the Mosaic law in any way whatsoever, it doesn't really matter to us what day the Sabbath is.[1219] In the very beginning of the churches, believers didn't

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[1217] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, — 2 Thessalonians 2:1

[1218] *WHAT IS "THE LORD'S DAY" OF REVELATION 1:10?* by Shawn Brasseaux: https://forwhatsaiththescriptures.org/2016/08/13/lords-day-revelation-1-10

[1219] *You Do Not Need Holy Sabbath Days* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/tradition/you-do-not-need-holy-sabbath-days

pick one specific day to gather together when they did get together for fellowship; they could meet any day of the week (possibly doing so more than one day a week, and very likely often happening later in the afternoon or evening after work rather than first thing in the morning, based on the fact that some were eating all the food and getting drunk before the poor could arrive at their gatherings, presumably due to having to work later into the day than the rich had to[1220]). That said, there's nothing technically wrong with meeting on a Sunday. In fact it's often the most convenient day to do so on at this point in history, since the Catholic Church has managed to convince most people that it is the new Sabbath thanks to the influence it's had over our society, but it's really not any different from any other day of the week so don't feel any obligation to treat it like a special day (if you're a part of the Israel of God, on the other hand, you *do* need to follow the rules in the Mosaic law regarding the Sabbath, which actually begins on Friday at sunset and ends on Saturday at sunset).

And on the topic of esteeming certain days above others, be they new holidays invented by (or pagan holidays that were "Christianized" by) the Institutional Church (such as Lent,[1221] such as Easter,[1222] and such as Christmas,[1223] to name just three) or days that are observed by Jewish followers of the Mosaic law,[1224]

[1220] For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. — 1 Corinthians 11:21

[1221] *Fat Tuesday and Fleshly Fasting* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/life/fat-tuesday-and-fleshly-fasting

[1222] *SHOULD CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE EASTER? IS IT NOT A PAGAN HOLIDAY?* by Shawn Brasseaux: https://forwhatsaiththescriptures.org/category/holidays/should-christians-celebrate-easter-holidays

[1223] *How Christ Ruined My Christmas* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/tradition/holydays/how-christ-ruined-my-christmas

[1224] *ARE CHRISTIANS OBLIGATED TO OBSERVE PASSOVER?* by Shawn Brasseaux: https://forwhatsaiththescriptures.org/2014/04/15/christians-observe-passover

while it might not always be a great idea, it's not necessarily wrong to celebrate a specific day if it's something that one enjoys doing just for the fun of it (or if it's something that one who is weak in faith still feels they need to do[1225]). Just realize that none of these days are required for the body of Christ any more than the Sabbath is (you won't find any commandments, or even exhortations, in Scripture for the body of Christ to celebrate any of these days), and that nobody should be looked down upon for not participating in these "holy days."

[1225] Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. — Romans 14:1-23

And, of course, please keep in mind just how unlikely it is that Jesus actually died on a Friday,[1226] as well as remember that He wasn't resurrected on the day we call Easter on our modern calendars (which should be more obvious than it seems to be to most people, considering the fact that it's on a different day each year), and I trust you're also aware that He almost certainly wasn't born on December 25th either (there are arguments to be made for the idea that He was born in the spring, as well as for the idea that He was born around September or October instead, but either way, it doesn't seem likely that He was born in the winter). That said, if you're going to celebrate Christmas or Easter, consider doing so mostly from a secular perspective, focusing on the chocolates and eggs and gifts and such. To do otherwise (meaning, to celebrate them as remembrances of Jesus' birth and death) is to know Christ after the flesh, which is something the body of Christ is called to move past.[1227]

To sum it all up, we already know that all things are permitted us[1228] (at least within the body of Christ), so while you certainly can visit Christian church buildings (especially for weddings and the like), and even attend church services and participate in other things that Christians like to do when it comes to church and holidays and such, not all things are a good idea, so please use wisdom if you are going to flirt with such things, because modern Churchianity is not even close to the innocent institution that Christians believe it to be[1229] (which should now be very obvious to anyone who has read this whole book from the beginning).

