

IS THIS THE ONLY DAY OF SALVATION?

Is there a "great controversy" between God and Satan—God doing His best to get everybody saved—Satan trying to keep them lost—with time now fast running out on God?

by C. Paul Meredith

What about the millions of people living now in Communist Russia and Red China where Christianity is suppressed? Those people did not choose to be born into these godless nations. Are they lost forever because they never hear the true Bible teachings? Will God condemn to an eternally burning "hell" those people who died before the true Gospel was ever brought to them?

Gentiles Without Hope? What is the eternal fate of the countless millions of Asia and Africa who are without Christ? Is this their *only* day of salvation? Are they eternally doomed when they die? Is God about to "shut the door" of salvation in their face?

Paul, in Ephesians 2:11-12, gives the answer. Here is what he wrote to converts in Asia Minor: "Being in time past Gentiles... at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens... and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

Clearly, people who have not heard the way of salvation and the name of Jesus Christ are at least temporarily without hope of salvation—may be lost forever *if* there is no future opportunity of salvation.

But God desires that all humanity *eventually* avail itself of the opportunity for salvation: "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). But, some will say, "Oh, so *everyone* is going to be saved—universal salvation!"

Absolutely not! The Bible does not teach universal salvation.

Notice what II Peter 3:9 says: The Eternal "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is God's will or wish that all would come to a knowledge of the truth so they would repent and be saved from the penalty of sin—death. But some people are not going to repent! For if all repented and met the conditions to eternal salvation, there would be no necessity for casting human beings into the lake of fire, depicted in Revelation 20:15 and 21:8, which will destroy the wicked! Malachi 4:1-3 absolutely disproves the doctrine of universal salvation derived from heathen philosophy. The wicked are to become ashes, left neither root nor branch. There will NOT be a resurrection from the lake of fire. (Write for our free reprint article "Does the Bible Teach Universal Salvation?")

But does this mean there is no hope for the millions who have died in ignorance of the true Christ? No!

God is desirous that all may attain eternal life. He is "longsuffering," not being quick to judge—desirous that all will accept His way of life as revealed in the Holy Bible so we may become His spirit-born children at the resurrection. But we must choose whether we will accept His way.

The Common Attitude. "Well," many will say, "it might seem from what the Bible says, that God would not be fair if He did not give those people who lived in the Old Testament times a chance in the future;

but all of us since Christ are having our chance now, and we must be saved by the time Christ comes again or we will be lost."

Yes, that does *SEEM* to be the idea, and almost everyone today believes it to be a fact. It appears to be so evident that no one even questions the matter. It is taken for granted.

Did you ever hear it questioned? No, you probably never have in your lifetime. People do not investigate. "Everybody can't be wrong"—is the popular attitude!

It would appear from the common teachings that salvation is open to everyone today and that all one has to do now is to "join a church" and be "saved." But is everyone free to accept salvation and be saved any time one wishes? Or has God purposely *blinded* some to salvation in this day?

Let us see what the Bible teaches about this subject. It concerns every one of us.

Why Ancient Israel Blinded. Note what Moses said to the ancient Israelites shortly after he had led them out from Egypt: "Ye have seen all that the Eternal did before your eyes in the land of Egypt... those great miracles: yet the Eternal [not Satan] hath not given you an heart to perceive, eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (Deuteronomy 29:2-4).

God, Himself, had blinded Israel. Why?

Now notice Ezekiel 20. This chapter is vitally important. It is a summary of God's dealings with rebellious Israel. Particularly take note of verses 11 and 12: "And I gave them my statutes and shewed

them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths.”

But what did God do when they rebelled? Verses 24 and 25 tell us: “Because they had not executed my judgments . . . had polluted my sabbaths . . . wherefore *I gave them also* [over to] *statutes that were not good* and judgments whereby they should not live.” God said He gave them over to other laws by which they should not live!

All through the Bible, after it tells of God’s punishments, it quotes what God said was His reason for blinding people: “That they may know that I am the Eternal.” This phrase occurs over fifty times, with slight variation. Ezekiel 20:26 is an example. Yes, God wants everyone to truly know Him. Whosoever rejects knowledge will be punished in order to learn of God and His ways by hard experience.

But what was the reason for blinding Israel? Are they lost forever?

