

THE ATONEMENT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

BY

ROLF J. FURULI PH.D



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- *RF* -

IN MEMORY OF MY BELOVED WIFE ANNE-SISSEL WHO
SERVED JEHOVAH FAITHFULLY FOR 65 YEARS

I EXPECT TO MEET HER AGAIN IN THE RESURRECTION IN THE
MILLENNIUM

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The coming paradise on the earth is the result of the atonement between God and man, and the picture of the paradise is taken from: <https://kayumahavurah.org/2018/10/05/>.

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus bought Adam and all Adam's descendants when he died, and the ransom sacrifice was given to save what was lost. It was human perfection and the right to live forever on the earth that was lost. Because of the application of the ransom sacrifice, all Adam's descendants, except the few who have sinned against the holy spirit, will be present during the millennium, either because they have survived the great tribulation or have received a resurrection. The ransom sacrifice will be applied to each individual, and at the end of the millennium, what was lost is completely restored. Now the atonement between God and man is completed. All humans are perfect and without sin, and each person will get the same chance that Adam got: Either to worship Jehovah and live forever on the earth or refuse to worship God and die.

In 1899, C.T. Russell published the book, *The At-one-ment Between God and Man*, which was volume V in the *Millennial Dawn* series. This book expressed the same view that is expressed in the rectangle above, and this was also the view of the Bible Students.

In 1931, the Bible Students took the name Jehovah's Witnesses. Among all the Christian denominations, Jehovah's Witnesses is the only one whose basic doctrines are directly based on the Bible. In spite of this, the issue regarding the atonement between God and man has been clouded. And the present members of the Governing Body have devalued and restricted the doctrines of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection.

This book shows how different viewpoints of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection have developed among Jehovah's Witnesses in a zigzag fashion, and it contains a detailed analysis of the Bible passages that discuss the atonement between God and man.

God promised Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the world will be blessed. This means that there are two groups of humans, the seed of Abraham and all the others. When you read a passage in the Bible, is this passage addressed to the seed of Abraham or to the other group? I ask this question because it turns out that there are two different hopes of salvation, one earthly and one heavenly. Abraham's seed will reign with Jesus Christ in heaven, and the other group will live in the paradise on the earth.

It is important to understand that the atonement between God and man functions differently for each of these two groups. This means that if you do not have a good understanding of the two different hopes of salvation, you will not fully understand the ransom sacrifice and the atonement between God and man.

Chapter 1 has a detailed analysis of the two different hopes of salvation, and it gives a good background for the understanding of the other chapters of the book.

Chapter 2 has a detailed description of the nature and scope of the ransom sacrifice and how this sacrifice is an expression of God's righteousness and love.

Chapter 3 gives an outline of how the understanding of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection have changed through time, from the understanding of the Bible Students that Jesus bought Adam and all Adam's descendants and that all will get a resurrection, to the view of a restricted ransom sacrifice and the view of the limited resurrection of the present members of the Governing Body.

Chapter 4 shows that the vast majority of Adam's descendants will get a resurrection during the millennium and that only the few who have sinned against the holy spirit will be everlastingly annihilated.

Chapter 5 shows that the new view of the members of the Governing Body regarding "the resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of judgment" in John 5:29 is wrong and that the old view is correct.

Chapter 6 has a detailed analysis of the texts the members of the Governing Body have used to prove that billions of Adam's descendants will be eternally annihilated without having had the chance to hear the truth about God and take a stand for him. The analysis shows that these billions of people will not be eternally annihilated but that they will get a resurrection.

Chapter 7 discusses an account of Jesus that is used to show that only a few persons will be saved.

Chapter 8 discusses what will happen during the millennium, and it shows that the atonement between God and man will be fully accomplished at the end of the millennium.

Chapter 9 shows that when the atonement between God and man is fully accomplished, every knee will bend to Jehovah and every tongue will swear loyalty.

AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TWO DIFFERENT HOPES IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

—REVIEW—

It is impossible to understand the Bible and what it says about the atonement between God and man if we do not understand that there are two different hopes of salvation, one heavenly hope and one earthly hope. This subject is discussed in detail in this chapter.

The 144,000 kings and priests and the great crowd

The contrast between the two groups is seen in Revelation chapter 7. That the heavenly kings and priests have a finite number is confirmed by Paul in Romans chapter 11. He shows that spiritual Israel consists of the full number of the Jews and the full number of people of the nations and he uses the illustration of an olive tree with a trunk of finite length and a finite number of branches.

Heavenly bodies and earthly bodies

1 Corinthians chapter 15 is dubbed the “resurrection-chapter.” Paul illustrates the resurrection with the sowing of a seed. He says that the fleshly bodies that die can be compared to seeds that are sown. These bodies are similar because they are made of flesh. But they are different because most people die as the penalty for sin. But those who are declared righteous do not have sin and die because they sacrifice their fleshly bodies in order to have a heavenly resurrection. These two groups represent two different “seeds” and God “gives each of the seeds its own body.” Paul shows that when they are resurrected, some get heavenly bodies and others get earthly bodies.

Abraham’s seed and all the nations

The prophecy in Genesis chapter 22 says that through Abraham’s seed, all nations of the earth will be blessed. In Galatians, chapter 3, Paul shows that Jesus Christ is the primary Abraham’s seed and his brothers are the secondary Abraham’s seed that will bless all the nations of the earth.

The heavenly calling and the coming inhabited earth

Hebrews chapters 2 and 3 apply the prophecies of Isaiah’s children to Christians who are both the children of Jesus and the brothers of Jesus. The brothers of Jesus have the heavenly calling. And in addition to these, the text says that in the future there will come an inhabited earth that will be ruled by Jesus Christ.

The children of God and the creation

The letter to the Romans contains many deep truths. In chapter 8, Paul speaks of those who are the children of God as well as the brothers of Jesus. These look forward to a heavenly resurrection. In addition to these, “the creation,” referring to humans who are imperfect, is mentioned. The “creation” looks forward to “be set free from the enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

The brothers of Jesus and the “sheep”

The brothers of Jesus and the “sheep” are mentioned in Matthew chapter 25. The brothers of Jesus are promised a kingdom that is prepared for them “*before* the founding of the world,” and the sheep are promised a kingdom that is prepared for them “*from* the founding of the world.” The prepositions “before”

and “from” are mutually exclusive, and when we know that the brothers of Jesus will be ruling with Jesus in the heavenly Kingdom, the kingdom of the “sheep” must be the earthly Kingdom, the millennium.

The “things in the heavens” and “the things on the earth”

These expressions are used in Ephesians chapter 1 and in Colossian chapter 1. The contexts show that “the things in the heavens” refer to humans who will get a heavenly resurrection and “the things on the earth” refers to humans who will get an earthly resurrection. This shows again, that there are two different hopes of salvation, one for life in heaven and the other for life on the coming inhabited earth.

The “children of God” and “the whole world”

Jesus said that he came to save the world, which is all the descendants of Adam. And in the first letter of John, this subject is discussed. John also shows that Jesus is the savior of the world, and he shows that this includes two different groups of people: Jesus is a propitiatory sacrifice for “the children of God” and also for “the whole world.”

We cannot understand the purpose of God in connection with the ransom sacrifice if we do not understand that there are two different hopes of salvation, one heavenly and one earthly, and how God is calling persons to be a part of the two groups that will see the fulfillment of these hopes. When we understand this, we will also understand to whom the different texts of the Bible are directed.

When we read the Hebrew Scriptures, we see that the hope that is presented is that there will be a new earth with a paradise and that there will be a resurrection of the dead on the last day. Isaiah 65:21-25, says:

²¹They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage.

²²They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full.²³They will not toil for nothing, Nor will they bear children for distress, Because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, And their descendants with them. ²⁴Even before they call out, I will answer; While they are yet speaking, I will hear.²⁵The wolf and the lamb will feed together, The lion will eat straw just like the bull, And the serpent’s food will be dust. They will do no harm nor cause any ruin in all my holy mountain,” says Jehovah.

These words got a symbolic fulfillment when the Jews returned from Babylon. But the descriptions are taken from the first paradise in Eden, and because Jesus shows in Luke 23:43 that there will again be a paradise on the earth, these descriptions must get a literal fulfillment on the new earth.

In the Christian Greek Scriptures, we read about new heavens and a new earth in 2 Peter 3:13. And the hope that is presented to the readers is to receive a heavenly resurrection and reign together with Jesus Christ in the new heavens and over the new earth, as we see in Philippians 3:20, 21:

²⁰But our citizenship exists in the heavens, and we are eagerly waiting for a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our humble body to be like his glorious body by his great power that enables him to subject all things to himself.

When we understand that some servants of God will get a resurrection in the earthly paradise, and others will get a heavenly resurrection, we have the background for the understanding of how the ransom sacrifice will be applied to the human family for the atonement between God and man.

THE 144,000 AND THE GREAT CROWD IN REVELATION CHAPTER 7

When Jesus was on the earth, he preached about the Kingdom of the heavens, and he also sent out his disciples to preach about this Kingdom. This means that the Christian Greek Scriptures were written for the servants of God with the heavenly calling. Nevertheless, the two hopes are mentioned in these Scriptures as well.

THE 144,000 KINGS AND PRIESTS

I start with Revelation 7:3, 4:

² And I saw another angel ascending from the sunrise, having **a seal** (*sfragis*) of the living God; and he called with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying: “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we **have sealed** the slaves of our God in their foreheads.” ⁴ And I heard the number of those who **were sealed** (*sfragizō*), 144,000, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel.

The group of 144,000 individuals are the spiritual Israel, and the tribes that are mentioned in Chapter 7 are not wholly identical to the tribes of fleshly Israel. One identification is that each one has “the seal of the living God.” The noun *sfragis* has the meaning “a seal; a signet ring; an inscription on a seal,” according to Mounce, and the corresponding verb *sfragizō* has the meaning “to seal; to stamp with a seal.”

Who gets the seal of the living God? We read in 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22, (above) and 5:1, 2, (below):

²¹ But the one who guarantees that you and we belong to Christ and the one who **anointed us** is God. ²² **He has also put his seal on us** and has given us **the token of what is to come**, that is, the spirit, in our hearts.

¹ For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, should be torn down, we are to have a building from God, **a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens**. ² For in this house we do indeed groan, earnestly desiring to put on the one for us from heaven.

Those who have the seal are anointed by God, and the seal is “the token of what is to come,” according to 1:22. And “what is to come,” is the hope of the Corinthian Christians “to put on the one (the house) from heaven.” This shows that the seal that is mentioned in Revelation 7:3, 4 is a token of a future life in heaven. Thus, the 144,000 have the heavenly hope.

This is also confirmed in Ephesians 1:3, 4, 13, (above) and 5:5, (below):

³ Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing **in the heavenly places** in union with Christ, ⁴ as he chose us to be in union with him before the founding of the world, that we should be holy and unblemished before him in love

¹³ But you also hoped in him after you heard the word of truth, the good news about your salvation. After you believed, **you were sealed** by means of him with the promised holy spirit, ¹⁴ which is a token in advance of **our inheritance**, for the purpose of releasing God’s own possession by a ransom, to his glorious praise.

⁵ For you know this, recognizing it for yourselves, that no sexually immoral person or unclean person or greedy person, which means being an idolater, has any *inheritance in the Kingdom of the Christ and of God.*

The Christians in Ephesus had the heavenly hope as 1:3 shows. They were sealed with holy spirit, and this seal was a token of “our inheritance,” that referred to the heavenly places. This is confirmed in Ephesians 5:5, with the words “inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.” This is the same as the Kingdom of the heavens. I also quote 1 Peter 1:3, 4:

³ Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ *to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you.*

Peter shows that the inheritance of the Christians was “reserved in the heavens.” The seal that is mentioned in Revelation 7:2, 3 is a token for “what to come” a heavenly resurrection, and a token for “our inheritance,” which is the Kingdom of God. Thus, the seal of the 144,000 shows that the members of this group have the hope of coming to heaven. This is also confirmed in Revelation 14:1, 4:

¹ Then I saw, and look! the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who have his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.

⁴ These are the ones who did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones who keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. *These were bought (agorazō) from (apo) among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.*

The ransom sacrifice of Jesus is used and the 144,000 “are bought from among mankind.” This shows that they are in heaven and not on the earth. We note that they are “firstfruits,” which means that they have received the first resurrection. This helps us with the further identification, as we see in Revelation 20:6:

⁶ Happy and holy is anyone having part in *the first resurrection*; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and they will rule as kings with him for the 1,000 years.

The reason why a small group of God’s servants will get a heavenly resurrection is that they will be a government of kings and priests. That is also the reason why they stand on the heavenly Mount Zion, because this was the mountain where the kings reigned.

I have identified the group of 144,000 by their seal, which is a token of a heavenly inheritance, by the words in Revelation 14:4, that they are bought from among mankind, and by the words in Revelation 20:6 that they are heavenly kings and priests. It is logical that a government has a smaller membership than the number of its subjects. But still, many persons who study the Bible are skeptical of the view of a heavenly government with 144,000 members.

I will use an additional identification, which indicates that spiritual Israel does not have an infinite but a finite number.

THE FINITE NUMBER OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

When the law was given, God wanted the nation of Israel to continue to be his people, and in Exodus 19:5, 6 we read:

⁵ Now if you will strictly obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will certainly become my special property out of all peoples, for the whole earth belongs to me. ⁶ You will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites.”

The Jewish nation did not keep the covenant, and after a period of 70 weeks (490 years) during which the nation got its last chance, the nation was rejected as the people of God. (Daniel 9:24-27) A new spiritual Israel would now be formed, and Peter used words in 1 Peter 2:9, 10, that are similar to those used in Exodus 19:5, 6:

⁹ But you are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies” of the One who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.¹⁰ For you were once not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not been shown mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In the congregation in Rome, there were both Jews and people of the nations. In his letter to this congregation, Paul discusses the spiritual Israel that had members both of Jews and of people of the nations. I quote Romans 2:28, 29, (above) and 9:6-9, (below):

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor is circumcision something on the outside, on the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart by spirit and not by a written code. That person’s praise comes from God, not from people.

⁶ However, it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who descend from Israel are really “Israel.” ⁷ Neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s offspring; rather, “What will be called your offspring will be through Isaac.” ⁸ That is, the children in the flesh are not really the children of God, but the children by the promise are counted as the offspring. ⁹ For the word of promise was as follows: “At this time I will come and Sarah will have a son.”

The Israel of God, spiritual Israel, was not fleshly Israel. But the members were both Jews and people of the nations. Paul uses chapter 11 for a long discussion of how spiritual Israel will be saved. In Romans 11:1-5, Paul shows that while the nation of Israel has been rejected as God’s Kingdom, individual Jews could still be the sons of God. In verse 5, Paul uses the Greek word *leimma* (“remnant”), which according to Louw and Nida refers to “a relatively small part that exists.” The nation of Israel was invited to contribute 144,000 members of spiritual Israel, but most Jews rejected this, and only a remnant, a small number of Jews, were a part of spiritual Israel.

I will now present Paul’s arguments in Romans chapter 11, and I start with verses 26 and 27:

²⁶ and in this manner *all Israel will be saved*. Just as it is written: *“The deliverer will come out of Zion and turn away ungodly practices from Jacob.”* ²⁷ *And this is my covenant with them, when I take their sins away.”*

When Paul says that “all Israel will be saved,” he cannot refer to fleshly Israel because this nation was rejected by God, and only a remnant of Jews was a part of spiritual Israel. Therefore, “all Israel” must be spiritual Israel. Supporting this conclusion are the references to the Hebrew Scriptures that Paul uses to show that “all Israel will be saved.” Paul is quoting from Isaiah 59:20, 21, (above) and 27:9, (below):

²⁰ *“To Zion the Repurchaser will come, To those in Jacob who turn from transgression,”* declares Jehovah.²¹ *“As for me, this is my covenant with them,”* says Jehovah. “My spirit that is on you

and my words that I have placed in your mouth—they will not be removed from your mouth, from the mouth of your children, or from the mouth of your grandchildren,” says Jehovah, “from now on and forever.”

⁹ So in this way the error of Jacob will be atoned for, *And this will be the full fruitage when his sin is taken away*: He will make all the stones of the altar Like chalkstones that have been pulverized, And no sacred poles or incense stands will be left.

I have marked the clauses from which the quotations (references) are taken, and the clauses that are quoted are marked with the same colors. The context of Isaiah 27 does not give any clues as to whether the words of Isaiah are a prophecy about spiritual Israel. But the prophecy in Isaiah 59:20 that ends in 60:22 is a prophecy of spiritual Israel.

Isaiah 60:1 speaks to a woman:

¹ “Arise, O woman, shed light, for your light has come. The glory of Jehovah shines on you.”

This woman is Zion or Jerusalem, which represents the people of God. Zion is also mentioned in Isaiah 59:20 and in Paul’s quotation of these words in Romans 11:26. What is very important in our context, is that several words about this woman Zion in Isaiah 60 are quoted in Revelation chapters 21 and 22, and they are applied to the heavenly Zion or Jerusalem, which is spiritual Israel.

Isaiah 60:1 says regarding Zion that “the glory of Jehovah shines on you,” and what that means is shown throughout the chapter. The first two verses of Revelation chapter 21 speak about “New Jerusalem,” which represents spiritual Israel. The description of New Jerusalem in 21:23-26, and 22:5 is taken from Isaiah chapter 60, as we see when we compare the words in Isaiah with the words in Revelation. We note that Isaiah chapters 59 and 60 speak about Zion or Jerusalem, and Revelation 21:1, 2 applies the words of Isaiah to New Jerusalem:

Isaiah chapters 59 and 60

59:20, 21: ²⁰ “To *Zion* the Repurchaser will come, To those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares Jehovah.²¹ “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says Jehovah. “My spirit that is on you and my words that I have placed in your mouth—they will not be removed from your mouth, from the mouth of your children, or from the mouth of your grandchildren,” says Jehovah, “from now on and forever.”

60:1: ¹ “Arise, O woman, shed light, for your light has come. *The glory of Jehovah shines on you.*

60:3: ³ *Nations will go to your light. And kings to your shining splendor.*

60:5: ⁵ At that time you will see and become radiant, And your heart will throb and overflow, Because the wealth of the sea will be directed to you; The resources of the nations will come to you.

60:11: ¹¹ *Your gates will be kept open constantly; They will not be closed by day or by night, To bring to you the resources of the nations, And their kings will take the lead.*

60:19, 20: ¹⁹ For you the sun will no longer be a light by day, Nor will the shining of the moon give you light, *For Jehovah will become to you an eternal light*, And your God will be your beauty.

²⁰ No more will your sun set, Nor will your moon wane, *For Jehovah will become for you an eternal light*, And the days of your mourning will have ended.

Revelation chapters 21 and 22

21:1, 2: ¹And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. ²I also saw the holy city, **New Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

21:23-27: ²³And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine on it, **for the glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp was the Lamb.** ²⁴And the nations will walk by means of its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵Its gates will not be closed at all by day, for night will not exist there. ²⁶And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷But anything defiled and anyone who does what is disgusting and deceitful will in no way enter into it; only those written in the Lamb's scroll of life will enter.

22:5: ⁵ Also, **night will be no more, and they have no need of lamplight or sunlight, for Jehovah God will shed light upon them, and they will rule as kings forever and ever.**

There can be no doubt that the prophecy in Isaiah chapters 59 and 60 about Zion or Jerusalem is quoted in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 and is applied to New Jerusalem, which represents spiritual Israel. When Paul quotes from Isaiah's prophecy saying that this prophecy shows that "all Israel" will be saved, then, "all Israel" must refer to spiritual Israel. Supporting this is also the words in Revelation 20:6 that those who are having a part in the first resurrection will rule as kings and priests, and 22:5, which refers to Isaiah 60:11 and says that those who are inside New Jerusalem will be kings.

In the following discussion, I take Romans 11:26 as a point of departure. We read:

²⁶ and **in this manner all Israel will be saved.** Just as it is written: "The deliverer will come out of Zion and turn away ungodly practices from Jacob.

The words "in this manner" are translated from the adverbial *butōs* with the meaning "thus; in this way," according to Mounce. This means that the salvation of "all Israel" is described in the text before verse 26. It is clear from many expressions in the Christian Greek Scriptures that fleshly Israel was invited to become members of the heavenly Kingdom and fill the number of 144,000. However, most Jews did not accept the invitation, and as a nation, Israel was rejected.

This is the background for Paul's words in Romans 11:1: When God has rejected fleshly Israel, is there no hope for any member of that nation? The answer is Yes, and the proof is that "I, Paul, am a member of this nation." Paul then refers to the words of Elijah in 1 Kings 19:10: "I alone am left, and now they are trying to take my life." But Jehovah comforted Elijah, saying that "I have left for myself 7,000 men who have not bent the knee to Ba'al." On the basis of this, Paul in 11:5 says:

⁵ So in the same way, at the present time also, **there is a remnant** (*leimma*) according to a choosing through undeserved kindness.

The Greek word *leimma* has the meaning "remnant; a small residue," according to Mounce. This means that a small group of spiritual Israel are fleshly Jews. In connection with the salvation of "all Israel," the full number of spiritual Israel, Paul uses the Greek word *plerōma* ("full number") with reference to the group that is referred to by the word *leimma* ("remnant") in 11:12:

¹² Now if their false step means riches to the world and their decrease means riches to people of the nations, how much more will **their full number** (*plerōma*) mean!

The noun *plērōma* has the meaning “that which fills up; full measure; entire content,” according to Mounce. Below are some examples showing that the word can have an abstract and a concrete meaning. I use the following quotations:

John 1:16:

¹⁶ For we all received from *his fullness* (*plērōma*), even undeserved kindness upon undeserved kindness.

1 Corinthians 10:26:

²⁶ for “to Jehovah belong the earth and *everything* (*plērōma*) in it.”

Ephesians 1:10:

¹⁰ for an administration *at the full limit* (*plērōma*) of the appointed times, to gather all things together in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the earth.

In the first example of John 1:16, *plērōma* is abstract, but in the other two examples, the word is concrete. In 1 Corinthians 10:26, it refers to all the things on the earth — the full number of these things. In Ephesians 1:10, the word “time” is plural, and *plērōma* refers to the full number of these times. On this background, the rendering “their full number” in Romans 11:12 with reference to the remnant of the Jews is a good translation. The translation “the fullness” would not give any meaning.

There is also another example of the Greek word *plērōma* in Romans chapter 11, namely, in verse 25:

²⁵ For I do not want you to be unaware of this sacred secret, brothers, so that you do not become wise in your own eyes: A partial dulling of senses has come upon Israel until *the full number* (*plērōma*) of people of the nations has come in.

Now we have the full picture. Verse 12 speaks of “the full number” of the Jews and verse 25 speaks of “the full number” of people of the nations that “has come in” or become Christians. Verse 26 says, “and in *this manner* all Israel will be saved.” In which manner? The full number of the Jews has come in and the full number of people of the nations will come in. And when these two groups are counted together, “all Israel” will be saved because now the full number of spiritual Israel has been reached.

The arguments of Paul regarding the full number of both groups corroborate the words of Revelation 7:4 that the full number of spiritual Israel is 144,000. But there is also another part of what Paul was writing in Romans chapter 11, which corroborates the view that spiritual Israel has a finite number. We read in verses 16-24:

¹⁶ Further, if the part of the dough taken as firstfruits is holy, the entire batch is also holy; and if the root is holy, the branches are also.¹⁷ However, if some of the branches were broken off and you, although being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became a sharer of the richness of the olive’s root,¹⁹ You will say, then: “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”²⁰ That is true! For their lack of faith, they were broken off, but you are standing by faith. Do not be haughty, but be in fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²² Consider, therefore, God’s kindness and severity. There is severity toward those who fell, but toward you there is God’s kindness, provided you remain in his kindness; otherwise, you too will be lopped off. ²³ And they also, if they do not remain in their lack of faith, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them back in. ²⁴ For if you were cut out of the

olive tree that is wild by nature and were grafted contrary to nature into the garden olive tree, how much more will these who are natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree!

Paul uses the example of an olive tree to illustrate how “all Israel” will be saved. This olive tree is an excellent illustration of how the full number of Jews and the full number of people of the nations together make up the full number of spiritual Israel. How so?

We note that there is not a trunk with an infinite length, and when people, illustrated by branches, become Christians they are grafted in on a trunk with an infinite length. No, the olive tree has a trunk of a finite length and a finite number of branches. The natural branches are symbols of the Jewish people that first got the invitation to fill the number of kingdom heirs. But they did not accept this invitation, and therefore they, as branches, were broken off the trunk. Now there was a vacancy of branches, and people of the nations were grafted in instead of the original branches.

However, Paul shows that if people of the nations do not continue to express faith, they will also be broken off. And if some of the original branches, the Jews, would express the true faith, they would again be grafted into the trunk. What is important in our context, is that the illustration of the olive tree of a finite length and a finite number of branches show that spiritual Israel has a finite number. Thus, this illustration of the olive tree shows exactly the same as the words about the full number of the Jews plus the full number of people of the nations that together make up the full number of spiritual Israel.

The full number of Jews + the full number of people of the nation = The full number of 144,000 members of spiritual Israel.

The olive tree with a trunk of a finite length and with branches of a finite number = Spiritual Israel with a finite number.

THE INFINITE NUMBER OF THE GREAT CROWD

The great crowd is mentioned in Revelation chapter 7, and I quote verses 7:9-17:

⁹ After this I saw, and look! *a great crowd*, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they keep shouting with a loud voice, saying: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.” ¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell facedown before the throne and worshipped God, ¹² saying: “Amen! Let the praise and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” ¹³ In response one of the elders said to me: “These who are dressed in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from?” ¹⁴ So right away I said to him: “My lord, you are the one who knows.” And he said to me: “These are the ones who *come out of the great tribulation*, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ That is why they are before the throne of God, and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. ¹⁶ They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat down on them nor any scorching heat, ¹⁷ because the Lamb,

who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them and will guide them to springs of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes.”

The phrase “come out of the great tribulation” means surviving the great tribulation. We can see this by comparing the Greek text of Revelation 7:14, (above) and Acts 7:10, (below):

¹⁴ *houtoi eisin hoi erkhomenoι* (present middle participle) *ek tēs thlipseōs tēs megalēs.*

these are those coming out of the tribulation the great.

¹⁰ *kai exeilato* (aorist middle) *auton ek pasōn tōn thlipseōn autou.*

and taken out of he out of all the tribulations his.

The account in Acts chapter 7 tells us about Joseph who was sold to Egyptian merchants. But God took him out of all of his tribulations. The verb *exaireō* in Acts 7:10 is aorist, which is the perfective aspect. According to Mounce the meaning of the verb is “take out; pluck out,” and the preposition *ek* has the meaning “out of.” So, both the verb and the preposition show that Joseph was taken out of all his tribulations, and this means that he survived these tribulations. In a similar way, “coming out of the great tribulation” means that the persons survive the great tribulation.

The Greek verb *erchomai* in Revelation 7:14 is present participle, which is the imperfective aspect. The meaning of the verb is “come; go; pass,” according to Mounce. The NWT13 fails to convey the true nuances of the present participle of *erchomai* by the rendering “**come out** of the great tribulation.” And I am surprised that NWT84, which takes great pains in rendering all the nuances of the Greek and Hebrew verbs, has the same rendering.

The true force of the present participle of *erchomai* can be found by reading Matthew 11:3, where NWT13 renders *ho erkhomenos* (the article and the present participle of *erchomai*) as “the Coming One.” Mounce uses this verse as an example of the force of the present participle of *erchomai*, and has the rendering: “*He who is coming, the expected Messiah.*” It would not be correct to render the phrase as “He who Comes” or “The One who Comes.” The point is that the present participle in Greek should be rendered by the present participle in English and not by simple present. Only the rendering “the ones who **are coming** out of the great tribulation” conveys the nuances of the Greek verb.

One important question in connection with Revelation 7:14 is the perspective of the words of the elder. What is the vantage point of the elder, the point from which he describes the action? *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1991, page 15, says:

⁸ All who hope to survive the impending “great tribulation” and to enjoy God’s blessings on a paradise earth depend on Jesus’ shed blood. Revelation 7:9-14 describes them and says **retrospectively**: “These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Note the language here. It does not say that these who are saved through the tribulation had ‘accepted Jesus’ or ‘put faith in him,’ though those certainly are vital aspects. It goes a step further and says that they “washed their robes and made them white in [Jesus’] blood.” That is because his blood has ransoming value.

The book, *United in Worship of the Only True God* (1983), page 106, says:

⁶ The description of the “great crowd” as found at Revelation 7:9-15 adds further important details. In telling us how those of the “great crowd” appear *after* the “great tribulation,” the Scriptures also draw attention to factors that led to their being preserved.

The use of the adverbial “retrospectively” in *The Watchtower* is correct, but the use of the preposition “after” in the book is a little imprecise. It is clear that the elder places himself at a point after the great tribulation, and this is his vantage point. So, what does he describe from this vantage point? The elder does not use a prospective perspective by using future, “will come out of.” Neither does he use the retrospective viewpoint of past tense, “they came out of.” This perspective would have qualified for the phrase “appear after ‘the great tribulation’.”

He describes the situation with a focus on the end of the great tribulation, exactly at the moment when the great crowd “is coming out of” the great tribulation, the moment when the individuals of the great crowd survive the great tribulation.

The important point in connection with the description of the elder is what the quotation from *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1991 says, that he views the situation retrospectively. The blood of Jesus “has ransoming value.” Because the verbs “wash” (*plynō*) and “whiten” (*leukainō*) are aorists, their actions make a contrast to the verb *erkbomai* (“come”) as present participle in the phrase “coming out of.” The elder placed himself in a position immediately after the end of the great tribulation and was looking at the great crowd that was coming out of the great tribulation. Because of the contrast between the two aorists and the present participle, the actions of washing and whitening must have occurred before the great tribulation. At this time, each member of the great crowd accepted the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, and that is the reason for their survival. However, after the great tribulation, they are still imperfect, and they still need the ransom sacrifice. This is shown in Revelation 7:17 where we read that the Lamb “will guide them to springs of waters of life.”

THE HEAVENLY AND THE EARTHLY HOPES EXPRESSED IN THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES.

Jesus preached about the Kingdom of the heavens and spoke about this Kingdom, and his followers did the same. This was the only hope that was preached in the first century CE. The ransom sacrifice was applied to those who put faith in Jesus and his Father, they were declared righteous, and they were born again as “new creatures.”

THE TWO DIFFERENT SEEDS IN 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 15

In order to become a part of the heavenly Kingdom, a person has to die and then be given a spiritual body in the resurrection.

THE TWO KINDS OF “FIRSTFRUITS”

In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul discusses the resurrection from the dead, and in verses 20-23 he says:

²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the *firstfruits* (*aparkhē*) of those who have fallen asleep in death. ²¹ For since death came through a man, resurrection of the dead also comes

through a man.²² For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive.²³ But each one in his own proper order: Christ the *firstfruits* (*aparkbè*), afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence.

Jesus was the “firstfruits” of the dead. He was resurrected on Nisan 16, the day when the firstfruits of the first grain crop of barley was presented to Jehovah at the sanctuary. The members of spiritual Israel are also called “firstfruits” in James 1:18, (above) and Revelation 14:4, (below):

¹⁸It was his will to bring us forth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of *firstfruits* (*aparkbè*) of his creatures.

⁴These are the ones who did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones who keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. These were bought from among mankind as *firstfruits* (*aparkbè*) to God and to the Lamb.

The “firstfruits” of the second grain crop, the wheat, was presented on the day of Pentecost (the Festival of Weeks). So, both Jesus and the 144,000 spiritual Israelites can rightly be called “firstfruits.” When there are firstfruits, there must also be other crops that would be harvested. The Festival of Booths in the autumn was the end of the major part of the agricultural year in Israel, and at this time there was an ingathering of all the crops. This must be a prophetic picture of other servants of God than those who represented the firstfruits, namely those who will live in the earthly paradise. This is seen in Revelation 20: 4-6, 12, 13:

⁴And I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed for the witness they gave about Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had not worshipped the wild beast or its image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. *And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for 1,000 years.*⁵ (*The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended.*) *This is the first resurrection.*⁶ Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and they will rule as kings with him for the 1,000 years.

¹²*And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened.* But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. The dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds.¹³ And the sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the Grave gave up the dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds.

The text says that those who have a part in the first resurrection will rule as kings with Jesus Christ. The dead who are mentioned do not have a part in the first resurrection, and this shows that there are two different groups that will be saved by a resurrection, one with a heavenly resurrection and the other with an earthly resurrection.

THE TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF BODIES ACCORDING TO 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 15

I will now analyze several clauses in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, where Paul discusses the resurrection in detail. I start with verses 22 and 23:

²²For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive. ²³***But each one in his own proper order*** (*tagma*): Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence.

The first part of verse 23 says regarding those who will get a resurrection: “each one in his own proper order.” The Greek word translated as “order” is *tagma*, and its meaning is “order of succession; class; group,” according to Mounce. NWT84 has the translation: “But each one ***in its own rank.***” The English word “rank” is defined as “a number of persons forming a separate class in a social hierarchy or in any graded body.”¹ This is a better rendering than the “proper order,” but instead of “rank” the word “group” could also have been used. The point here is that there are at least two ranks or groups. Then the situation described in verse 23 is mentioned in verses 37 and 38; I quote verses 35-40:

³⁵Nevertheless, someone will say: “How are the dead to be raised up? Yes, with what sort of body are they coming?” ³⁶You unreasonable person! What you sow is not made alive unless first it dies. ³⁷And as for what you sow, ***you sow, not the body that will develop, but just a bare grain***, whether of wheat or of some other kind of seed; ³⁸***but God gives it a body just as it has pleased him, and gives to each of the seeds (sperma) its own body (soma).*** ³⁹Not all flesh is the same flesh, but there is one of mankind, there is another flesh of cattle, another flesh of birds, and another of fish. ⁴⁰***And there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies***; but the glory of the heavenly bodies is one sort, and that of the earthly bodies is a different sort.

In order to help the Corinthians to understand the resurrection better, Paul uses the illustration of different seeds (*sperma*). When a seed is sown in the soil, a plant will grow, and different kinds of seeds give different kinds of plants. When we sow a seed of wheat, a wheat plant will grow up from the soil, and when we sow a seed of tulip, a tulip flower will grow up. Paul shows that these laws of nature are valid in the resurrection as well.

In verse 37, Paul shows that the view of the resurrection of the flesh, the resurrection of the same fleshly body that died, is not correct.² The key word in the verse is “seed” (*sperma*), which refers to the fleshly body of each one who dies, and the expression “each of the seeds” shows that there are at least two kinds of seeds, two kinds of bodies that die. Paul shows that each kind of seed has “its own body,” ***and God gives “each of the seeds “its own body.”***

In verse 44, Paul says that “it is sown a physical body (literally: a ‘soulical body’ (*soma psukhikos*)).” Human beings are souls, and when humans die, they sow the same kind of fleshly bodies. But Paul says in verse 38 that ***these similar fleshly bodies represent two kinds of seeds.*** To understand this, we can ask. What is the reason why humans with fleshly bodies die? Romans 6:23 says that humans die as a penalty for inherited sin. But there are some humans that belong to another group, and who do not die as a penalty for inherited sin. I quote 1 John 3:14, (above) Philippians 3:10, (middle), and Romans 6:3-5, (below):

¹⁴***We know that we have passed over from death to life***, because we love the brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.

1. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/rank>.

2. Some rabbis had the view that the body of each person with its atoms and molecules would be resurrected, and “the resurrection of the flesh” is also found in the creeds of different denominations.

¹⁰My aim is to know him and the power of his resurrection and to share in his sufferings, ***submitting myself to a death like his.***

³Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴So we were buried with him through our baptism into his death, in order that just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, ***so we also should walk in a newness of life.*** ⁵***If we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection.***

John shows that he and his fellow Christians “have passed over from death to life.” This means that God has declared them righteous, baptized them with holy spirit, and they have become new creations. From God’s point of view, they do not have sin because they are declared righteous, and therefore they cannot die because of inherited sin. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul’s aim was “submitting myself to a death like his.” In Romans 5:5, Paul says that “if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death.” Why did Jesus die? He did not die as a penalty for inherited sin. But he sacrificed his life. In a similar way, anointed Christians do not die as a penalty for sin. But they experience “a death like his.” This means that they experience “the likeness of his death” — ***they sacrifice their lives*** — in order “to be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection,” as Paul says in Romans 5:5.

Now we can understand Paul’s words about the two seeds that are different. From a physical point of view, all bodies that die are similar, but from a spiritual point of view, the bodies represent two different kinds of seeds. Some humans die as a penalty for sin, and others, who have no sin because they have been declared righteous, die because they sacrifice their bodies in order to get a heavenly resurrection. And that is the reason why Paul says that God “***gives it a body as it has pleased him,***” and “***to each seed its own body.***”

In order to illustrate that there are different seeds with different bodies, Paul shows in verse 39 that humans and animals have different kinds of flesh and therefore have different kinds of bodies. On the basis of this illustration, Paul says in verse 40 that there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. What does he refer to? Some would say that the “heavenly bodies” refer to the stars and the sun that are mentioned in verse 41. But the word *sōma* (“body”) only refers to the bodies of living creatures in the Christian Greek Scriptures. So, a reference to the stars and the sun is impossible. In connection with the resurrection, Paul says in verse 38 that different seeds get different bodies. The most likely understanding, therefore, ***is that Paul in verse 40 specifies the different kinds of bodies, as “heavenly bodies and earthly bodies”*** with reference to the heavenly and earthly resurrections. Verses 47-49 support this view (my translation):

⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, earthly, the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸***Like the earthly one, of that sort will also the earthly ones be, and like the heavenly one, of that sort will also the heavenly ones be.*** ⁴⁹And just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we will also bear the image of the heavenly one.

There are no Greek verbs in the clauses of verse 48, so the translator must construe the time from the context. I do not find any meaning in verse 48 if English present is used. The first question to ask is, “To whom do “the earthly ones” refer, and to whom do “the heavenly ones” refer? When an author uses an expression that he does not explain,

either the expression can be understood on the basis of the context, or the meaning of the expression is already known to his audience. In this discussion Paul is breaking new ground, so we must look at the context.

The English word “heavenly” (*epouranios*) is found in verse 40 as an epithet to “bodies” (*soma*) as “heavenly bodies.” Therefore, when Paul uses the expression “the heavenly ones,” he must refer to those with heavenly bodies. And similarly with “the earthly ones,” he must refer to those with earthly bodies. This means that Paul by using the phrases “the heavenly ones” and “the earthly ones” in verse 47, refers to the heavenly and earthly resurrection, as is also the case in verse 40. Because the resurrection is future, it is natural to use English future in verse 48. This is supported by verse 49. After Paul has shown that in the resurrection, there will be earthly and heavenly bodies, and have used the phrases “the heavenly ones” and “the earthly ones, he addresses the members of the congregation in Corinth by saying:

⁴⁹ And just as *we* have borne the image of the one made of dust, *we* will bear also the image of the heavenly one.