[1226] *WAS JESUS CHRIST REALLY CRUCIFIED ON FRIDAY?* by Shawn Brasseaux: https://forwhatsaiththescriptures.org/category/denominations-cults-false-teaching/was-jesus-christ-really-crucified-on-friday

[1227] Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. — 2 Corinthians 5:16

[1228] All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. — 1 Corinthians 10:23

[1229] *Sex with the devil* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF7.49.pdf

Of course, with the rise of Christian Nationalism in certain parts of the world, there is a chance that a Christian theocracy could take control of one or more countries somewhere in the world at some point and mandate church attendance and participation, not to mention require the following of other laws based on misunderstandings of Scripture. And if things ever *do* get that bad, as we already learned, it's best to obey the law, so in that case it might be advisable to play along and attend an "orthodox" Christian church if required by the law. Because, as I said before, ours isn't a religion, it's a faith, which means it takes place entirely within, and what happens outside (church attendance and participation) can't affect what you already know to be true, nor will it affect your salvation or how God feels about you (especially considering the fact that He's in charge of everything that happens, at least from an absolute perspective). That said, as we also know, words can have different meanings, so if the law ever requires one to practice the Christian religion, we can also simply define "religion" the same way we define "faith" in our minds during any discussions where it might be prudent to do so and legitimately claim to be members of the Christian religion (even if we don't necessarily mean the same thing that most people mean by the term, it isn't necessarily lying as long as we don't outright claim we mean the same thing by the term that they mean, although it could be considered to be deception, so follow your conscience and decide for yourself whether that would be wrong or not if the situation ever arises).

All that being said, while the western world *is* still relatively free (at least as of the time this book was last updated), you now know that you can be free too, from the power of sin and from the fear of hell, as well as from slavery to the many religious rules that were never even biblical to begin with (or, as far as most the rules that *are* biblical go, only ever applied to the Israel of God and not to the body of Christ at all, much less to any Gentiles of the nations, whether they're members of the body of Christ or not). So if you've come to believe the

truths I laid out in this book, please go enjoy the life of freedom of a Pauline Universalist. And while I pray that this never happens here in the western world prior to the Snatching Away, if you *are* reading this at a point in time when the west has become less free thanks to some sort of religion gaining power over the government (or if you're perhaps instead reading this in a country where some other religion already controls the laws of the land), if you *have* become a Pauline Universalist (or perhaps a "Concordant" believer, if you prefer that label the way some Pauline Universalists do), even if you might have to follow certain religious laws in order to remain *physically* free, you're now still far more *spiritually* free than any member of the Christian religion is, or than any follower of any other religion is as well.

Conclusion

I could go on and on about the multitude of ideas that those within the Christian religion are confused about due to the flawed assumptions they begin with and a lack of desire to actually take the time to dig into what the Bible really says, preferring to simply accept what their religious leaders teach instead, but that should be more than enough to explain why I'm now a Pauline Universalist who could never return to the Christian religion and its extremely unbiblical doctrines. Of course, at this point the real question isn't why I couldn't return to the Christian religion, but why you yourself might still consider having anything to do with such an unscriptural, not to mention harmful, institution.

Nearly everything in this book should really be considered to be "Scripture 101," and everyone who has read through the entire Bible (be it the KJB, or *any* translation really) should already be completely familiar with most of what I've covered, but the truth, of course, is that most of what I've written here is brand new for most people who are reading it for the first time (and for those who *weren't* previously familiar with it, if you *did* read the whole book, you now know the core doctrines of those of us who are sometimes referred to as "Concordant" believers,[1230] and then some, even if most of the English-speaking "Concordant" believers out there tend to prefer the more literal Bible versions and generally avoid the *King James Bible* that we've been using throughout this book, because they mistakenly tend to think it's badly mistranslated, mostly due to not being aware of the facts about it that I pointed throughout this book,

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[1230] *What are "Concordant" believers?* by Drew Costen: https://www.concordantgospel.com/what-are-concordant-believers