Why God Blinds. Man naturally wants to do things that are contrary to God’s Laws. “The carnal mind [which we all have before conversion] is enmity against God” (Romans 8:7). Compare this with Romans 3:9-18 and then with Galatians 5:17. “The flesh [man’s natural heart and mind] lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and they are contrary the one to the other.” All have a desire—lust—to go contrary to God’s Laws. (James 1:14 and Psalm 81:11-12.)

A person’s carnal mind remains at enmity against God *until* that person becomes sick and tired of the results of his own ways, repents of them, and calls on God to change him by giving him the Holy Spirit—the very mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5).

Satan has deceived man into rejecting truth and into doing what is right in his own eyes, wanting to sin—wanting to break God’s Laws. It is by this means that God blinds him—not to destroy him, but to bring him to repentance. Concerning blinded Israel, Paul said: “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all” (Romans 11:32).

So ancient Israel isn’t lost forever.

Their time of salvation is yet coming.

The Creation of Character Takes Time. Nothing that God has ever created begins to compare with the delicate thing that He is creating in man—CHARACTER. God knows that it *takes time* to do this. He, Himself, said “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always” (Deuteronomy 5:29). God is not in a hurry to save all until they have learned their lesson.

The Eternal let ancient Israel try various forms of human government, as the books of Judges and Kings explain. Human beings are blinded to the Kingdom of God because they believe that their own forms of government are right. Today, we have democracies, dictatorships, and other forms of government. None has brought happiness!

Christ Didn’t Convert Everyone! Christ said to the disciples: “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: But unto them [the vast majority] 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” (Mark 4:11-12).

Do you catch the significance of this verse? Some of Jesus’ parables were spoken so that the truth might remain hidden. But why? What is the mysterious purpose of God that is taking shape before our eyes without our realizing it? Here is the answer:

Man does not know his own inability to rule either himself or the world as compared with the ability of God. The Father wants us to develop our initiative and ability. But He also wants us to recognize that He is the One to whom we should go with our problems and that His Laws are best and that He is the true ruler of the earth. He wants us to know that we must have His very Spirit within us (Acts 2:38).

Of all material things that God has ever created, man is far superior to others in his ability to reason and to make things. But—these abilities are of no value to God—indeed they are a hindrance—if man’s will or desire to use these abilities is against God’s will! “Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). God wishes His will to be done in us.

When man has—through spiritual blindness—had an opportunity to exercise his own will and seen the evil results of it, he is ready to have his old self—his own will—killed, “buried with him [Christ] by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4), and willing to present his body as a living sacrifice to God—a living body through which God can carry out His will (Romans 12:1).

Are the Majority Blinded? Paul, speaking to the Romans concerning their Gentile forefathers, said: “As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a *reprobate mind* . . . being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness . . . full of envy” (Romans 1:28-29). Again, “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief [all mankind] that he might have mercy on all” (Romans 11:32). The Gentiles [nations] were blinded then and they are blinded today.

What about Israel? “Even so then at this *present* time there is a remnant [just a remnant] according to the election of grace” (Romans 11:5). A few had received the chance of salvation—but notice verse 7: “. . . the rest [the vast majority] were blinded.”

The same is true today. The few, whosoever will, may come to God; but the vast majority won’t, because they are blinded to God’s truth by thinking their ways are better. Jesus never once said that everyone is called to salvation in this age.

Paul said: “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (I Cor. 1:26). Only those drawn by the Spirit of God can come to Christ (John 6:44, 65).

In this connection some have been confused by II Corinthians 6:2, which seems to say that now is the *ONLY* day of salvation. But the word “the” in the King James Version is actually misleading, because *it is absent in both the Hebrew and the Greek*. Actually, II Corinthians 6:2 was quoted by Paul from the Old Testament. Paul is quoting Isaiah 49:8. But the Hebrew text of Isaiah 49:8 does *not* have a definite

article. Neither does the Greek text of II Corinthians 6:2. The first part of the verse is more correctly rendered as follows: "I have answered thy prayer, he says, in a [not the only one] time of pardon, I have brought thee help in a [not the only one] day of salvation" (Knox translation).