The Corinthians were declared righteous and were new creations, and therefore they are among the “heavenly ones” who in the future — during the presence of Jesus (verse 23) — will get a spiritual body like the body of Jesus. Then Paul discusses different sides of the resurrection of spiritual bodies and shows that not only will the Corinthians get a body like the body of Jesus. But they will also get immortality, according to verse 54.

Paul’s discussion of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 includes a detailed discussion of the two different hopes of salvation.

Table 1.1 Different seeds get different bodies

Seeds = the fleshly bodies that die.	
Seed one: dies because of inherited sin.	God gives seed one a fleshly body.
Seed two: dies by sacrificing the body.	God gives seed two a spiritual (heavenly) body.

There are two different “seeds” (= bodies that die). God will give “each of the seeds” a resurrection body “as it has pleased him.” Some will get “earthly bodies” and others will get “heavenly bodies.”

THE BROTHERS OF JESUS AND THE COMING INHABITED EARTH

In chapters 7 and 8 of Isaiah, there are prophecies regarding the children of Isaiah. In 7:3, we read about a son with the name Shear-jashub with the meaning “only a remnant will return.” And in 8:3, we read about another son with the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, with the meaning “hurrying to the spoil, coming quickly to the plunder.” Regarding Isaiah’s sons we read in 8:18:

¹⁸ Look! I and the children whom Jehovah has given me are as signs and as miracles in Israel from Jehovah of armies, who resides on Mount Zion.

Jehovah shows that Isaiah and his sons were signs of particular events that would occur in the future. There would also be another sign according to 7:14:

¹⁴Therefore, Jehovah himself will give you a sign: Look! The young woman will become pregnant and will give birth to a son, and she will name him Im·man'u·el.

The meaning of Immanuel is “with us is God.” We are not told whose child Immanuel was, but because Immanuel was a sign and Isaiah says that he and his sons were signs, Isaiah may also have been the father of Immanuel. Matthew quotes the words about Immanuel and applies them to the birth of Jesus in Matthew 1:18-23:

¹⁸But this is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. During the time his mother Mary was promised in marriage to Joseph, she was found to be pregnant by holy spirit before they were united.¹⁹ However, because her husband Joseph was righteous and did not want to make her a public spectacle, he intended to divorce her secretly.²⁰ But after he had thought these things over, look! Jehovah’s angel appeared to him in a dream, saying: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take your wife Mary home, for what has been conceived in her is by holy spirit.²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”²² All of this actually came about to fulfill what was spoken by Jehovah through his prophet, saying:²³ “Look! The virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will name him Im·man'u·el,” which means, when translated, “With Us Is God.”

The birth of the first Immanuel was a sign that God had not forsaken the house of David. And the birth of Jesus was a sign that God had not forsaken his Kingdom covenant with David, as we read in Luke 1:31-33:

³¹And look! you will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus.

³²This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father,³³ and he will rule as King over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end to his Kingdom.”

I have discussed Isaiah and his sons because they also function as signs in connection with Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 2:10-18 we read:

¹⁰For it was fitting that the one for whom and through whom all things exist, in *bringing many sons to glory*, should make the Chief Agent of their salvation perfect through sufferings.¹¹ *For both the one who is sanctifying and those who are being sanctified all stem from one, and for this reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers*,¹² as he says: “*I will declare your name to my brothers*; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you with song.”¹³ And again: “I will put my trust in him.” And again: “*Look! I and the young children, whom Jehovah gave me.*”¹⁴ Therefore, since the “young children” are sharers of blood and flesh, he also similarly shared in the same things, so that through his death he might bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil,¹⁵ and that he might set free all those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death.¹⁶ For it is not really angels he is assisting, *but he is assisting Abraham’s offspring*.¹⁷ Consequently, he had to become like his “brothers” in all respects, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, in order to offer a *propitiatory sacrifice* (*hilaskomai*) for the sins of the people.¹⁸ Since he himself has suffered when being put to the test, he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test.

There are three expressions that we need to consider, namely, “sons and small children,” “brothers,” and “Abraham’s seed.”

ABRAHAM'S SEED

I will start with “Abraham’s seed.” God made a promise to Abraham, and this promise is referred to by Peter in one of his speeches. I quote the words of Peter in Acts 3:25, (above) and the words of Jehovah in Genesis 22:17, 18 NWT84, (below):

²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your forefathers, saying to Abraham: ‘**And by means of your offspring** (*sperma*, neutrum, singular dative) **all the families of the earth will be blessed** (*eneulogeō*, future passive indicative).’

¹⁷ I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. ¹⁸ **And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves** (*bārakb*, hitpael perfect) due to the fact that you have listened to my voice.

The difference between the two quotations is that the verb in Genesis 22 is reflexive while the verb in Peter’s quotation is passive. The Hebrew verb *bārakb* (“bless”) is hitpael 3. person plural indicative, and the hitpael stem is reflexive. So, the rendering “bless **themselves**” is correct. The Greek verb *eneulogeō* (“bless”) is 3. person plural future passive indicative. So, the rendering “will be blessed” is correct. Both verbs show that the seed of Abraham will bless all nations of the earth. The Greek text does not show in which way Abraham’s seed will bless the nations. But the Hebrew text shows that those who will be blessed have to do something themselves.

In the letter to Galatians, Paul has a long discussion regarding Abraham’s seed, and I quote Galatians 3:16, 26-29:

¹⁶ Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “and to your descendants,” in the sense of many. Rather, it says, “and to your offspring,” in the sense of one, who is Christ.

²⁶ **You are all, in fact, sons of God** through your faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.

²⁹ **Moreover, if you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham’s offspring, heirs with reference to a promise.**

The argument in verse 16 is sound because the Hebrew word “seed” (*zera*) has the same form in the plural as in the singular. So, the word itself does not show whether the seed of Abraham is one or many. However, the last clause in Genesis 22:17 shows that the seed is singular. This is shown by the rendering “**his** enemies,” and it is also shown by the verb “will take possession” (*yārash*) because this verb is qal imperfect 3. person **singular**. Peter understood this, as we see in his words in Acts 3:25 above, where he uses “seed” (*sperma*) in the singular.

When Paul says in Galatians 3:16 that Abraham’s seed is singular, he is correct. However, Genesis 22:17 God shows that Abraham’s seed would multiply and become many. And this is the argument of Paul in Galatians 3:27-29 that those who were “baptized into Christ” were Abraham’s seed.

This means that Jesus Christ was the primary Abraham’s seed by whom all the families of the earth would bless themselves. The secondary Abraham’s seed were those who were Christ’s brothers, who were called to the heavenly kingdom.

In our context, it is important to note that there are two groups, 1) Abraham's seed which are Jesus and the brothers of Jesus who will do the blessing, and 2) All the nations of the earth who will bless themselves with the help of Abraham's seed.

The other group that does not have a heavenly calling is mentioned in Hebrews 2:5-9:

⁵For it is not to angels that he has subjected ***the inhabited earth*** (*oikoumenē*) to come (*tēn mellousan*), about which we are speaking. ⁶But in one place a certain witness said: "What is man that you keep him in mind, or a son of man that you take care of him?" ⁷You made him a little lower than angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and appointed him over the works of your hands. ⁸All things you subjected under his feet." By subjecting all things to him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Now, though, we do not yet see all things in subjection to him. ⁹But we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than angels, now crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, so that by God's undeserved kindness he might taste death for everyone.

The noun *oikoumenē* has the meaning "the surface of the earth as a dwelling place of mankind," according to Louw and Nida, and the verb *mellō* has the meaning "to occur at a point of time in the future which is subsequent to another event and closely related to it," according to the same source." Most translations have the rendering "the inhabited earth." Below I quote two passages that are supporting this meaning, Revelation 3:10, (above) and Hebrews 1:6, (below):

¹⁰Because you kept the word about my endurance, I will also keep you from the hour of test, which is to come upon the entire ***inhabited earth*** (*oikoumenē*), to put to the test those dwelling on the earth (*tēs gēs*).

⁶But when he again brings his Firstborn into ***the inhabited earth*** (*oikoumenē*), he says: "And let all of God's angels do obeisance to him."

Revelation 3:10 has a parallelism between "the entire inhabited earth" (*oikoumenē*) and "those dwelling on the earth." This supports the meaning "the inhabited earth" for *oikoumenē*. Hebrews 1:6 applies *oikoumenē* to the present inhabited earth where Jesus was born, and 2:5 speaks of a future inhabited earth. Louw and Nida have the following comment on the use in Hebrews 2:5:

In He 2:5 there is a reference to *tēn oikoumenēn tēn mellousan* 'the world to come, the future world.' This has generally been interpreted as being equivalent to 'the coming age,' but the use of *oikoumenē* would seem to imply an inhabited world.

This is a good observation, and there can be no doubt that Hebrews 2:5 speaks of a future inhabited earth. This is also shown in Acts 17:31:

³¹Because he has set a day on which he purposes to judge ***the inhabited earth*** in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has provided a guarantee to all men by resurrecting him from the dead."

Because Jesus will judge the coming "inhabited earth," it must be equated with Judgment Day, which is the same as the millennium. He and the Kingdom heirs will on this day be judges, priests, and kings. And this corroborates the words in Hebrews 2:8 showing that God subjected all things under the feet of Jesus. But at present "we do not yet see all things in subjection to him." We also read in Revelation 20:6 that those who have a part in the first resurrection will rule with Jesus for a period of 1,000 years. This

also corroborates the role of Abraham's seed, by which all nations of the earth will bless themselves. Today, all nations of the earth have not blessed themselves by the help of Abraham's seed, but that will be the case when the coming inhabited earth will be judged in righteousness.

THE BROTHERS OF JESUS

In the Epistle to the Hebrews there is a contrast between the inhabited earth and the brothers of Jesus. In 2:13, the words "Look! I and the young children whom Jehovah gave me," is a quotation from Isaiah 8:18, that I have quoted above, where we read that Isaiah and his children are signs and miracles. How have the persons that are referenced become the children of Jesus? Verses 14 and 15 in chapter 2 say that Jesus set free all the "young children" those "who were held in slavery." According to verse 17 he did this by giving "a propitiatory offering for the sins of the people." The verb *bilaskomai* has the meaning "make an atonement or expiation for," and by his death he bought all the descendants of Adam. Because of this, they became his children.

In Psalm 22, David describes how he is attacked by his enemies, and David was a prophetic type of Jesus. This is seen in verse 18 and in John 19:23, 24. I quote Psalm 22:17-27:

¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They look on and stare at me.¹⁸ *They divide my garments among themselves, And they cast lots for my clothing.* ¹⁹ But you, O Jehovah, do not remain far away. You are my strength; hurry to help me.²⁰ Save me from the sword, My precious life from the paws of dogs; ²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion and the horns of wild bulls; Answer and save me.²² *I will declare your name to my brothers; In the midst of the congregation I will praise you.* ²³ You who fear Jehovah, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him! Stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel.²⁴ For he has not despised nor loathed the suffering of the oppressed one; He has not hidden his face from him. When he cried to him for help, he heard.²⁵ I will praise you in the large congregation; I will pay my vows before those who fear him.²⁶ The meek will eat and be satisfied; Those seeking Jehovah will praise him. May you enjoy life forever.²⁷ *All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Jehovah. All the families of the nations will bow down before you.*

The writer of Hebrews puts the words of Psalm 22:22 in the mouth of Jesus. And this shows that the mentioned "small children" or "the sons" are the brothers of Jesus as well. All Adam's descendants are the sons of Jesus because he bought them with his ransom sacrifice, and in Isaiah 9:6 he is prophetically called "Eternal Father." The name of his brothers he would declare in the midst of the congregation, and Romans 8:28-30 shows who these brothers are:

²⁸ We know that God makes all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God, those who are the ones called according to his purpose; ²⁹ because those whom he gave his first recognition he also foreordained to be patterned after the image of *his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* ³⁰ *Moreover, those whom he foreordained are the ones he also called; and those whom he called are the ones he also declared to be righteous. Finally those whom he declared righteous are the ones he also glorified.*

The brothers of Jesus are foreordained as a group. The only call that was made in the 1st century CE was the call to be a member of the heavenly Kingdom. The brothers of Jesus were called, they were declared righteous, and they were glorified. These are

characteristics of those who were born again and who have the heavenly calling. Returning to the letter of Hebrews, we find confirmation that the brothers of Jesus are those who are called to the heavenly Kingdom. I quote Hebrews 3:1, (above) and I add two passages mentioning the heavenly calling, Philippians 3:14, (middle) and 1 Thessalonians 2:12, (below):

¹ Consequently, holy brothers, partakers of *the heavenly calling*, consider the apostle and high priest whom we acknowledge—Jesus.

¹⁴ I am pressing on toward the goal for *the prize of the upward call* of God by means of Christ Jesus.

¹² so that you would go on walking worthily of God, *who is calling you to his Kingdom and glory*.

In the discussion of the ransom sacrifice in chapter 2, I show that when the high priest on the day of atonement went into the Most Holy with blood, this was a prophetic picture of Jesus, who went into heaven and presented the value of his blood before Jehovah. The brothers of Jesus are a part of this prophetic picture as well, as we see in Hebrews 10:19-22:

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness for the way of entry into the holy place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ which he opened up for us as a new and living way through the curtain, that is, his flesh,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us approach with sincere hearts and complete faith, having had our hearts sprinkled clean from a wicked conscience and our bodies bathed with clean water.

Jesus sacrificed his body, which is a picture of the curtain between the Holy and the Most Holy. He was raised in a spiritual body, and he would go into the Most Holy with his blood. When the brothers of Jesus die, they also sacrifice their bodies. In the resurrection, they also get spiritual bodies, and they can now enter the Most Holy, which is a picture of heaven.

The two groups:

Abraham's seed — All the nations of the earth.

The two other groups:

Partakers of the heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1) — the coming inhabited earth (Hebrews 2:5).

THE BROTHERS OF JESUS IN CONTRAST TO OTHER GROUPS

The bothers of Jesus, who have the heavenly calling, are mentioned several places in the Christian Greek Scriptures. In two instances they are mentioned in contrast to groups that do not have the heavenly calling.

THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND THE CREATION

The children of God, who are the brothers of Jesus, are mentioned in Romans 8:14-23, 28-30:

¹⁴ For all who are led by God's spirit are indeed God's sons. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of *adoption as sons*, by which spirit we cry out: "Abba, Father!" ¹⁶ The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ If, then, we are children, we are also heirs—heirs indeed of God, but *joint heirs with Christ*—provided we suffer together so that we may also be glorified together. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of the present time do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For *the creation* is waiting with eager expectation for the revealing of *the sons of God*. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope ²¹ *that the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God*. ²² For we know that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we ourselves also who have the firstfruits, namely, the spirit, yes, we ourselves groan within ourselves while we are earnestly waiting for adoption as sons, the release from our bodies by ransom...

²⁸ We know that God makes all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God, those who are the ones called according to his purpose; ²⁹ because those whom he gave his first recognition he also foreordained to be patterned after the image of his Son, *so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers*. ³⁰ Moreover, those whom he foreordained are the ones he also called; and those whom he called are the ones he also declared to be righteous. Finally those whom he declared righteous are the ones he also glorified.

In these verses, there is a contrast between the sons of God, who are the brothers of Jesus, and the creation. The creation must refer to the inhabitants of the earth, all those who live on the earth. I quote two passages confirming this: Colossians 1:15, (above), and 1:23, (below):

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, *the firstborn of all creation*.

²³ Provided, of course, that you continue in the faith, established on the foundation and steadfast, not being shifted away from the hope of that good news that you heard and that was *preached in all creation* under heaven. Of this good news I, Paul, became a minister.

When Jesus is said to be "the firstborn of all creation" in Colossians 1:15, the noun "creation" must refer to all created beings, including the humans on the earth. And in Colossians 1:23, the word "creation" must refer to the humans on the earth among whom the good news was preached. There can be no doubt that "the creation" in Romans 8:19, 21 refers to all humans who live on the earth apart from God's children.

The creation was subjected to futility (*metaiotēs*). The noun occurs three times and the corresponding verb one time. The meaning is "pertaining to being useless on the basis of being futile and lacking in content," according to Louw and Nida. It seems to be a synonym for "imperfection," and this is supported by the words in verse 21 that they are under "enslavement from corruption," which is the same as "to rot or decay," according to Louw and Nida.

The creation did not choose to be subjected to futility. But the reason was that Adam sold all his descendants under sin. However, Paul says there is "the basis of hope." The

first prophecy in Genesis 3:15 gave the basis for this hope, even though its meaning was not understood in the days of Moses when it was written down.

The hope of the human family is to “be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” This will happen at the end of the millennium when all humans are perfect, just as Adam was.

*Two different groups:
The sons of God — The creation.*

THE BROTHERS OF JESUS AND THE SHEEP

Most of the illustrations of Jesus express different important principles and viewpoints. But they are not prophecies where the parts function as types with an antitypical fulfillment in the future. But some illustrations are also prophecies, such as the illustration of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46:

³¹When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. ³⁴“Then the King will say to those on his right: ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, ***inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.***’ ³⁵For I became hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you received me hospitably; ³⁶naked and you clothed me. I fell sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous ones will answer him with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’ ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and receive you hospitably, or naked and clothe you?’ ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰In reply the King will say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹“Then he will say to those on his left: ‘Go away from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. ⁴²For I became hungry, but you gave me nothing to eat; and I was thirsty, but you gave me nothing to drink. ⁴³I was a stranger, but you did not receive me hospitably; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not look after me.’ ⁴⁴Then they too will answer with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?’ ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, saying: ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶***These will depart into everlasting cutting-off; but the righteous ones into everlasting life.***

The time setting of this illustration shows that it also is a prophecy. The fulfillment is connected with the time when Jesus “comes in his glory” and when “he will sit down on his glorious throne.” The Bible Students believed that this prophecy would be fulfilled in the millennium, and the members of the present Governing Body believe that it will be fulfilled in the great tribulation. I take the same viewpoint that the leaders of Jehovah’s Witnesses had for 72 years from 1923 on, that the fulfillment occurs during the presence of Jesus from the year 1914 CE.³

3. Chronological evidence showing that Jesus started to reign in the heavenly Kingdom in the year 1914 is given in chapter 1 of my book, *My Beloved Religion — And The Governing Body*, third edition. A detailed analysis of Matthew 25:31-46 is found in chapter 6 in the present book.

There is one expression that is important in connection with two different groups with two different hopes, namely, “**from** (*apo*) the founding (*katabolè*) of the world (*kosmos*).” The meaning of the word “founding” (*katabolè*) can be seen in Hebrews 11:11:

¹¹ By faith also Sarah received power to conceive (*katabolè*) offspring, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who made the promise.

The Greek word *kosmos* (“world”) refers to the human family, the descendants of Adam, and the word *katabolè* in the phrase “the founding of the world” refers to the procreation of children by Adam and Eve. This is seen in Luke 11:50, 51:

⁵⁰ so that the blood of all the prophets spilled from the founding of the world may be charged against this generation, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel down to the blood of Zech·a·ri’ah, who was killed between the altar and the house.’ Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation.

The founding of the world is connected with Abel, the second son of Adam. The sheep would inherit “the kingdom prepared for you **from** (*apo*) the founding of the world.” Which kingdom did Jesus speak about? We can understand this by considering Ephesians 1:3, 4:

³ Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in union with Christ, ⁴ as he chose us to be in union with him **before the founding of the world**, that we should be holy and unblemished before him in love.

The sheep would “inherit the Kingdom prepared for you **from** (*apo*) the founding of the world”, and Paul says that Jesus “chose us to be in union with him **before** (*pro*) the founding of the world.” The prepositions “from” and “before” are mutually exclusive, and when they are applied in connection with “the founding of the world,” they must refer to two different groups. Ephesians 2:4-7 says:

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, ⁵ made us alive together with the Christ, even when we were dead in trespasses—by undeserved kindness you have been saved. ⁶ Moreover, **he raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus**, ⁷ so that in the coming systems of things he might demonstrate the surpassing riches of his undeserved kindness in his graciousness toward us in union with Christ Jesus.

As the words above show, the Ephesians had the heavenly calling and they would become a part of the heavenly Kingdom. Because of the different prepositions, the Kingdom that was reserved for the sheep could not be the heavenly Kingdom, and the only alternative is the earthly Kingdom of a thousand years when the earth will be judged in righteousness.

The logic of the use of the prepositions is as follows: The time of the founding of the world is the birth of Abel. Before his birth, God expressed the prophecy in Genesis 3:15:

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will strike him in the heel.”

This is a prophecy about the destruction of Satan the Devil by the seed (offspring) of the woman, which is Jesus Christ. This prophecy implies that Jesus would have brothers who would rule with him in heaven. And therefore, the Ephesians and other Christians

with the heavenly calling were known *before* the birth of Abel. Adam's son Abel was the first person who served God, and therefore, the earthly kingdom of all Adam's descendants that Jesus bought when he died, was prepared *from* the time of the birth of Abel.

Two different groups: Jesu brothers; the kingdom prepared before the founding of the world — The sheep; the kingdom prepared from the founding of the world.

UNITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

In the time period before Satan the Devil made his rebellion, there was unity in heaven and earth. The angels in heaven, that are portrayed as Jehovah's wife, were in union with God, and the same was true with Adam and Eve on the earth. This unity will be regained, as we see in Ephesians 1:8-14:

⁸This undeserved kindness he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding ⁹by making known to us the sacred secret of his will. It is according to his good pleasure that he himself purposed ¹⁰for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, *to gather all things together* (“*again*” NWT84) *in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth*. Yes, in him ¹¹with whom we are in union and were assigned as heirs, having been foreordained according to the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things as he decides according to his will, ¹²so that we who have been first to hope in the Christ should serve for the praise of his glory. ¹³But you also hoped in him after you heard the word of truth, the good news about your salvation. After you believed, you were sealed by means of him with the promised holy spirit, ¹⁴which is a token in advance of our inheritance, for the purpose of releasing God's own possession by a ransom, to his glorious praise.

There is a difference between NWT86 and NWT13 in the rendering of verse 10. NWT84 says: “to gather all things together *again* in the Christ,” but NWT13 does not have the adverbial “again.” The basis for the rendering “gather together ...again” is the verb *anakafalaioō*.

Applying the principles of lexical semantics, we find that the use of “again” has a solid basis. I will bring three quotations to show that. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. III, page 682, has the following comments on the verb *anakefalaioō*:

Iren. [Irenaeus, c. 130 — c. 200 CE, Church father] used *anakafalaioō* in the sense of gathering together, summation. Since every summation implies a kind of repetition, the word may sometimes have the direct sense of “to repeat.” The *ana-* thus assumes an iterative sense which it does not have elsewhere...Apsines [a Greek philosopher in the 3rd century CE] used *anakafalaioō* with reference to the repetition of an event. The *recapitulare* in Iren. [Irenaeus] is also to be understood in the first instance as repetition, though it is to be noted that it sums up the original and is thus qualitative...In this summation, however, the prominent element may be, not that of repetition, but that of the affirmation and confirmation implied in repetition.

We note the comment on the preposition *ana* (“up, upon, on”), which often is used distributively (= referring to each individual of a group rather than collectively to all individuals). The use of this preposition with a distributive meaning at the beginning of the verb *anakefalaioō* could signal the repetitive meaning of doing again, is the argument. Additions of prepositions to a word may change its meaning. For example, the Greek word *gnosis* means “knowledge,” but with the preposition *epi* (“over, upon”) prefixed, as *epignosis*, the meaning may be “accurate knowledge.”

The important point is that the commandments in Romans 13:9 have been expressed before, and now they are summed up again (*anakefalaiōō*) in the saying, “You must love your neighbor as yourself.”

The commentator A.S. Wood in *Ephesians* in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (1978) Vol. 11, page 26, also stresses the repetitive nature of the verb:

The verb *anakefalaiōō* (“to bring together”) means to sum up together again (Rom 13:9). It is derived not from *kefalē* (“a head”) but from *kephalaion* (a summary, or sum total). When a column of figures was added up, the total was placed at the top.

Several commentators of Ephesians also argue in favor of the repetitive meaning of 1:10. *Galatians and Ephesians* in Meyer’s *Commentary on the New Testament* (1883, 1979), page 322, says in comments on Ephesians 1:10:

Consequently *anakefalaiōō*, *summatim recolligere*, “recapitulate summarily,” which is said in Rom xiii 9 of that which has been previously expressed *singulatim*, “individually,” in separate parts, but now is again gathered up in one main point, so that at Rom. *le en touto to logo* denotes that main point in which the gathering up is contained. And here this main point of gathering up again, unifying all the parts, lies *in Christ*.

The three quotations above show that the use of the adverbial “again” in NWT84 has a solid linguistic basis. I do not know why the Governing Body deleted this important word from NWT13. But a characteristic of this translation is that the subtleties and nuances in the original text often are ignored and are not rendered in English.

Even without the adverbial “again,” Ephesians 1:10 shows that there are two different hopes, a heavenly one and an earthly one. With the use of “again,” the background is the unity in the universe before Adam and Eve sinned. This unity will be restored through Jesus Christ. We note the words in 1:11 that Paul and the Ephesians “were assigned as heirs,” which means that they had the heavenly calling. They would participate in the unity in the heavens, and there would be others who would participate in the unity on the earth.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul also speaks about the unity in heaven and earth. We read in Colossians 1:20:

²⁰and through him *to reconcile to himself* all other things by making peace through the blood he shed on the torture stake, *whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens*.

Heaven and earth are also mentioned in Colossians 1:20 (NWT13). The ransom sacrifice of Jesus is discussed, and because of this sacrifice, God will “reconcile to himself all other things.” To what does this refer? The last part of the verse says, “the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.” The ransom sacrifice and the blood of Jesus only relate to humans who are sinners and not to the angels in heaven. Therefore, “the things on the earth” must refer to those who will live on the coming inhabited earth, and “the things in the heavens” must refer to those humans who will inherit God’s Kingdom in the heavens. Thus, there are two different groups with two different hopes.

Two different groups:

The things in the heavens — the things on the earth.

THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND THE WORLD

Of the most quoted verses in the Bible are John 3:16, 17:

¹⁶“For God loved the world (*kosmos*) so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world for him to judge the world (*kosmos*), but for the world to be saved through him.

Jesus said that God loved the world and that Jesus was sent to save the world. The Greek word *kosmos* can have different references, but in this context, it must refer to all the descendants of Adam — God loves all human beings. The apostle John uses the word *kosmos* 23 times in his first letter. In this letter, he shows that there are two different hopes of salvation, and he outlines the contrast between “the children of God” and “the world.” In 1 John 3:1-3 we read:

¹ See what sort of love the Father has given us, that we should be called *children of God*! And that is what we are. That is why the world does not know us, because it has not come to know him.

² Beloved ones, we are now children of God, but it has not yet been made manifest what we will be. We do know that when he is made manifest we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is.³ And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as that one is pure.

In verse 2, John uses the words “children of God,” and he includes himself among these children by using the pronoun “we.” John says that it has not been made manifest what we will be. But the words that we will be like him (Jesus) and will see him as he is, refer to the heavenly resurrection. There is a clear contrast between “God’s children” and “the world,” as we see in 1 John 5:19, (above) 3:13, (middle) 2:15-17, (below):

¹⁹ We know that *we originate with God, but the whole world* (*kosmos*) is lying in the power of the wicked one.

¹³ Do not be surprised, brothers, that *the world* (*kosmos*) *hates you*.

¹⁵ *Do not love either the world* (*kosmos*) or the things in the world (*kosmos*). If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; ¹⁶ because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one’s means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. ¹⁷ Furthermore, the world (*kosmos*) is passing away and so is its desire, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.

I have already mentioned that *kosmos* has different references, and the two most common references are “all the humans on the earth” and “all the humans outside the Christian congregations.” In 5:19, the reference of *kosmos* is “all humans outside the Christian congregation.” Because the text says that “the world (*kosmos*) is lying in the power of Satan the Devil. We must also conclude that *kosmos* in 3:13 has the same reference. It is people outside the Christian congregation that hate the Christians.

In 2:15-17, where the bad sides of the world are described, the word *kosmos* is used three times referring to the people outside of the Christian congregations. ***There is a big contrast between “the children of God” and “the world.”*** However, Jesus said that God loved the world, all human beings, and that he was sent to save the world. I will now look at two texts that are important in our context, namely 1 John 4:14, (above) and 2:1, 2, (below):

¹⁴ In addition, we ourselves have seen and are bearing witness that *the Father has sent his Son as savior of the world* (*kosmos*).

¹ My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not commit a sin. And yet, if anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. ² And *he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's* (*kosmos*).

The words of John in 4:14 parallel the words of Jesus that he is the savior of the world, which must refer to all Adam's descendants. And then we have the contrast in 2:2 between "our sins" and "the sins of the whole world." We have seen that "the children of God," which are the antecedent of the pronoun "our," have the heavenly calling. And "the whole world" must then be all the humans on the earth. The "children of God" represent the seed of Abraham that would bless, and "the whole world" represents "all the nations of the world" that will be blessed.

*Two different groups:
The children of God — the world*

Table 1.2 The two different groups of salvation

<i>The 144,000 priests and kings — The great crowd</i>	<i>Revelation chapter 7</i>
<i>Two different seeds: The heavenly bodies — The earthly bodies</i>	<i>1 Corinthians chapter 15</i>
<i>Abraham's seed — All the nations of the earth</i>	<i>Galatians chapter chapter 3</i>
<i>Partakers of the heavenly calling — The coming inhabited earth</i>	<i>Hebrews chapters 3 and 4</i>
<i>The children of God — The creation</i>	<i>Romans chapter 8</i>
<i>The brothers of Jesus — The sheep</i>	<i>Matthew chapter 25</i>
<i>The things in the heavens — The things on the earth</i>	<i>Ephesians chapter 1</i>
<i>The things in the heavens — The things on the earth</i>	<i>Colossians chapter 1</i>
<i>The children of God — The whole world</i>	<i>1 John chapter 2</i>

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

—REVIEW—

The main point in this chapter is that Jesus by his death bought Adam and all Adam's descendants and that the ransom sacrifice is applied for each one, both for the righteous and for the wicked.

A corresponding ransom for all

Adam sold himself and his unborn descendants under sin. This means that Adam lost his right to live forever on the earth as a perfect man. Jesus came "to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10). Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:6 that Jesus was "a corresponding ransom for *all* (*pas*)," and Jesus says in Matthew 20:28 that he gave his life "as a ransom in exchange for *many* (*polys*)." I show that both "all" and "many" refer to *all* Adam's descendants, though seen from different viewpoints.

Reconciliation for the whole world

Jesus agrees with Paul that his ransom sacrifice was given for all descendants of Adam when he said in John 3:17 that *the world* would be saved through him. The Greek word *kosmos* ("world") refers to all humans on the earth. The apostle John says that Jesus "takes away the sins of the world," and that Jesus is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of "the whole world." And Paul says that God "was reconciling the world to himself."

The validation of the atonement

The high priest in Israel went into the Most Holy on the day of atonement before Jehovah with blood. This was a prophetic type of the actions of Jesus in connection with his perfect sacrifice. Jesus gave his life, he was resurrected, he went to heaven, the antitypical Most Holy, and he presented the value of his blood before Jehovah. When these four steps were taken, the ransom sacrifice was valid for all Adam's descendants.

The application of the ransom sacrifice

I use the following illustration: Inherited sin represents a debt of 10,000 dollars for each descendant of Adam. Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for Adam and each one of Adam's descendants. But that was not all that was needed for some of Adam's descendants.

The Jews: They had an extra debt of 3,000 dollars because they were under the curse of the law because they did not keep all the laws. By his death, Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each Jew, and because he died on a stake, he paid 3,000 dollars because cursed is the one who is hanging on a tree.

The heirs of the heavenly kingdom: Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each one of the 144,000 heirs. But this gave them the right to live forever on the earth but not a right to live in heaven. The price for this was 20,000 dollars. God paid the extra 10,000 dollars by declaring each one righteous and baptizing them with holy spirit so they became new creatures.

Those who have sinned against the holy spirit: Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each one of them, and by this, they got the right to live forever on the earth. But their sin against the holy spirit represented an extra debt of 6,000 dollars, and there was no one that could pay this debt. Therefore, they will not get a resurrection but will be eternally annihilated.

Adam: Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for Adam. But because he was perfect when he sinned, therefore, this was sin against the holy spirit. Thus, he got an extra debt of 6,000 dollars, and there was no one that could pay this debt. Because of this, he will not get a resurrection, and he is eternally annihilated.

Those who have not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. This includes the vast majority of Adam’s descendants, righteous as well as wicked ones. Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each one, and this guarantees their right to get a resurrection in the millennium where they will get the opportunity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.

The actions of the priests in the Tabernacle and the temple were typical representations and the antitypes would come with Jesus Christ. Because of this, we find descriptions of the role of Jesus in connection with the atonement in most books in the Christian Greek Scriptures. I will now look at the Greek and Hebrew words that are used in this connection.

THE NEED FOR ATONEMENT AND PROPITIATION

The word “propitiation” refers to regaining the favor or goodwill of someone, and “atonement” refers to an act of reparation for an offense or injury, or reconciliation. So, both words are used in connection with the relationship between God and man. I will now look at the original Hebrew and Greek words.

The Hebrew verb translated “to make atonement” (*kāfar*) occurs 94 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and this verb has the meaning “coat, cover, make atonement,” according to Kohlenberger and Mounce. The corresponding noun *kippurim* occurs eight times and has the meaning “atonement.” This means that sins are covered, and therefore the sins are forgotten or forgiven. So, the point is that sins are being covered and therefore are blotted out. One example where both words are found is Exodus 29:36:

³⁶You will offer the bull of the sin offering daily for an atonement (*kippurim*), and you are to purify the altar from sin by making atonement (*kāfar*) for it, and you must anoint it to sanctify it.

The noun *kōfar* has the meaning “ransom, compensation,” and it is used in connection with paying a price for the release of something or someone, as we see in Exodus 30:11, 12:

¹¹Then Jehovah said to Moses: ¹²“Whenever you take a census and count the sons of Israel, each one must give a ransom (*kōfar*) for his life to Jehovah at the time of the census. This is so that no plague may be brought upon them when they are registered.

In the Christian Greek Scriptures, there are three passages where atonement is mentioned. The Greek word *hilasterion* has the meaning “the cover of the ark of the covenant; the mercy-seat; the place of propitiation,” and *hilaskomai* has the meaning “to expiate; make an atonement or expiation for.” I quote Romans 3:25, (above) Hebrews 2:17, (middle) and 9:5, (below):

²⁵God presented him as an offering for propitiation (*hilasterion*) through faith in his blood. This was to demonstrate his own righteousness, because God in his forbearance was forgiving the sins that occurred in the past.

¹⁷ Consequently, he had to become like his “brothers” in all respects, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, in order to offer a propitiatory sacrifice (*hilaskomai*) for the sins of the people.

⁵ and above it were the glorious cherubs overshadowing the propitiatory cover (*hilasterion*). But now is not the time to speak of these things in detail.

The reason for the need of atonement is clear. Because all descendants of Adam have inherited sin from their first father, they violate the laws of God every day, and therefore they are enemies of God. So, there is a need for a sacrifice that can permanently take away the sins and make atonement with God. Paul outlines this situation in Colossians 1: 21, 22, (above) and Romans 5:6-11, (below):

²¹ Indeed, you who were once **alienated and enemies** (*ekhtrōs*) because your minds were on the works that were wicked. ²² he has **now reconciled** (*apokatalassō*) by means of that one’s fleshly body through his death, in order to present you holy and unblemished and open to no accusation before him.

⁶ For, indeed, while we were still weak, Christ died for ungodly men at the appointed time. ⁷ For hardly would anyone die for a righteous man; though perhaps for a good man someone may dare to die. ⁸ But God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more, then, since we have now been declared righteous by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. ¹⁰ For if when we were **enemies we became reconciled** (*katalassō*) to God through the death of his Son, how much more we will be saved by his life, now that we have become reconciled. ¹¹ Not only that, but we are also rejoicing in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received **the reconciliation** (*katallagē*).

The word *ekhtrōs* has the meaning, “hated; under disfavor; inimical; hostile; enemy; adversary,” according to Mounce. And in both quotations above it is said that humans were God’s enemies. The words *katalassō* and *apokatalassō* have the meaning “to transfer from a certain state to another which is quite different; hence, to reconcile, restore to favor,” according to Mounce. The corresponding noun *katallagē* has the meaning “an exchange, reconciliation, restoration to favor,” according to the same source. Both quotations above say that those who were enemies have been reconciled to God.

Paul shows that the people in Colossae were enemies of God because their minds and works were wicked. But he points to an act of reconciliation, namely that the fleshly body of Jesus was sacrificed. Also, Hebrews 10:10 refers to the body of Jesus as a sacrifice. However, Romans 5:9 refers to the blood of Jesus and verse 10 says that they were reconciled through the death of Jesus. When Jesus died, he sacrificed his perfect body, but because the blood represents the life that he sacrificed, the ransom sacrifice is usually connected with his blood. And as Hebrews 9:11, 12 says, Jesus went to heaven and presented his blood (his life) as the ransom sacrifice for Jehovah.

THE SCOPE OF THE ATONEMENT

We have now been on the surface of the issue of reconciliation and atonement, but we need to go deeper. This is an issue of selling and buying for the right price, and it is very important to understand the details of this.

SELLING THE HUMAN RACE

The problem for Adam's descendants is expressed in Romans 7:14:

¹⁴For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold (*pipraskeō*) under sin.

The verb *pipraskeō* has the meaning “to sell” according to Mounce, and “to dispose of property or provide services in exchange for money or other valuable considerations,” according to Louw and Nida. *Aid to Bible Understanding* (1971), page 1373, has the following comment on this issue:

The foregoing information lays the basis for understanding the ransom provided for humankind through God's Son, Christ Jesus. Mankind's need for a ransom came about through the rebellion in Eden. Adam sold himself to do evil for the selfish pleasure of listening to his wife's voice and of keeping continued company with the sinful transgressor, and to share the same condemned standing with her before God. He thereby sold himself and his descendants into slavery to sin and to death, the price that God's justice required. (Rom. 5:12-19; compare Romans 7:14-25.) Having possessed human perfection, Adam lost this valuable possession for himself and all his offspring.

This is an excellent explanation, and the issue is seen from another angle in Romans 5:12:

¹²That is why, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned.