so please keep everything you learned about the KJB while reading this book in mind when reading or viewing other "Concordant" believers' material, not to mention when conversing with other "Concordant" believers, as you likely now know much more about what the KJB actually says and means than pretty much anybody out there who hasn't read this book does). Sadly, Satan's false apostles, deceitful workers, and ministers of righteousness within Churchianity[1231] (aka the vain talkers and deceivers[1232] who are leading and teaching the followers of the Christian religion today) have hijacked the Bible, convincing billions that Scripture is actually a much more conservative set of documents than it really is (not to mention convincing them that it's a rulebook which every human alive is expected to follow in its entirety), and have also managed to deceive billions into thinking that God is capable of allowing never-ending torture to occur, or is at least willing to leave the majority of humans to remain dead permanently (with both false teachings causing people to reject God altogether thanks to the monstrous false image of God we've been told is the real God). These lies, along with the other errors that seem to keep the majority of humanity (including many Christians) from experiencing "everlasting" (meaning age-pertaining) life, make the Christian religion one of the most nefarious cults there is. The actual truths of Scripture set people completely free,[1233] but the common teachings of "orthodox" Christianity only enslaves its followers through its unscriptural rules, unnecessary shame, unloving discrimination, and threats of unending punishment (although it's important to also keep in mind that, at least from an absolute perspective, it's not ultimately

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[1231] For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. — 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

[1232] For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: — Titus 1:10

[1233] And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. — John 8:32

the fault of those people who are leading the Christian religion that this is so[1234]).

For those chosen few of you who actually have read the whole book, though, you'll likely be left wondering what you should do now. Well, first of all, it means that you get to sleep in on Sunday (or Saturday) mornings if you want to (at least as of the time this book was written, since we don't live under a Christian theocracy at present). Beyond that, my personal advice is to study everything connected with the topics covered in this book carefully, and then share the actual Gospel that Paul preached to the nations with those you feel led to share it with (sharing this very book is a good way to do so for many). Beyond that, however, if you can find a nearby church that *actually* believes what Scripture says, it might be a good group to check out. That said, many, if not most, of the members of the body of Christ have to go it fairly alone, or at least without a local church to fellowship with, since it seems there are very few members of the true body of Christ in any particular area. I should say that this is not a new problem; the church made up of the body of Christ has been extremely small from almost the beginning, and I'd be surprised to see this change before Jesus comes for His body. It seems that it fell into apostasy and people separated from it very early on,[1235] with some of these divisions and separations from Paul's Gospel and the actual body of Christ becoming the so-called Orthodox and Roman Catholic denominations we know today (a number of the so-called "Early Church Fathers" of these denominations, Polycarp and Irenaeus for example, were from the very province that Paul said "all" had turned away from him in during his imprisonment,[1236] which makes any of their

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[1234] *Lies in the mouths of prophets* by Martin Zender: https://martinzender.com/ZWTF/ZWTF8.3.pdf

[1235] *The Myth of the First Century Church* by Justin Johnson: https://graceambassadors.com/tradition/history/the-myth-of-the-first-century-church

[1236] This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. — 2 Timothy 1:15

teachings, and then any of the later teachings by those who accepted their teachings, suspect to begin with), and it seems to have never regained its original size.

This means that, if you can't find any fellow members to fellowship with where you live, you should just keep studying the Scriptures. You're far better off not participating in any religious church gathering than you are participating in Churchianity,[1237] so I'd suggest leaving the Institutional Church behind completely if you're able to.[1238] Yes, it's beneficial to fellowship with like-minded believers if you can find them, but you won't find many, if any, of them in the Christian denominations, at least not if you happen to agree with the conclusions I've come to in this book. That said, at least as of the time this book was last updated, you can find links to a number of other books, magazines, websites, and YouTube channels by members of the body of Christ on the *Concordant Gospel Resources* webpage,[1239] so please check them out.

Regardless of what it is you end up doing, though, if you've become a Pauline Universalist who now understands and believes Paul's Gospel due to what you've learned in this book, I welcome you to the body of Christ, and look forward to meeting you in the heavens in the future. And if you haven't, I'll still see you on the New Earth at some point, and I look forward to that as well.

[1237] *How To Quit Church Without Quitting God* by Martin Zender: https://www.martinzender.com/books/htqc_pb_enlarged.htm

[1238] But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. — 2 Timothy 2:20-21

[1239] *Concordant Gospel Resources*: https://www.concordantgospel.com

Appendix A: Thou shalt preserve them

As you know if you read the rest of this book, I used the *King James Bible* for all of the scriptural references throughout it, and there are many good reasons to have done so, with the overall accuracy of the KJB – not to mention of the TR (*Textus Receptus*) that the Greek Scriptures in it are translated from – compared to most *other* English Bible versions (and the manuscripts that most of *them* are translated from) being an important one. Many King James Bible Believers have another reason they only use the KJB, however, and that's because they believe God promised to preserve His words in written form in Psalm 12:6-7,[1240] and they then assume the KJB *is* that set of preserved words in written form, and in the interest of accuracy, I wanted to quickly discuss this claim.