Certainly, this is the day of salvation for those who have been called and whose minds have been opened to the truth by God. *Now* is their chance—their opportunity to qualify for His Kingdom. This is *the* day of salvation for them. But it is *not* the day of salvation for the vast majority. They will receive their chance—their *first* and *only* chance—at a later time. It is *a* day of salvation, but *not* the *only* day of salvation.

Consider also that if it were the *only* day of salvation in Paul's time—then it is closed to us today. But Paul was quoting a scripture hundreds of years old. Was that time—in the days of Isaiah—the only day of salvation? Obviously NOT. Today, as in the time of Paul, it was only one of several times of salvation.

Blinded Spiritually. So we see that the vast majority of all peoples today are blinded! "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction" (Matt. 7:13). People today are spiritually in Babylon! Remember, it is a great religious power with its roots in the ancient city of Babylon—"Babylon the great"—that deceives this world (Rev. 17:2, 5; 18:4).

The vast majority will continue to remain so blinded that they will even fight against Christ at His second coming—not recognizing who He is. The devil will have them so deceived that they will think Jesus is "antichrist" (Rev. 17:13-14).

Of course, people blinded to the truth can have salvation *now* if they will earnestly ask God to show them His ways and then be willing to follow these ways. "Whosoever will may come."

But only a relatively small number will seek salvation in this age. These will be used to teach, rule, and judge those called later in the millennium (Rev. 1:6; I Cor. 6:2).

But what of the vast blinded majority who never had an opportunity? Are they damned because they

were blinded to the ways of salvation?

Now, as God is just, and as it is He who has permitted the majority to be blinded, then He will have to remove the blindness to give them a chance—their *first* chance—not a second chance?

He has promised to do it. "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations"—the veil of spiritual darkness (Isaiah 25:7). It is no stigma or disgrace to your loved ones or others that they are among those that are blinded now. God's plan calls for the removal of blindness from only a few now. It is His responsibility.

Salvation in the Millennium. God has allotted six thousand years to mankind here on this earth in which they can try out all methods of living which they think will bring them happiness. Look at the world today for the results! Now—in this very end time—man is writing a finish to a history of his poor attempt to rule himself without God's help—a history that all may profit by when they have their first chance. The world today is feverishly preparing to drench itself in a blood bath.

What happens after this?

"The people that walked in darkness [blindness] have seen a great

light [the blindness removed] . . . for unto us a child is born . . . and the government shall be on his shoulder . . . of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:2-7).

This tells of Christ's birth and of His taking over the rule of this earth for 1000 years at His second coming (Rev. 20:4).

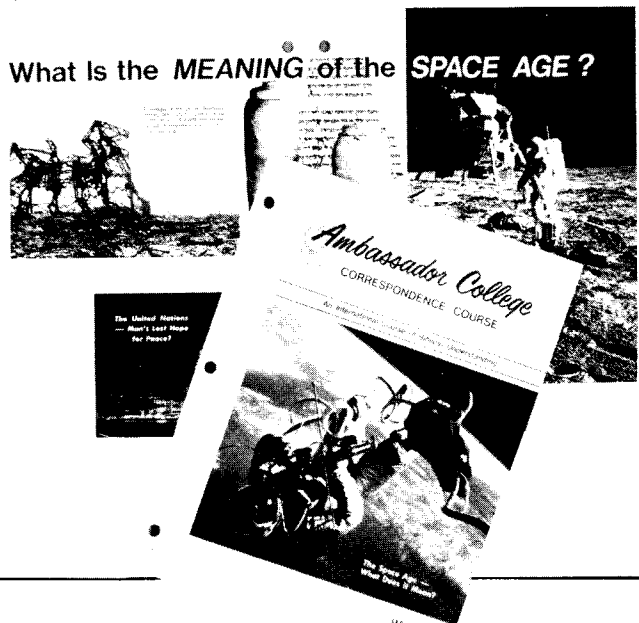
This is the long-awaited millennium.

This is the time God has set to really start to save the people. Blindness will be removed; the people will see God's mercy and love clearly. All who are blinded today, but who live into that period, will have their first opportunity for salvation. Christ will come with "ten thousands" of His saints to execute judgment and convince all that are ungodly of their ungodly deeds (Jude 14, 15). The devil will be chained so he cannot deceive people (Revelation 20:1-3). The saints will be ruling the nations *here on earth* (Dan. 7:27; Luke 19:17; Rev. 2:26, 27; 5:10).