The point of Paul is that Adam sold himself and all his unborn descendants, and therefore, each one has inherited sin that leads to death. In order to reverse the situation and satisfy the righteousness of God, what was sold, must be bought back.

BUYING BACK THE HUMAN RACE WITH A CORRESPONDING RANSOM

In connection with buying back the human race, there are passages using words with the meaning of “buy” and with the meaning of “save.” Luke 19:10 says:

¹⁰For the Son of man came to seek and to save (*sōzō*) what was lost.”

Adam lost the right to continue to live on the earth without dying, and Jesus bought this back. Showing that the Bible writers realized that what was lost was bought back, I quote the two passages of 1 Corinthians 6:20, (above) and 7:23, (below):

²⁰for you were bought (*agorazō*) with a price (*time*). By all means, glorify God in your body.

²³You were bought (*agorazō*) with a price (*time*); stop becoming slaves of men.

The Greek word *agorazō* has the meaning, “to buy; redeem; acquire by a ransom or price paid,” according to Mounce. The passages above show that the Corinthians were bought with a price. But I will now show that Adam and all his descendants were bought with the same price as the price for which they were sold. This is seen in 1 Timothy 2:5, 6, (above) and Matthew 20:28, (below):

⁵For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself **a corresponding ransom** (*antilytron*) **for all** (*pas*)—this is what is to be witnessed to in its own due time.

²⁸ Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as *a ransom* (*lytron*) *in exchange* (*anti*) *for many* (*polys*).”

The Greek word *antilytron* is correctly translated by the expression “corresponding ransom,” which means that the ransom had exactly the same value as that which was sold. And this value was the perfect human life of Jesus corresponding to the perfect human life of Adam. In Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45, the Greek word *lytron* without the prefixed preposition *anti* is used. But the preposition *anti* is immediately following *lytron* as *lytron anti*, so the idea of a “corresponding ransom” is also expressed in these two passages.

The meaning of the word “*all*” (*pas*) is “a totality of kinds or sorts; every kind of; all sorts of,” according to Louw and Nida. The basic meaning of *pas* is “*all*,” and in the excursus below showing the use of *pas* in the first letter to Timothy, we see that this meaning is used in almost all instances. The primary principle of the translation of words is that the basic meaning must always be used, except when the context shows that it has one of the rare meanings. There is nothing in the context indicating that *pas* has a rare meaning and the use of *antilytron* (“corresponding ransom”) clearly shows that the word “*all*” includes *all* Adam’s descendants.

In 1 Timothy 2:5, 6 we read about “the corresponding ransom for *all* (*pas*),” but in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 we read about “a ransom in exchange for *many* (*polys*).” Is there a difference in meaning here between “*all*” (*pas*) and “*many*” (*polys*)?

According to Mounce, the meaning of *polys* is “great in magnitude or quantity; much; large; many.” It is important to note that *polys* and *pas* may express the same situation from two different angles, and the two words do not exclude each other. Romans 5:15 illustrates this issue. Paul uses the word *polys* (“*many*”) both for all the descendants of Adam who will die and for all that are included in the ransom sacrifice:

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by one man’s trespass *many* (*polys*) died, how much more did the undeserved kindness of God and his free gift by the undeserved kindness of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to *many* (*polys*)!

The meaning of the expression “*many* died” (aorist active) is seen in verse 17 where we read, “for if by the trespass of one man death ruled as king through that one.” All Adam’s offspring were subjected to death, and the reference of the word “*many*” (*polys*) in this context is to *all* Adam’s descendants. *The Watchtower* of August 1, 1973, page 465, has some interesting comments on the use of the word *polys*:

⁹ This teaching of the ransom brings to our attention two families—the family of Adam and the family of Jesus Christ. Both families are described as being “*many*.” (Rom. 5:15) There is no special requirement for becoming one of Adam’s sinful family. All are born into it by the natural procreative process. But, concerning what Jesus did, it is written: “For even the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for *many*.” (Mark 10:45; Matt. 20:28) *How “many”? As we have already seen, he gave himself “a corresponding ransom for all.”* He tasted death “for every man.” (1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 2:9) *During the past six thousand years, Adam’s family has multiplied into the billions. Christ purchased them all.*

On the background of the points above, we see that *polys* (“*many*”) in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 does not refer to a group that is less in numbers than “*all*,” but to *all* Adam’s descendants. The word *antilytron* in itself supports the conclusion that *pas* refers

to **all** Adam's descendants. Because **all** Adam's descendants were sold, the corresponding ransom requires that **all** Adam's descendants are bought back. I will quote two more passages showing that Jesus died for **all** Adam's descendants, namely, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, (above) and Hebrews 2:9, (below).

¹⁴For the love the Christ has compels us, because this is what we have concluded, that one man **died for all**; so, then, all had died. ¹⁵And he **died for all** so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.

⁹But we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than angels, now crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, so that by God's undeserved kindness he might **taste death for everyone**.

The lexicon *Aid to Bible Understanding*, page 1373, has a very fine description of the ransom sacrifice and the price paid:

But God is pleased to approve the application of the ransom to redeem those of Adam's offspring who avail themselves of such release. As Paul states, "as through the disobedience of the one man many were constituted sinners, likewise also through the obedience of the one person many will be constituted righteous." (Rom. 5:18, 19) At the time of Adam's sin and his being sentenced to death, his offspring or race were all unborn in his loins and so all died with him. (Compare Hebrews 7:4-10; Romans 7:9.) Jesus as a perfect man, "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), had a race or offspring unborn in his loins, and when he died innocently as a perfect human sacrifice this potential human race died with him. He had willingly abstained from producing a family of his own by natural procreation. Instead, Jesus uses the authority granted by Jehovah on the basis of his ransom to give life to all those who accept this provision.—1 Cor. 15:45; compare Romans 5:15-17.

The illustration of the potential unborn offspring of Adam and the potential unborn offspring of Jesus illustrates the situation. However, the sacrifice was not Jesus and his unborn offspring instead of Adam and his unborn offspring. But the ransom sacrifice was only the body and blood of the perfect man Jesus for the body and blood of the perfect man Adam.

In order for the price to be a "corresponding ransom" both Adam and his unborn descendants were bought. This means that the corresponding ransom also includes Adam. But even though the ransom is applied for him, he will not get a resurrection or everlasting life for reasons that will be discussed below.

EXCURSUS ON THE MEANING OF **PAS** IN THE FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY

A list of all the occurrences of **pas** in 1 Timothy follows:

1:15: This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full (**pas**) acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these, I am foremost.

2:1, 2: First of all (**pas**), then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made concerning all sorts of men (**pas**),² concerning kings and all those who are in high positions, so that we may go on leading a calm and quiet life with complete godly devotion and seriousness (**pas**).

2:4: whose will is that *all sorts of people* (“*all*” NWT84) (*pas*) should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.

2:6: who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all (*pas*)—this is what is to be witnessed to in its own due time.

2:8: So I desire that in every (*pas*) place the men carry on prayer, lifting up loyal hands, without anger and debates.

2:11: Let a woman learn in silence with full (*pas*) submissiveness.

3:4: a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having his children in subjection with all (*pas*) seriousness.

3:11: Women should likewise be serious, not slanderous, moderate in habits, faithful in all (*pas*). things.

4:4: For every (*pas*) creation of God is fine, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,

4:8, 9: For physical training is beneficial for a little, but godly devotion is beneficial for all (*pas*) things, as it holds promise of the life now and the life that is to come.⁹ That statement is trustworthy and deserves (*pas*) full acceptance.

4:15: Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, so that your advancement may be plainly seen by all (*pas*) people.

5:2: to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters, with all (*pas*) chasteness.

5:10: having a reputation for fine works, if she raised children, if she practiced hospitality, if she washed the feet of holy ones, if she assisted the afflicted, if she devoted herself to every (*pas*) good work.

5:20: Reprove before all (*pas*) onlookers those who practice sin, as a warning to the rest.

6:1: Let those who are under the yoke of slavery keep on considering their owners worthy of full (*pas*) honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may never be spoken of injuriously.

6:10: For the love of money is a root of *all sorts* (*pas*) of *injuriously things*, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains.

6:13: Before God, who preserves all things (*pas*) alive, and Christ Jesus, who as a witness made the fine public declaration before Pontius Pilate.

6:17: Instruct those who are rich in the present system of things not to be arrogant, and to place their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who richly provides us with all the things (*pas*) we enjoy.

2 Timothy 1:15: You know this, that all (*pas*) the men in the province of Asia have turned away from me, including Phy·gel·us and Her·mog·e·nes.

I have written *pas* in red where I take the meaning to be “*all*,” and 6:10, the only place where I, on the basis of the context, see the meaning “all sorts of,” is written in blue. I have some comments in connection with particular occurrences.

The translators of NWT13 have “all sorts of people” in the second occurrence of *pas* in 2:1. There is nothing in the context indicating that the basic meaning “*all*” of *pas* should not be used. The reason for the prayers is that Christians should “go on leading a quiet and calm life.” Because of this, Paul exhorts Timothy to pray for “kings and all those who are in high positions” because these have the power to influence the life of the Christians.

But because kings and persons in high positions are mentioned, will that not support the translation, “all sorts of”? No. We can compare this verse with the use of *pas* in 2 Timothy 1:15. Paul says that, “all the men in the province of Asia turned away from me.” Does the word “*all*” refer to *every* person in the province of Asia? No, it refers to persons in the province of Asia in the Christian congregations there. In a similar way, Paul exhorts Timothy to pray for “all men,” not all men in the whole world, but all men who have the power to cause or prevent the Christians from “leading a calm and quiet life.”

But what about Paul’s words in 1 Timothy 2:4?

whose will is that all sorts (*pas*) of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.

I put my question in the negative in order to illustrate the issue: Is it God’s will that some people will not be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of the truth? No. Jehovah wants that *all people* shall be saved, and that was the reason why he sent Jesus to the earth to buy “all Adam’s descendants.” And that is the reason why “all people” must get a personal chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. This means that the rendering “all sorts of people” does not have any support in the textual context or in the doctrine about the ransom sacrifice.

SALVATION AND RECONCILIATION FOR THE HUMAN WORLD

Buying something can be done in different ways. The easiest way is to pay a sum of money and immediately get the product you paid for. This is the way the ransom sacrifice works. When Jesus died, he paid the price for Adam and all his descendants, and after that, Jesus was the owner of Adam and the human race. However, some persons today, including the members of the Governing Body, treat the ransom sacrifice more like a business option than as a real payment. I will elucidate that in Chapter 3.

The concept “option” is defined in the following way:

The term option refers to a financial instrument that is based on the value of underlying securities such as stocks. An options contract offers the buyer the opportunity to buy or sell—depending on the type of contract they hold—the underlying asset. Unlike futures, the holder is not required to buy or sell the asset if they decide against it.⁴

The issue is whether Jesus bought Adam and all his descendants and applied his ransom sacrifice to each of them to the point where all of them, including Adam, were reconciled to God, or whether Jesus used the ransom sacrifice as a business option and only applied it to some of them, to the point that only certain descendants of Adam are reconciled to

4. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/option.asp>.

God. This issue is discussed in several places in the Christian Greek Scriptures, and I will make some quotations. I start with John 3:16, 17:

¹⁶ “For God loved the world (*kosmos*) so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world for him to judge the world, but for the world (*kosmos*) to be saved through him.

The text says that God loved the world so much that he sent his Son to the earth because his Son should save the world. To what does *kosmos* refer? The UBS lexicon has the following references of *kosmos*: “world; world order; world inhabitants; mankind (especially of men hostile to God); realm of existence; way of life.” Because it is said that God loved the world and that it will be saved, the reference must be to all mankind, to all Adam’s descendants. We note that Jesus ***should save the world and not save a part of the world.*** This is confirmed by the following passages:

John 1:29:

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and he said: “See, the Lamb of God who ***takes away the sin of the world*** (*kosmos*).

John 4:14:

¹⁴ In addition, we ourselves have seen and are bearing witness that the Father has sent ***his Son as savior of the world*** (*kosmos*).

John 6:51:

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and for a fact, the bread that I will give is my flesh ***in behalf of the life of the world*** (*kosmos*).

John 12:47:

⁴⁷ But if anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I came, not to judge the world, ***but to save the world*** (*kosmos*).

These passages show that Jesus “takes away” the sins of ***all*** Adam’s descendants, the sins ***the whole kosmos*** have inherited. This is a subject that is close to the heart of the apostle John and in 1. John 2:1, 2 he says:

¹ My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not commit a sin. And yet, if anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. ² And ***he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins***, yet not for ours only ***but also for the whole world’s*** (*kosmos*).

When John used the words “our sins,” he referred to the sins of those with the heavenly calling, those to whom John was writing. This is a contrast to the sins “of the whole world,” all the other descendants of Adam. And according to the words of John, there is no difference in the way “our sins” and “the world’s sins” are taken away. The ransom sacrifice is not used as a business option by only taking away the sins of those who believe, “all those who accept this provision,” as several recent articles in *The Watchtower* say. But Jesus has taken away ***the sins of “the whole world,” all the descendants of Adam.***

The present members of the Governing Body use the ransom sacrifice as businesspeople use an option and not as a price that is paid. Jesus bought all Adam's descendants and applied the ransom sacrifice for all of them. And he did not apply the sacrifice only for some of them, those who will be saved.

Let us now look at the use of the word reconciliation (*katallagē*) and the corresponding verb *katallassō* in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21:

¹⁶ So from now on we know no man from a fleshly viewpoint. Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, we certainly no longer know him in that way. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in union with Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; look! new things have come into existence. ¹⁸ But all things are from God, who **reconciled** (*katallassō*) **us to himself** through Christ and gave us **the ministry of the reconciliation** (*katallasgē*), ¹⁹ namely, that God was by means of Christ **reconciling** (*katallassō*) **a world** (*kosmos*) **to himself, not counting their offenses against them**, and he entrusted to us the message of the reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors substituting for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us. As substitutes for Christ, we beg: “**Become reconciled** (*katallassō*) to God.” ²¹ The one who did not know sin, he made to be sin for us, so that by means of him we might become God’s righteousness.

I will first analyze the verbs in the text. Verse 18 refers to God, “who reconciled us to himself.” The verb *katalassō* in this clause is aorist active participle. Those who have been reconciled are new creations with the heavenly calling, members of spiritual Israel, as we see in verse 17. The aorist participle shows that this reconciliation has occurred. In the clause, “God was by means of Christ reconciling the world to himself,” the verb *katalassō* is present active participle, and it is governed by the verb *eimi* as imperfect indicative. Greek imperfect is a combination of past tense and the imperfective aspect, and can be translated as “was doing.” So literally the text says that “God by means of Christ was doing reconciliation,” and this is correctly translated as “God was by means of Christ reconciling the world to himself.”

Because the members of spiritual Israel were already reconciled to God, as verse 18 says, the noun *kosmos* (“world”) must refer to all human beings outside the Christian congregations. It cannot refer to Adam’s descendants that are dead, because their sins were blotted out by their deaths. So, God’s action of reconciliation must refer to all Adam’s descendants that were living at the time when those with the heavenly calling were reconciled to God. The use of a finite imperfect verb and a present participle suggests that the process of reconciliation had not stopped but was still continuing when Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians. Children continued to be born, and because they had inherited sin, they also had to be reconciled to God.

The followers of Jesus who preached the good news of the Kingdom had approached sincere people and helped them to start serving God and become members of spiritual Israel. But most of the other living people had not heard the truth about God and his Son Jesus Christ. This means that all those who were living on the earth were being reconciled

5. The article “a” before “world” is unnecessary, even though there is no Greek definite article before *kosmos*. The word *kosmos* is used in 1 Corinthians 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 1:12, and when a word already is used or known, it is definite even when it does not have the article.

to God without having done anything for it, or even without knowing about it. This is confirmed by Paul's words in Romans 5:10:

¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we became reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more we will be saved by his life, now that we have become reconciled.

The members of the congregation in Rome were reconciled to God before they became Christians, *when they were enemies of God*. The reconciliation was happening "by means of Christ." Jesus had bought all Adam's descendants, and Jehovah was now applying the ransom sacrifice to all living humans. The result was that God was "not counting their offenses against them," as verse 19 says. What does this mean?

When members of spiritual Israel violated the laws of God, they could ask for forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and their sins would be forgiven. But most people in the world did not know about the ransom sacrifice. So how did God view all these people of the world? I quote Ephesians 2:1-5:

¹ Furthermore, God made you alive, though you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you at one time walked according to the system of things of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. ³ *Yes, among them we all at one time conducted ourselves in harmony with the desires of our flesh, carrying out the will of the flesh and of our thoughts, and we were naturally children of wrath (orgē) just as the rest.* ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, ⁵ made us alive together with the Christ, even when we were dead in trespasses—by undeserved kindness you have been saved.

The people of the world (*kosmos*) generally were like the Ephesians. They were carrying out the "will of the flesh and (their) thoughts," and they were "*children of wrath (orgē)*." What does that mean? Ephesians 5:6 speaks of God's wrath:

⁶ Let no man deceive you with empty words, for because of such things the wrath (*orgē*) of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

Ephesians 5:6 elucidates the meaning of the expression "children of wrath" from 2:3, "the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience." Genesis 2:17 shows that the penalty for sin is death, and God's wrath means that God would follow strict justice and execute the penalty for sin with no hope for those who die. However, 1 Thessalonians 1:10 points to a solution to the bad situation in which Adam has put his descendants:

¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from the heavens, whom he raised up from the dead, namely, Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath (*orgē*) that is coming.

The members of the congregation in Thessalonika served God, and they were called to the heavenly Kingdom. Paul shows that because of the ransom sacrifice, they would be rescued from the coming wrath. But Jesus came to save *the world (kosmos)*, as John 3:17 says. And 1 John 2:2 says that Jesus is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. And now we can understand 2 Corinthians 5:19 which is our primary focus:

¹⁹ that God was by means of Christ *reconciling (katallasō) a world (kosmos) to himself, not counting their offenses against them.*

Because of the bad actions of the people of the world, they are designated as “the children of wrath” in Ephesians 2:3, and this means that God could apply his strict justice letting all these people die without any hope. But because he is applying the ransom sacrifice of Jesus to all these people, the result is that all of them are reconciled to God and that God is “not counting their offenses against them.”

The persons who heard the preaching of the Kingdom and started to serve God, they were declared righteous, baptized with holy spirit, and they became new creations. Because of this, God is “not counting their offenses against them.” But they will be rescued “from the wrath that is coming,” and they will get a heavenly resurrection. The people of the world have not had the opportunity to become Jehovah’s servants. But he is applying the ransom sacrifice in their behalf. They have become reconciled to God, and because of this, he “is not counting their offenses against them.” This means that when they die, they come to *hadēs* and will get a resurrection in the millennium. During Judgment Day, they will get the same chance as the Romans and other Christians got in the first century CE. They will be offered the ransom sacrifice, and if they choose to serve God, they will become perfect humans at the end of the 1,000 years with the possibility of living forever on the earth.

The words of Jesus that he is the savior of the world (kosmos) and John’s words that Jesus is a propitiatory sacrifice for the whole world (kosmos) are strong arguments in favor of the resurrection of all Adam’s descendants, except the few that are incorrigibly wicked and beyond repentance.

But there are some words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 that some will use against the conclusions above. The Christians with a heavenly calling are Christ’s ambassadors, and they have received “the ministry of reconciliation.” Because of this, they beg, “Be reconciled (*katalassō*) to God.” If all humans in the whole world have been reconciled to God without doing anything, even without knowing about it, why would the ambassadors ask them to *become reconciled* to God?

The answer to this question can be found in the form of the verb *katalassō* (“to reconcile”) in 5:20. The verb is 2. person plural aorist passive imperative. This shows that the ambassadors are not speaking to the people of the world; that would require an imperative in 3. person plural. But they are speaking to “*you*” (2. person plural), to the members of the congregation in Corinth. But why do they make this appeal to the Corinthians? *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* in the series Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, by R.V.G. Tasker, pages 89, 90, says:

God makes His appeal to men through such ambassadors. In His name they call upon men to accept the reconciliation made possible for them by the death of Christ, and so to enjoy the pardon, peace and power that such reconciliation alone can bring them. Paul now calls upon all at Corinth, who may hear this letter read out in the assembly and who are still at enmity with God, to accept the reconciliation open to them.

These comments are correct, and we note that Paul does not speak about the reconciliation of the people in the world. The letters of Paul show that there were many violations of God’s laws in the congregation in Corinth. Because of this, some anointed believers could have become enemies of God, such as the “superfine apostles.” And there was a need of reconciliation to God for them.

The conclusion is that Jesus ransomed all mankind, and he purchased them all, even without their requesting him to do so. Those with the heavenly calling must choose to accept the ransom sacrifice and the reconciliation in this old system of things. The people of the world must choose to accept the ransom sacrifice and the reconciliation in the new system of things.

THE VALIDATION OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

The ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ has great importance for God's servants. When asked, they will say that when Jesus died, he provided the ransom sacrifice by his death, and by believing in Jesus, we will receive forgiveness for our sins. This is a correct answer, but most Christians do not know all the details in connection with what the ransom sacrifice really is and how it is applied to all Adam's descendants.

For example, New Revised Standard Version renders 2 Corinthians 5:15 this way:

¹⁵ And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him *who died and was raised for them.*⁶

This text shows that not only did Jesus die for all but he was also resurrected for all. This is also shown in other passages. Paul says in Philippians 3:10: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection." Peter says in 1 Peter 1:3 that "he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." And regarding baptism, we read in 1 Peter 3:21 that "it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Few Christians can explain the role played by the resurrection of Jesus in connection with the ransom sacrifice, so let us consider what The Bible says.

THE LAW OF MOSES CONTAINS TYPES OR SHADOWS THAT REFER TO ANTITYPES THAT ARE FULFILLED IN CONNECTION WITH JESUS

In the epistle to the Hebrews, the arrangement with sacrifices in Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem is portrayed as a type of heavenly things. Hebrews 8:5 says:

⁵ These men are offering sacred service in *a typical representation* (*hypodeigma*) and *a shadow* (*skia*) of the heavenly things; just as Moses, when about to construct the tent, was given the divine command: For He says: "See that you make all things after *their pattern* (*typos*) that was shown to you in the mountain."

When God instructed Moses to make the Tabernacle, he said that Moses had to make it exactly after the pattern he was shown on the mountain. The word "pattern" is translated from the Greek word *typos*, and according to Louw and Nida, the meaning of

6. The last clause in NWT13 is: "who died for them and was raised up." I quote NRSV because the rendering of most translations, including NWT 84 and NWT13 of the last part of this verse is inaccurate. Literally, the Greek text says: "for them died and was raised." The important point is that the verbs *apothnēskō* ("to die") and *egeirō* ("to raise") both are aorist participles masculine singular dative, and the only difference is that "to die" is active while "to raise" is passive. Because both participles stand in the dative case and are connected with *kai* ("and"), they must have the same relationship to the words "for them." I simply do not understand the reasoning of those translators who separate the two participles and only connect "to die" with "for them."

this word is “a visual form designed to be imitated or copied.” The sacred service in the Tabernacle and later in the temple is said to be “a typical representation.” The Greek word *hypodeigma* has the meaning “a token; example; model” according to Mounce. Both *typos* and *hypodeigma* refer to something that is a type that points to an antitype. The word *skia* (“shadow”) is also used, and this word points to the same as the other two Greek words, though from a different point of view. The sacred service is a type of something bigger. It is also a shadow of something bigger, and the body that casts the shadow is the antitype.⁷

A similar viewpoint is made in Hebrews 10:1, where the law is the shadow (*skia*) and there is a reality, expressed by the Greek word *eikon* with the meaning “a material image; likeness,” according to Mounce

¹ For since the Law has a shadow (*skia*) of the good things to come, but not the very substance (*eikōn*) of the things, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make those who approach perfect.

What we have learned so far from the Epistle to the Hebrews is that a great part the writings of Moses are types of bigger things. We learn from 8:5 that the actions of the priests that were written in the law were types, and 10:1 tells us that the whole law consists of types.

THE REALITY OF THE ACTIONS OF THE HIGH PRIEST ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

There are detailed instructions regarding the actions of the high priest on the day of atonement, and we read in Leviticus 16: 11-16:

¹¹ “Aaron will present the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement in behalf of himself and his house; afterward he will slaughter the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself. ¹² “He will then take the fire holder full of burning coals from the altar before Jehovah and two handfuls of fine perfumed incense, and he will bring them inside the curtain. ¹³ He will also put the incense on the fire before Jehovah, and the cloud of the incense will envelop the Ark cover, which is on the Testimony, so that he may not die. ¹⁴ “He will take some of the bull’s blood and spatter it with his finger in front of the cover on the east side, and he will spatter some of the blood with his finger seven times before the cover. ¹⁵ “He will then slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the curtain and do with its blood the same as he did with the bull’s blood; he is to spatter it toward the cover and before the cover. ¹⁶ “He must make atonement for the holy place concerning the acts of uncleanness of the Israelites and concerning their transgressions and their sins, and that is what he should do for the tent of meeting, which is located among them in the midst of their acts of uncleanness.

Between the Holy and the Most Holy in the Tabernacle, there was a curtain. On the day of atonement, the high priest would go inside this curtain with incense and blood, and he would stand in God’s presence. With the blood of animals, the high priest made atonement for himself and for the people. This was an illustration of much bigger things, and this is explained in Hebrews 9:6-9:

7. The word *skia* is also used in Colossians 2:16, 17. The shadow is the festivals, new moons, and sabbaths that were written in the law, and the body casting the shadow (the reality) is connected with Jesus Christ. We see that a great part of the law was types, and the antitypes would come in connection with Jesus Christ.

⁶ After these things were constructed this way, the priests enter the first tent compartment regularly to perform the sacred services;⁷ but the high priest enters alone into the second compartment once a year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins that the people committed in ignorance.⁸ Thus the holy spirit makes it clear that the way into the holy place had not yet been revealed while the first tent was standing.⁹ ***This tent is an illustration (parabolē) for the present time.***

Verse 9 says that the service of the priests in the Tabernacle is “an illustration for the present time,” which refers to the time when Hebrews was written. The word “illustration” is translated from the Greek word *parabolē*, which according to Louw and Nida has the meaning, “a model or example which anticipates or precedes a later realization.” I will now look at the antitype in Hebrews 9:11-14, 24-28:

¹¹ However, when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have already taken place, he passed through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.¹² He entered into the holy place, not with the blood of goats and of young bulls, ***but with his own blood, once for all time, and obtained an everlasting deliverance for us.***¹³ For if the blood of goats and of bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who have been defiled sanctifies for the cleansing of the flesh,¹⁴ how much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works so that we may render sacred service to the living God?⁸

²⁴ For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with hands, which is a copy (*antitypos*) of the reality (*alēthinos*), ***but into heaven itself, so that he now appears before God on our behalf.***²⁵ This was not done to offer himself often, as when the high priest enters into the holy place from year to year with blood that is not his own.²⁶ Otherwise, he would have to suffer often from the founding of the world. But now he has manifested himself once for all time at the conclusion of the systems of things to do away with sin through the sacrifice of himself.²⁷ And just as it is reserved for men to die once for all time, but after this to receive a judgment,²⁸ so also the Christ was offered once for all time to bear the sins of many; and the second time that he appears it will be apart from sin, and he will be seen by those earnestly looking for him for their salvation.

That different things and actions in the law that were types, and that the reality would come in connection with Jesus, is again stressed in these verses. The noun *antitypos* has the meaning “a correspondent stamp or form,” according to Mounce. And *alēthinos* has the meaning “real; true.” In this context, *antitypos* is the type or the shadow and *alēthinos* is the body casting the shadow, or the reality. And in Hebrews 8:5, *typos* and *hypodeigma* each were the type.

I will now look at the antitype of the high priests’ entering the Most Holy with blood. Verse 24 shows that the Most Holy in the Tabernacle was a picture of heaven. And Jesus, as the antitypical high priest, entered into heaven with his own blood that he sacrificed when he died. The last clause in verse 24 is important for us. We read that “he now appears before God on our behalf.” This shows that the action of Jesus both of spilling his blood when he died and that he presented his blood in heaven, are not mere formalities without meaning. But this is done “on our behalf,” which means that the ransom sacrifice was

8. Hebrews 10:10 says: “By this ‘will’ we have been sanctified through the offering of ***the body*** of Jesus Christ once for all time.” When he died, ***Jesus sacrificed his body***. But because his blood represented his life, Hebrews 9:12 says that he presented his own blood before Jehovah in heaven.

presented to Jehovah, and then it was applied for our benefit. We are now in a position that we can know the different details of the ransom sacrifice and its application.

There were four necessary steps that had to be taken before the ransom sacrifice could be applied for our benefit, 1) the death of Jesus, 2) his resurrection, 3) his ascension to heaven, and 4) his presentation of his sacrificed blood before Jehovah.

THE APPLICATION OF THE ATONEMENT FOR THE HUMAN RACE

When the Scriptures speak about the ransom sacrifice and salvation, in most cases, the undeserved kindness and love of God are stressed. But in Romans chapter 3, the righteousness of God is stressed.

THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S PERFECT JUSTICE

In Romans 3:24-26, the nouns *dikaiosynē* (“righteousness”) is used two times, the noun *dikaios* (righteous) is used one time and the verb *dikaōō* (“to declare righteous”) is used two times. The verse says that God himself *must be righteous* when declaring a person righteous. We read Romans 3:23-26:

²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous (*dikaioō*) by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus.²⁵ God presented him as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood. This was to demonstrate his own righteousness (*dikaiosynē*), because God in his forbearance was forgiving the sins that occurred in the past.²⁶ This was to demonstrate his own righteousness (*dikaiosynē*), in this present season, *so that he might be righteous (dikaos)* even when declaring righteous (*dikaioō*) the man who has faith in Jesus.

Before Jesus died and sinners could enjoy the benefits of the ransom sacrifice, God could forgive sins because he knew Jesus would give his life as a ransom sacrifice. However, persons who were called to the heavenly kingdom had to be declared righteous, and because of the requirement that God himself had to be righteous when doing so, this action of him could only occur after Jesus had given his life as a ransom sacrifice. The requirement of righteousness is that first when there is a corresponding ransom — Jesus instead of Adam — then God has a just judicial basis on which he can declare a person righteous. The study note of Romans 3:25 in NWT13 says:

An offering for propitiation: Or “an offering for atonement (reconciliation).” The Greek word *hi·la·ste'ri·on*, word *hi·la·smos'*, Or “an offering for atonement (reconciliation).” The Greek here rendered “an offering for propitiation,” and the related rendered “propitiatory sacrifice” at 1Jo 2:2 and 4:10, can signify a means of appeasement. In the Scriptures, these terms are used to refer to a restoration of good relations between God and man. When Adam was created as an earthly “son of God,” he enjoyed a peaceful relationship with his Creator. (Adam forfeited his favorable relationship and his perfect human life. He also sold his Lu 3:38) By disobeying God and sinning, descendants into slavery to sin and death. (Ro 5:12) *God's perfect justice required like for like in order for mankind's relationship with God to be restored.* (When Jesus sacrificed his perfect human life, the sacrifice he offered appeased, or satisfied, Jehovah's standard of justice by providing the righteous and just basis for pardoning sin. Thereafter, God could “be righteous even when declaring righteous the [inherently sinful] man who has faith in

Jesus.” (Ro 3:26) Jesus’ sacrifice made it propitious, or favorable, for humans to seek and receive restoration to a peaceful relationship with Jehovah. (Eph 1:7) At Heb 9:4, 5, the Greek word *bi·la·ste·ri·on* is used in connection with the cover of the chest called “the ark of the covenant” and is rendered “the propitiatory cover” or, as found in the footnote, “the place of atonement.”

These are very fine comments, and I would like to stress the words, “*God’s perfect justice required like for like.*” In order to discuss “God’s perfect justice” I quote three scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:15, (above) Romans 5:6, (middle) and 2 Peter 2:1 (below):

¹⁵ And *he died for all* so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up (literally: “who died and was raised up for them”).

⁶ For, indeed, while we were still weak, Christ *died for ungodly men* at the appointed time. ⁷ For hardly would anyone die for a righteous man; though perhaps for a good man someone may dare to die. ⁸ But God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

¹ However, there also came to be false prophets among the people, as there will also be false teachers among you. These will quietly bring in destructive sects, and they will even disown *the owner who bought them*, bringing speedy destruction upon themselves.

What would God’s perfect justice require? That the ransom sacrifice was applied to Adam and all his descendants, even to the “ungodly men”. We should particularly note the words of Peter that Jesus had even bought the false prophets who would bring in destructive sects. The actions of these men indicate that they had rejected the ransom sacrifice and had sinned against the holy spirit. This was the same kind of action that Adam did; he also sinned against the holy spirit. This means treating the ransom sacrifice as a business option, claiming that Jesus only bought those who will be saved and that the ransom sacrifice only is applied to these is a false teaching! Even those who have sinned against the holy spirit are bought by Jesus.

I will now go a step further and again quote the lexicon, *Aid to Bible Understanding*, where we find an excellent presentation of the scope of the ransom sacrifice.

Though available to all, Christ’s ransom sacrifice is not accepted by all, and the “wrath of God remains” upon those not accepting it, as it also comes upon those who first accept and then turn away from that provision. (John 3:36; Heb. 10:26-29; contrast Romans 6:9, 10.) They gain no deliverance from the enslavement to Kings Sin and Death. (Rom. 5:21) Under the Law the deliberate murderer could not be ransomed. Adam, by his willful course, brought death on all mankind, hence was a murderer. (Rom. 5:12) Thus, the sacrificed life of Jesus is not acceptable to God as a ransom for the sinner Adam.

The words in brown are important. They show that Jesus bought *all* Adam’s descendants. But *all* will not accept the ransom sacrifice. This is true. Let us now consider all of Adam’s descendants who lived before Jesus provided his ransom sacrifice. We read Hebrews 10:1-10:

¹ For since the Law has a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very substance of the things, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make those who approach perfect. ² Otherwise, would not the sacrifices have stopped being offered, because those rendering sacred service once cleansed would have no consciousness of sins anymore? ³ On the contrary, *these sacrifices are a reminder of sins year after year, ⁴ for it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take sins away.* ⁵ So when he comes into the world, he says: “Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but you prepared a body for me. ⁶ You

did not approve of whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.’⁷ Then I said: ‘Look! I have come (in the scroll it is written about me) to do your will, O God.’”⁸ After first saying: “You did not want nor did you approve of sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin offerings”—sacrifices that are offered according to the Law—⁹ then he says: “Look! I have come to do your will.” He does away with what is first in order to establish what is second.¹⁰ ***By this “will” we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.***

The priests in Israel offered sacrifices in the temple for the sins of the people. But the forgiveness of sins was only temporary, as verse 3 says, “for it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take sins away.” But the situation changed when Jesus came to the earth, as verse 10 says: “By this ‘will’ we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.” God’s perfect justice required the life of the perfect man Jesus instead of the life of the perfect man Adam. And by this transaction, Adam and all human beings that had lived and died before Jesus came to the earth were bought by him. And what is the requirement of God’s perfect justice in connection with all these people? This is written in John 3:36:

³⁶The one who ***exercises faith*** in the Son has everlasting life; the one who ***disobeys*** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.

It is an absolute requirement for getting everlasting life to “exercise faith in the Son.” No person who lived before Jesus came to the earth had the chance to exercise faith in Jesus. Therefore, God’s perfect righteousness requires that all these people will get a resurrection during the millennium, so they can get the chance to “exercise faith in the Son” or “disobey the Son.” This is supported by Paul’s words in Acts 17:31:

³¹Because he has set a day on which he purposes ***to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness*** by a man whom he has appointed, and he has provided a guarantee to all men by resurrecting him from the dead.”

The inhabited earth will be judged in righteousness. Not only did not those who lived before Jesus have the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. But most persons who lived in the first century CE and until this day neither have had this chance. So, when the inhabited earth ***will be judged in righteousness***, these persons must also get a resurrection on Judgment Day. In the next chapter, I will show how the members of the Governing Body have treated the ransom sacrifice as businesspeople treat an option and claimed that it is used in a discriminatory way. They have devalued and restricted the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, and in this connection, I show below that 6 billion+ of the 8 billion+ who live when the great tribulation comes have not had a personal chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. The members of the Governing Body say that all these will be eternally annihilated by God. But this is a blatant contradiction of God’s perfect justice and a devaluation and restriction of the ransom sacrifice.

GOD’S PERFECT JUSTICE AND THE APPLICATION OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

Adam was created as a perfect man whose prospect was to live forever on this earth, and Jesus came to the earth to save or buy back what was lost — he bought Adam and his offspring and the right to continue to live forever on the earth. But let us look at how

this right to continue to live on the earth is applied to different people. In order to understand the issue better, I use the following illustration: The sin we have inherited from Adam represents a debt for each descendant of Adam of 10,000 dollars. By the application of the ransom sacrifice to Adam and all Adam's descendants, Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each one. This means that the ransom sacrifice guarantees that Adam and every descendant of Adam have the right to continue to live on the earth without dying. But the end result is that not everyone will continue to live on the earth. Let us look at the reasons:

FIRST, WE CONSIDER THE JEWS

The Jewish nation was the people of God, and Moses gave them around 500 different laws from God. These laws would help the nation in different ways, and Exodus 24:3 says:

³Then Moses came and related to the people all the words of Jehovah and all the judicial decisions, and all the people answered with one voice: "All the words that Jehovah has spoken, we are willing to do."

If the people did not stick to their words and keep all the laws they received from Moses, they would come under a curse, as Deuteronomy 27:26 says:

²⁶ "Cursed is the one who will not uphold the words of this Law by carrying them out." (And all the people will say, 'Amen!')

Because of their inherited sin, no Jew was able to keep all the laws of God, and therefore the Jews came under the mentioned curse, which meant that they did not have the right to live. In order to continue our illustration, we may say that coming under the curse of the law meant that each Jew incurred a debt of 3,000 dollars. The death of Jesus and his presentation of his ransom sacrifice to Jehovah in heaven meant that 10,000 dollars were paid for each Jew. But because each Jew had an additional debt of 3,000 dollars, in spite of the ransom sacrifice they did not get the right to live forever on the earth.

Paul was a clear thinker, and he was inspired by God as well. He saw this problem with the extra debt of 3,000 dollars, and he knew the law, including Deuteronomy 21:22, 23:

²² "If a man commits a sin deserving the sentence of death and he has been put to death and you have hung him on a stake,²³ his dead body should not remain all night on the stake. Instead, you should be sure to bury him on that day, ***because the one hung up is something accursed of God***, and you should not defile your land that Jehovah your God is giving you as an inheritance.