Now, this is technically actually two claims (that God promised to preserve His words in written form for ever – although it's also important to remember that "for ever" rarely, if ever, literally means "without end" in the KJB, since it's normally a figurative translation, as we learned in chapter 4 of this book – and also that this promise was fulfilled through the KJB rather than in various Hebrew and Koine Greek manuscripts), but we're only going to look at the first claim here. And while there are various other passages they refer to as well, in order to try to defend this assertion (although, if you look at them in context, you'll see that many of those other passages are actually referring strictly to the

[1240] The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. — Psalm 12:6-7

prophetic words[1241] which had just been spoken immediately prior to any

[1241] And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. — Luke 21:7-33

promises made in these passages,[1242] or else to other specific words within Scripture[1243] such as the Mosaic law,[1244] rather than to Scripture as a whole; although, even if any of the "proof texts" *were* referring to preserving Scripture as a whole, literally no passage in the Bible says that God promised to use English to do so, which means that King James Bible Believers can really only use philosophical and theological arguments for the idea that the KJB is the preserved word of God rather than the plain reading of any passages in Scripture, including the one we'll be discussing here), as I already mentioned, they primarily use Psalm 12:6-7 to back this claim, because it says:

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

Of course, if you only read those two verses on their own, cherry-picking them out from among the rest of the chapter they're a part of, it's easy to see why

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[1242] Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. — Isaiah 40:1-8

[1243] As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. — Isaiah 59:21

[1244] For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. — Matthew 5:18

someone might assume they're talking about preserving Scripture. Is that actually what those two verses are referring to, though? Well, as you know by now (presuming you've finished the rest of this book, anyway), a text read out of context is just a pretext for a "proof text," so we have to look at the context of the Psalm as a whole in order to determine what those two verses near the end of it are really talking about rather than just using them as a "proof text" on their own to prove a specific doctrine. Of course, what most people don't really notice when reading the Psalm is that it consists of three separate parts, so let's see how the chapter looks when that fact is taken into consideration, in order to discover what the context of the whole Psalm[1245] is:

Part 1 (verses 1-2), the words of the Psalmist: *Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*

Part 2 (verses 3-5), the words of the Lord: *The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*

[1245] Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted. — Psalm 12:1-8

Part 3 (verses 6-8), the words of the Psalmist: *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

When you break the Psalm down into its three respective parts, we can see that it's talking about three different groups: the wicked, the needy, and God, with:

1) The Psalm beginning as a cry for help to God by the Psalmist because of wicked men oppressing the needy (albeit, only the needy within the Israel of God, since this is a Circumcision writing – and please read chapter 1 of this book if you haven't already and don't know what I mean by that).
2) This cry for help then being followed up by the words of the Lord, where He promises to both protect needy members of the Israel of God, and also to punish the wicked men who are troubling them. And finally...
3) The Psalm is wrapped up by the Psalmist acknowledging God's promise, taking comfort in the fact that the words God spoke there are pure words, and hence that this promise can be trusted, which means he knows that the wicked men he was writing about will *not* remain exalted permanently as they would if God's promises couldn't be trusted, and hence that the needy will indeed be preserved by God.

Scripture itself – particularly Scripture translated into English – is obviously not the main focus, and hence not the context, of this Psalm, and when we consider the context of God promising to deal with those who are harming the needy throughout the rest of the Psalm, there's literally zero reason to assume that the Psalmist suddenly began discussing an entirely different topic (scriptural preservation, not to mention scriptural preservation after it's been translated into one specific language at a much later time) that hadn't even been hinted at anywhere in this Psalm about saving the needy from the wicked *prior* to verse 6. And so, to insist that verses 6 and 7 are suddenly talking about a whole other

topic altogether from the rest of the chapter, with verse 8 then returning to the original topic (even though that verse makes no sense standing on its own the way it would be without verses 6 and 7 being the connective tissue of God's promise to preserve the needy and punish the wicked rather than being a random interjection about God promising to preserve Scripture), rather than these verses telling us that God will preserve the needy as He promised in His words which preceded those two verses, just makes no sense whatsoever, and anyone who insists it does is obviously trying to shoehorn their desired meaning into the two verses (thus practicing eisegesis) rather than interpreting these two verses based on the context of the *rest of the chapter*.