Christ will pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Acts 2:17), and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Eternal (Isaiah 11:9). God will cleanse the people and give them a new heart and a new spirit, and cause them to walk in His statutes and judgments (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

THE BIBLE AND THE SPACE AGE. Surprising as it may seem, the Space Age was predicted centuries ago. The first lesson of the Ambassador College Correspondence Course makes it plain. Why not enroll today?

What Is the **MEANING** of the **SPACE AGE** ?



The whole chapters of Isaiah 11 and Zechariah 14 describe this time more fully.

But the people who live on from this life into the thousand-year period are relatively few compared to the millions and millions that have died blinded to the truth. What about them?

When Is Vast Majority Saved? Notice Revelation 20:5: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Now read verse 11-12: "And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it . . . and I saw the dead, small and great, stand [a resurrection] before God, and the books were opened . . . which is the book of life [there is still a chance of obtaining eternal life], and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books . . ."

They are to be judged by the Word of God—the books of the Bible—in accordance with what they have done in this life and what they will do after they are resurrected to mortal life.

This scene in Revelation 20 pictures the climax of God's plan—the great white throne judgment, when the vast number of unsaved people will be resurrected and be given their first chance for salvation—all those millions and millions who have lived and died since the time of Adam up through our age, and have not known the true way to eternal life.

Salvation will be open to all then

resurrected, just as in the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, only now there will be many more to accept it.

This will not be a **SECOND CHANCE**. Here's why. If they were blinded when they formerly lived, they never had a *first* chance. The ancient inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon will be resurrected and those people who were formerly blinded will be given their first chance (Matt. 11:22). Also, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will be resurrected (Matt. 10:15), and their deceived citizens will have their first chance. God is a just God. He is giving even the worst of the people who were blinded before Christ's second coming their first opportunity to receive salvation.

Ezekiel 37:11-14 gives a good picture of how this physical resurrection will be accomplished for all people. Here it is speaking of Israel as a type of all nations. This shows how the spiritual begetting and growth comes about. Here are people receiving the Father's Holy Spirit for the first time, just as a few are being called today to receive it.

People will live in the physical *flesh* for a period of time sufficient to be given a just and fair opportunity to receive salvation—eternal *spirit* life in God's Kingdom. But they will have to *choose* whether or not to accept God's way (Deut. 30:19).

All this information ought not come as a surprise. For anyone could and would understand this

great and comforting truth if he were observing God's command to keep the Holy Days, which show God's plan of salvation. In Leviticus 23:34, the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles represents salvation in the 1000-year period; and the eighth day, in verse 36, represents the great white throne judgment period when the vast majority will be resurrected and have their first opportunity to be saved from sin.

All this is explained in our booklet *Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* Write for your free copy.

No, the blinded world today does not understand that the Father is in the process of making from mortal man, here on this earth, a spirit family of His very own—a family that is being carefully trained. His family will constitute the Kingdom of God, living by and administering His laws of love which are written in the heart and mind (Jer. 31:33-34 and Heb. 8:10).

After blinded man has had a lifetime of sad experience living by his own way of life, he will be resurrected back to physical life and have his blindness removed so that he can see and practice God's way of life—the only way that leads to happiness. Then, and only then, is God going to save the vast majority of mankind and give eternal life to those who are willing to come under His loving rule and aid Him in administering wisely the great power He will share with them. □

IF YOU DIE... WILL YOU LIVE AGAIN?

You are going to be surprised by the New Facts you will learn about life after death in this article—facts you may never have been taught, but information your Bible has always contained.

by C. Paul Meredith

Is death the end of everything? Just what is the chance of your coming back to life, or living again?

Anyone in great physical danger fights for his life! He exerts almost superhuman energy to save himself—and he does not give up until all strength is gone.

Why this fear of death?

The answer is obvious—death is the opposite of life. It snuffs out this very mortal life that you would defend with all your strength.

All people down through the ages have had to die, but this is not a satisfying answer when you yourself have to face it.

Whether or not you realize it, your only hope of living again is by a *resurrection!* But what is your assurance, if any, of such an occurrence? Where can you look for such assurance?

You can look to the Bible. It will give you the answers to those important life and death questions that no human mind can give. It is the revealed Word of God.