In his letter to Galatians, 3:10-13, Paul shows how the situation with the debt of the 3,000 dollars of each Jew because of the curse was solved:

¹⁰ All those who depend on works of law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not remain in all the things written in the scroll of the Law by doing them." ¹¹ Moreover, it is evident that by law no one is declared righteous with God, because "the righteous one will live by reason of faith." ¹² Now the Law is not based on faith. Rather, "anyone who does these things will live by means of them." ¹³ ***Christ purchased us, releasing us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse instead of us, because it is written: "Accursed is every man hung upon a stake."***

Peter also expresses the same point as Paul, though from a different viewpoint. We read in 1 Peter 2:24:

²⁴He himself bore our sins in his own body on the stake, so that we might die to sins and live to righteousness. And “by his wounds you were healed.”

The words of Paul and Peter show that Jesus erased the debt of each Jew of 10,000 dollars by dying, and he erased the debt of 3,000 dollars for each Jew by dying on a stake. He took the curse of the Jews on himself instead of them. This means that each Jew now had the possibility of accepting what Jesus had done for him or her and all other Jews, and by this have the right to live forever on the earth. But as Paul shows on several occasions, most individuals of the Jewish nation rejected the offer God gave them.

SECOND, WE CONSIDER THE HEIRS OF THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM

The Christian Greek Scriptures were written for those who would be among the 144,000 kings of the heavenly Kingdom. Because people today are not aware of the two different hopes, the heavenly one and the earthly one, they apply the texts of the Christian Greek Scriptures to themselves. And this leads to serious misunderstandings.

In the year 33 CE, when Jesus presented his ransom sacrifice to Jehovah, according to our illustration he paid 10,000 dollars for Adam and for all Adam’s descendants, and 3,000 dollars for each one of the Jews. This included Paul and Peter and all the other Christians who were called to the heavenly Kingdom. But because the price that was paid only gave each person the right to live forever on the earth, the ransom sacrifice of Jesus could not lead anyone to heaven. The price for coming to heaven was 20,000 dollars.

The persons whom Jesus bought by his death were still imperfect and were sinners, even though Jesus had bought back their right to live forever on the earth. So, all the time, they had to ask for forgiveness of their sins because of the ransom sacrifice. But on the basis of the ransom sacrifice, God could take the necessary steps so the persons could get the heavenly hope and in time could get a heavenly resurrection. In line with our illustration Jehovah could pay the extra 10,000 dollars in addition to the 10,000 dollars paid by the ransom sacrifice.

The first step for that payment was to declare each person righteous. Those who will live in the future paradise earth will not become righteous before the end of the millennium. However, those who are called to the heavenly Kingdom will not be present during the 1,000 years and experience the gradual process that leads to perfection and a righteous standing. But imperfect humans cannot get a heavenly resurrection. Because the ransom sacrifice for each one had been presented to Jehovah, he could make the judicial act of declaring them righteous on the basis of the ransom sacrifice and their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul shows this in Romans 3:22-24, 28:

²²Yes, God’s righteousness through the faith in Jesus Christ, for all those having faith. For there is no distinction. ²³For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and it is as a free gift that *they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus.*

²⁸For we consider that *a man is declared righteous by faith* apart from works of law.

What does it mean to be declared righteous? The person still is imperfect and is sinning. But he or she *is judicially counted or credited as righteous*. On this background, it is easier to understand the words of Paul in Romans 7:14-25:

¹⁴For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin. ¹⁵For I do not understand what I am doing. For I do not practice what I wish, but I do what I hate. ¹⁶However, if I do what I do not wish, I agree that the Law is fine. ¹⁷But now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is the sin that resides in me. ¹⁸For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing good; for I have the desire to do what is fine but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good that I wish, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice. ²⁰If, then, I do what I do not wish, I am no longer the one carrying it out, but it is the sin dwelling in me. ²¹I find, then, this law in my case: When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me. ²²I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within, ²³but I see in my body another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my body. ²⁴Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death? ²⁵Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So, then, with my mind I myself am a slave to God's law, but with my flesh to sin's law.

When Paul in verse 17 says regarding sin: "But now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is the sin that resides in me," that could seem to be an excuse: "I am not responsible for the wrong I am doing." But because Paul had been declared righteous, it was not "he" that was doing the sin. This will be clearer when I introduce the concept of "a new creation." But before I do that, I will quote Romans 8:33, 34:

³³Who will file accusation against God's chosen ones? God is the One who declares them righteous. ³⁴Who will condemn them? Christ Jesus is the one who died, yes, more than that, the one who was raised up, who is at the right hand of God and who also pleads for us.

Because those whom God has declared righteous *from a judicial point of view* are without sin, no one could accuse these persons even though their flesh still was imperfect and was sinning.

As I already have mentioned, a person to whom the ransom sacrifice is applied and he or she is declared righteous, has the right to live forever on the earth. But he or she has no right to get a heavenly resurrection. Therefore, God must do something in addition to declaring a person righteous in order to prepare him or her for the heavenly resurrection. Jesus showed this in his conversation with Nicodemus:

We read in John 3:1-8:

¹There was a man of the Pharisees named Nic·o·de'mus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This one came to him in the night and said to him: "Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher, for no one can perform these signs that you perform unless God is with him." ³In response Jesus said to him: "Most truly I say to you, *unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*" ⁴Nic·o·de'mus said to him: "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter into the womb of his mother a second time and be born, can he?" ⁵Jesus answered: "Most truly I say to you, *unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*" ⁶What has been born from the flesh is flesh, and what has been born from the spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be amazed because I told you: You people must be born again. ⁸The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who has been born from the spirit."

Jesus shows that to become a part of the kingdom of God, a person must “be born again,” which means to be born from water and spirit. What does this mean? John the Baptist baptized repentant persons in water. But he showed that Jesus would perform another kind of baptism, as we read in John 1:33:

³³ ‘Even I did not know him, but the very One who sent me to baptize in water said to me: ‘Whoever it is upon whom you see the spirit coming down and remaining, this is *the one who baptizes in holy spirit*.

Luke was probably the one who wrote the book of Acts, and in 1:4, 5 he refers to the words of Jesus regarding baptism in holy spirit:

⁴ While he was meeting with them, he ordered them: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but keep waiting for what the Father has promised, about which you heard from me; ⁵ for John, indeed, baptized with water, but you will be baptized with holy spirit not many days after this.”

The words of Jesus were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in 33 CE. Many Jewish proselytes were baptized with holy spirit, according to Acts 2:1-4, and the same later happened with Cornelius and those who were together with him, according to Acts 10:44-46.

Jesus said that to enter into the Kingdom of God one has to be born again, i.e., born from water and spirit. And this means to be baptized with holy spirit. One clue to the real meaning of this and to its purpose are the expressions “born again,” and “becoming a new creation,” as we read in 2 Corinthians 5:16-18

¹⁶ So from now on we know no man from a fleshly viewpoint. Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, we certainly no longer know him in that way. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in union with Christ, *he is a new creation*; the old things passed away; look! new things have come into existence. ¹⁸ But all things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation.

It is logical that if a person is “born again,” he or she is “a new creation.” But why must those who will reign with Jesus in heaven become new creations? We get an answer in 1 Corinthians 15:42-50:

⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised up in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised up in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised up in power. ⁴⁴ *It is sown a physical body; it is raised up a spiritual body*. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual one. ⁴⁵ So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living person.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, what is spiritual is not first. What is physical is first, and afterward what is spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man is from the earth and made of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ Like the one made of dust, so too are those made of dust; and like the heavenly one, so too are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we will bear also the image of the heavenly one. ⁵⁰ But I tell you this, brothers, *that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's Kingdom*, nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

When the ransom sacrifice is applied to a person, he gets the right that Adam sold, to live forever on the earth. But Paul says in verse 50 that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's Kingdom. Jesus Christ was raised as a spirit according to verse 45. Those who will get a heavenly resurrection will get spiritual bodies just like Jesus. Therefore, they must be new creations. Paul uses the illustration of a grain that is sown. The Kingdom heirs still

have their imperfect human body, and when they die, this body is sown, but a spiritual body is raised.

Peter also writes about this issue in 1 Peter 1:3, 4, 23:

³ Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he ***gave us a new birth*** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ ***to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you.***

²³ ***For you have been given a new birth***, not by corruptible, but by incorruptible seed, through the word of the living and enduring God.

Peter shows that the purpose of the new birth as new creations was the hope of a perfect inheritance in the heavens. This was through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This means the basis for being a new creation is that Jesus was resurrected and presented his ransom sacrifice in heaven. When the ransom sacrifice was provided, God declared the Kingdom heir righteous and baptized him or her with holy spirit, so he or she became a new creation. It is important to understand that the 10,000 dollars Jesus paid for each one of Adam's descendants was not enough for a heavenly resurrection. But declaring a person righteous and baptizing him or her in holy spirit and making him or her a new creation was worth the extra 10,000 dollars. On this basis, a person could receive the unfading inheritance in the heavens.

THIRD, WE CONSIDER THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus showed that some of Adam's descendants will not get a resurrection during the millennium. We read in Luke 20:34-36:

³⁴ Jesus said to them: "The children of this system of things marry and are given in marriage,³⁵ but ***those who have been counted worthy of gaining that system of things and the resurrection from the dead*** neither marry nor are given in marriage. ³⁶ In fact, neither can they die anymore, for they are like the angels, and they are God's children by being children of the resurrection.

The word "system of things" (*aiōn*) refers to the new earth and not to heaven. Jesus shows that some persons will not get a resurrection on the new earth. Who are these persons? They must have sinned against the holy spirit, which cannot be forgiven. What exactly is that?

What is the difference between the sins that can be forgiven and those that cannot be forgiven? Every sin that directly or indirectly is caused by our imperfection, by the sin we have inherited, can be forgiven. But sins that are caused by ***our own wickedness*** cannot be forgiven. What does that mean? According to Matthew 12:27, the sons (disciples) of the Pharisees could expel demons. In this case, the demons cooperated with the disciples of the Pharisees, in order to mislead those who saw the demons being expelled. When this expelling of demons occurred, the Pharisees evidently used this as evidence that God was on their side. Jesus expelled demons on a much greater scale than the disciples of the Pharisees. But in his case, a group of Pharisees, according to verse 24, said that Jesus expelled the demons with the help of Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.

Were these Pharisees led by their imperfection, by their inherited sin to ascribe the great works of Jesus to Satan? Did they say this because they had inherited sin from their first father? No! They accused Jesus of being in league with Satan because they were

wicked, and Jesus threatened their position. This was a conscious decision that could not be ascribed to their inherited sin. Sin against the holy spirit, therefore, is an intentional wicked course of action that continues despite the fact that the actor knows that his or her course is wicked, and it is done because of pure selfishness. When sin against the holy spirit is done, the person is no longer able to repent.

The *Awake!* magazine of May 22, 1963, page 28, contained an article with the theme, “Resurrection — for whom?” Regarding those who will not get a resurrection the article says:

There will not be a resurrection for the willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked, those without the slightest spark remaining of conscience or love of righteousness.

This is an excellent definition of sin against the holy spirit.

In connection with our illustration of a debt of 10,000 dollars for each descendant of Adam I again refer to 2 Peter 2:1:

However, there also came to be false prophets among the people, as there will also be false teachers among you. These will quietly bring in destructive sects, and they will even disown ***the owner who bought them***, bringing speedy destruction upon themselves.

The false prophets who would bring in destructive sects most likely had sinned against the holy spirit, but still, Peter says that they were bought by Jesus Christ. This shows that Jesus bought Adam and each one of Adam’s descendants, also those who sinned against the holy spirit. This means that Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each one, and 3,000 dollars for each Jew in addition. So, at the outset, those who later sinned against the holy spirit had the right to live forever on the new earth. However, because their sins were caused by their own selfishness and wickedness, and not because of the sin they had inherited from Adam, they had incurred an additional debt of 6,000 dollars. And even though their debt of 10,000 dollars was paid, they will not get a resurrection because of their unpaid debt of 6,000 dollars for which there is no ransom sacrifice.

The group of Pharisees that sinned against the holy spirit had not been Christians, and the false teachers who brought in destructive sects may or may not have been Christians. However, there are some persons who had been Christians who also sinned against the holy spirit, and the illustration of the 10,000 dollars also fits their situation. We read in Hebrews 6:4-6, (above) and 10:26-31, (below):

⁴For as regards those who were once enlightened and who have tasted the heavenly free gift and who have become partakers of holy spirit ⁵and who have tasted the fine word of God and powers of the coming system of things, ⁶***but have fallen away, it is impossible to revive them again to repentance***, because they nail the Son of God to the stake again for themselves and expose him to public shame.

²⁶***For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left***, ²⁷but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a burning indignation that is going to consume those in opposition. ²⁸Anyone who has disregarded the Law of Moses dies without compassion on the testimony of two or three. ²⁹How much greater punishment do you think a person will deserve ***who has trampled on the Son of God and who has regarded as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant*** by which he was sanctified, and who has outraged the spirit of undeserved kindness with

contempt?³⁰ For we know the One who said: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again: “Jehovah will judge his people.”³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

There is one misunderstanding that is easy to make, and that is the application of the words “have fallen away.” This does not refer to persons who have left the Christian congregation for different reasons. But it refers to persons who “practice sin willfully” (10:26), and whose conscience is so hard that he or she is not able to repent (6:6). This is sin against the holy spirit, as 10:26 shows.

In order to stick to our illustration, Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for the inherited sin of such a person, and Jehovah paid 10,000 dollars extra by declaring the person righteous and making him or her into a new creation. The person had now the right to get a heavenly resurrection. But sinning willfully represents a debt of 6,000 dollars, and no one could pay this debt—as 10:26 says, “there is no longer any sacrifice for his sins left.” The person first accepted the ransom sacrifice, but later he or she rejected this sacrifice — he or she “has trampled on the Son of God” and regarded his blood of ordinary value (10:29).⁹

FOURTH, WE CONSIDER ADAM

In many discussions in the Watchtower literature of the corresponding ransom, Adam is left out. The focus is either on some or all of Adam’s descendants or on the right to continue to live on the earth that they lost when Adam sinned. But the very concept “corresponding ransom” requires that the focus is on Adam — the perfect man Jesus instead of the perfect man Adam. This means that Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for Adam, as well as for each of his descendants. But because Adam sinned when he was perfect, he sinned against the holy spirit, and therefore he incurred an extra debt of 6,000 dollars, that no one could pay. Therefore, he will not get a resurrection.

FIFTH, WE CONSIDER THOSE WHO HAVE NOT HAD THE CHANCE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

I have already shown that God’s perfect justice in connection with the ransom sacrifice requires that all the descendants of Adam who have not had the opportunity to “exercise faith in the Son” or to “disobey” him will get a resurrection during the millennium to get this opportunity. In order to use our illustration, Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each person who has not had this opportunity, and 3,000 dollars extra for the Jews who have not had this opportunity. And these payments guarantee the resurrection of each individual. In chapter 4, I will show that according to the Scriptures, the vast majority of all who ever have lived and died will get a resurrection.

When these persons get their resurrection, Satan is bound, and the inherited sin of all humans will gradually be removed during the period of 1,000 years. Then, at the end of the 1,000 years, all humans are perfect and without sin, just like Adam was. Each person who lives at this time has already accepted the ransom sacrifice, and the atonement between God and man is completed. Now he or she will be in exactly the same situation

9. A detailed discussion of Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-31 is found in my article, “The members of the Governing Body have devalued and restricted the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ,” in the category, “The Governing Body.”

as Adam. And each one, as a perfect human without sin, has to choose between supporting God and his reign or supporting the reign of Satan.

Helping each person to become perfect without sin and giving him or her exactly the same choice as Adam got, is perfect justice at its very best.

Table 2.1 The application of the ransom sacrifice

Inherited sin incurs a debt of 10,000 dollars for each descendant of Adam.

- 1) Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each descendant of Adam with his ransom sacrifice. This includes the Jews, those with the heavenly hope, and those who sin against the holy spirit.*
- 2) The Jews had an extra debt of 3,000 dollars because they were under the curse of the law. Jesus paid 3,000 dollars for each Jew by hanging on the stake, and by this taking their curse on him.*
- 3) The payment of 10,000 dollars for those with a heavenly hope gave them the right to live forever on the earth, but not the right to come to heaven. The price of a heavenly resurrection is 20,000 dollars. By declaring these persons righteous and baptizing them with holy spirit, Jehovah paid 10,000 dollars for each of them. Now 20,000 dollars was paid and they had the right to receive a heavenly resurrection.*
- 4) Jesus paid 10,000 dollars for each one who has sinned against the holy spirit. But this unforgivable sin represents a debt of 6,000 dollars, and there is no one that could pay this debt. Therefore, they will not get a resurrection and everlasting life.*
- 5) The debt of Adam of 10,000 dollars was paid by Jesus. But because Adam sinned against the holy spirit, he incurred an extra debt of 6,000 dollars. There was no one that could pay this debt. Therefore, he will not get a resurrection and everlasting life.*
- 6) The payment of Jesus of 10,000 dollars for each person that has not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice gives each one the right to get a resurrection on Judgment Day. Then he or she will have the opportunity to "exercise faith in the Son" or to "disobey the Son."*

THE DEVALUATION AND RESTRICTION OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE AND THE RESURRECTION

—REVIEW—

This chapter discusses the zigzag viewpoints of Jehovah’s Witnesses regarding the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection.

The view of the Bible Students:

The ransom sacrifice of Jesus was one of the most important doctrines for C.T. Russell and the Bible Students. Their view was that Jesus bought Adam and all his descendants when he died and that Adam and his descendants will get “another opportunity or trial for life everlasting” during the millennium. This accords with the words of Peter in Acts 3:21 about the “restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old.”

The view of J.F. Rutherford:

The illustration of the sheep and the goats was applied to the millennium by the Bible Students. But Rutherford applied it in a balanced way to the presence of Jesus. Rutherford wrote several articles about the ransom sacrifice, and his articles are excellent. He presented the view: “to be the will of God that by virtue of the ransom price all men should be redeemed from death and that then *each one* must be given a knowledge of God’s arrangement, to the end that each one may have the opportunity to exercise his free moral agency and accept or reject the offer of life that comes through the ransom sacrifice.” This is the very core of the ransom sacrifice.

The devaluation of the ransom sacrifice:

The first zigzag turns occurred in 1938 and 1939. Articles in *The Watchtower* presented a new view of the ransom sacrifice: “*The life of Jesus was given as a ransom for all who believe and obey him,*” and it was not given for all descendants of Adam. In *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1938, the “goats” are defined as those who are willfully wicked and who oppose those who preach about the heavenly kingdom. But in *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1939, the “goats” are identified as all the people on the earth who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The doubling down on the devaluation of the ransom sacrifice:

A new zigzag turn occurred in 1951. An article in *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1951, argued that those who live when the great tribulation comes will be eternally annihilated, even those who have not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. An article in *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1952 claims that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will not get a resurrection in spite of the fact that Jesus said they will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. Both the mentioned articles represent a rejection of the full value of the ransom sacrifice and present a view of a limited resurrection.

The new and correct view of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection

A new and correct zigzag turn occurred in 1965. In the early 1960s, a thorough study of what the whole Bible says about the resurrection was undertaken. The result was 12 articles on the resurrection in *The*

Watchtower of 1965. These articles contradicted the view of *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1952, of a limited resurrection. And the articles showed that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Sodom, and Gomorrah, would get a resurrection on Judgment Day. The conclusion of these articles was that ***“the vast majority of dead humankind” will get a resurrection.*** These articles presented the Bible’s true view of the resurrection. And this view was close to what the Bible Students and J.F. Rutherford had believed. The view that Jesus only died for those who believe in him and obey him was discarded, and the correct biblical view that the ransom sacrifice is applied for ***all*** Adam’s descendants was again introduced.

The return to the view of a limited resurrection and a devalued ransom sacrifice

A new zigzag turn occurred in 1988. *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1988, returned to the unbiblical view of 1952 of a limited resurrection. The words of Jesus that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will get a resurrection on Judgment Day were rejected. But the true view of the ransom sacrifice, that Jesus bought all Adam’s descendants, and that the sacrifice will be applied to each one, was held by the members of the Governing Body at least until the year 2000. But after that, the ransom sacrifice was devalued and restricted only to those who believe in Jesus and obey him.

In the 1870s, C.T. Russell and a number of truth-seekers started a thorough study of the Bible with the purpose of finding God’s truth. Their basic view was that all doctrines that they would believe in, had to accord with God’s fundamental characteristics, his love, his righteousness, his wisdom, and his might. One of the first doctrines that they rejected was the one about a fiery hell where God would torment many people forever. This doctrine particularly contradicted God’s love and righteousness.

THE UNIVERSAL VIEW OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE BY THE BIBLE STUDENTS

At one time there was a crisis when some of the Bible Students rejected the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. C.T. Russell acted decisively by defending the ransom sacrifice and breaking the cooperation with those who denied this doctrine. The doctrine about the ransom sacrifice was one of the most important doctrines for the Bible Students. They read in the Christian Greek Scriptures that Jesus died for all humans and bought all humans, and they believed that all humans, including Adam, will get a resurrection during the millennium and have the chance of getting everlasting life. This would accord with God’s love and righteousness. Regarding the ransom price, we read:

This brings us to the consideration of the word ransom, which in the New Testament has a very limited and very definite signification. It occurs only twice. Once in our Lord’s own description of the work he was doing, and once in the Apostle’s description of that completed work, our text. The Greek word used by our Lord is *lutron-anti*, which signifies, “a price to correspond.” Thus our Lord said, “The Son of Man came ... to give his life a ransom, [*lutron-anti* a price to correspond] for many” (Mark 10:45.) The Apostle Paul uses the same words, but compounds them differently, *anti-lutron*, signifying, “a corresponding price,” saying, “The man, Christ Jesus, gave himself a ransom [*anti-lutron* corresponding price] for all, to be testified in due time.” — 1 Tim. 2 :6. There is no room for quibbling or disputing the meaning of these texts. ***Only by handling the Word of God deceitfully can any be blinded to the force and real meaning of this,*** the Lord’s testimony to the work which has been accomplished by our great Mediator. And the more this thought of a ransom a “corresponding price” is considered, the more force does it seem to contain, and the more light does it shed upon the entire work of the Atonement. ***The thought, and the only thought, contained in it is that as Adam, through disobedience, forfeited***

his being, his soul, all his rights to life and to earth, so Christ Jesus our Lord, by his death, as a corresponding price, paid a full and exact offset for Father Adam's soul or being, and in consequence for all his posterity every human soul are sharers in his fall and in his loss. Rom. 5:12.¹⁰

Russell also discusses the ransom sacrifice in *The Plan of the Ages*, which was the first volume in the *Millennial Dawn* series, and he shows that the ransom guarantees an opportunity for a trial for everlasting life:

Let the actual benefits and results of the ransom be clearly seen, *and all objections to its being of universal application must vanish*. The “ransom for all” given by “the man Christ Jesus” does not give or guarantee everlasting life or blessing to any man; *but it does guarantee to every man another opportunity or trial for life everlasting*. The first trial of man, which resulted in the loss of the blessings at first conferred, is really turned into a blessing of experience to the loyal-hearted, by reason of the ransom which God has provided. But the fact that men are ransomed from the first penalty does not guarantee that they may not, when individually tried for everlasting life, fail to render the obedience without which none will be permitted to live everlastingly. Man, by reason of present experience with sin and its bitter penalty, will be fully forewarned; and when, as a result of the ransom, he is granted another, an individual trial, under the eye and control of him who so loved him as to give his life for him, and who would not that any should perish, but that all should turn to God and live, we may be sure that only the wilfully disobedient will receive the penalty of the second trial. That penalty will be the second death, from which there will be no ransom, no release, because there would be no object for another ransom or a further trial. All will have fully seen and tasted both good and evil; all will have witnessed and experienced the goodness and love of God; all will have had a full, fair, individual trial for life, under most favorable conditions. More could not be asked, and more will not be given. That trial will decide forever who would be righteous and holy under a thousand trials; and it will determine also who would be unjust, and unholy and filthy still, under a thousand trials. (The author's italics)¹¹

When would the ransom sacrifice be applied to humans in connection with everlasting life? Russell referred to Acts 3:21 to answer this question:

²¹ Heaven must hold this one within itself until *the times of restoration (apokatastasis) of all things* of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old.

The word *apokatastasis* has the meaning “a restitution or restoration of a thing to its former state,” according to Mounce. And Russell, and the Bible Students applied this restoration to the millennium when Jesus would rule as king. Regarding the restoration, *The Watchtower*, No. 12, Volume XI 1880, page 4, (Reprints page 1261), says:

God's gracious provision in Christ is, however, abundant. His arrangement is that the whole race, having been purchased by our Lord Jesus, shall be fully in his hands: The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto his Son (John 5:22); *and he hath appointed the Millennial day for that work of trial and judgment*. (Acts 17:31.) *He who redeemed or purchased back Adam and his race from the sentence of death will offer to each one full restitution of all that Adam possessed and lost*, upon conditions which even in their fallen condition they will be *fully able* to accept. Obedience of will or intent shall be the first requirement; and as this is obeyed—restitution will commence. As gradually, during the Millennium, imperfection and weakness shall give place to strength and perfection,

10. *The At-one-ment between God and Man*, The Millennial Dawn series, Volume V (1899), pages 427, 428.

11. C.T. Russell. *The Plan of the Ages*, The Millennial Dawn series, Volume I (1986), page 218.

correspondingly less allowance will be made for transgressions by the Mediator-Judge; his chastisements and corrections proportioned to the ability and willfulness of the transgressors being meanwhile most valuable experience to those upon trial. (The author's italics.)

The most important side of the Bible Students' view was that the ransom sacrifice was ***"a guarantee to every man another opportunity or trial for life everlasting."*** The view that Adam would also have a resurrection is logical because the perfect man Jesus gave his life for the perfect man Adam and for his offspring.

J.F. RUTHERFORD'S VIEW OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

When I read Rutherford's accounts of the ransom sacrifice, my impression is that he was a clear thinker. One of his articles on the ransom sacrifice is the best account of this subject that I ever have read. And I have copied the whole article below.

THE BALANCED VIEW OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

In accordance with the universal view of the ransom sacrifice, the Bible Students applied the illustration and prophecy of the sheep and the goats to the millennium. This was logical because the goats will receive the same penalty as the Devil, and they believed that all persons who had lived on the earth would get a resurrection during the 1,000 years. However, in *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1923, Rutherford wrote an article applying the illustration of the sheep and the goats to the presence of Jesus that started in 1914. On page 812 we read about the goats:

These are messengers of the devil and not of the Lord. The devil is to suffer destruction. To the goat class Jesus says: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever lasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." ***As a goat class they will be forever destroyed. As to whether or not any of the individuals making up that class will have an opportunity for trial during the Millennial age we cannot surely tell. If they quickly change their course they may. The Scriptures seem to indicate that those who have knowingly and wilfully repudiated the truth*** during the presence of the Lord, who have substituted Satanic doctrines for the doctrine of the Lord, who have neglected the Lord's flock while claiming to be his representatives, and who have persecuted his brethren, may not be counted worthy of a trial for life during the Millennial age.

On page 813 we read about the sheep:

There are millions of members of the denominational churches, both Catholic and Protestant, who are God-fearing people. They have kind hearts; they believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior; they hope for a better time and are glad to extend kindness toward all whom they believe to be Christians. They have been fearful of their leaders and principal men and have been held in bondage to the Babylonish systems; yet they have never entered into the persecution of Christians who differ with them on the fundamental principles of the truth. During the past forty-five years and during the presence of the Lord his representatives as colporteurs have visited almost every part of Christendom. Their reports show that in that time they have met great numbers of good people who believe the Bible to be God's Word and who desire the coming of the Lord's kingdom. Many of those have been kind to the colporteurs. Often the Lord's little ones, calling as strangers, have been invited into the homes of these good people, who have ministered to their needs, who have found them sick and were glad to render them aid. Many a time they have offered a cup of tea or cold water and food, and even raiment, to these representatives of the Lord because they were representing the Lord...

During the past few years the Lord has caused a wide witness of the truth to be given. He has made known the fact of his presence, advertising his kingdom. Throughout the world and in many languages the message of the kingdom has been proclaimed. *There is a large number of people in the denominational churches and outside of them who do not claim consecration*, but who now see enough of the truth to convince them that the kingdom is at hand and who rejoice in the fact that the King is here. *It is not at all unreasonable to conclude that there are millions now hearing about God's plan of salvation who will pass through the time of trouble and never die, being amongst the first that will have opportunity for a trial for life everlasting.*

According to Rutherford, the sheep are persons who are not consecrated but who are sincere and who believe in God and Jesus Christ. There may be millions of these that will survive the great tribulation. The goats are persons "who have knowingly and willfully repudiated the truth." But it is possible that some of them will change and will be present during the millennium. The change from the previous view is that some persons who live before the great tribulation are wicked and will not be present on Judgment Day.

There is a clear logic in the reasoning of Rutherford because Jesus shows in Luke 20:35 that some persons will not get a resurrection. And in Matthew 12:31, 32 Jesus shows that those who have sinned against the holy spirit will never be forgiven. On this background, Rutherford had a basis for applying the illustration of the sheep and the goats during the presence of Jesus. And his comments accord well with the scope of the ransom sacrifice.

Nine years after the article of 1923 with the new view of the illustration of the sheep and the goats, an article in *Golden Age* of January 2, 1932, pages 220 and 221, had a presentation of the sheep and the goats that is quite similar to the article from 1923:

To whom, then, do the symbols "sheep" and "goats" apply? "Sheep" represent that class of people of the nations who, though not begotten by the spirit of God, but disposed toward righteousness, mentally acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Lord and who are looking for and hoping for a better time under His reign. Such, of a docile temperament, believe in the Almighty God and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind. They strive sincerely to do right and want to do good. They do not claim to be consecrated followers of the Lord, but they have great respect and love for God and His people. They manifest a sheeplike disposition.

Since *the "goat" class, when judged by The King, is to suffer a punishment similar to that "prepared for THE devil and his angels", it is reasonably evident that this class is moved by and manifests the Devil's spirit;* hence we may be aided in locating the class by observing its spirit and its conduct.

It is important to note that while the sheep are sincere people, the goats are people who manifest the Devil's spirit and are wicked. The viewpoint is not that all those who are not of the Kingdom class or are "sheep" are "goats." *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1938, goes a little away from *the universal view of the ransom sacrifice*. We read on page 314:

There is certainly no Scriptural proof that every man that has lived on the earth from Adam to the kingdom will be awakened out of death. The apostle, speaking under inspiration of the spirit of God, says that there are those who "bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction". (2 Peter 2: 1) The very purpose of the deluge was to clear off the earth the violent, wicked generation that refused to give heed to God's warning; and that flood was a type of Armageddon. *The very purpose of Armageddon is to clear off the earth a similar class of wicked ones who refuse to hear God's warning given*

at the present time and who continue to defame God's name. Such willfully wicked God declares he will destroy forever. Why should these destroyed, wicked ones again ever exist and infest the ground and reproach God's name. They have knowingly interfered with God's kingdom.

It is true that there is no “Scriptural proof that every man that has lived on the earth from Adam to the Kingdom will be awakened out of death.” As already mentioned, persons who have sinned against the holy spirit will not get a resurrection. We also note that those who will be eternally destroyed in Armageddon are the “willfully wicked.”

THE BALANCED VIEW OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

During the 1930s, there were a number of articles in *The Watchtower* that discussed the ransom sacrifice and the atonement between God and man. One of the articles written by Rutherford was published in *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1934, pages 352, 353. This is an excellent article, and I copy the whole article:

REDEMPTION BY A RANSOM

IT IS the autumn of the year twenty-nine (A.D.). Now we find the man Christ Jesus on earth at thirty years of age, a perfect man and at the legal age required for the work before him. Why had he come to earth? God had promised to ransom the human race. Several hundred years before he had inspired his prophet Hosea (13:14) to utter this prophecy: “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.” The law of God as given to the Jews required a perfect man’s life to provide the ransom. Jesus said that he came to give his life a ransom.—Matt. 20:28.

“Ransom” means, literally, ‘something to loosen with; a redemptive price.’ Stated in other phrase, it means the price or value which can be used in loosening or releasing something that is in bondage, restraint or imprisonment. Necessarily the ransom price must be equivalent to, or exactly corresponding with, that which justice requires of the thing or person in bondage.

The right to live as a human creature was required by the judgment against Adam in the garden of Eden. *This judgment of God took away Adam’s right to live because of his willful disobedience to the law of God.* That which would provide a ransom price must be the right of another perfect human creature to live. *The perfect man Jesus possessed exactly that thing, namely, the right to live on earth as a man.*

The redemption of man from death and its effects, and deliverance therefrom, is the expressed will of God. (1 Tim. 2:4) Jesus came to do the will of God, as it was written of him in the Psalms (40:7, 8), saying: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

God having promised to ransom man, now he had provided a way to carry out his promise by his Son’s willingly becoming a man. “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2: 8) Jesus willingly submitted to death, because it was the will of God to thereby provide the ransom price.

Now the question, Why must Jesus die? may be answered briefly. The perfect man Jesus, while he remained alive, could not provide a ransom price. He must now convert his perfect human life into an asset of value, which asset would be sufficient to release man from judgment and from the condemnation resulting from that judgment. *He must lay down his human life that the value thereof might be presented to divine justice instead or in place of that which Adam had forfeited, to the end that Adam and his race might have an opportunity to live.* Otherwise stated, Jesus must make his human life and the right thereto a legal tender for the payment of Adam’s debt.

“Legal tender” means currency, money, measure of value, which the law requires and receives in satisfaction of debts or obligations.

“Merit” means value gained. By “the merit of Christ Jesus” we mean the perfect humanity of Jesus and all the rights incident thereto converted into value or an asset, which is legal tender for the payment of man’s debt.

To illustrate this point: Take a man, whom we will call John for convenience, who is languishing in prison to satisfy a fine of a hundred dollars, because of his inability to pay that fine. John’s brother Charles is willing to pay the fine, but he has no money with which to pay. Charles is strong and vigorous, has time to work and is willing to work; but his strength and time and willingness will not pay the debt for his brother John. Smith desires someone to work for him, and has the money with which to pay. Charles engages himself to work for Smith, and earns a hundred dollars in cash and receives it. Thereby Charles has reduced his time, strength and vigor into a money value, which has purchasing power, and which is legal tender for the purpose of the payment of John’s obligations. This money may be properly called merit, because of its purchasing value or redemptive value. Charles then appears before the court which entered the judgment against his brother, and offers to pay the hundred dollars which the law demands of John. This court accepts the hundred dollars and releases John. John is thereby judicially released from the judgment; and his brother Charles has become his ransom, or redeemer.

Adam in the day of his creation was the son of God. It was judicially determined by Jehovah that due to the violation of God’s law Adam should forfeit his life in death, which judgment would mean the eternal death of Adam and all of his offspring unless he and they could be redeemed. As Adam possessed the power to beget children before this judicial determination, all of Adam’s offspring being yet in his loins came under the effects of the judgment, he is now held in restraint in death to meet the requirements of the divine law. The entire human race is in a similar condition, resulting from the original sin of Adam.

Jesus, the perfect man, the Son of God, was designated by the Lord God as “*the Son of the man*”; this title implying that he, being the only perfect man that has lived on earth since Adam, was entitled to everything that belonged to Adam, namely, life and all the blessings incident thereto. ***Jesus had the power to produce a perfect race of people, and was in every respect the exact equal of Adam before Adam sinned. It was the will of God that Jesus should redeem Adam and his posterity.*** Jesus was willing to pay Adam’s debt and redeem him; but the perfect, righteous human creature Jesus could not accomplish that purpose while living in the flesh, for the same reason that Charles could not use his strength, time and energy to pay the debt of his brother John, but must first reduce these to a purchasing value.

Jesus must reduce his perfect humanity to a measure of value (which measure of value we call merit), which value or merit constitutes legal tender for the payment of the debt of Adam and his offspring, furnishing the price sufficient to judicially release them all. To provide this ransom price Jesus must die. But to present the value of it before Jehovah he must be alive and have access to the court, of Jehovah.

At the Jordan river the perfect man Jesus presented himself in consecration to do the will of Jehovah and was baptized; and it was God’s will that Jesus should there lay down his life in death, but that he should *not forfeit the loyal right to life as a man*. the human race by merely dying? It was the will of God that Christ Jesus should be raised out of death a divine creature, and as such should take up that merit or right or value of his perfect human life and use it as an asset or legal tender in harmony with the divine will; namely, to judicially release mankind and to provide life for the human race. “Why do we not use the expression “legally release” instead of “judicially release”? Because the Lord could not provide for an illegal release of the human race, inasmuch as he must be just. We here use the term “judicially release” because that means that the release is done in a judicial capacity or manner, by the one having authority to release.

This argument is in harmony with the statement of Jesus, when he said: “The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they [the people, the human race] 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. . . . As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I *lay down my life, that I might take it again*. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself [that is, willingly]. I have *power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*. This commandment have I received of my Father.”—John 10:10, 11, 15, 17, 18.

For whom did Jesus die? This question must be answered from the Scriptures. Everyone should desire to know the truth. “Thy word is truth,” said Jesus in his prayer to God. (John 17:17) It would seem strange that God would provide for his blessing to extend to a few, and not grant a similar privilege to all. The Scriptures answer: “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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” —John 3:10, 17.

The apostle Paul discusses the matter; and writing (as we know) under inspiration, he declared it *to be the will of God that by virtue of the ransom price all men should be redeemed from death and that then each one must be given a knowledge of God’s arrangement, to the end that each one may have the opportunity to exercise his free moral agency and accept or reject the offer of life that comes through the ransom sacrifice.*—Heb. 2:9; Rom. 30:13-15.

The same apostle again proves that Jesus was a perfect man and not a spirit person, and that he was made perfect, in order *that he might redeem the human race*. His argument reads: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that lie by the grace of God should taste death, for every man.”—Heb. 2: 9.

But how could a man, even though perfect, redeem the human race by merely dying? If he remained dead he could not carry out the redemption and deliverance, because a dead man can do nothing. The great court entering the judgment against man, and the place at which the ransom price must lie presented, is the court of Jehovah. Of course, Jehovah could have appointed somebody else to present to him the value of the sacrifice of the perfect man Jesus, but it did not please him to do this. It was his purpose that Jesus should be both the ransomer and deliverer of the human race; and he could not be the deliverer if he remained dead. It was therefore necessary for Jesus to be resurrected.

The question may be asked: If Jesus was put to death as a man, and the value of his sacrifice as a man must be presented in heaven, how could a man appear in heaven and present that ransom price? The answer is: He could not, for the reason that no man has recess to the spiritual realm. A human creature is confined to earth. Jesus died as a man, but his Father Jehovah raised him out of death a *spirit creature*. About this the apostle Peter plainly says: “Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.” —1 Pet. 3:18, *l.v.* (The author’s italics; colors added by me.)