To make this even more clear, if we *did* interpret it the way many King James Bible Believers do, that would mean the Psalm was actually written in four parts rather than just three:

Part 1 (verses 1-2), the words of the Psalmist: *Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*

Part 2 (verses 3-5), the words of the Lord: *The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*

Part 3 (verses 6-7), the words of the Psalmist: T*he words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

Part 4 (verse 8), follow-up words of the Psalmist: *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

If this were what the Psalm was really getting at, it would also mean we'd have to break it down this way instead:

1) The Psalm beginning as a cry for help to God by the Psalmist because of wicked men oppressing the needy.
2) This cry for help then being followed up by the words of the Lord, where He promises to both protect needy people, and also to punish the wicked men who are troubling them.
3) The Psalmist suddenly arbitrarily talking about how God will preserve His words in written form, having nothing to do with the parts of the Psalm that came before or after this supposed interjection. And finally...
4) The Psalmist returning to talking about the wicked men he'd previously been talking about in the Psalm being exalted and walking on every side, for some reason, ending on a down note rather than acknowledging the promise made by God in part 2 to protect the needy.

When you look at it that way, I trust you can see which of those two breakdowns make the most sense, and that this Psalm has nothing to do with scriptural preservation at all.

Of course, there's also a second factor that most people aren't aware of when reading this Psalm, and this is its chiastic structure[1246] (you can see the chiastic, reflective nature of certain words in the Psalm thanks to the colours used, and breakdown of the verses, in the image on the next page):

[1246] *What is a chiasm / chiastic structure in the Bible?*: https://www.gotquestions.org/chiasm-chiastic.html

Psalm 12:1-8 Chiastic Structure:

A1) *1* Help, Lord; for the godly man **ceaseth**;
for the faithful **fail** from among the children of men**.**

B1) *2* They speak vanity every one with his neighbour:
with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak**.**
3 The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips,
and the tongue that speaketh proud things:
4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail;
our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

X) *5* For the oppression of the poor,
for the sighing of the needy,
now will I arise, saith the Lord;
I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

B2) *6* The words of the Lord are pure words:
as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

A2). *7* Thou **shalt keep** them, O Lord,
thou **shalt preserve** them from this generation for ever.
8 The wicked walk on every side,
when the vilest [Hebrew: children of] men are exalted.

As you can see from that breakdown, the words of the Lord referred to in verse 6 are a chiastic, reverse reflection of the words of the ungodly in verses 2 to 4 (telling us that His promises are pure and can be trusted, unlike the vain words coming from the lips of the wicked), and you can also see from the breakdown that verse 7 (combined with verse 8) is a chiastic, reverse reflection of verse 1 (and not of verses 2 to 4, as it would have to be in order to be talking about words rather than people), revealing yet again that verses 6 and 7 have nothing to do with scriptural preservation at all, but are rather talking about the

preservation of the needy as promised by the words of the Lord. Of course, that's not to say that His words *won't* be preserved in written form in some way (whether completely or not, and whether this is done through the KJB or not, at least as far as translations of His words in English go), but by now it should be clear that this isn't what those two verses in Psalm 12 are talking about (and this isn't even considering the Hebrew grammar of the passage itself, which also proves that those two verses don't mean what many King James Bible Believers assume that they do, although I'm going to leave this fact for others to demonstrate[1247] – although, for any King James Bible Believer who disagrees with the conclusions about the Hebrew in that article I linked to in the footnote there, you still have to explain away everything else I already covered here, and so far nobody has been able to do that, or has actually even tried).