One of the most important subjects in the Bible is the Kingdom of God. It can also be called the Family of God. It will be a family of SPIRIT BEINGS with God the Father at the head; Christ will be the eldest Son, and those who are finally saved at the resurrection will be the other sons.

The resurrection to immortality represents the vital transition from this mortal body—by being born again—into the spirit form, and entrance into the Kingdom of God! “Except a man be born again, he

cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). As we proceed to study the various resurrections, let us keep in mind how God the Father reveals His plan to us. It will build our faith in the resurrection. We will know that we are in a world that is running according to a preconceived, definite plan.

Resurrection of Jesus Christ Foretold in Advance. From the time Adam and Eve sinned, God foretold the coming of one who would again give man an opportunity for immortal life, and foretold of His descent through Abraham. He who was to give us the opportunity of a resurrection to eternal life—Christ.

David foretold Jesus’ resurrection about 1000 years B.C. (Psalm 16:10), and Isaiah about 700 years B.C. (Isaiah 7:14 and 26:19). Christ Himself foretold that His resurrection would occur the third day.

The resurrection of Christ was an entirely different type of event than has ever happened on this earth before or since. The pagans had taught about immortal souls and that people returned to life after death in various other forms (i.e., reincarnations), but they could never produce proof. Christ, before His crucifixion, raised many of the dead back to life to fill out their natural life span (Matt. 9:24, 25; Matt. 10:8; Luke 7:15; John 11:44).

These resurrections were all only for a relatively short return to a physical life, and were of no great importance except to the ones involved. But on Christ’s resurrection depends the resurrection and eternal life of all of us, for I Cor.

15:17, 18 says, “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.” Doomed to eternal death.

Do you understand it? Had Christ been an ordinary mortal man without the Spirit of God, He would have sinned sometime during His life and could not have paid our debt for sin. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23)—eternal death. His sin would have taken His own life and God would not have resurrected Him. He would have had no life left to pay for our sins—we could not expect to be resurrected to eternal life.

Resurrection Appearances. God saw to it that the crucifixion and the resurrection were well witnessed. Christ’s healing and miracles had attracted a large following. People were interested in Him wherever He went. On the day of His crucifixion a large multitude was present (Matt. 27:24).

Mary (Jesus’ mother) and the other two Marys and John were present also (John 19:25, 26).

Because Christ said He would rise the third day, the chief priests and Pharisees took great precautions to see that His body did not disappear by being stolen by the disciples: A guard was set and a great stone was rolled over the sepulcher entrance (Matt. 27:63-66).

Christ’s body did disappear though. Christ was resurrected as a divine spirit being! He had been resurrected from the dead the third day and appeared to Mary Magda-

lene (John 20:1, 14), the disciples (John 20:19), and after that about 500 people saw him at one time! (I Cor. 15:6.) Fifty days later in Jerusalem a large number gathered from all over the world to observe Pentecost and await the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

From this point, the news of the resurrection was spread by the apostles (Acts 4:2) and their converts.

Resurrection Is Necessary. You have probably been taught that you have been born with an immortal soul which goes immediately to heaven, purgatory or hell when you die. This is not true. Your Bible does not teach it! "The first man is of the earth, earthy" (I Cor. 15:47).

The same Hebrew word *nephesh* which means fleshly life—whether of animal or man—was translated "creature" in Gen. 1:24, where it was associated with animals, and "soul" in Gen. 2:7, where the Bible speaks of man becoming a living soul.

In other words, both animal and man are composed of one thing—the same thing—mortal flesh, and, as born into this world, one has no more an immortal soul inside him than the other! (Eccl. 3:19, 20).

No one would contend that any beasts are in purgatory or eternal torment.

Another passage, which shows that anyone who dies goes to his grave and is there now, is Acts 2:29 which shows that David is now in his sepulcher, "David... is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day."

Now notice this: if people are in heaven, purgatory or hell, then they are still alive; therefore they could not be resurrected—for the very word "resurrection" itself implies that those resurrected were dead.

Therefore a resurrection is necessary if a person who once died is brought to life again! Otherwise we could not attain immortality and God would be defeated in His main purpose of creating man—the creation of a spirit being. But we do have this hope of a resurrection.