All the conclusions in this article are correct and to the point:

- 1) The right of a perfect man was to continue to live on the earth.
- 2) Jesus laid down his life and presented the value of it as a ransom sacrifice.
- 3) Jesus redeemed Adam and his descendants.
- 4) And the most important point:

“The will of God [is] that by virtue of the ransom price all men should be redeemed from death and that then each one must be given a knowledge of God’s arrangement, to the end that each one may have the opportunity to exercise his free moral agency and accept or reject the offer of life that comes through the ransom sacrifice.”

Rutherford's reasoning is crystal clear, and he applied the biblical passages dealing with the resurrection in an excellent way.

Rutherford had the correct view of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection: All Adam's descendants, except those who are willfully wicked, will get a resurrection during the millennium. Then, each one will have the opportunity to "accept or reject the offer of life that comes through the ransom sacrifice."

THE ZIGZAG VIEWS OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE AND THE RESURRECTION STARTED AT THE END OF THE 1930S

In the years 1938 and 1939, a new view of the ransom sacrifice and its scope was emerging. Rutherford died on January 8, 1942, and before that, he had great health problems. Because the new viewpoints that were presented lacked the clarity of Rutherford's view and even were a contradiction of his excellent presentation of the ransom sacrifice in the 1934 article, it is logical to think that Rutherford was not the author of this new view.

THE RANSOM SACRIFICE IS ONLY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE — THE "GOATS" ARE THOSE WHO ARE WILLFULLY WICKED

The Watchtower of May 15, 1938, pages 149, 150, says:

¹²The man Christ Jesus had shed his lifeblood, and his right to human life is represented in the blood. Raised out of death, the divine Jesus presented in heaven the purchase price, to wit, the right of human life, and paid it over at the seat of justice, and **thereby purchased Adam's offspring and became the sole and rightful owner thereof.** Therefore it is written: "Ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6: 20)

These words are correct, and they outline what the Christian Greek Scriptures say about the actions of Jesus Christ. The following words are inaccurate. And they may mislead the reader because they focus on the benefits of the ransom sacrifice and not on its value and scope:

¹³ **Does not the ransom result beneficially to all of Adam's offspring, and include Adam himself? No; it results beneficially only to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and obey him.** (John 3: 16, 17) **Adam could not be redeemed; for the reason that the judgment against him is final.** No judgment was entered against his offspring, and therefore such are subject to purchase or redemption; but such purchase does not result automatically for the benefit of everyone, but only for those who exercise their privilege of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and doing the will of God.

It is true that Adam will not get a resurrection with the possibility of everlasting life because he acted willfully and sinned against the holy spirit. But the point of Rutherford in his 1934 article that Adam also was bought by the death of Jesus is wrongly contradicted. Rutherford also stressed that every descendant of Adam must get a personal chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. But this may be contradicted by the focus

on the benefits of the ransom sacrifice rather than on its value. But the next words represent a rejection of the core of the ransom sacrifice, and they are linguistically wrong:

¹⁴ *But do not the Scriptures say that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified to all in due time? No; the Scriptures do not so state. The words “to all” are not in the text, but have been added by commentators. The text reads: “Who gave himself a ransom in behalf of all, the testimony in its own seasons; for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle, (I speak truth, I do not falsify,) a teacher of nations in faith and truth.” (1 Tim. 2: 6, 7, Diaglott) Otherwise stated, the life of Jesus was given as a ransom for all who believe and obey him...*

The last clause is rather dramatic because the *universal view of the ransom sacrifice is rejected* by the claim that “the life of Jesus was given as a ransom for all who believe and obey him.” The argument that the Greek text does not show that Jesus gave himself as a ransom *for all* is linguistically wrong. In Greek, we find the preposition *hyper* after “corresponding ransom” and before “all.” The meaning of this preposition in this clause is “for” and not “in behalf of,” as the claim is, as most Bible translations show.

The argument that the rendering should be “in behalf of,” and that this rendering shows that not all are included in the corresponding ransom, neither has linguistic nor biblical support.

There can be no doubt that the Greek text says that Jesus is the “corresponding ransom” *for all*. The next words in the article are partially correct:

¹⁵ When Jesus died on the tree the ransom price had been provided and made valuable. When Jehovah raised Christ Jesus out of death and exalted him to heaven, and Christ Jesus there in heaven presented the ransom price as a sin offering, *there the transaction was completed, and from that time forward every one of Adam's offspring belonged to and are owned by Christ Jesus to be dealt with according to the will of God.* It was at that time that Jesus had “purchased with his own blood” the offspring of Adam. (Acts 20: 28; Eph. 1: 14; Col. 1: 14; Heb. 9: 14; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19; Rev. 1: 5) *Was such purchase merely for the purpose of saving men from death? No; that was not the primary purpose. It opened the way for men in due time to obey the Lord and live.* It made possible the opportunity for men to prove their integrity toward Jehovah in vindication of his name and prove Satan to be a liar.

The first part of the quotation is correct. Jesus bought all Adam’s descendants, and now they belonged to him. But the last part is misleading because it denies that the primary purpose of the ransom sacrifice was to save all Adam’s descendants from death by a resurrection, so they would get the possibility of accepting or rejecting the ransom sacrifice. The clause “It opened the way for men in due time to obey the Lord and live,” would have been correct if it referred to the universal resurrection during the millennium. But the claim that “the life of Jesus was given as a ransom for all who believe in him,” shows that this is not the meaning.

The Watchtower article from May 15, 1938 was a devaluation and restriction of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That Jesus was a corresponding ransom for all is rejected.

The illustration about the sheep and the goats is also mentioned in the year 1938, in *The Watchtower* of October 15, page 314:

⁸⁸ The parable of the sheep and the goats, spoken by Jesus, announced the unchangeable law of God concerning the wicked. Jehovah has raised up his watchman class, and these are made the “faithful servant” of the Lord to tell his message and to give warning to the “goats”, and this warning has been given and is being given to those “goats”. ***Although having been warned, they continue to oppose the kingdom and to persecute the witnesses of the Lord who proclaim the King and his kingdom.*** They refuse to enter the kingdom themselves, and they hinder others from entering. ***By their willful conduct they demonstrate that they would oppose the kingdom during the thousand-year reign of Christ.*** Why should they be given a second chance to show their opposition to God and to his kingdom? They have taken a positive stand against the Lord and against his kingdom now, and have entered into a conspiracy to prevent the faithful witnesses from continuing to serve God and to be a part of his kingdom. ***As they have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate their wickedness,*** the judgment of the Lord finally entered against them is this: “These shall go away into everlasting cutting off.” (Matt. 25:46, *Diag.*, interlinear) There appears to be no reason why they should be brought back.

The important point to note is that ***the goats are not all the nations of the world.*** But they refer to wicked people who actively oppose the work of those who preach about the Kingdom of God. In his article from 1923, Rutherford wrote that some of the goats may perhaps change their attitude and start to serve Jehovah. But here the goats are denied any resurrection. And in view of the words of Jesus in 25:41 that they are cursed “into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels,” this is correct.

THE RANSOM SACRIFICE IS ONLY FOR GOD’S PEOPLE — THE “GOATS” ARE ALL PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Watchtower of May 15, 1939, discusses the ransom sacrifice, and the zigzag view continued. Based on Parkhurst Greek and English Lexicon, the author shows that *antilytron* refers to “a corresponding ransom.” After this, there is a clear devaluation of the ransom sacrifice. We read on page 149:

⁹ The word *anti’lytron* appears only once in the Scriptures, and that in the following text, to wit: “Who gave himself a ransom in behalf of all [***whom God wills to be saved*** (verse 4)], the testimony in its own seasons; for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle.” (1 Tim. 2: 4-7, *Emphatic Diaglott*) According to *Parkhurst*: “Who gave himself a correspondent ransom.” ***This text does not say or mean that Adam was or is ransomed, but does mean that the human perfection once possessed by the perfect man Adam (and which human perfection carried with it the right to life, which life and right thereto were forfeited by the willful disobedience of Adam) is purchased or bought back or ransomed for Adam's offspring, who were prevented from receiving that life and right thereto by reason of Adam's sin. The offspring of Adam who accept God's provision for their purchase, and who comply with God's fixed rules concerning the same, are privileged to receive the benefit of the ransom price. By his own lifeblood Jesus ransomed or purchased life and the right to human life for those of Adam's offspring that are saved.*** The clear meaning of the Scripture is this, to wit: That God desires all men to be saved and to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth who comply with his fixed and unchangeable provisions. “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved [by availing themselves of the ransom price, because God is impartial], and [then] to come to [an accurate] knowledge of the truth [in order that they might continue to walk in the right way]. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, ***the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all a ransom for all [who will be saved]***, to be testified in due time.” (1 Tim. 2: 3-6, *A. V.*)...

Jesus still possessing that right to life as a man, that asset or thing of value he paid over to Jehovah God as the price required, and thereby became the owner of Adam's offspring who had not willfully sinned as did Adam, and who should in due time avail themselves of the value of that ransom price. Jesus then could release or deliver Adam's offspring from the bondage of sin and death which had come upon them by reason of Adam's sin, by which the right to life had been denied Adam's offspring. *That means that the ransom sacrifice would inure to the benefit of the worthy ones of Adam's offspring; by "worthy ones" meaning those who would follow God's rules...*

When Jesus Christ paid over the value of his perfect human life he then by right of purchase became the owner of obedient mankind. He did not become a substitute for Adam in death, but he became the purchaser of Adam's offspring by paying over a thing exactly similar to that which Adam forfeited; therefore the life of the man Jesus, which he gave up, is a price exactly corresponding to the life of perfect Adam.

The article of Rutherford from 1934 where he excellently explained the ransom sacrifice as a judicial transaction that would satisfy God's righteousness is now contradicted, and even the words of Paul in his first letter to Timothy 2:6 are manipulated.

First, the corresponding price of the ransom sacrifice — the perfect man Jesus instead of the perfect man Adam is no longer valid. The article says: *"This text [about the corresponding ransom] does not say or mean that Adam was or is ransomed."* But this is exactly what the text says! Adam was bought by Jesus together with his unborn descendants. It is true that Adam will not get a resurrection during the millennium. But that is not because he was not bought by Jesus. But it is because he sinned against the holy spirit, and no one would pay a ransom for this kind of sin.

Second, the illogical reasonings of the author of the article are seen in the following quote: *"He did not become a substitute for Adam in death, but he became the purchaser of Adam's offspring by paying over a thing exactly similar to that which Adam forfeited; therefore the life of the man Jesus, which he gave up, is a price exactly corresponding to the life of perfect Adam.* This explanation is confusing and unclear. It is true that Jesus bought Adam's offspring. But how could he buy Adam's offspring, which were in the loins of Adam, without buying Adam? This is a clear violation of the price of a corresponding ransom.

Third, The corresponding ransom consisted of a literal price, the body and blood of the perfect man Jesus for the body and blood of the perfect man Adam. The concrete thing that was bought back — Adam and his offspring — has now been changed into something abstract: *"The human perfection once possessed by the perfect man Adam (and which human perfection carried with it the right to life, which life and right thereto were forfeited by the willful disobedience of Adam) is purchased or bought back."* The claim is that the human perfection of Adam and his right to life — something that is abstract — was bought back by Jesus. This is again confusing and a violation of the price of the corresponding ransom. Jesus did not sacrifice his perfection and right to life on the earth as a price for Adam's perfection and right to life on the earth. But he sacrificed his body and blood as the price for Adam's body and blood.

Fourth, The claim is that the ransom sacrifice is not for all Adam's offspring: *"By his own lifeblood Jesus ransomed or purchased life and the right to human life for those of*

Adam's offspring that are saved.” And: “*When Jesus Christ paid over the value of his perfect human life he then by right of purchase became the owner of obedient mankind.*” The ransom is only for those who want to serve God, for obedient mankind. But again, where is the *corresponding* value that God’s just court requires? How could Jesus by giving his life for mankind only buy a few of Adam’s descendants together with the right of these to continue to live on the earth? Claiming that he gave his life as a *corresponding ransom* when only a few of those his ransom corresponds to are bought simply is absurd! The excellent discussion by Rutherford in 1934 showing how Jehovah’s just requirements were fulfilled when Jesus died is now crushed.

Fifth, in order to support this new and unbiblical view of the ransom sacrifice, the words of Paul in 1 Timothy, chapter 2, are manipulated. We read: “*The word anti’lytron appears only once in the Scriptures, and that in the following text, to wit: ‘Who gave himself a ransom in behalf of all [whom God wills to be saved (verse 4)], the testimony in its own seasons; for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle. (1 Tim. 2: 4-7, Emphatic Diaglott).*” Without any linguistic support, the author claims that “*all* people” in 2:4 do not refer to *all* Adam’s descendants but only to “*all of Adam’s descendants that will be saved.*” This is, in reality, an attack on the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

This new and unbiblical view of the ransom sacrifice represented a part of a pattern. And this pattern was based on the principle in Matthew 12:30:

Whoever is not on my side is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

We see this in the article in *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1939, page 181. In this article, Matthew 24:14 is quoted, and then we read:

⁶The name of Jehovah, which means his purpose toward his creatures, must be proclaimed or declared throughout the earth immediately preceding Armageddon, at which battle of Armageddon the power of Jehovah will be made known to all, and it will result in the complete destruction of Satan and all his agencies. That God must use someone to declare his name is made certain by the Scriptures, because that is his will. Therefore it is written: ‘God at first did visit the nations to take out from them a people for his name.’ [Acts 15:17]...

⁸*The foregoing text of Acts 15: 14-18 shows that the only ones that are going to be saved before and at Armageddon are those who constitute the kingdom class and the great multitude.*

Now the circle is closed. Russell and the Bible Students believed that Jesus gave his life and bought Adam and all his descendants. Therefore, all these will get a resurrection during the millennium to get the chance of accepting or rejecting the ransom sacrifice. This was accepted by Rutherford and expressed in 1934 in his excellent article on the ransom sacrifice.

The Watchtower of May 15, 1938, says that Jesus bought all Adam’s offspring with his death, but the ransom sacrifice is “*for all who believe and obey him.*” Regarding the “goats,” *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1938, says that they are those who oppose the Kingdom of God and who continue to demonstrate their wickedness. However, *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1939, says that Adam was not ransomed and that “By his own lifeblood Jesus ransomed or purchased the life and the right to human life for those of Adam’s offspring that are saved.”

The Watchtower of June 15, 1939, says that only persons with the heavenly and earthly hope who are Jehovah's Witnesses will be saved when Armageddon comes. This means that "the goats" are all the humans on the earth who are not Jehovah's Witnesses.

WHO WILL BE ETERNALLY ANNIHILATED AND WHO WILL GET A RESURRECTION?

When we discuss the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection, it is important that we use the same viewpoint and speak about the same things. In connection with the ransom sacrifice, Paul says that Jesus died for "all," righteous and unrighteous people. (1 Timothy 2:6), but that he "became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him." (Hebrews 5:9). There is no doubt that the final result of the ransom sacrifice is that not all people will get everlasting life. However, it is important not to confuse the final result with what Jesus achieved with his death.

THE ETERNAL DESTRUCTION IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The importance of avoiding the confusion of equating the final result with the redemptive action of Jesus is that a wrong view of the redemptive work will lead to a wrong view of the resurrection and of the destiny of those who are living on the earth when the great tribulation comes. Regarding the last ones mentioned, there was the question and answer in *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1951, pages 287, 288:

Some maintain that at Armageddon there will be three classes: sheep that survive, goats that are eternally destroyed, and uninformed or irresponsible ones who will die but will be resurrected, and that in this latter class will be young children. Is this correct?—L. P., Montana.

We know of no Scriptural backing for such a view. *The parable of the sheep and goats shows the nations being separated into two classes, not three.* The goats headed for everlasting cutting-off are not just those who persecuted Christ's brothers. The parable upbraids the goats, not for what they did, but for what they failed to do, for their indifference toward and lack of interest in his brothers.—Matt. 25:45.

Many who never come in touch with the anointed remnant nevertheless subscribe to what others do in persecuting or fail to do in the way of giving help. The Bible shows a communal responsibility, where a community upholds rulers who persecute Jehovah's people. Did not the Egyptians suffer the plagues because of Pharaoh's hardheartedness? Did not the Amalekites suffer for generations afterward because of Amalek's opposition to Israel in the wilderness? Were not the entire households, including little children, of Korah and Dathan and Abiram swallowed up in destruction because of the rebellion of the household heads? Did not Achan by his greed bring death not only to himself but to his sons and daughters as well? Even King David brought death upon his people by his own transgressions. (Ex. 5:1, 2; 9:13-16; 17:8, 14, 16; 20:5, 6; Num. 16:23-33; Josh. 7:24, 25; 2 Sam. 24:10-17) Now, who will be rash and commit the folly of posing as more just than God by saying He was wrong in such procedures?—Deut. 32:4.

In harmony with the parable of the sheep and goats, Ezekiel chapter 9 shows but two classes, those marked for preservation and the unmarked ones appointed to destruction. And in this latter class note that little children were included, to be slain without pity. This is a prophetic picture of the destruction at Armageddon. At a time of judgment Jesus said: "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." That means not only clergy and laity but also parent and child. If a parent chooses to sin against the holy spirit despite the eternal interests of his

offspring, that then becomes the responsibility of the parent. In that same time of judgment Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews: “It was necessary for the word of God to be spoken first to you. Since you are thrusting it away from you and do not judge yourselves worthy of everlasting life, look! we turn to the nations.” (Acts 13:46, NW) Those Jews became responsible for the fate of their offspring, not Paul and Barnabas.

Parents devoted to their children will in the interests of their offspring shun wrong ways, taking instead right paths so as to put their children in the way of preservation. “Jehovah knows those who belong to him,” and that also means little children at Armageddon whose parents belong to Jehovah and who try to rear them according to God’s Word. (Deut. 6:6, 7; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:19, NW) To Christian parents of young children the promise is: “Otherwise, your children would really be unclean, but now they are holy.”—1 Cor. 7:14, NW.

This article was published 17 years after Rutherford wrote that:

“to be the will of God that by virtue of the ransom price all men should be redeemed from death and that then each one must be given a knowledge of God’s arrangement, to the end that each one may have the opportunity to exercise his free moral agency and accept or reject the offer of life that comes through the ransom sacrifice.”

The answer above is a clear rejection of both Rutherford’s words and of the words of the Christian Greek Scriptures about the ransom sacrifice.

First, that *the nations* are separated into two classes is wrong. As I show in chapter 6, it is not the nations that are separated but *some people from the nations*. The author of the article should have known this because an article in *The Watchtower* two years earlier, in the issue of May 15, 1949 (see page 156 in this book) shows that it is grammatically impossible that the separation relates to the nations.

Second, the claim regarding “communal responsibility”(today called, “community responsibility”) is completely untenable. It is true that the families of Korah, Datan, and Abiram, were killed together with them, and it is also true that others were punished for the actions of Achan and David. But Numbers 16:33 shows that Korah, Datan, and Abiram, and their families went down to *sheōl*, and therefore they will get a resurrection. So, what the author of the article calls “communal responsibility” relates to situations in this world. And those who were punished for the actions of others will get a resurrection. Therefore, the so-called “communal responsibility” cannot be applied to the eternal destiny of any person.

The words of Ezekiel chapter 9 are a prophecy that cannot be applied literally to the great tribulation. And to claim that people who have not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice are goats and will be eternally annihilated is completely against Jehovah’s righteousness and that he loves the world. And it is against the truth that Jesus bought **all** the descendants of Adam. But it accords with the unbiblical view of 1938 and 1939 that Jehovah’s Witnesses is an elite group and that all others are God’s enemies.

BIBLE TEXTS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION ARE CONTRADICTED

The first zigzag steps on the view of the ransom sacrifice from the late 1930s had great consequences for the view of who will get a resurrection. In fact, these viewpoints caused some brothers who wrote articles from *The Watchtower* to contradict the text of the Bible and to reduce the number of those who will get a resurrection significantly. This is a very

bad situation because the teaching milieu after World War II was excellent, with numerous articles discussing deep Bible subjects on the basis of interactive teaching.¹² In chapter 4, I will show in detail who will get a resurrection according to the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures. But here I will use Luke 12:41, 42 as an example of how the text of the Bible was rejected. I quote *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1952, page 339:

¹⁸ Nor is the fact that the judgment day for natural Israel was nineteen centuries ago denied by Jesus' words: "Men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; because they repented at what Jonah preached, but, look! something more than Jonah is here. The queen of the south will be raised up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but, look! something more than Solomon is here." (Matt. 12:41, 42; Luke 11:31, 32, NW) ***This does not mean the Ninevites and the queen of the south will confront the Jews of Jesus' day in the millennium judgment period.*** Why that, just to condemn those Jews, and for something they did in their former existence? In the millennium persons will be judged on the basis of what they do then, not what they did in a previous existence. Yet these Jews are adversely judged and condemned because nineteen centuries ago, back in their lifetime, during their judgment period, they rejected one more than Jonah and more than Solomon, namely Messiah Christ. They have no second chance in a second judgment period, in the millennium.

¹⁹ ***What Jesus meant was that the Jews of his day were condemned by the example of the repentant Ninevites, which example was recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures and confronted those Jews during their then judgment period.*** In the same way the record of the queen of the south stood up to confront the unrepentant Jews. Such Gentiles heeded mere men such as Jonah and Solomon; the covenant nation of Jews would not heed even their Messiah. Before their judgment period was over, those Jews were literally confronted by Gentiles like the Ninevites and the queen of the south, Gentiles of their day who repented and became a part of the bride of Christ. The Jews judged themselves unworthy of life. (Acts 13:44-50, NW) Abel did not have to be alive for his blood to cry out from the ground in condemnation of Cain, and his course of integrity and the record of it speaks, even though Abel is dead. (Gen. 4:10; Heb. 11:4) Similarly, the course of the Ninevites and the queen of the south, and the record of it, could rise and speak in condemnation of the Jews during their judgment period back there.

It is difficult for me to understand that brothers who were such excellent teachers could have written these comments which, in reality, represent a rejection of what the Holy Scriptures say. And if the writer of the article had little experience with Bible study, still it is difficult for me to understand that such an article was accepted for publication by the leading brothers. In chapter 4, there is a more detailed analysis of what Jesus said regarding the resurrection. Will wicked persons get a resurrection? According to Matthew 12:38-42, Jesus said:

³⁸ Then as an answer to him, some of the scribes and the Pharisees said: "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." ³⁹ In reply he said to them: "A ***wicked and adulterous generation*** keeps on seeking a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jo'nah the prophet. ⁴⁰ For just as Jo'nah was in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. ⁴¹ Men of Nin'e·veh ***will rise up*** in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented at what Jo'nah preached. But look! something more than Jo'nah is here. ⁴² The queen of the south ***will be raised***

12. Examples of the excellent teaching given are found in my book, *My Beloved Religion — And The Governing Body*, third edition, pages 331-340.

up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Sol'o·mon. But look! Something more than Sol'o·mon is here.

Let us look at the words: “Men of Nineveh will stand up (*anistemi*, ‘stand up’, future middle indicative) in the judgment *with* (*meta* ‘with’) *this generation*... The queen of the south will be raised up (*egeirō* ‘raise, lift up’, future passive indicative) in the judgment *with* (*meta* ‘with’) *“this (wicked and adulterous) generation.”*

Both verbs refer to the resurrection — “will stand up” and “will be raised up.” Both verbs are indicative, and therefore, it is grammatically impossible to deny that Jesus spoke about a literal resurrection in the future of the inhabitants of Nineveh, of the queen of the south, and of this wicked and adulterous generation. Matthew uses the words “Judgment Day” while Luke uses the word “judgment” with the same meaning. Jesus says that this “wicked and adulterous generation” will be raised up *with* the queen of the south.

This means that according to Jesus, wicked and adulterous people will get a resurrection on Judgment Day.

If we accept what the Word of God really says, it is impossible to deny that “this wicked and adulterous generation” will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. This accords well with the value of the ransom sacrifice that *all* Adam’s descendants will get the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.

The Watchtower of June 1, 1952, page 339, quoted above says: “What Jesus meant was that the Jews of his day were condemned by the example of the repentant Ninevites.” Because of the Greek grammar, this is an impossible conclusion. In Matthew 12: 41 we read: “Men of Nin'e·veh *will rise up* (*anistemi*, ‘stand up’, future middle indicative) in the judgment *with* (*meta*) *this generation* and will condemn (*katakrinō*, ‘condemn’, future active indicative) it. Both the action “will rise up” and “condemn” are Greek futures. The grammar requires that the condemnation of “the wicked and adulterous generation” occurs *after* the men of Nineveh have risen up *with this generation*. So, the explanation of *The Watchtower* is an attempt to explain away what a crystal-clear Bible text says.

This is a clear example of how a wrong view of the ransom sacrifice leads to a wrong view of the resurrection.

THE ZIGZAG TURN GOES IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION: THE NEW VIEW OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE AND THE RESURRECTION IN THE 1960s

In order to understand the contrast between the old view and the new view, I first make an outline of the viewpoints before the 1960s.

- 1) The Bible students and Rutherford believed that Jesus gave his life as a ransom sacrifice for Adam and all his descendants. This means that all of them will get a resurrection during the millennium with a personal opportunity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.
- 2) *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1938, page 150, denies that the ransom sacrifice was for *all* Adam’s descendants and said: “Otherwise stated, the life of Jesus was given as a ransom for all who believe and obey him.”

- 3) *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1939, page 181, says: “The only ones that are going to be saved before and at Armageddon are those who constitute the kingdom class and the great multitude” — only Jehovah’s Witnesses will be saved.
- 4) *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1952, shows that those who died in the worldwide flood, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorra, Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida will not get a resurrection.

The three last viewpoints restrict the ransom sacrifice enormously, and the consequence of these viewpoints is that the ransom sacrifice will not be applied to the vast majority of the people who have lived on earth between Adam and the great tribulation. And they will not have a resurrection during the millennium. This is almost the diametrically opposite of what the Bible Students and Rutherford believed.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF ADAM’S DESCENDANTS WILL GET A RESURRECTION

I am not aware any other example in the first two decades after World War II where the leading brothers of Jehovah’s Witnesses directly contradicted the text of the Bible, as in the three last points listed above.

There must have been other brothers beside me who became aware of the problems with the devalued and restricted view of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection that started at the end of the 1930s. And that was probably the reason why a thorough study of everything the Bible says about the resurrection was undertaken in the early 1960s. The result of this study was the publication of 12 articles on the resurrection in *The Watchtower* of 1965.¹³

These articles are excellent for interactive study because they present clear evidence from the Bible for their conclusions. Regarding the resurrection, we read in *The Watchtower* of March 1, 1965, page 139:

As in the case of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus showed that Sodom, bad as it was, had not got to the state of being unable to repent. That is why Jesus said that, if his powerful works that had taken place in Capernaum had taken place in Sodom, “it would have remained” until Jesus’ day. And in that connection Jesus said that Capernaum, which had been exalted in a spiritual way to heaven, would be abased down to Ha’des, not to Gehenna. Heaven for height and Ha’des or Sheol for depth; and by using this contrast Jesus meant that Capernaum would undergo the deepest abasement. Though highly favored by Jesus, that city does not exist today any more than Sodom does. ***But if Sodom had had Capernaum’s opportunity Sodom would have had ten or more righteous persons in it and it would have continued over nineteen hundred years longer till Jesus’ day and then some. So the spiritual recovery of the dead people of Sodom is not hopeless.*** (Gen. 18:22-32) Ezekiel 16:46-61 speaks hopefully of people compared to ancient Sodomites.

13. *The Watchtower* of 1965: “Worship the God of Resurrection.”; “Death and Hades to Give Up the Dead.”, “Part II.”; “The Dead Who Are in Line for Resurrection.”, “Part II.”; “For Whom There Are Resurrection Hopes.”, “Part II.”; “Who Will be Resurrected from the Dead?”, “Part II.”; “Who Will be Resurrected—Why?”; “Our Own Twentieth-Century Generation and the Resurrection.”; “Earthly Opportunity Opened Up by Resurrection.” in *The Watchtower* of January 1, January 15, February 1, February 15, March 1, and March 15, 1965.

This was a direct reversal of the viewpoint of a limited resurrection that was expressed in *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1952. And the conclusion that had to be drawn from all the 12 articles on the resurrection was expressed in *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1965, page 179:

There will indeed be a resurrection of many ignorant people, *the vast majority of dead mankind.*

Not only is this a viewpoint that is close to the view of the resurrection held by the Bible Students and by Rutherford, but it also accords with what the whole Bible says about the ransom sacrifice of Jesus and the resurrection. It shows that the atonement between God and man includes a much greater number of humans than what was believed in the 26 years before 1965 — it includes all humans.

THE RANSOM SACRIFICE IS APPLIED TO ALL OF ADAM'S DESCENDANTS

Passages that were misapplied in order to show that Jesus gave his life only for those who believe in him and obey him are Matthew 20:28, (above) and 1 Timothy 2:5, 6, (below):

²⁸ Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for *many (polys).*”

⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself a corresponding ransom for *all (pas)*—this is what is to be witnessed to in its own due time.

I have looked at all references to Matthew 20:28 and 1 Timothy 2:6 in the Watchtower Online Library. And between 1965 and 2000, the same viewpoints have been presented: The ransom sacrifice means that Jesus by his death bought *all* descendants of Adam and that the sacrifice was applied to *all* these descendants. The final result to the application of the ransom sacrifice is seen in John 3:36, that only those who “exercise faith in Jesus” will get everlasting life on the basis of the ransom sacrifice. The view was also expressed that “*many*” in Matthew 20:28 and the “*all*” in 1 Timothy 2:6 both refer to *all* the descendants of Adam. Below I bring some quotations to that effect:

The Watchtower of April 15, 1972, page 237, says:

¹⁸ Jesus knew that he had to die as a man. Otherwise, he could not become a ransom sacrifice for all mankind. To his twelve apostles he said: “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matt. 20:28) To this end he must die innocent, the righteous for the unrighteous. He must sacrifice his human life forever and let its value go in behalf of all mankind. He died without children, and nobody on earth can claim natural descent from Jesus Christ. *He sacrificed his perfect human life and parenthood as a corresponding ransom for all mankind.*

The Watchtower of November 15, 1972, page 687, says:

He had said on earth that he had come “to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matt. 20:28) The apostle Paul speaks of Jesus as “having suffered death, that he by God’s undeserved kindness *might taste death for every man.*” Paul also speaks of “a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all.” (Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6) *Thus Jesus*

Christ, by presenting to God the life value of his human sacrifice, ransomed all mankind, purchased them, even without their requesting him to do so. On this account, there will be, under his heavenly kingdom, a “resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Acts 24:15) Jesus Christ owns them all.

Awake! of 22. September 1973, page 8, says:

But not all of Adam’s offspring are of the same mind as was Adam. Many of these do have a love of righteousness, and yet, seemingly, they are no better off than Adam. But not so; there will be a difference and that is because of God’s provision of a resurrection. God in his goodness provided that his Son should ransom humankind that had been sold, as it were, to sin and death by the disobedience of Adam. (Rom. 5:12) *This Jesus did by coming to earth, being born as a human and then laying down his life for humankind. By thus purchasing the human race, Jesus opened the way for removal of the legal disability resting upon mankind and now he has the right to raise mankind from death.*—Matt. 20:28; 28:18.

The Watchtower of April 1, 1974, page 200, says:

Christ Jesus provided this. As he himself said: “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matt. 20:28) *Since our first father, Adam, lost for us perfect human life, Christ Jesus ransomed what Adam lost, doing so for the human race, thereby opening the way for them to regain perfect life. He did this by paying over his own perfect human life as an exchange of equal value.* Yes, “one man died for all,” a fact made possible because he was a perfect man, born on earth by God’s power, his life having been transferred from heaven to the womb of the virgin girl Mary.—2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Luke 1:34, 35.

The Watchtower of August 15, 1989, page 687, says:

He had said on earth that he had come “to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matt. 20:28) The apostle Paul speaks of Jesus as “having suffered death, that he by God’s undeserved kindness *might taste death for every man.*” Paul also speaks of “a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all.” (Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6)

Thus Jesus Christ, by presenting to God the life value of his human sacrifice, ransomed all mankind, purchased them, even without their requesting him to do so. On this account, there will be, under his heavenly kingdom, a “resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Acts 24:15) Jesus Christ owns them all.

The Watchtower of March 15, 1990, page 4, says:

Jesus came “to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Mark 10:45) But who are the “many”? Adam is evidently excluded because he was a perfect man who deliberately chose to disobey God and died as an unrepentant, willful sinner. *But what about his large family, numbering into the thousands of millions? With a corresponding price, Jesus Christ offsets the inherited condemnation resting on Adam’s family.* (Compare 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.) In behalf of the “many” believers, Jesus applies the merit of his redemptive price.

The Watchtower of March 15, 2000, page 3, says:

When Adam sinned and was sentenced to death, his as yet unborn offspring were still in his loins and therefore died with him. The perfect man Jesus, “the last Adam,” willingly did not produce a family. (1 Corinthians 15:45) He had unborn offspring in his loins when he died as a perfect human sacrifice. Therefore, it might be said that the potential human race within his loins died with him. *Jesus took Adam’s sinful, dying family as his own. He gave up the right to have a family of his own. By sacrificing his perfect human life, Jesus repurchased all*

mankind descended from Adam so that they could become His family, making Him their “Eternal Father.”—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

The quotations above show that the view during the last 35 years of the 20th century was that Jesus bought *all* Adam’s descendants by his death, and the ransom sacrifice is applied to all these.

Before I end this section, I will bring a quotation from *The Watchtower* of January 15, 1987, page 24, regarding the resurrection of wicked people in the days of Jesus:

Jesus goes on to single out for reproach the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, where he has performed most of his powerful works. If he had done them in the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus says, these cities would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Condemning Capernaum, which apparently has been his home base during his ministry, Jesus declares: “It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you.”

What does Jesus mean by this? *Evidently he is showing that, during Judgment Day when proud ones in Capernaum are resurrected,* it will be more difficult for them to admit their mistakes and accept Christ than it will be for the resurrected ancient Sodomites to repent humbly and learn righteousness.

The same view that was expressed in 1965 that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will get a resurrection was now reiterated 22 years later. And the correct biblical view of the ransom sacrifice continued to be expressed by the leaders of Jehovah’s Witnesses. But in the next year, 1988, a dramatic change occurred.

A NEW ZIGZAG TURN IN THE WRONG DIRECTION: RESTRICTING THE RESURRECTION AND THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

The biblical view that the vast majority of Adam’s descendants will get a resurrection was presented in 1965, and the view that the ransom sacrifice was applied to all Adam’s descendants was also held by the leaders of Jehovah’s Witnesses during the 20th century. However, the view that all humans living when the great tribulation comes, except Jehovah’s Witnesses, will be eternally annihilated, was not changed during the 20th century.

REJECTING THE WORDS OF JESUS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

It does not make sense that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, who heard the preaching of Jesus and saw his miracles but refused to believe in him will have a resurrection, while several billion people, most of whom have not had a chance to accept God’s truth will be eternally annihilated in the great tribulation. I do not know if this is the reason for the dramatic change in the year 1988, but now the members of the Governing Body retracted the view that the vast majority of Adam’s descendants will get a resurrection. We read in *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1988, page 30:

A recent review of this suggests that these verses need not be taken as statements about the future for the people of Sodom/Gomorrah...

A reexamination of Matthew 11:20-24, though, has brought into question whether Jesus was there discussing eternal judgment and resurrection. His point was how unresponsive the people in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were and how unlikely it was that they would reform even in the Judgment Day. Saying that it would be “more endurable” for Tyre/Sidon and Sodom/Gomorrah “on Judgment Day” *was a form of hyperbole (exaggeration to emphasize a point) that Jesus need not have intended to be taken literally*, any more than other graphic hyperboles that he used.

The book *Can You Live Forever on a Paradise Earth?* that was revised in 1989, says on page 179, that the Sodomites will not get a resurrection.

¹⁰ Jesus too indicated that the Sodomites may not be resurrected. When he spoke of Capernaum, one of the cities where he performed miracles, he said: “If the powerful works that took place in you [Capernaum] had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained until this very day. Consequently I say to you people, It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you.” (Matthew 11:22-24) *Jesus here was emphasizing the reprehensibility of the people of Capernaum by saying that it would be more endurable for the ancient Sodomites who, in the minds of his Israelite audience, were totally unworthy of a resurrection on Judgment Day.*

These comments are a direct rejection of the words of Jesus, and the members of the Governing Body defend this false teaching of a limited resurrection to this day, as is seen in the study note of Luke 10:12 in the online NWT13:

It will be more endurable: *Evidently used as a form of hyperbole that Jesus may not have intended to be taken literally.* (Compare other graphic hyperboles that Jesus used, such as those at Mt 5:18; Lu 16:17; 21:33) When Jesus said it would be “more endurable for Sodom in that day,” that is, on Judgment Day (Mt 10:15; 11:22, 24; Lu 10:14), *he was not saying that the inhabitants of Sodom must be present on that day.* (Compare Jude 7) He could simply have been emphasizing how unresponsive and culpable most people were in such cities as Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. (Lu 10:13-15) It is worth noting that what happened to Ancient Sodom had become a proverbial and was often mentioned in connection with God’s anger and judgment.—De 29:23; Isa 1:9; La 4:6.

The study note claims that Jesus did not say that the inhabitants of Sodom must be present on Judgment Day. But that was exactly what Jesus said! This is a rejection of the full inspiration of the Bible.

This rejection of the words of Jesus cannot have gone unnoticed by all readers of *The Watchtower*. And it is likely that the Watchtower Society received many questions about this subject. I do not know if this is the reason, but a minor retreat can be seen in *Insight on the Scriptures* published in 1915. This lexicon was first published in 1988, and the two volumes accord with the view expressed in *The Watchtower* of 1987 that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Sodom, and Gomorrah, will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. The lexicon was revised in 2015, and the view presented is that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will not get a resurrection. But *some persons* from Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will be resurrected. This minor retreat in the 1915-edition is written in red in the quotations, and the text at the same place in the 1988-edition is written in blue:

(137) **Resurrection is involved.** When using the expression “Judgment Day,” Jesus brought into the picture a resurrection of the dead. He mentioned that a city might reject the apostles and

their message, and said: “It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than for that city.” (Mt 10:15) *Although he was evidently using a hyperbole (because Sodom and Gomorrah had undergone everlasting destruction), his statement did point to a future judgment for at least some from such a first-century Jewish city.* [1988-edition: *This projected the matter into the future and naturally suggested that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah would then be alive by means of resurrection.*] (Compare Mt 11:22-24; Lu 10:13-15; Jude 7.) Even clearer is Jesus’ statement that “the queen of the south will be raised up in the judgment.” (Mt 12:41, 42; Lu 11:31, 32) The Biblical statements about Jesus’ judging “the living and the dead” can be viewed in the light of the fact that resurrection is involved in Judgment Day.—Ac 10:42; 2Ti 4:1.