Now don't get me wrong here. Defending the reliability of the *King James Bible* is definitely a worthy cause (if it wasn't obvious by now after reading the rest of this book, I'm a King James Bible Believer myself), but one should not do so by misinterpreting it. We have to be honest, both with the text and with our arguments, and so I'm calling on all King James Bible Believers who are doing so to please stop using this passage to try to defend God's preservation of Scripture (in English or otherwise), since it just isn't saying what so many have assumed it is, and because you aren't going to convince anybody who *does* know what this passage is actually talking about by using it to defend scriptural preservation anyway (instead, at best, all you're going to do by using this passage to defend the doctrine is convince them that you don't understand hermeneutics or what this passage means, and at worst you're going to convince them that you're deceptive, and I trust that neither of those conclusions is what you want to convince them of). Besides, if we want to defend the preservation of Scripture,

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[1247] *Did God Promise To Preserve 'His Words' In Psalm 12:5-7?*: https://dustoffthebible.com/Blog-archive/2016/08/08/did-god-promise-to-preserve-his-words-in-psalm-12-6-7

every other passage is basically unnecessary for this purpose anyway, since all we have to do is look at 1 Peter 1:25,[1248] which says:

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

That said, "for ever" in this verse is technically yet another example of "ever" being used as metonymy for the impending "age," as we learned it sometimes is earlier in this book, being translated from the Accusative Singular variation of αἰών rather than from a plural variation of the word. This tells us that "for ever" is a figurative translation in the KJB meaning "for the age" here, referring to the age when the kingdom of heaven will exist on earth for 1,000 years, as we discussed earlier in this book, but it still proves that God's word will be preserved at least until the end of *that* time (it won't need to be preserved on the New Earth once the ages end, since the things of *this* earth and the ages that take place on *it* will no longer be remembered at that time[1249]).

τὸ	δὲ	ῥῆμα	κυρίου
the	but	word	of the Lord
μένει		εἰς τὸν	αἰῶνα
endureth		for the	age

[1248] But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. — 1 Peter 1:25

[1249] For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. — Isaiah 65:17

Appendix B: Myths and misunderstandings

There are a lot of myths and misunderstandings that come up anytime someone begins discussing the Snatching Away. Whether it's due to simple lack of study or due to willful ignorance, I can't say for sure, but whenever the topic comes up, somebody invariably reveals their lack of knowledge about the subject by sharing one or more of the many myths and misunderstandings I'm going to cover in this section.

- **John Nelson Darby invented the Snatching Away.**

Darby certainly helped popularize the idea of the Snatching Away in modern times, but the doctrine predated him by almost two millennia (since it was first taught by the apostle Paul). Just because most Christians had forgotten the doctrine between the time Paul taught about it and Darby's time doesn't mean it's a new invention. There were plenty of doctrines that were forgotten by the majority of Christians between Paul's time and centuries later as well, so the argument that it wasn't popular until recently doesn't really help. Besides, if we're rejecting doctrines for being considered "new" (although really just being rediscovered after being forgotten), Evangelicals and other Protestants need to reject the Protestant Reformation and should all become Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox (whichever you happen to believe is the original Christian church). That said, he didn't discover it himself. It was actually known and taught at various points between the time of Paul and the time he learned about it, even if it wasn't a popular doctrine until then.

- **Darby learned about the Snatching Away from a prophetic vision by a teenage girl named Margaret MacDonald.**

Anyone who grew up in the Plymouth Brethren[1250] as I did laughs whenever they hear this, because it's obvious the one making this claim isn't familiar with the doctrines of Darby's denomination. First of all, the Brethren were quite sexist (and often still are), and would never accept any teaching from a female. But even if the "vision" had been given by a male, Darby would have still rejected it because the Brethren are cessationists and believe that legitimate prophetic visions ended during Paul's time, so he would have rejected any such vision as a deception, either by the one speaking the "prophecy" or by demons giving the "prophecy" to the speaker.

Regardless, if you read the so-called prophecy, it appears that it was actually just about the idea known as the Post-Tribulation Second Coming of Christ anyway, and not about the Snatching Away at all, so this entire myth is based on a complete misunderstanding of what the supposed prophecy said in the first place.

- **Jesus' statements about His Second Coming don't seem to line up with the doctrine of the Snatching Away.**

This is true, and there's a very good reason for this: He wasn't talking about the Snatching Away. Jesus only ever spoke about the Second Coming when He talked about His return. As should be obvious by now based on what you've learned throughout the rest of this book, the Snatching Away was a mystery,

[1250] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth_Brethren

meaning a secret, until the apostle Paul revealed it.[1251] Until then, Jews were looking forward to the resurrection of the just[1252] which will happen "at the last day"[1253] (this is a reference to the last day of the current age, not the last day of the world, which will take place about 1,000 years later), but as I've mentioned before in this book, anyone who does the math – comparing the numbers in Daniel 12:11-13[1254] to the numbers in Revelation 13:5[1255] – will discover that this resurrection won't occur until 75 days after Jesus steps foot on the Mount of Olives.[1256] Meanwhile, Paul told us that the dead in Christ will rise first[1257] (referring to those in the body of Christ who are dead, not to be confused with the saints in the Israel of God who will be resurrected at the resurrection of the