Bible Teaches Resurrection for All. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). Paul said this when he was being tried before Felix. Do you

grasp the meaning of this? *Everyone* is going to be resurrected.

"The hour is coming, in 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 [judgment]" (John 5:28, 29). Daniel 12:2 gives the same thought—a resurrection for everyone.

Now you are going to be in for a surprise. You are going to learn of one resurrection (and possibly two) that you probably never heard of before.

The First Resurrection. The first resurrection of man to immortality that has ever occurred in this world (except Christ's), will occur when Christ comes at the last trump. I Thessalonians 4:16-17 describes this: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a [great] shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump [last 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." They will go *immediately* to Jerusalem to start their 1000-year rule. Read Zechariah 14.

This is the resurrection just ahead now. I Corinthians 15:51 through 56 describes this same resurrection and Revelation 11:15 describes the blowing (sounding) of the "last trump" which ushers this period in.

The **JUST** will be raised by the power of God exerted through Jesus Christ (John 6:44). These are they who have repented (i.e., turned from their former ways), been baptized, received the gift of the Holy Spirit and were overcomers to the end (Acts 2:38 and Romans 8:11).

Note. This Holy Spirit is a **GIFT** that is given only to those who qualify to receive it.

Of this resurrection, Revelation 20:6 says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death [i.e., the eternal death] hath no power..."

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them..." (Rev. 20:4). This is

the resurrection to the spirit form (I Cor. 15:44) just described. Now notice verse 5, "... but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"—all but the good remain dead through the 1000 years. There are no resurrections in the millennium of those who died *before* the thousand years began.

A thousand-year period follows Christ's second coming and during this time Christ rules the earth (Isaiah 11; Jeremiah 31:1-18, Ezekiel 36). This one thousand years is the time represented by the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34 and Exodus 23:16) in God's Holy Days. It is a time when God really begins in earnest to save people who live in the end of this age and into the world tomorrow.

Another Resurrection. At the end of the thousand years, during which time Christ has been ruling the world and the earth has been full of the knowledge of the Eternal (a condition that certainly has not been present up to now), there will be another resurrection.

Some of us were told ever since we can remember that if anyone is not saved in the present life then he is eternally lost.

But what about all those millions and millions of people back there who were born before Christ's time who never had the chance of salvation because Christ had not yet come to make it available?

Remember this important biblical fact. Salvation is only possible through the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Notice Acts 4:12. "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Revised Standard Version). Other passages in the New Testament express the very same principle. Note an important verse in Paul's first letter to Timothy: "For there is one God, and there is *one mediator* between God and men, the man Jesus Christ" (I Tim. 2:5, RSV). The gospel of John puts it in a slightly different manner. "Truly, truly, I say unto you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber... Jesus again said to—

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The answer is yes, we do.

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So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses and phone numbers are as follows:

- United States: P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123 (Or simply

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- New Zealand and Pacific Isles: P.O. Box 2709, Auckland 1, New Zealand (or dial Auckland 686-114—reverse the charges.)
- Australia: P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220 (Or dial this number: 075-35-4233—reverse the charges.)
- Canada: P.O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2M2
- South Africa: P.O. Box 1060, Johannesburg 2000 (Or dial this number: 011-216406.)

them. Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers . . . *I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved . . .*” (John 10:1, 7-9, RSV).

It is only through Jesus Christ that we may be saved. The Bible says, “If the Spirit [the Holy Spirit] of him [God the Father] that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ . . . shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:11). But the Holy Spirit from the Father was not generally available to people on the earth until after Christ ascended.

Christ had to ascend unto heaven first. Christ said in John 16:7, “For if I go not away, the Comforter [the Holy Spirit] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” The Holy Spirit first came to this earth to be available to all men nearly two months after Christ was crucified. It came on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

These millions are not lost forever. They never were called to be saved! God is a just God and He has provided a way whereby they can be saved.

Also, what about the great number since Christ's day who have shown very little interest in religion

and have died? Are they lost forever? No, because they have never had a chance for salvation. They are blinded.

No Second Chance. Now notice when (and at what event) God is going to give these people their *first* chance for salvation. It cannot take place before Christ returns to the earth at His second coming because that will bring about the first resurrection. It will not take place then, but only after one thousand years have elapsed from the time for the first resurrection, because as we have already seen, only those who have qualified for eternal life *before* Christ's second coming will be resurrected then. (Also see Rev. 20:5.)