(775) **Resurrection Affords Opportunity.** By contrast, when addressing certain first-century *Jewish cities*, Jesus referred to a future judgment day in which they would be involved. (Mt 10:14, 15; 11:20-24) *That implies that at least some people from those cities would be resurrected, and even though their formerly unrepentant attitude would make it very hard for them to repent, they would have opportunity to manifest humble repentance and “turn around” in conversion to God through Christ.* Those failing to do so will receive everlasting destruction. [1988-edition: By contrast, *the people of Sodom and Gomorrah as well as those of Canaanite Tyre and Sidon are spoken of by Jesus as finding “Judgment Day” more endurable than would the people of certain Jewish cities* (Mt 10:14, 15; 11:20-24) *Those of pagan Nineveh are similarly spoken of. (Mt 12:41) This of itself implies that people from all such places, including the Jewish cities mentioned, will be resurrected and have opportunity to manifest humble repentance and “turn around” in conversion to God through Christ.]*

This new view is, in reality, a contradiction of terms. The view that Jesus used hyperboles and did not speak about the resurrection is still standing. On this basis, it is contradictory with reference to the words of Jesus to say that “*some* from such a first century Jewish city” would have a resurrection. The members of the Governing Body cannot have it both ways. When they say that Jesus did not speak about the resurrection because he used hyperboles, they cannot in the next breath say that he spoke about the resurrection of *some* of these inhabitants.

I suspect that this partial retraction is an attempt to cover up the doctrine from 1988 of a limited resurrection that is completely untenable. But we note that this contradiction of the words of Jesus is still standing!

REJECTING THAT THE RANSOM SACRIFICE IS APPLIED TO ALL ADAM’S DESCENDANTS

I have shown that the view of the members of the Governing Body until the year 2000 was that the ransom sacrifice was applied to all Adam’s descendants. In the 21st century, the view changed. In order to “*prove*” that the ransom sacrifice does not apply to *all* descendants of Adam, but only to “those who take the steps necessary to benefit from it,” the members of the Governing Body have manipulated the texts of Matthew 20:28 and 1 Timothy 2:4-6.

Insight on the Scriptures (2015), volume II, page 79, says:

Some Not Resurrected. While it is true that Christ’s ransom sacrifice was given for mankind in general, **Jesus indicated that its actual application nevertheless would be limited when he said: “Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Mt 20:28)** Jehovah God has the right to

refuse to accept a ransom for anyone he deems unworthy. Christ's ransom covers the sins an individual has because of being a child of sinful Adam, but a person can add to that by his own deliberate, willful course of sin, and he can thus die for such sin that is beyond coverage by the ransom. (The author's italics for "many.")

The Watchtower of July 15, 2014, page 30, says:

As Jesus explained, he came, "not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many." (Matt. 20:28) **The "many" who would benefit from Jesus' ransom were not to be limited to repentant Jews. Rather, it is God's will that "all sorts of people should be saved,"** since the ransom "takes away the sin of *the world!*"—1 Tim. 2:4-6; John 1:29.

The Online article, "How is Jesus' 'a Ransom for Many'" says:¹⁴

Correspondence. Jesus' sacrifice corresponds exactly to what Adam lost—one perfect human life. (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 46) The Bible says: "Just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one person [Jesus Christ] many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:19) This explains how the death of one man can pay the ransom for many sinners. ***In fact, Jesus' sacrifice is "a corresponding ransom for all" those who take the steps necessary to benefit from it.***—1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

It is clear that the view of the Christian Greek Scriptures is that Jesus bought **all** Adam's descendants when he died and that the ransom sacrifice is applied to **all these**. This was the view of C.T. Russell and the Bible Students, the view of J.F. Rutherford, and the view of the leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses from 1965 and during the last part of the 20th century. But in the 21st century, the members of the Governing Body have devalued and limited the ransom sacrifice, as we see from the three last quotations above.

"Jesus died for 'many'; he died not die for 'all men' but for 'all sorts of men'," is the claim of the members of the Governing Body.

It can be no doubt that the view of Russell and Rutherford that I have quoted accords with Jehovah's righteousness: all those who have been bought by Jesus must get a personal chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. And it can be no doubt that the new view of the members of the Governing Body that the ransom is only for "those who take the steps necessary to benefit from it" is a violation of God's righteousness.

I suspect that this new view was formed to support the view that 8 billion+ humans will be eternally annihilated in the great tribulation. If these persons are bought by the sacrifice of Jesus, they must have a personal chance to accept or reject that sacrifice. This chance is given by being taught about it and being offered the ransom sacrifice, as Romans 10:13-17 shows. However, as I will demonstrate below, at least 6 billion+ of the persons who live when the great tribulation starts, will not have had the mentioned personal chance to accept the ransom sacrifice. This means that these people cannot be eternally annihilated if they are bought by Jesus. But if the corresponding ransom only includes those who will be saved, all the others need not get a personal chance and can be eternally annihilated.

14. <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/502016129>.

The false view of the ransom sacrifice:

Jesus died only for those who will be saved, for “all sorts of men” and not for “all men.” (The Watchtower of July 15, 2014)

The true view of the ransom sacrifice:

Jesus died for all descendants of Adam and bought all those by his death. Each one must get a personal chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. (The Watchtower of August 1, 1973, and Insight on the Scriptures, (1988) volume 1, page 854)

Table 3.1 The zigzag views of the resurrection

1870s	Russell and the Bible Students: Jesus bought Adam and all his descendants when he died. Adam and all his descendants will get a resurrection in the millennium, and they will have the opportunity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.
1934	J.F. Rutherford: Jesus bought Adam and all his descendants when he died. Adam and all his descendants will get a resurrection in the millennium, and they will have the opportunity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.
1938	<i>The Watchtower</i> : The life of Jesus as a ransom sacrifice was not given for Adam and all his descendants but only for those who believe and obey him.
1952	<i>The Watchtower</i> : The resurrection during the millennium is limited. The words of Jesus that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will get a resurrection are contradicted. These people will not get a resurrection.
1965	<i>The Watchtower</i> : The vast majority of dead humans will get a resurrection. This includes the inhabitants of of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida.
1965-2000	<i>The Watchtower</i> : Jesus Christ, by presenting to God the life value of his human sacrifice, ransomed all mankind, purchased them, even without their requesting him to do so.
1987	<i>The Watchtower</i> : The inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will get a resurrection.
1988	<i>The Watchtower</i> : The inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will not get a resurrection.
2014	<i>The Watchtower</i> : A manipulation of the text of the Bible: Jesus did not die for “all people” but for “all sorts of people,” for those who takes the necessary steps to benefit from it.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF ADAM'S DESCENDANTS WILL GET A RESURRECTION

—REVIEW—

This chapter discusses what the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures say about the resurrection.

Manipulating the text of the Bible

The members of the Governing Body believe in a restricted ransom sacrifice and a limited resurrection. In order to find support for their belief, NWT13 shows that Jesus did not die for “all people” but for “all sorts of people,” that is, for all people that will be saved. The appeal to the context to prove this has no merit whatsoever.

The resurrection of people in the first century CE.

Jesus said that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. The members of the Governing Body reject the words of Jesus, saying that he used hyperboles and the text cannot be taken literally. An analysis of how Jesus used hyperboles indicates that he did not use such when he spoke about the resurrection. A restricted ransom sacrifice and a limited resurrection contradict the righteousness and love of God.

The resurrection of people in the 1st century CE

The Jews in general believed in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said that “the wicked and adulterous generation,” which I show includes the whole Jewish nation, will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. This includes the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, that are specially mentioned by Jesus.

The resurrection of people who lived between Adam and Jesus

Jesus showed that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. I discuss the words “Judicial punishment of everlasting fire” that Jude applies to Sodom, and I show that this expression does not refer to eternal annihilation. The account of Lot’s wife represents strong evidence that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will get a resurrection.

Wicked people are in sheōl and will get a resurrection

I have looked at all the occurrences of *sheōl* in the Hebrew Scriptures, and huge numbers of wicked people and wicked nations are said to come to *sheōl*. Psalm 9:17 says directly that all the nations consisting of wicked people come to *sheōl*.

Chapter 2 discussed the different sides of the atonement between God and man, what the ransom sacrifice is, its scope, and how it is applied to human beings. In this chapter, I will analyze the words of the Holy Scriptures regarding who will get a resurrection. But first, I will discuss how the members of the present Governing Body are manipulating the text of the Scriptures in connection with the ransom sacrifice.

MANIPULATING THE GREEK TEXT IN ORDER TO FIT THE VIEW OF A LIMITED APPLICATION OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE

I am very sad to see how the members of the Governing Body have misled the members of my beloved religion to believe in a devalued and restricted ransom sacrifice, and in a limited resurrection.

MISINTERPRETING THE TEXT OF THE BIBLE

Insight on the Scriptures (2015) discusses the resurrection, and regarding its scope, we read in volume II, page 79:

Some Not Resurrected. While it is true that Christ's ransom sacrifice was given for mankind in general, **Jesus indicated that its actual application nevertheless would be limited when he said: "Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for *many*."** (Mt 20:28) Jehovah God has the right to refuse to accept a ransom for anyone he deems unworthy. Christ's ransom covers the sins an individual has because of being a child of sinful Adam, but a person can add to that by his own deliberate, willful course of sin, and he can thus die for such sin that is beyond coverage by the ransom. (The author's bold font and italics)

There is nothing wrong in discussing the final result of the application of the ransom sacrifice for different people. But this must not be confused with the real value of the sacrifice, which is done in the quotation above. The reference is to Matthew 20:28, and by putting the word *many* in italics, the author argues that the ransom sacrifice does not include **all** Adam's descendants. This is false a teaching! The nature and scope of the ransom sacrifice are discussed in chapter 2. But it is so important that I discuss a part of it again. Let us look at the two relevant passages, Matthew 20:28, (above) and 1 Timothy 2:4-6, (below):

²⁸Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom (*lytron*) in exchange (*anti*) for **many** (*polys*)."

⁴whose will is that **all sorts of people** should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth ⁵For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself a corresponding ransom (*antilytron*) **for all** (*pas*)—this is what is to be witnessed to in its own due time.

The Greek word *antilytron* is correctly translated by the expression "corresponding ransom," which means that the ransom had exactly of the same value as that which was sold. And this value was the perfect human life of Jesus corresponding to the perfect human life of Adam. In Matthew 20:28 the Greek word *lytron* without the prefixed preposition *anti* is used. However, the preposition *anti* is immediately following *lytron* as *lytron anti*, so the idea of a "corresponding ransom" is also expressed in Matthew 20:28.

In 1 Timothy 2:6 we read about "the corresponding ransom for **all** (*pas*)," but in Matthew 20:28 we read about "a ransom in exchange for **many** (*polys*)." Is there a difference in meaning here between "**all**" (*pas*) and "many" (*polys*)?

According to Mounce, the meaning of *polys* is "great in magnitude or quantity; much; large; many." It is important to note that *polys* and *pas* may describe the same situation

from two different angles, and the two words do not exclude each other. Romans 5:15 illustrates the issue. Paul uses the word *polys* (“many”) both for all the descendants of Adam who will die and for all that are included in the ransom sacrifice:

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by one man’s trespass many (*polys*) died, how much more did the undeserved kindness of God and his free gift by the undeserved kindness of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to many (*polys*).

The meaning of the expression “many died” (aorist active) is seen in verses 15 to 17 where we read, “for if by the trespass of one man death ruled as king through that one.” All Adam’s offspring were subjected to death, so, the “*many*” that died, refers to *all* Adam’s descendants. Therefore, the expression “abound to *many*” in verse 15 must refer to all Adam’s descendants as well. *The Watchtower* of August 1, 1973, page 465, has some interesting comments on the use of the word *polys*:

⁹ This teaching of the ransom brings to our attention two families—the family of Adam and the family of Jesus Christ. Both families are described as being “many.” (Rom. 5:15) There is no special requirement for becoming one of Adam’s sinful family. All are born into it by the natural procreative process. But, concerning what Jesus did, it is written: “For even the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Mark 10:45; Matt. 20:28) How “many”? *As we have already seen, he gave himself “a corresponding ransom for all.” He tasted death “for every man.”* (1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 2:9) During the past six thousand years, Adam’s family has multiplied into the billions. Christ purchased them all.

In chapter 3, I showed that the biblical view of resurrection is that “the vast majority” of the dead will get a resurrection during the millennium. And this view was re-established by the 12 articles on the resurrection in *The Watchtower* in 1965. I also showed that the correct understanding of the ransom sacrifice was re-established, that “Jesus Christ, by presenting to God the life value of his human sacrifice, ransomed all mankind, purchased them, even without their requesting him to do so.” (*The Watchtower* of August 15, 1989, page 687.) Now, in 2015, when *Insight on the Scriptures* was revised, the members of the Governing Body have devalued and restricted the ransom sacrifice, so it should match with their new view of a resurrection that is much more limited than the Holy Scriptures say.

MANIPULATING THE TEXT OF THE BIBLE

I will now discuss the manipulation of the translators of NWT13 and the members of the Governing Body who approved its renderings related to the Greek word *pas*. This word has the following meanings: “all; the whole; entire, usually when the substantive has the article; every, only with an anarthrous,” according to Mounce. So, the word can refer to universality, to every individual of a group, or to every kind or sort of something. The word can also refer to “all other,” as in Luke 21:29 where Jesus speaks of the fig tree and all other (*pas*) trees.

The procedure followed by Bible translators is to use the basic meaning of a word if the context does not show a more restricted meaning. In connection with some of the references in the study note of 1 Timothy 2:4, this principle is followed. According to John 12:32, Jesus will not draw “all men” to himself but “all sorts of men.” And according to Acts 2:17, God will not pour out his spirit on “all flesh” but on “all sorts of flesh.”

However, the basic meaning of *pas* is *all*, and the other alternative references mentioned above are specialized references. A Bible translator should only use the specialized meaning of a word when the context *clearly indicates* this meaning. This is not the case in 1 Timothy 2:3-6, where we read according to NWT13:

³This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, ⁴whose will is that *all sorts of people* should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth. ⁵For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself a corresponding *ransom for all*—this is what is to be witnessed to in its own due time.

The study notes of 2 Timothy 2:4, (above), and 2:6, (below) say:

all sorts of people: *While the Greek expression used here may more literally be translated “all people,” the rendering “all sorts of people” is appropriate because of the context.* (For other examples, see study notes on Joh 12:32; Ac 2:17.) God wants all people “to attain to repentance” (2Pe 3:9), so he impartially offers salvation to everyone, regardless of their gender, ethnic background, financial status, or social position. (Mt 28:19, 20; Ac 10:34, 35; 17:30) However, the Scriptures clearly indicate that many people will reject God’s invitation and will not be saved. (Mt 7:13, 21; Joh 3:16, 36; 2Th 1:9) So the rendering “all sorts of people” is in harmony with those verses. A similar rendering is also appropriate in the preceding verses, where Paul urges fellow Christians to pray “concerning *all sorts of men*, concerning kings and all those who are in high positions.”—1Ti 2:1, 2.

For all: Or “all sorts of people,” —Mt 20:28; Joh 3:16; see study note on 1Ti 2:4.

Contrary to what the study note claims, there is absolutely nothing in the context of 1 Timothy, or in other books of the Bible, that justify the translation “all sorts of people” instead of “all people.” This is a manipulation of the Greek text. The online study, “How is Jesus’ sacrifice a Ransom for many?” is also manipulating the text of the Bible:

Correspondence. Jesus’ sacrifice corresponds exactly to what Adam lost—one perfect human life. (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 46) The Bible says: “Just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one person [Jesus Christ] many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:19) This explains how the death of one man can pay the ransom for many sinners. In fact, Jesus’ sacrifice is *“a corresponding ransom for all” those who take the steps necessary to benefit from it.*—1 Timothy 2:5, 6.¹⁵

The readers are misled to believe that “a corresponding ransom *for ‘all’*” is not a corresponding ransom for *all* Adam’s descendants.

There is also a contradiction in the study notes and in the online article. If the words of 1 Timothy 2:6 is “who gave himself as a *corresponding* ransom for all sorts of people,” what is the meaning of the expression “*corresponding* ransom.”? What do “all sorts of people”— “those who take the necessary steps to benefit from the ransom,” correspond to? This question shows the fallacious logic behind this new view. The truth is, as the quotations above from the Watchtower literature until the year 2000 show: *Adam sold himself and all his descendants* under sin, and Jesus bought *Adam and all his descendants* with his sacrifice. He did not die only for those who will be saved, but he died for *all* Adam’s descendants.

15. <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/502016129>.

A LIMITED RANSOM SACRIFICE AND A LIMITED RESURRECTION CONTRADICT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LOVE OF GOD

Please consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:10-14:

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ———¹² “What do you think? If a man has 100 sheep and one of them strays, will he not leave the 99 on the mountains and set out on a search for the one that is straying? ¹³ And if he finds it, I certainly tell you, he rejoices more over it than over the 99 that have not strayed. ¹⁴ Likewise, it is not a desirable thing to my Father who is in heaven for even one of these little ones to perish.

Jesus speaks about a person who had strayed from God’s truth, and his words show that God cares for this person and does not want anyone to perish. Jehovah is not only interested in persons who have strayed from the truth. But Peter shows that he wants *all people* in the world to gain salvation. We read in 2 Peter 3:9:

Jehovah is not slow concerning his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.

In *The Watchtower* of August 1, 1970, page 472, we read:

The inspired apostle John wrote that “God is love,” and the apostle Paul states that love “hopes all things.” (1 John 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:4, 7) It is in harmony with this outstanding divine quality that God should exercise a genuinely open, kindly attitude toward all persons, desirous of their gaining salvation, until they prove themselves unworthy, beyond hope. (Compare 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 6:4-12.) Thus, the apostle Paul speaks of the “kindly quality of God [that] is trying to lead you to repentance.”—Rom. 2:4-6.

The view of the leaders of Jehovah’s Witnesses in 1970 was that Jehovah was “desirous of their [*all persons*] gaining salvation.” This is a correct view, and the view of the present members of the Governing Body that Jehovah only “will that *all sorts of people* shall be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of the truth” is wrong. That this is a false teaching is clearly shown in 2 Peter 3:9, which is quoted above. In 1 Timothy 2:4, the Greek word *pas* must have its basic universal meaning. God wants that *all* Adam’s offspring shall be saved. But many will use their free will to turn against God, so they will not be saved.

In order to continue the discussion above, it is also clear that the Greek word *pas* must have the basic universal meaning in 1 Timothy 2: 6. Because Jesus is the “corresponding ransom” (*antilytron*), his ransom must include *Adam and all his descendants*, and not only *all sorts of Adam’s descendants*. The word *pas* in the basic universal sense is also used in 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, (above) and Hebrews 2:9, (below).

¹⁴ For the love the Christ has compels us, because this is what we have concluded, that one man *died for all (pas)*; so, then, all had died. ¹⁵ And he *died for all (pas)* so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.

⁹ But we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than angels, now crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, so that by God’s undeserved kindness he might *taste death for everyone (pas)*.

The NWT13 renders the Greek word *pas* in 1. Timothy 2:6 as “*all*,” but as shown above, the study note has the alternative “*all sorts of*,” and 2:4 renders *pas* as “*all sorts of*” in the text. The reference to Matthew 20:28 with the word “*many*,” which *The Watchtower* of July 15, 2014, applied to those who will be saved, and the study note of 1 Timothy 2:4, indicates that the view of the members of the Governing Body is that Jesus gave himself as a corresponding ransom “*for all sorts of men*” and not for *all* Adam’s descendants. As I have mentioned above, this is a false teaching.

THE RESURRECTION OF PEOPLE FROM THE FIRST CENTURY CE

When Paul spoke to the philosophers on Mars Hill and he mentioned the resurrection, some of them began to scoff. (Acts 17:32) However, In Israel, the word “resurrection” was a familiar word.

THE JEWS IN GENERAL BELIEVED IN A FUTURE RESURRECTION

After the death of Lazarus, Jesus Christ spoke with his sister Martha. According to John 11:23, Jesus said, “Your brother will rise (*anistēmi*, ‘cause to stand up; raise up’).” The answer of Martha was, “I know he will rise in the resurrection (*anastasis*, ‘a raising; resurrection’) *on the last day* (*eschatos*, ‘last’; *hēmera*, ‘day’).” What was the basis for the belief of Martha? Probably, her basis was the words in Daniel 12:13. Below I have translated the Hebrew text, the Greek text of the Septuagint, and the Greek text of Theodotion.

Hebrew text:

And you, go (*hālak*, qal imperative), and you will rest, and you will stand up (*āmad*, qal imperfect) to your lot at the end (*qets*, end) of the days (*hēmera*, plural).

The Septuagint:

And you, go (*bainō*, aorist imperative), you will rest (*anapauō*, present middle imperative) until days and hours until the fulfillment (*anaplerōsis*) of the completion (*synteleia*). And you will rise (*anistēmi*) to your glory at the completion (*synteleia*) of the days (*hēmera*, plural).

Theodotion:

And you, until now, rest (*anapauō*, present middle imperative), and you will rise (*anistēmi*) at the completion (*synteleia*) of the days (*hēmera*, plural).

The Greek word *anastasis* (“resurrection”) is not found in the Septuagint. However, Isaiah 26:19 uses words that clearly refer to a resurrection. My translation follows.

And your dead (*mūt*, “to die”, qal participle) will live (*hāyā*, qal imperfect), and a dead body belonging to me (*nebelā*, carcass; dead body, singular) will stand up (*āmad*, qal imperfect). Cause them to wake up (*kīts*, hifil imperative) and let them sing with joy (*rānan*, piel imperative) you who dwell in the dust. For the dew of light is your dew, and the earth will cause the dead (*refaim*) to fall down (*nāfal*, hifil imperfect).

The Hebrew words are clear. The expression that the dead will live is the same as speaking of a resurrection. The word “carcass; dead body” is singular and is evidently used

in a collective way, such as for example *nefesh* (“soul”) often is. The words that they will wake up also show that Isaiah speaks about a resurrection. A Hebrew woman could give birth in a standing position, as some women still do. That the earth will cause the dead to fall down may indicate that they are born, which also refers to a resurrection.

Three different synonyms for dead persons, *metim* (from *mut*, “death”) *nēbelā*, and *refaim* are used, and three different ways of referring to a resurrection are used: “will live,” “will stand up,” and “will fall down (like a newborn).”

Martha was a God-fearing woman who evidently was very well-versed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Therefore, we must assume that she was familiar both with Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:13. Jesus used the verb *anistēmi* (“rise”), the same word that both the Septuagint and the Theodotion translation uses in Daniel 12:13. The substantive *anastasis* (“resurrection”) correspond to the verb *anistēmi* (“rise”), and it is used 40 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures, mostly referring to the resurrection.

Martha used the word “day” in the singular while Daniel used the word in the plural. But this does not necessarily be a difference because a singular noun can have a collective meaning. One reason why Martha uses the adjective *eskbatos* (“last”) while both the Septuagint and Theodotion use the noun *synteleia* (“completion”) may be that *synteleia* in Daniel’s time only had a temporal meaning, while it had both a temporal and a spatial meaning in the days of Jesus. In Matthew 24:3, for example, NWT13 correctly translates *synteleia* with “system of things.” Martha spoke Hebrew and may have used *kets* (“end”) just as did Daniel. But because of the changed meaning of the word *synteleia*, John may have used the Greek word *eskbatos* instead of *synteleia* in his translation of the words of Martha. In that case, John used the word *eskbatos*, which has about the same meaning as *synteleia* had in the days of Daniel.

When we read the texts with the occurrences of the Greek word *anastasis* (“resurrection”) in the Christian Greek Scriptures, we see that there was a belief in the resurrection of the dead among the Jews in general. The only ones who did not believe in the resurrection were the Sadducees. (Mark 12:18) Of the 40 occurrences of *anastasis*, 22 are preceded by the definite article with the meaning “*the* resurrection,” the resurrection that we know about and believe in. This is confirmed by Paul in Acts 24:15

And I have hope toward God, which hope these men also look forward to, that there is going to be a resurrection (*anastasis*) of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

Paul says that “these men” believed in a resurrection from the dead. And verse 9 shows that “these men” were the Jews. Martha referred to the resurrection on “the last day,” and Paul refers to the Jewish belief of a resurrection of both righteous and unrighteous. Because there are no unrighteous people in heaven, the resurrection that the Jews believed in, must have been a resurrection on the earth,

Hebrews 9:27, 28 says:

²⁷ And just as it is reserved for men to die once for all time, but after this to receive a judgment (*krisis*), ²⁸ so also the Christ was offered once for all time to bear the sins of many; and the second time that he appears it will be apart from sin, and he will be seen by those earnestly looking for him for their salvation.

The words of Hebrews that judgment will occur after death, and the words of Paul regarding the resurrection of both righteous and unrighteous connect the judgment with the resurrection on Judgment Day.

THE THREE CITIES NORTH OF THE SEA OF GALILEE

When Jesus spoke about the resurrection, he referred to the three cities north of the Sea of Galilee, Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida. In order to understand his words, we need to know something about his sojourn in these cities. Apart from his mention of Chorazin when he spoke about the resurrection in Matthew 11:21 and 10:13, nothing is said in the Christian Greek Scriptures about this city.

The only account of Bethsaida is found in Mark 8:22-25, where there is a report about Jesus restoring the eyesight of a blind man:

²² Now they put in at Beth·sa'i·da. Here people brought him a blind man, and they pleaded with him to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and brought him outside the village. After spitting on his eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked him: "Do you see anything?" ²⁴ The man looked up and said: "I see people, but they look like trees walking about." ²⁵ Again he laid his hands on the man's eyes, and the man saw clearly. His sight was restored, and he could see everything distinctly. ²⁶ So he sent him home, saying: "Do not enter into the village."

Jesus spent much time in the city of Capernaum, and there are several accounts of the actions of Jesus in this city. Matthew 4:12-17 shows that Jesus started his preaching about the Kingdom of God in Capernaum:

¹² Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Gal'i·lee. ¹³ Further, after leaving Naz'a·reth, he came and took up residence in Ca·per'na·um beside the sea in the districts of Zeb'u·lun and Naph'ta·li, ¹⁴ so as to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, who said: ¹⁵ "O land of Zeb'u·lun and land of Naph'ta·li, along the road of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Gal'i·lee of the nations! ¹⁶ The people sitting in darkness saw a great light, and as for those sitting in a region of deathly shadow, light rose on them." ¹⁷ From that time on, Jesus began preaching and saying: "Repent, for the Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."

The account in Mark 1:21-28 is particularly interesting in our context:

²¹ And they went into Ca·per'na·um. As soon as the Sabbath began, he went into the synagogue and started to teach. ²² And they were astounded at his way of teaching, for he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was a man in their synagogue who was under the power of an unclean spirit, and he shouted: ²⁴ "What have we to do with you, Jesus the Naz'a·rene? Did you come to destroy us? I know exactly who you are, the Holy One of God!" ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked it, saying: "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, after throwing the man into a convulsion and yelling at the top of its voice, came out of him. ²⁷ ***Well, the people were all so astonished that they began to discuss it among themselves, saying: "What is this? A new teaching! He authoritatively orders even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."*** ²⁸ So the report about him spread quickly in all directions throughout the entire region of Gal'i·lee.

Mark tells that Jesus was teaching in the synagogue and he expelled a demon from a man. Mark says that those who were present in the synagogue "were astonished," and they discussed what Jesus had done among themselves. What Jesus did was extraordinary, and the report about this spread throughout the entire region of Galilee. This included the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, which were close to the city of Capernaum. Luke

4:31-46 have a report about this event or about another similar event. In 4:32 Luke says about the people, “and they were astounded at his way of teaching, because he spoke with authority.” So, both the words he spoke and the miracles he did impressed the inhabitants of Capernaum. But as we learn from the words of Jesus in connection with the resurrection that the people did not believe in him.

In Chapter 3, I show that the present members of the Governing Body reject what Jesus said about the resurrection. As a background for the discussion of the resurrection, I repeat the arguments. Jesus used the same words with reference to different cities, and a comparison may help us understand the meaning of the words. I quote Luke 10:12-15 (above) and the study note of NWT13 of the expression “It will be more endurable” (below):

¹²I tell you that it will be more endurable for Sod’om in that day than for that city. ¹³“Woe to you, Cho·ra’zin! Woe to you, Beth·sa’i·dal because if the powerful works that have taken place in you had taken place in Tyre and Si’don, they would long ago have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴*Consequently, it will be more endurable for Tyre and Si’don in the judgment than for you.* ¹⁵*And you, Ca·per’na·um, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to the Grave (hadēs) you will come!*

It will be more endurable: *Evidently used as a form of hyperbole that Jesus may not have intended to be taken literally.* (Compare other graphic hyperboles that Jesus used, such as those at Mt 5:18; Lu 16:17; 21:33.) When Jesus said that it would be “more endurable for Sodom in that day,” that is, on Judgment Day (Mt 10:15; 11:22, 24; Lu 10:14), *he was not saying that the inhabitants of Sodom must be present on that day. (Compare Jude 7.) He could simply have been emphasizing how unresponsive and culpable most people were in such cities as Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.* (Lu 10:13-15) It is worth noting that what happened to ancient Sodom had become proverbial and was often mentioned in connection with God’s anger and judgment.—De 29:23; Isa 1:9; La 4:6. (the author’s bold font but my colors.)

The focus of the study note is the inhabitants of Sodom and whether they will get a resurrection. But the phrase “it will be more endurable” is used about all the three cities by the Sea of Galilee. And the argument that the words of Jesus is a hyperbole and cannot be taken literally relates to all the cities mentioned. There is nothing in the context showing that Jesus did not speak about the literal resurrection. So, the study note is a direct rejection of the Word of God! I will now study this issue in detail.

HYPERBOLES USED BY JESUS

I do not want to tamper with the text of the Bible. Because of this, I take any passage in the Bible in the literal sense, if the context does not clearly indicate that the text should be understood in a non-literal way. I will, therefore, carefully consider the claim that the words of Jesus represent a hyperbole that cannot be taken literally. *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1988, page 30, says:

“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one particle of a letter of the Law to go unfulfilled.” “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.” (Luke 16:17; 21:33; Matthew 5:18; compare Hebrews 1:10-12.) We know that the literal heavens and earth will never pass away. (Psalm 78:69; 104:5; Ecclesiastes 1:4) Jesus also said: “It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:25) Certainly, Jesus did not mean that no rich man could ever become a disciple; some in the first century became anointed Christians. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Jesus' use of exaggeration was to stress how hard it is for a rich man to put God before material wealth and comforts.—Luke 12:15-21.

I will now deal with the words about heaven and earth.

Luke 16:17 (NWT13):

¹⁷ Indeed, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to go unfulfilled.

Luke 21:33 (NWT13):

³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.

Matthew 5:18 (NWT13):

¹⁸ Truly I say to you that sooner would heaven and earth pass away than for one smallest letter or one stroke of a letter to pass away from the Law until all things take place.

Matthew 24:35 (NWT13):

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.

Can these passages be used to show that Jesus' words about Chorazin, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Sodom, and Gomorrah, in connection with Judgment Day represent hyperboles and so should not be taken literally? Luke 16:17 and Matthew 5:18 are clearly not hyperboles. Both these passages show that heaven and earth will never pass away. Does this mean that Luke 21:33 and Matthew 24:35, where it is said that heaven and earth will pass away, must be taken as hyperboles? Not necessarily.

I will use Hebrews 4:3 as an example. The text above is the NWT13 text, and the text below is the literal rendering in the Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures:

So I swore in my anger, "They *will not* enter into my rest."

As I swore in the wrath of me *if they will* enter into the ceasing down of me.

Do you see what is strange with the NWT13 rendering? The Greek text is positive while the NWT13 is negative; the negative word "not" is lacking in the Greek text. The first Greek word in the sentence is *ei*. This word ma

So why is this positive word translated by the negative word "not"? The reason is that the words represent an oath, and oaths in Hebrew are expressed in the opposite way of what we would expect. The quotation is from Psalm 95:11, where we find the Hebrew particle *'im* meaning "*if*." When this particle *'im* is found, the oath is negative "they shall not." If the oath is positive, we find the words *'im lō* meaning "if not." This is the case in Isaiah 14:24.

The idea for these seemingly backhanded constructions is:

If (*'im*) you do it, then... = you must not do it.

If you do not (*'im lō*) do it, then... = you must do it.

Can this discussion of how oaths are expressed in Hebrew throw some light on the words of Jesus about the heaven and the earth? Quite possibly. Jesus could have used his

words in Luke 21:33 and Matthew 24:35 as hyperboles. But there is nothing in the context suggesting that, and it would be strange since he uses heaven and earth in the two parallel passages in Luke 16:17 and Matthew 5:18 in a literal way.

Jesus could also have expressed his words as an oath, and in that case, Luke 21:33 and Matthew 24:35 must be taken in a literal sense: “Heaven and earth will *certainly* not pass away, as my words will *certainly* not pass away.” If Jesus expressed his words as an oath, that would make the words emphatic, and that would fit the context both in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. Moreover, in that case, all four expressions quoted above would express the same thought — heaven and earth will not pass away.

The other example of a hyperbole is Mark 10:25:

²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.

It seems that the word *kamēlos* refers to the big animal with the name “camel,” that *trymalia* refers to a hole, and that *rafs* refers to a needle. If this is correct, Jesus used a hyperbole in this case. However, that does not have anything to do with the words used by Jesus in connection with Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Sodom, because the meanings of these words show clearly that this is an exaggeration. To be sure, Jesus also used a number of other hyperboles, but the conclusion to this discussion is that none of the hyperboles used by Jesus in any way resembles the words he used about the mentioned cities and Judgment Day. Moreover, the structures of the words about Sodom, Gomorrah, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Nineveh, show that these words could not have been expressed as oaths in Hebrew.

My conclusion is that if the claim is made that a text is a hyperbole — an exaggeration — that must be clearly shown by the context, as is the case in Mark 10:25. There is nothing in the context of Jesus’ words about Sodom, Gomorrah, and the three Jewish cities indicating that Jesus used hyperboles. On the contrary, the account of Nineveh and the queen of the south, which will be discussed below, has the same setting as the accounts of the three Jewish cities. And this account uses Greek words with the meaning “to raise.” So, it is indisputable that Jesus speaks about the resurrection on Judgment Day.

THE INHABITANTS OF NINEVEH, THE QUEEN OF THE SOUTH, AND THIS ADULTEROUS AND WICKED GENERATION

The accounts of what Jesus said about the resurrection are quite similar in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with some small differences. The account about Nineveh and the queen of the south has some traits that can be used as a background for the other accounts. I will now analyze Matthew 12:38-42:

³⁸Then as an answer to him, some of the scribes and the Pharisees said: “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” ³⁹In reply he said to them: “A **wicked and adulterous generation** keeps on seeking a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jo’nah the prophet. ⁴⁰For just as Jo’nah was in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. ⁴¹Men of Nin’e·veh **will rise up in the judgment with this generation** and will condemn it, because they repented at what Jo’nah preached. But look! something more than Jo’nah is here. ⁴²The queen of the south **will be raised**

up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Sol'o·mon. But look! Something more than Sol'o·mon is here.

Let us look at the words: “Men of Nineveh *will rise up* (*anistemi*, ‘stand up’, future middle indicative) in the judgment *with* (*meta* ‘with’) this generation... The queen of the south will *be raised up* (*egeirō* ‘raise, lift up’, future passive indicative) in the judgment *with* (*meta*, ‘with’) this ‘wicked and adulterous generation’.”

Both verbs refer to the resurrection — “will stand up” and “will be raised up.” Both verbs are indicative, and therefore, it is grammatically impossible to deny that Jesus spoke of a literal resurrection of the inhabitants of Nineveh, the queen of the south, and of this wicked and adulterous generation. Matthew uses the words “Judgment Day” while Luke uses the word “judgment” with the same meaning. Jesus says that this “wicked and adulterous generation” will be raised up *with* the men of Nineveh and *with* the queen of the south.

This means that according to Jesus, and in contrast with the view of the members of the Governing Body, wicked and adulterous people will get a resurrection on Judgment Day.

The reason for the resurrection is that “this generation” was wicked because of inherited sin and not because of sin against the holy spirit. If we accept what the Word of God really says, it is impossible to deny that “this wicked and adulterous generation” will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. This accords well with the value of the ransom sacrifice that *all* Adam’s descendants will get the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.

Who does “this wicked and adulterous generation” include? Jesus spoke Hebrew, and the Hebrew word for “generation” is *dōr*. The Septuagint translates *dōr* with the Greek word *genea*, and this is also the word that is used for “generation” in the Christian Greek Scriptures. A clue to what “this wicked and adulterous generation” may include is found in Deuteronomy chapter 1. Verse 3 says that “Moses spoke to the Israelites according to all that Jehovah had instructed him to tell them.” We find the words “this evil generation” (*dōr raʼ*) (“this wicked generation,” New Living Translation) in Deuteronomy 1:35, and I quote verses 25-38, so we can see the context:

²⁵They took some of the fruitage of the land and carried it back to us, and they brought word back to us, ‘The land that Jehovah our God is giving us is good.’ ²⁶***But you refused to go up, and you rebelled against the order of Jehovah your God.*** ²⁷***You kept grumbling in your tents*** and were saying, ‘It was because Jehovah hated us that he brought us out of the land of Egypt to hand us over to the Am’or’ites to annihilate us.’ ²⁸What kind of place are we going to? Our brothers made us lose heart by saying, ‘They are a people greater and taller than we are, and their cities are great and fortified to the heavens, and we saw the sons of the An’a·kim there.’”²⁹ “So I said to you, ‘Do not be struck with terror or be afraid because of them.’ ³⁰Jehovah your God will go before you and will fight for you, just as he did in Egypt before your very eyes.’ ³¹And you saw in the wilderness how Jehovah your God carried you just as a man carries his son, everywhere you went until you came to this place.’ ³²***But despite all of this, you did not put faith in Jehovah your God,*** ³³who was going ahead of you on the way, to spy out a place for you to camp. He appeared by fire at night and by a cloud in the daytime to show you the way you should walk. ³⁴***All the while Jehovah heard what you were saying, and he became indignant and solemnly swore,*** ³⁵***‘Not one of these men of this evil generation* (*dōr raʼ*) *will see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers,*** ³⁶***except Ca’leb the son of***

Je-phun'neh. He will see it, and I will give the land on which he walked to him and to his sons, because he has followed Jehovah wholeheartedly. ³⁷ (*Jehovah even became angry with me because of you, and he said, "You too will not go in there."* ³⁸ *Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, is the one who will enter into the land.* Make him strong, for he will cause Israel to inherit it.")