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[1251] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.1 Corinthians 15:51-53

[1252] And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. — Luke 14:14

[1253] Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. — John 11:24

[1254] And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. — Daniel 12:11-13

[1255] And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. — Revelation 13:5

[1256] And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. — Zechariah 14:4

[1257] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

just), then they, along with those in the body of Christ who are still alive, will be caught up to be with Christ in the air, but the gathering of the living saints to Jesus at His Second Coming appears to happen after He fully returns to the earth,[1258] so the difference in timing shows us that these must be two separate events, with the Snatching Away predating the Second Coming by at least 3 and a half years, although probably actually by 7 or more years. This is easily understood by those who have read chapter 1 of this book, because we know that the body of Christ is *not* the same church as the group of believers known as the Israel of God (these are the saints who will be raised at the resurrection of the just, as well as those who will be gathered to Jesus at His Second Coming). The body of Christ has a heavenly destiny[1259] (which is why we meet Christ in the air), while the Israel of God will be ruling over the Gentile nations here on the earth (which is why they'll be gathered to Jesus on the earth when He returns).

- **When the Snatching Away occurs, there will be chaos on earth, including crashed vehicles and airplanes, because so many people will have disappeared, including all the Christians driving and piloting those crashed vehicles and planes.**

Only members of the body of Christ will be caught away in the Snatching Away, and there are very few actual members alive today (likely only a few thousand of us at most, it's been estimated, and possibly quite a smaller number). Members of the Christian religion aren't in the body of Christ (due to not

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[1258] And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. — Matthew 24:30-31

[1259] For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: — Philippians 3:20

understanding – and hence not truly believing – Paul's Gospel), so they won't vanish at that point, and will have to go through the Tribulation. Instead of chaos, odds are high that almost nobody (perhaps nobody at all) will even witness anyone being taken to the heavens when it occurs, and the relatively few people who are caught away will more likely be treated as missing persons cases since the world probably won't even know the Snatching Away happened.

- **The Snatching Away isn't mentioned anywhere in the Bible.**

This is the easiest myth to disprove. Because, aside from what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18,[1260] which is the passage that describes what will happen when the Snatching Away occurs, there's also Philippians 1:18-23[1261] – which we looked at back in chapter 3 of this book – where Paul outright states his desire that the Snatching Away occur soon (and please go re-read chapter 3 if you've

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[1260] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. — 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

[1261] What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: — Philippians 1:18-23

forgotten how this passage proves that the Snatching Away is what Paul said he was *actually* hoping for there, not to mention in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8[1262]).

I could go on, but I want to keep this section relatively short. If you want to learn[1263] more about the timing of the Snatching Away,[1264] though, the links[1265] in

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[1262] For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

[1263] *A Study on the Timing of the Snatching Away, Part 1 (Christ's Coming for the Body of Christ is Distinct from Christ's Coming with All of His Messengers)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2016/01/a-study-on-timing-of-snatching-away.html

[1264] *A Study on the Timing of the Snatching Away, Part 2 (The Day of the Lord and the Coming Indignation)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2016/01/a-study-on-timing-of-snatching-away_10.html

[1265] *A Study on the Timing of the Snatching Away, Part 3 (The Snatching Away will Precede the Coming Indignation)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2016/01/a-study-on-timing-of-snatching-away_68.html

the footnotes[1266] throughout[1267] this sentence[1268] are a good set[1269] of articles[1270] on the topic.[1271]

[1266] *Before the Pangs Begin: A Defense of the Imminence of the Snatching Away (Part One)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2019/05/before-pangs-begin-defense-of-imminence.html

[1267] *Before the Pangs Begin: A Defense of the Imminence of the Snatching Away (Part Two)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2019/05/before-pangs-begin-defense-of-imminence_15.html

[1268] *The Timing of the Snatching Away in Relation to the 70th Week (Part One)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2019/05/the-timing-of-snatching-away-in.html

[1269] *The Timing of the Snatching Away in Relation to the 70th Week (Part Two)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2019/05/the-timing-of-snatching-away-in_18.html