Therefore there are only two classes this resurrection can possibly refer to—the incorrigibly wicked who have knowingly rejected the truth or the dead who never had a chance. The evil in the first case are those who deliberately decided they did not want to be ruled by God. There is no reason to give them a second chance to attain immortality. They had their chance and turned it down.

Therefore it is the vast blinded majority, who never really had a chance to accept God's way of life, who are resurrected.

Read what Revelation 20:11-12

says about this resurrection: “And I saw a great white throne . . . and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God [these people are standing—a resurrection] . . . and another book was opened, which is the book of life [they are given life]; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books.”

It is the great white throne judgment. Even the worst of the sinners who never had a chance will be in this resurrection, for even the inhabitants of Sodom will be there. (Matt. 10:15; 11:23,24; Luke 10:12.)

God is indeed a just God (Deut. 32:4) and all will have their chance to be saved.

The Final Resurrection. Revelation 20:13-15 describes the final resurrection in which the sea, death, hell (*hades*, the grave) give up their dead to be judged. These are they who, after being begotten by God, rebelled, and those who have lived contrary to God's way of life and have refused to repent, be baptized, and thus receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are cast into the lake of fire which is described in verse 14 as the second death.

It is an everlasting death!

Why So Many Resurrections? At first glance it seems strange that there are so many resurrections, but let us examine. God the Father is forming a spirit family of His very own from us mortals here on this earth, but He is also seeing to it that we develop into beings of character—beings that can ultimately be trusted with the great power that God will give us.

This will take *time* in order that man may learn that his own ways of doing things, guided by his own natural tendencies, are wrong and that he must be guided by God's laws in all his activities or only wretchedness and death will result.

God is going to enlarge His Kingdom gradually. An increasing number will be given immortality at each resurrection. Only those who qualify to become spirit beings and are changed into spirit can enter into this kingdom, for I Cor. 15:50 says, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

Matthew 13:31-32 describes the manner of growth of this kingdom:

“The kingdom of heaven [or Kingdom of God] is like to a grain of mustard seed . . . which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among the herbs, and becometh a tree.”

Only one person has been born into this Kingdom so far—that is Jesus Christ. This was done by His resurrection to immortality (Romans 8:29; Col. 1:18).

These resurrections to immortality which are to give birth to the rest of the citizens of this spirit kingdom have not started yet, but will start at Christ’s second coming.

These people who are transformed into spirit beings will be used to govern the mortal beings here on this earth. These spirit beings of the Kingdom will be rulers, priests, and judges (Rev. 1:6; 20:4; I Cor. 6:2). Ultimately ALL mortal men must be in this spirit kingdom or cease to exist!

No wonder the apostles, who were all witnesses to the resurrection

of Christ to immortality (Acts 2:32; 3:15), were so joyous that they went diligently up and down the land preaching this hope.

It CAN Happen to You. The apostles had the Old Testament scriptures to read. They knew that David had said there would be a resurrection. They knew that Isaiah had later said the same thing. They also knew that Job had spoken of a resurrection from the dead to immortality. Christ had told them time and again “He must . . . be killed and be raised again the third day” to immortality (Matt. 16:21). It was too great a thing for them to comprehend. For even when told He had been resurrected, “they [still] knew [comprehended] NOT the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead” (John 20:9).

But when the *resurrected* Christ soon afterward came back to these same apostles, who had witnessed closely His terrible death, and remained among them for some

time—“Being seen of them forty days” (Acts 1:3)—and when they, at the end of this time, saw Him ascend into heaven (verse 9), they became convinced a resurrection of themselves and all people to immortality is possible.

No wonder they were so joyous that they went diligently up and down the land preaching the Good News—the Gospel—of a resurrection into the Kingdom of God. *Your* belief in a resurrection to eternal life is based on fact. It is true! Men like yourself witnessed and recorded for you the resurrection of another man of the same flesh as yourself—Christ (Heb. 2:14). A resurrection *can* happen to you! □

ADDITIONAL READING

And now you should read the following booklets: *Do You Have an Immortal Soul?* and *After Death—Then What?* These publications are sent free of charge as a public service.

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