The Jewish nation consisted of about 3 million people, men, women, and children, and all these people constituted "this wicked generation" that did not put faith in Jehovah and would not enter the promised land.

Only Joshua and Caleb would be allowed to enter the promised land. The word "generation" refers to persons who live at the same time. In this case, "generation" referred to the 3 million children, men, women, and old persons, who lived at the time when Moses spoke his words.

Luke is the only one who connects "this adulterous and wicked generation" with someone, and in Luke 11:29 we read:

²⁹ When *the crowds were massing together*, he began to say: "This generation is a wicked generation; it looks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jo'nah.

In this case, Jesus used "this generation" that is "wicked" with reference to the crowds that were massing together. We must remember that on the day of Pentecost in the year 33, after Jesus had preached the good news of the Kingdom for three and a half years, there were only 120 believers who were gathered. So, in accordance with the meaning of "generation" (*genea*), all the Jews who lived in the country where Jesus preached, children, men, women, and old persons, were included in "this wicked and adulterous generation." And Jesus said that all these will get a resurrection on Judgment Day together with the inhabitants of Nineveh and the queen of the south. And the purpose is that they will have the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.

The quotation above from *The Watchtower* says: "What Jesus meant was that the Jews of his day were condemned by the example of the repentant Ninevites." Because of the Greek grammar, this is an impossible conclusion. In verse 41 we read: "Men of Nin'e'veh *will rise up* (*anistemi*, 'stand up', future middle indicative) in the judgment *with* (*meta*) this generation and *will condemn* (*katakrinō*, 'condemn', future active indicative) it. Both the action "will rise up" and "condemn" are Greek futures. The grammar requires that the condemnation of "this wicked and adulterous generation" occurs *after* the men of Nineveh have risen up *with* this generation. So, the explanation of *The Watchtower* is an attempt to explain away what a crystal-clear Bible text says.¹⁶

16. The last time Matthew 12:41, 42 and the resurrection of the men of Nineveh, the queen of the south, and of this wicked generation, was discussed in the Watchtower literature was in *Awake!* of October 22, 1975, page 13. It is also mentioned in *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988 and 2015) Volume II, page 913: "Christ stated that this woman would rise up in the judgment and condemn the men of the first-century generation. (Mt 12:42; Lu 11:31) She had made an arduous trip to hear Solomon's wisdom, but the unbelieving Jews, who claimed to be servants of Jehovah, had present in Jesus something more than Solomon and did not pay attention to him." These words do not discuss the resurrection on Judgment Day. So, the meaning of the words in Matthew 12:41, 42 has not been discussed in the Watchtower literature during the last 47 years.

THE INHABITANTS OF CHORAZIN, CAPERNAUM, BETHSAIDA, TYRE, AND SIDON — AND THE RESURRECTION

The words showing that the inhabitants of Nineveh, the queen of the south, and this wicked and adulterous generation will get a resurrection on Judgment Day is a good background for the understanding of what Jesus said about the cities of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida — not least because the inhabitants of these cities were a part of the “wicked and adulterous generation” that Jesus said would get a resurrection on Judgment Day. I quote Matthew 11:20-24:

²⁰Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his powerful works had taken place, for they did not repent: ²¹“Woe to you, *Cho-ra'zin!* Woe to you, *Beth-sa'i-da!* because if the powerful works that took place in you had taken place in Tyre and Si'don, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes. ²²*But I say to you, it will be more endurable for Tyre and Si'don on Judgment Day than for you.* ²³And you, Ca-per'na-um, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to the Grave (*hades*) you will come; because if the powerful works that took place in you had taken place in Sod'om, it would have remained until this very day. ²⁴*But I say to you, it will be more endurable for the land of Sod'om on Judgment Day than for you.*”

I will return to the issue of the resurrection of the inhabitants of Sodom later, but here I concentrate on the destiny of the three cities. I will consider the clause, “It will be more endurable for Tyre and Si'don on Judgment Day than for you.” The adjective translated as “more endurable” is *anektos*, and the meaning is “tolerable, supportable,” according to Mounce, and “pertaining to what can be borne or endured,” according to Louw and Nida. Parsed as comparative, *anektos* has the meaning “more tolerable,” “more endurable,” or “more bearable.”

Why would it be “more endurable” for the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon than for the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida? Because the first mentioned inhabitants had repented if they had the chance, according to Jesus, but the second mentioned inhabitants had not repented even though they heard the preaching of Jesus and saw his miracles. We may find some interesting clues in Matthew 12:31-37. The words in verses 36 and 37 that “men will render an account on Judgment Day for every unprofitable saying that they speak; for by your words you will be declared righteous, and by your words, you will be condemned” and the words in Matthew 11:22 “It will be more endurable for ...on Judgment Day than for you,” say the same thing from two different angles. In order to show that, I will discuss Matthew 12:31-37:

³¹“For this reason I say to you, every sort of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. ³²For example, *whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him;* but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in this system of things nor in that to come.

³³“Either you make the tree fine and its fruit fine or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten, for by its fruit the tree is known. ³⁴Offspring of vipers, how can you speak good things when you are wicked? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵*The good man out of his good treasure sends out good things, whereas the wicked man out of his wicked treasure sends out wicked things.* ³⁶*I tell you that men will render an account on Judgment Day for every unprofitable saying that they speak;* ³⁷*for by your words you will be declared righteous, and by your words you will be condemned.*”

Jesus speaks about sin against the holy spirit, and he says that speaking against the holy spirit can never be forgiven. This is a sin of which very few people will be guilty. There is also a time reference to the present system of things and to the coming system of things. The coming system of things is the same as Judgment Day, and this means that if a person speaks a word of blasphemy against the Son of man, he may be forgiven in the present system of things and on Judgment Day.

I will now look at the meaning of verses 36 and 37 in chapter 12:

³⁶ I tell you that men will render an account on Judgment Day for every unprofitable saying that they speak; ³⁷ for by your words you will be declared righteous, and by your words you will be condemned (*katadikazō*).

Before a person in the first century CE could be present on Judgment Day, he or she had to die and get a resurrection. In Romans 6:7, Paul says, “For the one who has died has been acquitted from his sin.” The penalty for sin is death, and Paul’s words show that at the moment of death, a person has received the penalty for his sins, and now he is acquitted. This means that the actions he did before he died cannot be used against him or her.

Related to verses 36 and 37, Paul’s words in Romans 6:7 mean that no one can receive an adverse judgment on Judgment Day because of unprofitable sayings he or she spoke in this system of things. But what did Jesus mean? Verse 33 says that “by its fruit the tree is known.” Verse 34 says that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,” and verse 35 says that “The good man out of his good treasure sends out good things, whereas the wicked man out of his wicked treasure sends out wicked things.”

Now we can understand what Jesus meant. The words that a person speaks show whether he or she is a good or bad tree, whether he or she has a good or bad heart, whether he or she has a good or bad “treasure.” What does the word “treasure” (*thēsauros*) refer to? According to Louw and Nida it refers to “a room for the storage of valuables.” Each person has such a room inside his or her body, and the “valuables” in this room are good or bad.

So, how will the quality of a person’s “room for the storage of valuables” that is made visible by his or her unprofitable or profitable sayings, either declare him or her righteous or condemn (*katadikazō*) him or her? The verb *katadikazō* has the meaning “to give judgment against, condemn,” according to Mounce. We find a verb with about the same meaning in 12:41, “The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn (*katakrinō*) it.” How will the inhabitants of Nineveh condemn “this wicked and adulterous generation? The inhabitants of Nineveh are not judges, but because they repented when Jonah preached to them, their good actions condemn the bad actions of “this generation.” The condemnation means that the actions of the Ninivites should make the members of “this generation” ashamed to the point where they should repent on Judgment Day.

I will now return to the words about Tyre and Sidon, Chorazin, and Bethsaida in 11:21, 22, and to the words of Jesus about each one’s “room for the storage of valuables” that causes him or her to speak good or bad words. Jesus says in 11:22, “But I say to you, it will be more endurable (*anektos*) for Tyre and Sidon on Judgment Day than for you.” Jesus shows that if the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon had seen the powerful works of

Jesus, they would have repented. But the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida saw the powerful works of Jesus but did not repent. This shows that the “rooms for the storage of valuables” among the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon were good, while the “rooms for the storage of valuables” among the inhabitants of the two cities were bad. And the result of this was that because the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon generally had good personalities and the members of Chorazin and Bethsaida had bad personalities, it would be easier for the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon to conform to God’s laws and principles on the 1,000-year-long Judgment Day than for the people of the two cities.

So, speaking unprofitable words forms one’s personality in a bad direction, and on the basis of one’s bad personality, one “will render an account on Judgment Day.” It will be harder for those having bad personalities to repent than for those having good personalities. In other words: It will be more endurable for those with good personalities than for those with bad personalities on Judgement Day.

The Watchtower of January 1, 1965, page 25, made the following comment on the mentioned situation:

¹⁵ Today you can become his followers too, true Christians, and share in the preaching of God’s kingdom. Read the account in Matthew 11:20-24, and you will see what Jesus said about consequences. ***There he said that in the resurrection it will be much better for the people of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, to whom Jesus never preached, than for those persons to whom Jesus did preach in Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum.*** It was in these cities that Jesus did many of his powerful works, but they did not repent and follow him. Now, when the resurrection takes place for all these people, as it will for the thief who heard Jesus say, “You will be with me in Paradise,” what is going to happen? Jesus gave the answer to those of Chorazin and Bethsaida: “It will be more endurable for Tyre and Sidon on Judgment Day than for you.” And to those in Capernaum: “It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you.”—Matt. 11:22, 24.

¹⁶ ***It appears from Jesus’ statement that those of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom will repent and accept the provisions to gain life more quickly than will the Jews who had seen the powerful works that took place in their cities when Jesus was there with them.*** What about the people in Christendom and elsewhere today in this twentieth century? What are their prospects?

In connection with the inhabitants of Nineveh, the queen of the south, and “this wicked and adulterous generation,” it is explicitly said that they will “raise up” on Judgment Day. The words “raise up” are not used in connection with Chorazin and Bethsaida, Tyre and Sidon. But the words, “But I say to you, it will be more endurable for Tyre and Sidon on Judgment Day than for you,” show without any doubt that the inhabitants of these cities will be present on Judgment Day.

This is also confirmed by the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:23:

And you, Ca·per·na·um, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to the Grave (*badēs*) you will come.

According to Revelation 20:13, the dead in *badēs* will get a resurrection, and this is proof that the inhabitants of the cities north of the Sea of Galilee will get a resurrection. The members of the Governing Body have approved the following study note to verse 23:

Here [*hadēs* is] used figuratively to represent the debasement that Capernaum would experience.”

This is a false claim that has no basis in the context. It is an attempt to explain away the clear words of Jesus. And, it is an attack on the full inspiration of the Bible. I will also refer to data in favor of a resurrection on Judgment Day of the mentioned cities, namely to Ezekiel 32:21, 30. In this text, the destiny of the inhabitants of Sidon is discussed, and we read:

²¹ “From the depths of the Grave (*sheōl*) the mightiest warriors will speak to him and his helpers. They will certainly go down and will lie just like the uncircumcised, slain by the sword...

³⁰ “There all the princes of the north are, along with all the *Si·do·ni·ans*, who have gone down in disgrace with the slain, despite the terror caused by their mightiness. They will lie uncircumcised with those who were slain by the sword and will bear their shame with those going down into the pit.

The word “Grave” in verse 21 is translated from *sheōl*, and verse 30 shows that the inhabitants of Sidon were in *sheōl*. As mentioned, Revelation 20:13 shows that the persons who are in *hadēs* (corresponding to *sheōl*) will get a resurrection. When we know that the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon will be present on Judgment Day, it would be ridiculous to claim that the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, that are mentioned together with Tyre and Sidon will not be present on Judgment Day. If that were not true, the comparison of Jesus, “it would be more endurable,” would have been meaningless.

The conclusion of this section is that contrary to the view of the members of the Governing Body who advocate a limited resurrection, the evidence clearly shows that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, as well as all the other humans who lived in the first century CE and were a part of “this wicked and adulterous generation,” who had not sinned against the holy spirit, will get a resurrection on Judgment Day with the possibility of everlasting life.

THE RESURRECTION OF PEOPLE LIVING BETWEEN ADAM AND JESUS

The situation is simple: Jesus bought Adam and all his descendants when he died. No person who lived before the death and resurrection of Jesus had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. Therefore, God’s righteousness requires that all these people must get a resurrection so they can choose if they will accept or reject the salvation that they are offered.

The words in the rectangle are supported by the words of Jesus in John 3:36:

³⁶ The one who exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; the one who disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.

The meaning of the verb *apeitheō* is “to be uncompliant; to refuse belief; disbelieve,” according to Mounce, and “unwillingness or refusal to comply with the demands of some authority,” according to Louw and Nida. If you do not believe in something, the reason can be that you have not heard about it, or it can be that you have heard about it but refuse to believe. Below I give some examples of the way the verb *apeitheō* is used in the Christian Greek Scriptures. We see that the idea of “refusing to believe” or “being disobedient” is a part of the verb in the Scriptures.

Acts 19:9:

⁹But when some stubbornly **refused to believe** (*apeitheō*), speaking injuriously about The Way before the crowd, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples from them, giving talks daily in the school auditorium of Ty·ran·nus.

Romans 2:8:

⁸However, for those who are contentious and **who disobey** (*apeitheō*) the truth but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and anger.

Romans 11:30:

³⁰For just as you were once **disobedient** (*apeitheō*) to God but have now been shown mercy because of their disobedience.

Hebrews 3:18:

¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter into his rest? Was it not to those **who acted disobediently** (*apeitheō*)?

Hebrews 11:31:

³¹By faith Ra'hab the prostitute did not perish with those who **acted disobediently** (*apeitheō*), because she received the spies in a peaceable way.

1 Peter 2:8:

⁸and “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They are stumbling because they **are disobedient** (*apeitheō*) to the word. To this very end they were appointed.

1 Peter 3:20:

²⁰who **had formerly been disobedient** (*apeitheō*) when God was patiently waiting in Noah's day, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water.

1 Peter 4:17:

¹⁷For it is the appointed time for the judgment to start with the house of God. Now if it starts first with us, what will the outcome be for those **who are not obedient** (*apeitheō*) to the good news of God?

The examples above show that the meaning of the verb *apeitheō* is “to refuse to believe or act disobediently.” If we now return to John 3:36, we see a very simple truth. The absolute requirement for getting everlasting life is “to exercise faith in the Son.” And those who “disobey the Son” will not see life. In order to “exercise faith in the Son” or to “disobey the Son,” a person must have had **the opportunity** to exercise faith in and obey

the Son. No person who lived before the death of Jesus had this opportunity. Therefore, the only way for these people to get this chance is that they have a resurrection on Judgment Day where each one can choose to “exercise faith in the Son” or to “disobey the Son.”

Denying that every descendant of Adam must get the chance “to exercise faith in the Son” is a rejection both of Jehovah’s righteousness and of the value of the ransom sacrifice. And it is a denial of the full inspiration of the Bible.

The discussion in this last section demonstrates that the inhabitants of Nineveh, Tyre and Sidon, as well as the queen of the south, all who lived before Jesus came to the earth, will get a resurrection. I will now present what the Christian Greek Scriptures and the Hebrew Scriptures say about the resurrection of other people who lived between Adam and Jesus.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE INHABITANTS OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

I start this discussion with quotations dealing with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and Judgment Day:

Matthew 10:11-15:

¹¹ “Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving, and stay there until you leave. ¹² When you enter the house, greet the household. ¹³ If the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it; but if it is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you. ¹⁴ Wherever anyone does not receive you or listen to your words, on going out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵ *Truly I say to you, it will be more endurable for the land of Sod’om and Go-mor’rah on Judgment Day than for that city.*

Matthew 11:23-24:

²³ And you, Ca·per’na·um, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to the Grave (*hadēs*) you will come; because if the powerful works that took place in you had taken place in Sod’om, it would have remained until this very day. ²⁴ *But I say to you, it will be more endurable for the land of Sod’om on Judgment Day than for you.*”

The words “It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than for that city” shows that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. The members of the Governing Body have tried to explain away these words as we see in *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1988, page 30:

Looking elsewhere, we find it noteworthy that more than once the Bible links the Flood and Sodom/Gomorrah. In what context?

When asked about “the conclusion of the system of things,” Jesus foretold the coming “end” and a “great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning.” (Matthew 24:3, 14, 21) He went on to speak of “the days of Noah” and what “occurred in the days of Lot” as being examples of people who took no note of warning about coming destruction. Jesus added: “The same way it will be on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed.” (Luke 17:26-30; compare Matthew 24:36-39.) *Was Jesus illustrating just an attitude, or does the context in which he used these examples suggest that eternal judgments were involved?*

Later, Peter wrote about God's judgments and His punishing those deserving it. Then Peter used three examples: The angels that sinned, the ancient world of Noah's time, and those destroyed in Sodom/Gomorrah. The latter, Peter said, 'set a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come.' (2 Peter 2:4-9) Thereafter, he compared the destruction that people suffered in the Deluge with the coming "day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." That precedes the promised new heavens and new earth.—2 Peter 3:5-13.

Likewise, at the end of the present wicked system, will those whom God executes have had a final judgment? That is the indication of 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "It is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you, but, to you who suffer tribulation, relief along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength."

There is an interesting similarity in phraseology between this description and what Jude said occurred in the case of Sodom. Furthermore, Matthew 25:31-46 and Revelation 19:11-21 indicate that "the goats" cut off in the coming war of God will experience "everlasting cutting-off" in "the lake of fire," which symbolizes permanent annihilation.—Revelation 20:10, 14.

Consequently, in addition to what Jude 7 says, the Bible uses Sodom/Gomorrah and the Flood as patterns for the destructive end of the present wicked system. It is apparent, then, that those whom God executed in those past judgments experienced irreversible destruction.

Of course, each of us can confirm that by his proving faithful to Jehovah now. In that way we will qualify to be alive in the new world to see whom he resurrects and whom he does not. We know that his judgments are perfect. Elihu assured us: "For a fact, God himself does not act wickedly, and the Almighty himself does not pervert judgment."—Job 34:10, 12.

In the quotation above, the author of the article reads something into the text of the Scriptures that is not there. There are references in the Christian Greek Scriptures to God's judgments in the past, to the worldwide flood in the days of Noah, and to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These judgments "set a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come," as 2 Peter 2:6 says. This pattern shows that God judged persons in the past whose actions were bad and wicked, and, therefore, he will judge persons whose actions are bad and wicked in the future.

But no passage in the Bible speaks about the eternal destiny of peoples that were destroyed in the past. That the people who were destroyed in the great flood and in Sodom and Gomorrah were eternally annihilated is fiction or fantasy made up by the members of the Governing Body.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF "JUDICIAL PUNISHMENT OF EVERLASTING FIRE"?

One argument that is used in favor of everlasting annihilation of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah is Jude 5-7.

⁵ Although you are fully aware of all of this, I want to remind you that Jehovah, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward **destroyed those not showing faith**. ⁶ And the angels who did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place, he has reserved with eternal bonds in dense darkness for the judgment of the great day. ⁷ In the same manner, Sod'om and Go'mor'rah and the cities around them also gave themselves over

to gross sexual immorality and pursued unnatural fleshly desires; **they are placed before us as a warning example by undergoing the judicial punishment of everlasting fire.**

The Watchtower of June 1, 1988, page 30, has the following comments on the words of Jude:

One of the most pointed comments is in Jude 7. Jude had just spoken of (1) Israelites destroyed for lack of faith, and (2) angels who sinned and are ‘reserved with eternal bonds for the judgment of the great day.’ Then Jude wrote: “So too Sodom and Gomorrah . . . are placed before us as a warning example by undergoing the judicial punishment of everlasting fire.” This text has been applied to the actual cities’ being destroyed everlastingly, not the people. However, in view of Jude 5 and 6, likely most people would take Jude verse 7 to mean a judicial punishment of individuals. (Similarly, Matthew 11:20-24 would be understood as criticizing people, not stones or buildings.) ***In this light, Jude 7 would mean that the wicked people of Sodom/Gomorrah were judged and destroyed everlastingly.***

Two arguments are used in connection with the words of Jude, 1) the words “Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them” refer to the people of these cities and not to stones and buildings, and 2) the words “judicial punishment of everlasting fire” refer to everlasting destruction.

Jude speaks about three judgments:

- 1) Those who were not showing faith were destroyed.
- 2) God has reserved the demons with eternal bonds for the judgment of the great day.
- 3) The cities were undergoing the judicial judgment of everlasting fire.

We know that the demons will be everlastingly annihilated. But the word “destroyed” (*apollymi*) does not indicate everlasting annihilation. And the words “everlasting fire” do not necessarily indicate everlasting destruction. The example with the Edomites shows that. Isaiah 34:9, 10 says regarding the land of Edom:

⁹ Her streams will be changed into pitch, And her dust into sulfur, ***And her land will become like burning pitch.***¹⁰ By night or by day it will not be extinguished; ***Its smoke will keep ascending forever.*** From generation to generation she will remain devastated; No one will pass through her forever and ever.

The word “her” is referred to in a footnote: “Evidently referring to Bozrah, the capital of Edom.” This comment is correct because verse 6 mentions Bozrah and Edom. Were the inhabitants of Edom destroyed everlastingly without any hope of a resurrection? Ezekiel 32:21, 29 gives the answer:

²¹ “***From the depths of the Grave (sheōl)*** the mightiest warriors will speak to him and his helpers. They will certainly go down and will lie just like the uncircumcised, slain by the sword...

²⁹ “***E’dom is there***, her kings and all her chieftains, who despite their mightiness, were laid among those slain by the sword; they too will lie with the uncircumcised ones and with those going down into the pit.

The word “Grave” in verse 21 is translated from *sheōl*, and verse 29 shows that the inhabitants of Edom were in *sheōl*. As mentioned, Revelation 20:13 says that the persons who are in *hadēs* (corresponding to *sheōl*) will get a resurrection. This means that in spite of the words, “her land will become like burning pitch...its smoke will keep ascending

forever,” the people of Edom will get a resurrection. This also shows that the words, “the judicial judgment of everlasting fire” in Jude 7 do not mean “everlasting annihilation.”

There is a similar example with the inhabitants of Babylon in Jeremiah 51:1, 39:

¹ This is what Jehovah says: “Here I am raising up a destructive wind Against Babylon and the inhabitants of Leb-ka’mai...³⁹ When they are inflamed. I will set out their banquet and make them drunk, In order that they may exult; *then they will sleep a lasting* (NIV: *‘olam*, “everlasting”) *sleep, From which they will not wake up,*” declares Jehovah.

The words that the people “will sleep an everlasting sleep, from which they will not wake up,” do not mean that they are everlastingly annihilated. Isaiah 14:9, 11, 15, says that the wicked inhabitants of Babylon will come to *sheol*, and this shows that they will get a resurrection. And interestingly, there is a comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah in Isaiah 13:19:

¹⁹ And *Babylon*, the most glorious of kingdoms, The beauty and the pride of the Chal·de’ans, *Will be like Sod’om and Go-mor’rah when God overthrew them.*

The prophet says that the destiny of Babylon will be like the destiny of Sodom and Gomorrah. When we know that the people of Babylon will get a resurrection, it is natural to think that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will get a resurrection as well. A more direct saying that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will get a resurrection, apart from what Jesus said, is difficult to find.

So, the conclusion here, is that there is no passage in the Greek or Hebrew Scriptures saying that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are eternally annihilated without any hope of a resurrection.

THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED PEOPLE OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH CANNOT BE ETERNALLY ANNIHILATED

Paul says in Acts 14:15 that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous. But will the word “the unrighteous” also include those who are “wicked”? The answer is Yes.

Were there other righteous people in Sodom in addition to Lot, his wife, and two daughters? The answer is related to time. According to Genesis chapter 18, Abraham argued with Jehovah regarding Sodom and Gomorrah. According to verse 23, Abraham said: “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” Abraham asked Jehovah through his angel if he would pardon the city if there were 50 righteous people there. And the answer was in the affirmative. Different numbers of righteous people were mentioned and in verse 32 we find the last requirement:

³² Finally he said: “Jehovah, please, do not become hot with anger, but let me speak just once more: Suppose only ten are found there.” He answered: “I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten.”

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, and this shows that at the time of the conversation between the angel that represented Jehovah and Abraham, there were not ten righteous persons in the cities. However, Jesus said that if the powerful works that he performed in Capernaum had occurred in Sodom, the city had not been destroyed but had remained to the time of Jesus. The requirement for pardoning the city was that ten

righteous persons were found. And the words of Jesus show that in contrast with Capernaum where the people did not repent, at least ten persons in Sodom would have repented and would have been counted as righteous if they had seen the miracles of Jesus. These prospective righteous persons were killed when the city was destroyed.

In Genesis 18:25, Abraham says:

²⁵ It is unthinkable that you would act in this manner by putting the righteous man to death with the wicked one so that the outcome for the righteous man and the wicked is the same! It is unthinkable of you. Will the Judge of all the earth not do what is right?"

Abraham did contemplate about the situation that he saw with his own eyes, whether Sodom and Gomorrah should be destroyed. But he also said that God will not let “the outcome” of the righteous and the wicked be “the same.” All the inhabitants of Sodom were killed, including Lot’s wife. But the important point here is that Jesus said that more than ten inhabitants of Sodom would have repented if they had the chance. It is obvious that these people will get a resurrection on Judgment Day, even though they were “undergoing the judicial punishment of everlasting fire.” What can we say about the other people who also experienced “the judicial punishment of everlasting fire?”

Jesus said that the inhabitants of Capernaum would come to *hadēs*, which means that the inhabitants will get a resurrection. And he said that it would be easier for the people of Sodom to repent on Judgment Day than for the people of Capernaum. Therefore, when it is explicitly said that the people of Capernaum will get a resurrection — they would come to *hadēs* — it is obvious that the people of Sodom will get a resurrection as well because their destiny will be the same as the destiny of Capernaum, according to the words of Jesus.

The members of the Governing Body do their utmost to explain away the clear words of Jesus. The study note of Matthew 11:23 says that “Here [*hadēs* is] used figuratively to represent the debasement that Capernaum would experience.” The word *hadēs* is found seven times in the Christian Greek Scriptures, in addition to the two occurrences where Capernaum is mentioned. In all these seven instances, *hadēs* refers to the “place” where the dead comes who will have a resurrection. And there is nothing in the context where Capernaum is mentioned that suggest a figurative use and not a literal meaning.

THE ACCOUNT OF LOT’S WIFE IS A DEATHBLOW TO THE VIEW THAT THE INHABITANTS OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH WILL NOT GET A RESURRECTION

I will consider one argument from *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1988, that is quoted above. The judgments in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot according to Luke 17:26-30 are referred to, and the author of the article asks: “Was Jesus illustrating just an attitude, or does the context in which he used these examples suggest that eternal judgments were involved?” Jesus used these examples to “set a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come,” as 2 Peter 2:6 says. The pattern is that persons who continue to violate God’s laws will be punished. That the eternal destiny of individuals is not included in the pattern is seen by the fact that the other “ungodly persons” who violated God’s laws and were punished, like the people of Edom and Babylon and many other nations that God destroyed, are said to be in *sheōl*, and therefore will get a resurrection.

Let us look a little closer at Luke 17:26-30. According to 2 Peter 2:7, Lot was a righteous man. Were his wife and daughters also righteous? Genesis 19:15, 16 says:

¹⁵ As dawn was breaking, the angels became urgent with Lot, saying: “Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here with you, so that you will not be swept away in the error of the city!” ¹⁶ When he kept lingering, then because of Jehovah’s compassion for him, the men seized hold of his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, and they brought him out and stationed him outside the city.

In Genesis 18:23, Abraham asked God: “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” God answered that if there were ten righteous persons in Sodom, he would not destroy the city. As I have shown, according to 2 Peter 2:7, Lot was a righteous man, and the words of the angels in the quotation above show that Lot’s wife and his two daughters were righteous persons as well. That was the reason why the angels led the family out of Sodom, so they should “not be swept away in the error of the city.” The angels said that Lot and his family had to flee the city without looking back. However, Genesis 19:26 shows that Lot’s wife probably stopped when she looked back, and she became a pillar of salt:

²⁶ But Lot’s wife, who was behind him, began to look back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Genesis 19:24 says that “Jehovah made it rain sulfur and fire on Sod’om and Go’mor’rah.” In the area around the Dead Sea, there are layers of salt, sulfur, and bitumen, and when the explosion occurred, fire and sulfur together with salt fell down in the area. When Lot’s wife stopped and looked back, she may have become encapsulated in glowing sulfur and salt and literally became a pillar of salt. This means that Lot’s wife was among the people of Sodom who were killed by Jehovah, and she was among those who were “setting a pattern for ungodly people of things to come,” as 2 Peter 2:6 says.¹⁷

But what would the destiny of Lot’s wife be? The fact that the angels led her out of Sodom shows that she was a righteous person like her husband Lot. She did not follow the angel’s advice and did something stupid. Therefore, she lost her life. But because Jehovah is righteous it is impossible that she who was a righteous person is eternally annihilated without any hope of a resurrection because she looked back. So, she must be one of those who will be present on Judgment Day.

The destiny of Lot’s wife is important for our discussion because Jesus used her as an example in Luke 17:26-35:

²⁶ Moreover, just as it occurred in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of man: ²⁷ they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being given in marriage until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise, just as it occurred in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building.²⁹ But on the day that Lot went out of Sod’om, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰ It will be the same on that day when the Son of man is revealed. ³¹ “On that day let the person

17. Fire and sulfur are mentioned in connection with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah but not salt. However, the Valley of Salt is mentioned several times in the Scriptures, such as in 2 Samuel 8:13. The exact location of this Valley is not known. But those of us who have been to the Dead Sea can confirm that there are enormous amounts of salt around this sea, and it is likely that this area is the Valley of Salt.

who is on the housetop but whose belongings are in the house not come down to pick these up, and likewise, the person out in the field must not return to the things behind.³² **Remember the wife of Lot.**³³ Whoever seeks to keep his life safe will lose it, but whoever loses it will preserve it alive.³⁴ I tell you, in that night two people will be in one bed; **the one will be taken along, but the other will be abandoned.**³⁵ There will be two women grinding at the same mill; **the one will be taken along, but the other will be abandoned.**”

When Jesus comes as the judge in the great tribulation, then a person who is on the housetop must not come down and pick up his belongings, and a person who is in the field must not return to the things behind. Two people will be in one bed, the one will be taken along. But the other will be abandoned. And two women will be grinding at the same mill; the one will be taken along, but the other will be abandoned. The words of Jesus are taken from situations in the first century CE, when people were on the flat roofs of their houses or grinding at a mill. The point of Jesus is that when he comes as the judge, people must not focus on worldly issues but must concentrate on spiritual matters.

But what will be the consequence if someone ignores the advice of Jesus? He used the destruction of Sodom with fire and sulfur as an example and said: “It will be the same on that day when the Son of man is revealed.” And he used the wife of Lot as an example: “Remember the wife of Lot.” The words of 2 Peter 2:6 may throw more light on the issue.

⁶ And by reducing the cities of Sod’om and Go’mor’rah to ashes, he condemned them, setting a pattern for ungodly people of things to come.

Because the wife of Lot experienced the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, she is included in the “pattern for ungodly people of things to come.” This means that she is a pattern for those who will not be taken along but be abandoned. But because she was righteous, she will get a resurrection! And similarly, those who will be abandoned will get a resurrection as well. The point is that when we know that one person, who is among those who are “a pattern for ungodly people of things to come,” will get a resurrection, we know that others will get a resurrection as well. And it is impossible to claim that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a pattern for eternal annihilation.

That Jesus used Lot’s wife who will get a resurrection as an example is a death blow for the claim that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are eternally annihilated.

PEOPLE THAT ARE IN *SHEŌL* WILL GET A RESURRECTION

I have already quoted Revelation 20:13, which says that those who are in *hadēs* will get a resurrection. The Hebrew word that corresponds to *hadēs* is *sheōl*, and therefore, those who are in *sheōl* will get a resurrection. This word occurs 63 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and I have looked at all these occurrences.

THE ANCIENT SERVANTS OF GOD CONNECTED *SHEŌL* WITH FUTURE LIFE

Hoshea 13:14 expresses the same view as Revelation 20:13, and we read:

¹⁴ From the power of the Grave (*sheōl*) I will redeem them; From death I will recover them. Where are your stings, O Death? Where is your destructiveness, O Grave (*sheōl*)? Compassion will be concealed from my eyes.

The words of Hoshea refer to a ransom and to the resurrection from *sheōl*. We note that *sheōl* and death (*mūt*) are parallel, suggesting that there is no other place the dead comes than to *sheōl*. The Hebrew word *qəbār* with the meaning “burial site; tomb” occurs 63 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and it refers to the physical place where dead bodies are placed. The word *bōr* is used 66 times. It has the meaning “pit” or “cistern,” and it is also a physical place. Ezekiel 32:18, 21, 22 shows that *sheōl* is a symbol and not a physical place:

²¹ “From the depths of the Grave (*sheōl*) the mightiest warriors will speak to him and his helpers. They will certainly go down and will lie just like the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

²² As *syr'i'a* is there with all her assembly. Their graves (*qəbār*) are all around him, all of them fallen by the sword.

In chapter 32, Ezekiel refers to many people who have come to *sheōl*. And at the same time each one is in the physical “grave” (*qəbār*) or in the physical “pit” (*bōr*). This shows that *sheōl* is a concept or symbol, and both Hoshea 13:14 and Revelation 20:13 shows that the word is a symbol of the resurrection from the dead. So, there is no alternative Hebrew word for *sheōl* where people come when they are dead. The way *sheōl* is used in the Hebrew Scriptures shows that all persons who die, righteous and unrighteous, come to *sheōl*, and therefore all persons will get a resurrection. Psalm 9:17 says that “all the nations” will come to *sheōl* and will get a resurrection:

¹⁷ *The wicked* will retreat toward the Grave (*sheōl*), *All the nations* who forget God.

I will give some more examples. Psalm 89:48 suggests that all who die come to *sheōl* by making a parallelism of *sheōl* and death (*mūt*): No man can avoid death, and no man can avoid *sheōl*:

⁴⁸ What man can live and never see *death*? Can he save himself from the power of *the Grave* (*sheōl*)? (*Selah*)

The view of Jewish people who served God in the days of Jesus was that the dead will have a resurrection on the last day, as Martha said to Jesus. (John 11:24) Daniel 12:13 (above) speaks of the resurrection, and the same is true with Isaiah 26:19 (below):

¹³ “But as for you, go on to the end. You will rest, but you will stand up for your lot at the end of the days.”

¹⁹ “Your dead will live. My corpses will rise up. Awake and shout joyfully, You residents in the dust! For your dew is as the dew of the morning, And the earth will let those powerless in death come to life.

The book of Daniel was probably written in the 5th century BCE and Isaiah in the 8th century BCE. The writing of the book of Job is unknown. But it probably is older than the book of Isaiah. Job also believed in the resurrection from *sheōl*, as we see in 14:13, 14:

¹³ O that in the Grave (*sheōl*) you would conceal me, That you would hide me until your anger passes by, That you would set a time limit for me and remember me! ¹⁴ If a man dies, can he live again? I will wait all the days of my compulsory service Until my relief comes.

Job wanted to be in *sheōl* until God would remember him and give him a resurrection. The words of Hannah, mother of Samuel, also indicate a resurrection. We read in 1 Samuel 2:6:

⁶ Jehovah kills, and he preserves life; He brings down to the Grave (*sheōl*), *and he raises up*.

Hebrews chapter 11 speaks about several ancient servants of God who had strong faith in God. After the presentation of the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, we read in verses 13-16:

¹³ In faith all of these died, although they did not receive the fulfillment of the promises; but they saw them from a distance and welcomed them and publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land. ¹⁴ For those who speak in such a way make it evident that they are earnestly seeking a place of their own. ¹⁵ And yet, if they had kept remembering the place from which they had departed, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ *But now they are reaching out for a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven. Therefore, God is not ashamed of them, to be called on as their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

These servants of God looked forward to “a better place, one belonging to heaven,” and this means that they believed that they would get their lives back. Resurrection is directly mentioned in verses 17-19:

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, as good as offered up Isaac—the man who had gladly received the promises attempted to offer up his only-begotten son—¹⁸ although it had been said to him: “What will be called your offspring will be through Isaac.” ¹⁹ *But he reasoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead*, and he did receive him from there in an illustrative way.

The first time *sheōl* is mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures is in Genesis 37:34, 35 in connection with Jacob:

³⁴ With that Jacob ripped his garments apart and put sackcloth around his waist and mourned his son for many days. ³⁵ And all his sons and all his daughters kept trying to comfort him, but he kept refusing to take comfort, saying: “I will go down into the Grave (*sheōl*) mourning my son!” And his father continued weeping for him.

In view of the words in Hebrews chapter 11, Jacob must have known that when he went down to *sheōl*, he would be in line for a future resurrection when it was God’s time.

WICKED PEOPLE COME TO SHEŌL AND WILL HAVE A RESURRECTION

I will now quote several passages from the Hebrew Scriptures showing that people who violated the laws of God came to *sheōl*. Korah, Datan, and Abiram opposed Moses, and by this, they also opposed Jehovah. These three men together with their families were killed by God, but they came to *sheōl*, as we read in Numbers 16:23-33:

²³ Jehovah then said to Moses: ²⁴ “Speak to the assembly and tell them, ‘Get away from around the tents of Kor’ah, Da’tan, and A·bi’ram!’” ²⁵ Then Moses got up and went to Da’tan and A·bi’ram, and the elders of Israel went with him. ²⁶ He told the assembly: “Move away, please, from the tents of these wicked men and do not touch anything that belongs to them, so that you may not be swept away in all their sin.” ²⁷ They immediately moved away from the tents of Kor’ah, Da’tan, and A·bi’ram, from every side, and Da’tan and A·bi’ram came out, taking their stand at the entrance of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little children. ²⁸ Then Moses said: “By this you will know that Jehovah has sent me to do all these things, that it is not of my own heart: ²⁹ If these people die a natural death as all men do and if their punishment is the same as that of all mankind, then Jehovah has not sent me. ³⁰ But if

Jehovah does something extraordinary with them and the ground opens and swallows them and everything that belongs to them and they go down alive into the Grave, you will certainly know that these men have treated Jehovah disrespectfully.”³¹ As soon as he finished speaking all these words, the ground beneath them split apart.³² And the earth opened and swallowed them up, along with their households and everyone who belonged to Kor’ah and all their goods.³³ So they and all who belonged to them went down alive into the Grave (*sheōl*), and the earth covered them over, so that they perished from the midst of the congregation.