[1270] *Why the snatching away will precede "the Lord's day" (part one)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2021/05/why-snatching-away-will-occur-before.html

[1271] *Why the snatching away will precede "the Lord's day" (part two)* by Aaron Welch: https://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com/2021/05/why-snatching-away-will-occur-before_20.html

Appendix C: Out of nothing

Most Christians believe the Bible teaches that God created the universe out of nothing. Aside from the fact that it's entirely impossible to create anything out of nothing, this idea (which is a concept that is generally referred to as "*creatio ex nihilo*") isn't actually taught anywhere in Scripture anyway, so simply put, no, He didn't. Instead, I believe that both logic and Scripture teach something else, which is that the universe was "*creatio ex deo*," meaning created out of God Himself, and Romans 11:36[1272] (which says: *"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things"*) backs this up.

I realize it probably sounds blasphemous to many, but the fact of the matter is that the whole universe really is made out of a "part" of God, so to speak (note the quotation marks there, which are there because there's no good way to actually explain this, since God as a whole is beyond our comprehension and ability to fully describe, but we do still have to use words to try to explain our points about Him, and "part" is the best word I could come up with for this point). This doesn't mean that we ourselves are God, however (which would be Pantheism), because the universe isn't all there is (as would be the case under Pantheism). Instead, while a "part" of God does manifest within the physical universe,[1273] He ultimately transcends the universe at the same time (*"heaven*

[1272] For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. — Romans 11:36

[1273] After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. — Matthew 6:9

and the heaven of heavens cannot contain [Him]," as 2 Chronicles 6:18 tells us,[1274] and as I discussed in chapter 3 of this book). So, instead of Pantheism, I believe that Pan**en**theism is true instead, which basically just means that God "transformed" a "part" of Himself into "universe," meaning into space, time, and matter, and, in fact, that the whole universe exists within that "part" of God (which is also backed up by Acts 17:28,[1275] which says: *"For in him we live, and move, and have our being*" – and remember, Paul wasn't saying that to people who were already saved; this was a general point about God Himself and creation itself).

In response to this, I have heard it said that, "I believe God spoke all into existence. Everything is vibrating. This sound/vibration came out of God and didn't exist until spoken." And while Genesis does indeed seem to say that God "spoke" (note the quotation marks again, indicating that I'm using the word figuratively) all into existence, it's important to recognize that vibrations require something to vibrate. You can't vibrate matter out of something that doesn't exist, so it could only be God Himself that vibrated, if this is the case. Simply put, if He used vibrations to create the universe, He vibrated a "part" of Himself, so to speak, into "universe."

Besides, for God to form the universe out of **something** called "nothing" (if that were even possible), there would have to be a "nothing" already existing "beside" Him, so to speak, before the universe existed, to form it out of (to create something "*ex*" – or "*out of*" – something, even something called "nothing," that something would have to first exist in order to have something new created out of it; or, to put it another way, if I wanted to create a new "thing" out of another *specific* "thing," that *specific* thing would have to exist for

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[1274] But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! — 2 Chronicles 6:18

[1275] For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. — Acts 17:28

me to create something out of *it specifically*, even if that *specific* "thing" was "nothingness"). And if anything other than God existed "before" space/time/matter did, it would mean that **something** called "nothing" (or "nothingness") already existed in a "universe" of its own "beside" God, since it would have always been existing outside of God, and hence would not have been created by God. In fact, it would then have had to have been created by *another* God (or *be* another God). Unless, of course, you believe that God first created **something** called "nothingness," then created the universe out of that nothingness. But even then, that thing called nothingness would have had to have been created out of a "part" of Himself (unless He created that "nothingness" from another, already-existing "nothingness," but then where did the first "nothingness" come from?), so the end result would be the same, if it were actually even possible for "nothing" to exist, which it really isn't. You see – and this is getting into the topic of ontology – for **something** called "nothing" to exist, it would have to already be **something**, and if it's **something**, it's not nothing, which means that "nothing" can't actually exist at all, and hence there never was a "nothing" to create the universe out of. So, simply put, in the beginning there was only God to create the heavens and the earth (the universe, in other words) out of.

This also answers the question of why there is something rather than nothing as well, by the way, because, if "nothing" can't exist, then something *has* to exist, and we believers know that something was originally God.