I continue this discussion with David’s words to Solomon in 1 Kings 2:5, 6, (above) and 2:8, 9, (below):

⁵“You also well know what Jo’ab the son of Ze·ru’iah did to me, what he did to two chiefs of the armies of Israel—Ab’ner the son of Ner and A·ma’sa the son of Je’ther. He killed them, shedding the blood of war in peacetime, and he put the blood of war on the belt around his waist and on the sandals on his feet.⁶ You must act according to your wisdom and not let his gray hairs go down in peace to the Grave (*sheōl*).

⁸“There is also with you Shim’e·i the son of Ge’ra the Ben’ja·min·ite from Ba·hu’rim. He was the one who cursed me with a vicious curse on the day that I was going to Ma·ha·na’im; but when he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by Jehovah: ‘I will not put you to death by the sword.’⁹ Now do not leave him unpunished, for you are a wise man and you know what you should do to him; you must bring his gray hairs down to the Grave (*sheōl*) with blood.”

Joab killed Abner and Amasa in a time of peace, and on one occasion Shimei cursed David. Because of this, David wanted that Solomon should punish both by taking their lives. But even though Shimei and Joab were enemies of David and were wicked, David realized that both would go to *sheōl* and later would get a resurrection.

Job was concerned that wicked people could lead good lives. In 21:7-13, (above) and 24:19, (below) he says:

⁷ Why do the wicked live on, Grow old, and become wealthy? ⁸ Their children are always in their presence, And they get to see their descendants. ⁹ Their houses are secure, they are free from fear, And God does not punish them with his rod.¹⁰ Their bulls breed without failure; Their cows give birth and do not miscarry.¹¹ Their boys run outside just like a flock, And their children skip about.¹² They sing accompanied by tambourine and harp And rejoice at the sound of the flute.¹³ They spend their days in contentment And go down peacefully to the Grave (*sheōl*).

¹⁹ Just as drought and heat take away the melted snow, The Grave (*sheōl*) takes away those who have sinned!

The law of Moses regulated the marriage between a man and a woman, and immoral relations were forbidden. Proverbs and other books warn several places about such immoral relations. But even if someone lived an immoral life, he or she would come to *sheōl* and would be in line for a resurrection according to Proverbs 5:3-6:

³ For the lips of a wayward woman drip like a honeycomb, And her mouth is smoother than oil. ⁴ But in the end she is as bitter as wormwood And as sharp as a two-edged sword.⁵ Her feet descend into death. Her steps lead straight to the Grave (*sheōl*). ⁶ She gives no thought to the path of life. Her course wanders, but she does not know where.

The word *sheōl* occurs several times in the Psalms, and Psalm 9:17, that I already have quoted, says all the nations that do not serve God will go to *sheōl*:

¹⁷The wicked will retreat toward the Grave (*sheōl*), All the nations who forget God.

David had many enemies, and some of them persecuted David and attacked him. He has written about this with an appeal to Jehovah for help. One example is Psalm 55:9-15:

⁹ Confuse them, O Jehovah, and frustrate their plans, For I have seen violence and conflict in the city.¹⁰ Day and night they walk around on its walls; Within it are malice and trouble.¹¹ Ruin is in its midst; Oppression and deception never depart from its public square.¹² For it is not an enemy who taunts me; Otherwise I could put up with it. It is not a foe who has risen up against me; Otherwise I could conceal myself from him.¹³ But it is you, a man like me, My own companion whom I know well.¹⁴ We used to enjoy a warm friendship together; Into the house of God we used to walk along with the multitude.¹⁵ May destruction overtake them! Let them go down alive into the Grave (*sheōl*).

The enemies of David were wicked people. But when they died, they would go down to *sheōl*. Ungodly people who had immoral sexual relations, who sacrificed to idols, and who killed innocent children would also come to *sheōl*, as Isaiah 57:3-9 shows:

³“But as for you, come closer, You sons of a sorceress, You children of an adulterer and a prostitute:⁴ Whom are you making fun of? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not the children of transgression, The children of deceit,⁵ **Those who are inflamed with passion** among big trees, Under every luxuriant tree, Who **slaughter the children** in the valleys, Under the clefts of the crags?⁶ With the smooth stones of the valley is your portion. Yes, these are your lot. Even to them **you pour out drink offerings and offer gifts**. Should I be satisfied with these things?⁷ On a mountain high and lofty you prepared your bed, **And you went up there to offer sacrifice**.⁸ Behind the door and the doorpost you set up your memorial. You left me and uncovered yourself; You went up and made your bed spacious. And you made a covenant with them. You loved sharing their bed, And you gazed at the male organ.⁹ **You went down to Mel'ech with oil** And with an abundance of perfume. You sent your envoys far off, So that you descended to the Grave (*sheol*).

It is difficult to find actions that are more degraded than the ones described in the quotation above. Yet the people who did these actions would come to *sheōl* when they died, and they would get a resurrection.

I have now shown that both righteous and wicked people come to *sheōl* and will get a resurrection in the future. There simply was no other place to come in the time between Adam and Jesus when a person died than to *sheōl*, from which there is a resurrection. In the next section, I will quote several passages identifying people and nations who have come to *sheōl*.

ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH ARE IN SHEŌL AND WILL GET A RESURRECTION

I will now quote several passages from the Hebrew Scriptures showing that all the nations will get a resurrection.

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

The unrighteous people of Israel that have sinned against Jehovah are in *sheōl* according to Isaiah 5:7-14:

⁷For the vineyard of Jehovah of armies is the house of Israel; The men of Judah are the plantation he was fond of. He kept hoping for justice, But look! there was injustice; For righteousness, But look! a cry of distress.”⁸Woe to those who join one house to another house And who annex one field to another field Until there is no more room And you live by yourselves on the land! ⁹Jehovah of armies has sworn in my ears That many houses, though great and beautiful, Will become an object of horror, Without an inhabitant. ¹⁰For ten acres of vineyard will produce but one bath measure, And a ho’mer measure of seed will produce only an e’phah. ¹¹Woe to those who get up early in the morning to drink alcohol, Who linger late into the evening darkness until wine inflames them! ¹²They have harp and stringed instrument, Tambourine, flute, and wine at their feasts; But they do not consider the activity of Jehovah, And they do not see the work of his hands.¹³So my people will go into exile For lack of knowledge; Their glorious men will go hungry, And all their people will be parched with thirst.¹⁴So the Grave (*sheōl*) has enlarged itself And has opened its mouth wide without limit; And her splendor, her noisy multitudes, and her revelers Will certainly go down into it.

God expected justice from the people that was his vineyard, but there was injustice. Her splendor, her noisy multitudes, and her revelers seem to represent the whole nation of unrighteous people. They would come to *sheōl* with the hope of a resurrection. Also, the inhabitants of Babylon came to *sheōl*.

THE INHABITANTS OF BABYLON — THE KINGS OF THE NATIONS

In order to show that the people of Babylon were said to be wicked, but that they came to *sheōl* and will get a resurrection, I quote Isaiah 13:1; 11, 19, (above) and 14:3-15, (below):

¹A pronouncement against *Babylon* that Isaiah the son of A’moz saw in vision:

¹¹I will call the inhabited earth to account for its *badness* (*rā’ā*), And the *wicked* (*rāsha*) for their *error* (*’avōn*). I will put an end to the pride of the presumptuous, And I will humble the haughtiness of tyrants...¹⁹And *Babylon*, the most glorious of kingdoms, The beauty and the pride of the Chal’de’ans, *Will be like Sod’om and Go-mor’rah when God overthrew them.*

³In the day when Jehovah gives you rest from your pain and from your turmoil and from the hard slavery imposed on you, ⁴you will recite this proverb against the king of Babylon: “How the one forcing others to work has met his end! How the oppression has ended! ⁵Jehovah has broken the rod of the wicked, The staff of the rulers, ⁶The one furiously striking peoples with unceasing blows, The one angrily subduing nations with *relentless persecution.* ⁷The whole earth now rests, free of disturbance. People cry out for joy. ⁸Even the juniper trees rejoice over you, Along with the cedars of Leb’a’non. They say, ‘Ever since you have fallen, No woodcutter comes up against us.’ ⁹Even the Grave (*sheōl*) underneath is stirred up To meet you when you come. Because of you, it awakens those powerless in death, All the oppressive leaders of the earth. *It makes all the kings of the nations rise from their thrones.*¹⁰All of them speak up and say to you, ‘Have you also become weak like us? Have you become like us?’¹¹Down to the Grave (*sheōl*) your pride has been brought, The sound of your stringed instruments. Maggots are spread beneath you as a bed, And worms are your covering.’¹²How you have fallen from heaven, O shining one, son of the dawn! How you have been cut down to the earth, You who vanquished nations!¹³You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the heavens. Above the stars of God I will lift up my throne, And I will sit down on the mountain of meeting, In the remotest parts of the north.’¹⁴I will go up above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself resemble the Most High.’¹⁵Instead, you will be brought down to the Grave (*sheōl*), To the remotest parts of the pit.

Verse 11 in chapter 13 uses three different words to show that the inhabitants of Babylon were wicked. The adjective *rāsha* is the normal word with the meaning “wicked.” The noun *rā‘a* means “evil,” and the noun *‘awōn* means “sin, iniquity.” God would punish the inhabitants of Babylon for their wickedness in the same way as he punished Sodom and Gomorrah. Three times the prophet says that the inhabitants of Babylon will come to *sheōl*, indicating a resurrection. We also note that the kings of the nations are in *sheōl* according to verses 9 and 10.

It was surprising that the inhabitants of the world power of Babylon would come to *sheōl*, and to illustrate this, the words that all the kings of the nations will rise from their thrones are used. This shows that they were in *sheōl* as well.

PHARAO AND THE HORDES OF EGYPT AND THE SONS OF MANKIND ARE IN SHEŌL

Farao and the inhabitants of Egypt is pictured as a very tall cedar in Lebanon. They will go down to *sheōl* together with many other people. I quote Ezekiel 31:1-5, 14-18:

¹ In the 11th year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: ² “Son of man, say to **Phar'aoh king of Egypt and to his hordes**, ‘Whom are you like in your greatness? ³ There was an As·syr'i·an, a cedar in Leb'a·non, With beautiful branches like a shady thicket, lofty in stature; Its top was among the clouds. ⁴ The waters made it grow big, the deep springs of water caused it to grow high. Streams were all around where it was planted; Their channels watered all the trees of the field. ⁵ That is why it grew taller than all the other trees of the field...

¹⁴ This is so that no tree near the waters should grow so tall or lift up its top among the clouds and that no well-watered tree may reach up to them in height. **For they will all be given over to death, to the land down below, along with the sons of mankind**, who are going down into the pit (*dōr*).’ ¹⁵ “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘On the day it goes down to the Grave (*sheōl*) I will cause a mourning. Therefore, I will cover over the deep waters and hold back its streams so that the abundant waters are restrained. I will darken Leb'a·non because of it, and the trees of the field will all wither away. ¹⁶ At the sound of its downfall, I will cause nations to shudder when I bring it down to the Grave (*sheōl*) **along with all those going down into the pit** (*dōr*), and all the trees of E'den, the choicest and the best of Leb'a·non, all that are well-watered, will be comforted **in the land down below**. ¹⁷ They have gone down to the Grave (*sheōl*) with him, to those slain by the sword, together with his supporters who lived in his shadow among the nations.’ ¹⁸ “Which of the trees of E'den was like you in glory and greatness? But you will certainly be brought down with the trees of E'den **to the land down below**. You will lie down among the uncircumcised ones, with those slain by the sword. **This will happen to Phar'aoh and all his hordes**,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”

Farao and the inhabitants of Egypt, pictured by the big cedar and referred to as “it,” will go down to “the land down below,” which is a synonym of *sheōl*. The Egyptians will go down together with many other “trees” and “the sons of mankind.”

Chapter 32 of Ezekiel also expresses the judgment of Pharaoh and the inhabitants of Egypt together with many nations. I quote Ezekiel 32:1-3, 11-32:

¹ And in the 12th year, in the 12th month, on the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: ² “Son of man, sing a dirge concerning **Phar'aoh king of Egypt**, and say to him, ‘You were like a strong young lion of the nations, But you have been silenced. You were like a sea monster, thrashing about in your rivers, Muddying the waters with your feet and

fouling the rivers.’³ This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘By means of an assembly of many nations I will cast my net over you, And they will haul you up in my dragnet.

¹¹ For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘The sword of the king of Babylon will come upon you. ¹² I will cause your hordes to fall by the swords of mighty warriors, The most ruthless of the nations, all of them. ***They will bring down the pride of Egypt, and all her hordes will be annihilated.*** ¹³ I will destroy all her livestock beside her abundant waters, And no foot of a human or hoof of the livestock will muddy them again.’ ¹⁴ At that time I will clear up their waters, And I will make their rivers flow like oil,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. ¹⁵ ***‘When I make Egypt a desolate wasteland, a land stripped of all that filled it, When I strike down all the inhabitants in it,*** They will have to know that I am Jehovah. ¹⁶ This is a dirge, and people will certainly chant it; The daughters of the nations will chant it. They will chant it over Egypt and over all its hordes,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.” ¹⁷ Then in the 12th year, on the 15th day of the month, the word of Jehovah came to me, saying: ¹⁸ ***“Son of man, wail over the hordes of Egypt and bring her down to the land below, her and the daughters of mighty nations, with those going down into the pit.*** ¹⁹ ***“Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down, and lie with the uncircumcised ones!”*** ²⁰ ***“They will fall among those slain by the sword. She has been given to the sword; drag her away along with all her hordes.*** ²¹ ***“From the depths of the Grave (*sheōl*) the mightiest warriors will speak to him and his helpers. They will certainly go down and will lie just like the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.*** ²² ***As-syr'i-a is there with all her assembly.*** Their graves (*qabār*) are all around him, all of them fallen by the sword. ²³ Her graves (*qabār*) are in the depths of the pit (*bōr*), and her assembly is all around her grave (*qabār*), all of them struck down by the sword, because they caused terror in the land of the living. ²⁴ ***“E'lam is there*** with all her hordes around her grave, all of them fallen by the sword. They have gone down uncircumcised to the land below, those who caused terror in the land of the living. Now they will bear their shame with those going down into the pit (*bōr*). ²⁵ They have made a bed for her among the slain, along with all her hordes around her graves (*qabār*). All of them are uncircumcised, slain by the sword, because they caused terror in the land of the living; and they will bear their shame with those going down into the pit (*bōr*). He has been put among the slain. ²⁶ ***“There is where Me'shech and Tu'bal and all their hordes are.*** Their graves (*qabār*) are all around him. All of them are uncircumcised, pierced through by the sword, because they caused terror in the land of the living. ²⁷ Will they not lie with mighty uncircumcised warriors who have fallen, who went down to the Grave (*sheōl*) with their weapons of war? And they will put their swords under their heads and their sins on their bones, because these mighty warriors terrorized the land of the living. ²⁸ But as for you, you will be crushed among the uncircumcised ones, and you will lie with those who were slain by the sword. ²⁹ ***“E'dom is there, her kings and all her chieftains,*** who despite their mightiness, were laid among those slain by the sword; they too will lie with the uncircumcised ones and with those going down into the pit (*bōr*). ³⁰ ***“There all the princes of the north are, along with all the Si-do'ni-ans,*** who have gone down in disgrace with the slain, despite the terror caused by their mightiness. They will lie uncircumcised with those who were slain by the sword and will bear their shame with those going down into the pit (*bōr*). ³¹ ***“Phar'aoh will see all of these, and he will be comforted over all that happened to his hordes; Phar'aoh and all his army will be slain by the sword,*** declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. ³² ***“Because he caused terror in the land of the living, Phar'aoh and all his hordes will be laid to rest with the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword,*** declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”

In addition to *sheōl*, the common grave of mankind from which people will be resurrected, the words *qabār* (“the physical grave”) and *bōr* (pit, cistern), referring to a physical low place are used. The phrase “the land down below” is a synonym of *sheōl*.

Babylon will conquer Egypt according to verse 11. The inhabitants of Egypt and “the daughters of mighty nations” (verse 18) will go to the “land down below,” which is *sheōl*.

In addition to Pharaoh, the rulers and inhabitants of Assyria, Elam, Meshech and Tubal, Edom, and Sidon are in *sheōl*, as well as all the princes of the north. The expression “they caused terror in the land of the living” is applied to several of the nations who went down to *sheōl*, and “the terror caused by their mightiness” is applied to the princes of the north and to the Sidonians. This means that the nations that are mentioned consist of wicked inhabitants. Nevertheless, they came to *sheōl*, and in time they will get a resurrection.

THE DESTINY OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Jesus mentioned King Solomon in connection with the resurrection of the queen of the south in Matthew 12:42. But he did not say anything about his destiny. For a long time during his reign, Solomon worshipped Jehovah and followed his laws. But in his old age, he stopped serving God. We read in 1 Kings 11:1-8:

¹ But King Sol'o·mon loved many foreign women besides the daughter of Phar'aoh: Mo'ab·ite, Am'mon·ite, E'dom·ite, Si·do'ni'an, and Hit'titewomen. ² They were from the nations about whom Jehovah had said to the Israelites: “You must not go in among them, and they should not come in among you, for they will surely incline your heart to follow their gods.” But Sol'o·mon clung to them and loved them. ³ And he had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubines, and his wives gradually inclined his heart. ⁴ In Sol'o·mon's old age, his wives inclined his heart to follow other gods, and his heart was not complete with Jehovah his God like the heart of David his father. ⁵ And Sol'o·mon followed after Ash'to·reth, the goddess of the Si·do'ni'ans, and Mil'com, the disgusting god of the Am'mon·ites. ⁶ And Sol'o·mon did what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, and he did not follow Jehovah completely as David his father had done. ⁷ It was then that Sol'o·mon built a high place to Che'mosh, the disgusting god of Mo'ab, on the mountain in front of Jerusalem and to Mo'lech, the disgusting god of the Am'mon·ites. ⁸ That was what he did for all his foreign wives who were making sacrificial smoke and sacrificing to their gods.

Solomon is a typical example of a person who served God for a long time. But then he turned away and served and worshipped other gods. What would be the destiny of Solomon? We find the answer in 1 Kings 11:43:

⁴³ Then ***Sol'o·mon was laid to rest with his forefathers*** and was buried in the City of David his father; and his son Re·ho·bo'am became king in his place.

David was a man after the heart of God, and there can be no doubt that when he died, he went to *sheōl* with the hope of a resurrection. And Solomon's forefather Jacob was in *sheōl* as well, according to Genesis 42:38. This shows that the expression “laid to rest with his forefathers” is the same as saying that the person would rest in *sheōl*. So, in spite of what we would expect regarding Solomon, who turned against Jehovah, he will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. *The Watchtower* of February 15, 1965, page 114, says:

³² The queen of Sheba will be favored with a resurrection from Sheol or Ha'des, but what about King Solomon whom she visited? His father David is mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 as being among the approved ancient witnesses of Jehovah, but Solomon, the wisest king of ancient times and the writer of three Bible books, is not mentioned there. Some time after the queen of Sheba visited him, he yielded to the influence of his hundreds of wives and concubines and fell away to the foolish worship of pagan idols. (1 Ki. 11:1-8; Neh. 13:25, 26; Rom. 1:25) However, both 1 Kings 11:43 and; 2 Chronicles 9:31 say that “Solomon lay down with his

forefathers” and was buried “in the city of David his father.” *So, since Solomon lay down to sleep in death with his forefathers, including David, that puts him in Sheol or Ha'des, with the prospect of being brought forth therefrom under the kingdom of the Greater Solomon.*— Compare Deuteronomy 31:16; 2 Samuel 7:12; 1 Kings 1:21; 2 Kings 20:21.

Joseph’s words seem to show that he believed that he would be resurrected at the place where his body was buried. So, he said that he wanted to be buried “in the grave of my forefathers,” as we read in Genesis 49:29-30:

²⁹The time was approaching for Israel to die, so he called his son Joseph and said: “If, now, I have found favor in your eyes, place your hand, please, under my thigh, and show loyal love and faithfulness to me. Please, do not bury me in Egypt. ³⁰When I die, you must carry me out of Egypt *and bury me in the grave of my forefathers.*” Accordingly, he said: “I will do just as you say.”

Jehovah said to Moses, according to Deuteronomy 31:16, and to David, according to 2 Samuel 7:12, that they would rest with their forefathers. Other kings that are said to “rest with his forefathers” are, Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:31), Abijah (1 Kings 15:8), Asa (1 Kings 15:24), Baasha (1 Kings 16:6), Omri (1 Kings 16:26), Ahab (1 Kings 22:40), Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:50), Joram (1 Kings 22:40), Jehu (2 Kings 10:35), Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:9), Jehoash (2 Kings 14:16), Jeroboam (2 Kings 14:29), Azariah (2 Kings 15:7), Menahem (2 Kings 15:22), Jotham (2 Kings 15:38), Ahaz (2 Kings 16:20), Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:21), Manasse (2 Kings 21:18), and Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:6).

Some of these kings were wicked, such as Ahab. But all of them came to *sheōl* when they died, and they will get a resurrection. I will add one last point to the discussion of the resurrection according to the Hebrew Scriptures. I use *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1988, page 31, to express this point:

Consequently, in addition to what Jude 7 says, the Bible uses Sodom/Gomorrah and the Flood as patterns for the destructive end of the present wicked system. *It is apparent, then, that those whom God executed in those past judgments experienced irreversible destruction.*

The claim here is that all those who died in the cities of Sodoma and Gomorrah and all who died in the great flood “experienced irreversible destruction.” I have already demonstrated that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will get a resurrection, and Revelation 20:13 show that in addition to the dead in *hadēs*, the dead “in the sea” will get a resurrection. Those who drowned in the great flood died in the sea, so they must get a resurrection. There is no passage in the whole Bible saying that those who died in the flood experienced irreversible destruction. So, this claim is pure fiction!

After reading all the examples referred to in this section, who can deny that all the people that lived between Adam and Jesus, with the exception of those few who have sinned against the holy spirit, will get a resurrection during the millennium? Even if we did not have these examples, we had to draw the same conclusion because none of these individuals had the opportunity to “exercise faith in the Son,” or to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice, since this sacrifice was not available to them.

There is no chapter in this book dealing with the time between the 1st CE and our time. But most of the people who lived between the 1st and 20th centuries CE have not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. Therefore, they would come to *hadēs* when they died, with the hope of a resurrection. But I will refer to one point dealing

with events happening during the presence of Jesus that began in 1914: I quote Revelation 6:1-8:

² And I saw, and look! a white horse, and the one seated on it had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went out conquering and to complete his conquest. ³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say: "Come!" ⁴ Another came out, a fiery-colored horse, and it was granted to the one seated on it to take peace away from the earth so that they should slaughter one another, and he was given a great sword. ⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say: "Come!" And I saw, and look! a black horse, and the one seated on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ I heard what sounded like a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say: "A quart of wheat for a de·nar'i·us and three quarts of barley for a de·nar'i·us; and do not harm the olive oil and the wine." ⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say: "Come!" ⁸ And I saw, and look! a pale horse, and the one seated on it had the name Death. *And the Grave (hadēs) was closely following him.* And authority was given them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with a long sword and with food shortage and with deadly plague and by the wild beasts of the earth.

The one seated on the white horse started to reign in the midst of his enemies. Following this event in 1914 are wars, famine, pestilence, and different other disastrous events. All these events resulted in the death of hundreds of millions of people. And will all these people get a resurrection? The answer is Yes because verse 8 says that *hadēs* followed the other horses. So, all these people came to *hadēs*, and they are in line for a resurrection.

Table 4.1 The vast majority of humans will get a resurrection

Evidence that all Adam's descendants, except the few that have sinned against the holy spirit, will get a resurrection during the millennium, has been given:

- 1) Jesus bought all Adam's descendants, and all of them must get the opportunity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. The vast majority have not had this chance, and therefore, they must get a resurrection.
- 2) The Hebrew Scriptures show in detail how wicked individuals and all the wicked nations of the earth came to *sheōl* and will get a resurrection.
- 3) Jesus said that "the wicked and adulterous generation" that lived in his days, which refers to all the children, women, men, and old persons in the nation of Israel will get a resurrection on Judgement Day.
- 4) People who die in the time of the end comes to *hadēs* and will get a resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE AND THE RESURRECTION OF JUDGEMENT

—REVIEW—

The members of the Governing Body have during the last twenty years presented a number of new interpretations of biblical texts. Most of these interpretations are contradicted by biblical passages. This is also the case with the new interpretation of the resurrection mentioned in John 5:28, 29 that was presented at the Annual Meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses in 2021 and in the study edition of *The Watchtower* of September 2022.

The old and the new view of John 5:28, 29

The old view: "Resurrection of life" means a resurrection to everlasting life.

"Resurrection of judgment" means a resurrection to everlasting annihilation.

The new view: "Resurrection of life" means a resurrection for those whose name is written in the book of life, those who are in line for everlasting life.

"Resurrection of judgement" means a resurrection for those who are not written in the book of life, who are not in line for everlasting life.

Weaknesses in the new view

The new view is based on a misunderstanding of Greek grammar.

The old view was concrete and clear; the new view is unclear and vague.

The Greek word *ζωή* ("life") in the Gospel of John and in 1. John always has the meaning "everlasting life," and not "written in the book of life" or "in line for everlasting life."

When the word "life" used by Jesus means "everlasting life," the word "judgment" used by Jesus must mean "everlasting annihilation" and not "a testing," as *The Watchtower* of September 2022 claims.

The new view claims that only the group getting a "resurrection of judgment" will be "judged" (tested) in the millennium. But Revelation 20:13 says that *each one* of those that will be resurrected will be judged.

Conclusion

The old view accords with Greek grammar, it is concrete, and is supported by the context. The new view contradicts Greek grammar, it is somewhat abstract, and it is not supported by the context.

The new view of the resurrection in Daniel 12:2, 3

The old view was that verses 2 and 3 have been fulfilled during the time of the end, but the new view is that the verses will have a fulfillment in the millennium. We cannot be certain what is correct but the context seems to favor the old view.

According to John 5:28, 29 Jesus said:

²⁸ Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who did good things to *a resurrection of life*, and those who practiced vile things to *a resurrection of judgment*.

The talk of Geoffrey Jackson and *The Watchtower* of September 2022 present a new interpretation of these words, and Table 5.1 contains a comparison of the old and new interpretations of the words “resurrection of life” and “resurrection of judgment.”

Table 5.1 A comparison of the old and new understanding of John 5:28, 29

Old interpretation	The resurrection of life = Resurrection to everlasting life.
“	The resurrection of judgment = Resurrection to everlasting annihilation.
New interpretation	The resurrection of life = Resurrection of those who are written in the book of life, who are in line for everlasting life.
“	The resurrection of judgment = Resurrection of those who will be tested and whose names are not written in the book of life, and who are not in line of everlasting life.

The crucial points in verse 29 are the expressions “life” and “judgment.” The old understanding has a clear and concrete definition of “life” and “judgment,” while the new definitions are ambiguous and unclear. And contrary to what *The Watchtower* of September 2022 claims, the old interpretation accords with the context while the new interpretation contradicts the context. My general comment to the new interpretation is that all the resurrected ones are in line for everlasting life, not only one group. The purpose of the resurrection is that all Adam’s descendants will be offered the value of the ransom sacrifice so they can choose everlasting life. Moreover, Revelation 20:13 shows that the dead who are resurrected in the millennium will be “judged individually according to their deeds.” So, there is not only one group, those who are not written in the book of life, that will be “judged,” as the new interpretation claims.

GREEK GRAMMAR AND THE MEANING OF THE VERBS IN JOHN 5:28, 29

I will first discuss the basic claims of Jackson and *The Watchtower*. The arguments are: Jesus did not say “they **will do** good things” and “they **will practice** vile things,” but Jesus used past tense. So, these actions must have been performed by the persons before their death.

This is a fallacious argument, particularly for two reasons. **First**, the argument shows that Jackson and the other members of the Governing Body have no knowledge of Greek. They do not know that the Greek verb form of aorist does not indicate past tense because it is not a tense but an aspect, and they do not know the meaning and force of this aspect. **Second**, they do not know that Greek has both absolute and relative time references (“tenses”), and that this must be considered when clauses are translated from Greek. This lack of knowledge is shown in the way the members of the Governing Body have treated John 5:28, 29. I quote the verse below:

²⁸ Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming (**erkhomai**, “come,” present middle indicative) in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who did (**poieō** “do” aorist active participle) good things to a resurrection of life, and those who practiced (**prassō** “carry out some activity,” aorist active participle) vile things to a resurrection of judgment.

To what does Jesus refer when he speaks about “those who did good things” and “those who practiced vile things”? Does Jesus contradict Paul’s words in Romans 6:7 by referring to the actions the resurrected did before their death? The answer is No, and supporting this answer is John 5:25:

²⁵ “Most truly I say to you, the hour is coming (*erkhomai* “come,” present medium indicative), and it is (*eimi* “be,” present active indicative) now, when the dead will hear (*akouō* “hear” future active indicative) the voice of the Son of God, and those who have paid attention (*akouō* “hear,” aorist active participle) will live (*ζαῶ* “live,” future active indicative).

The first present verb “come” in verse 25 refers to the future, to a time period after Jesus uttered the words. The second verb “be” is present and most likely refers to the future as well, and the meaning can be “will now be/become.” The third verb “hear” is Greek future and should be rendered by English future. But what about the fourth verb “hear”? This verb is aorist active participle, and the aorist does not refer to past tense or to any other tense. But aorist is tenseless and represents the perfective aspect. This means that the aorist portrays an action from the outside with the inside details not being visible. The aorist form can refer to past, present, future, and future perfect with a preponderance for the past.

The first occurrence of the verb *akouō* (“hear”) in 5:25 has placed the situation in the future when the dead **will hear** the voice of the Son of God. The fact that the following verb, which also is *akouō*, is not Greek future but Greek aorist shows that the time reference has changed. Jesus does not portray a situation where the dead will hear (*akouō*) his voice, then he again repeats that they will hear (*akouō*), and then they will live (*ζαῶ*). But the change of aspect shows that the meaning is that the dead will hear (future), and those who **will have heard** (aorist) — those who have acted on what they heard — will live (future). I, therefore, suggest the following translation:

²⁵ The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who will have heard will live.

This means that I take the second occurrence of the verb *akouō* in the aorist aspect as English future perfect. This is a retrospective viewpoint and a relative “tense,” and we learn that the dead in the future will hear the voice of the Son of God. Then Jesus takes a step into the future beyond the point when the dead hear his voice, and he looks back retrospectively. He points out from his new vantage point that the dead who have heard his voice have taken a certain action, they have done something with what they heard. Then he again looks into the future and says that those who have taken the action will live. The important point in our context is that the action described by the aorist participle “will have heard” occurs after the time when they hear the voice of the Son of God.

I will again look at John 5:28, 29 in the light of John 5:25.

²⁸ Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming (*erkhomai*, “come,” present middle indicative) in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear (*akouō*, “hear” future active indicative) his voice ²⁹and come out (*poreuomai*, “come out,” future middle indicative), those who did (*poieō*, “do” aorist active participle) good things to a resurrection of life, and those who practiced (*prassō*, “carry out some activity” aorist active participle) vile things to a resurrection of judgment.

The first verb *erkbomai* (“come”) in verse 28 is Greek present and must refer to the future. The second verb *akouō* (“hear”) is Greek future and must be rendered as English future, and the third verb *poreuomai* (“come out”) is also Greek future and must be English future. The next two verbs *poieō* (“do”) and *prassō* (“carry out some activity”) are aorists and therefore must have a different time reference than *erkbomai* (“come”), *akouō* (“hear”), and *poreuomai* (“come out”). This must be a time that is past in relation to some vantage point.

In 5:25, the vantage point is clear because of the last future verb *ζαῶ* (“live”). They will hear (*akouō*), and those who will have heard (*akouō*) will live (*ζαῶ*.)” In verse 5:29 there is no verb after the two verbs in the aorist, and linguistically speaking the vantage point is not clear. Because the two verbs in the aorist must have another time reference than the three first verbs in Greek present, future, and future, there are two possible vantage points.

The verbs *poieō* (“do”) and *prassō* (“carry out some activity”) can refer to the time before the dead will come out of their graves, and the actions (deeds) can refer to what they did before they died. The vantage point is then the verb “come out,” and the actions of the two aorist verbs happened before this vantage point. The alternative is a retrospective vantage point. Jesus puts himself at a point in the future and he looks back at those who have come out of the graves, those who have been resurrected — the same vantage point as in 5:25.

The retrospective vantage point is very rare compared to a simple present vantage point. This means that if an aorist verb shall be translated by English future perfect, there must either be a syntactical and/or grammatical reason for this. In 5:25 there is a grammatical reason, namely, the two occurrences of the verb *akouō* with different time references. That there is a verb with a future meaning following the last verb *akouō* is a syntactical reason for the choice of English future perfect.

However, in 5:28, 29 there is neither a lexical nor a syntactical reason for the choice of English future perfect instead of simple past. Because of this, the simple past rendering of NWT13 of both verbs in the aorist is the best renderings. But these renderings do not exclude a retrospective viewpoint. Paul draws an important inspired conclusion in Romans 6:7:

For the one who has died has been acquitted from his sin.

On the basis of the view that the Bible is inspired by God and that all the Bible writers are in agreement, the words of Paul in Romans 6:7 exclude the possibility of the resurrected ones being judged on the basis of what they did before they died. This suggests that the vantage point for the words in John 5:28, 29 is retrospective. Supporting this is the retrospective vantage point in John 5:25.

This conclusion is far-reaching. All persons are sinners, and the wages they get are death. This means that at the moment a person dies he has received the wages (the penalty) for his sins, and when he is resurrected, he is acquitted of his previous sins. Therefore, he cannot be judged a second time for the sins he committed before he died.

If we apply this to John 5:28, 29, it means that the actions that are mentioned cannot refer to actions the dead did before they died. We can also apply it to the words of Revelation 20:12, “The dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls

according to their deeds.” This means that “their deeds” must be deeds that they will have done *after* their resurrection. They are judged according to what is written in the scrolls which are requirements they must fulfill during the millennium.

THE WORD “LIFE” WITH REFERENCE TO THE FUTURE ALWAYS MEANS “EVERLASTING LIFE”

Jackson said that the word “judgment” (Greek: *krisis*) can have other meanings than “adverse judgment,” and this is correct. Some of the meanings given by Mounce are: “distinction; discrimination; judgment, decision; award; a judicial sentence; an adverse sentence.” But Jackson’s claim that the context shows that “judgment” in John 5:29 is used in the neutral sense of a test and not in the sense of “condemnatory judgment” is clearly wrong.

Because the word “judgment” (*krisis*) has several different meanings, the best way to find the meaning of the word used in John 5:29 is to look at the word “life” (*ζωή*) which is used as a contrast to “judgment” (*krisis*). According to Mounce, *ζωή* only has two meanings, namely “life” and “living existence,” but the word *ζωή* can have several references. What is important in this context is that when *ζωή* is used with reference to the future, its meaning is uniform.

When future life is mentioned by John, the reference is always “everlasting life.” This is seen by the fact that “life” and “everlasting life” are used as synonyms. In many instances, life is used alone, and the meaning clearly is “eternal life”:

John 3:36: ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has *eternal life*, but whoever rejects the Son will not see *life*, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

John 5:24: ²⁴“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has *eternal life* and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to *life*.”

John 5:39: ³⁹You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess *eternal life*. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me to have *life*.”

John 6:33: ³³For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives *life* to the world.”

John 6:53: ⁵³Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no *life* in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has *eternal life*, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:47: ⁴⁷I tell you the truth, he who believes has *everlasting life*. ⁴⁸I am the bread of *life*.”

John 6:63: ⁶³The Spirit gives *life*; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are *life*.”

John 10:10: ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have *life*, and have it to the full.”

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

John 20:31: ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have *life* in his name.

1 John 1:1: ¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of *life*. ² The *life* appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the *eternal life*, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

1 John 5:11: ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us *eternal life*, and *this life* is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has *life*; he who does not have the Son of God does not have *life*.

Above are twelve examples in John and 1 John where “life” is used in the sense “eternal life,” either as a parallel with “eternal life,” or because the context shows that the reference is to “eternal life.” There is no example in John or in other books in the Christian Greek Scriptures of the use of *ζωῆ* in the sense “written in the book of life” or “in line for everlasting life,” which are the senses applied to *ζωῆ* in John 5:29 by Jackson and *The Watchtower*. Thus, the new meaning applied to “life” (*ζωῆ*) in John 5:29 has no basis in the Scriptures.

WHAT DOES THE CONTRAST BETWEEN “LIFE” (*ZŌĒ*) AND “JUDGMENT” (*KRISIS*) MEAN?

When a Witness participates in the preaching work and discusses the issue of what happens when a person dies, he or she has an easy task of showing that humans do not have an immortal soul. But to demonstrate from the Scriptures that there is no hell and no eternal torment is much more difficult. One important Scripture to use in this respect is Mark 9:43:

⁴³ “If ever your hand makes you stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into *life* maimed *than* to get off with two hands into *Ge-hen'na*, into the fire that cannot be put out.

The argument is that “life,” and “Gehenna” are used as contrasts, and therefore “Gehenna” must be the opposite of life, that is “no life.” In connection with “life” and “judgment” in John 5:28, 29, *Insight on the Scriptures II*, page 789, has the following comment:

If Jesus, in speaking of judgment, meant a trial the result of which might be life, then there would be no contrast between this and the “resurrection of life.” Therefore, the context indicates that Jesus meant by “judgment” a condemnatory judgment.

This is a fine comment. Jesus shows that there is a contrast between the phrases “resurrection of life” and “resurrection of judgment.” And because John always uses of the word “life” with reference to the future in the sense of “everlasting life,” as shown above, the word “judgment” must be the very opposite, namely, “condemnatory judgment,” or “eternal annihilation.”

Whether a person will get a resurrection of life or a resurrection of judgment depends on his or her actions, whether he or she did good things or practiced vile things. As I have shown, the argument of Jackson and *The Watchtower* that the verb is past tense and therefore the actions must have been done before the person died, is fallacious. This is so because the Greek aorist can refer to past, present, future, and future perfect, and the

members of the Governing Body do not realize that there are absolute tenses and relative tenses both in Greek and English.

According to Romans 6:7, when a person dies, all his sins are blotted out, and he cannot be judged a second time after his resurrection for what he did before his death. This means that the expressions “doing good things” and “practicing vile things” in John 5:29 refer to actions that will be done after the resurrection of the person.

I will now return to the new interpretation that was presented by Jackson: The resurrection to life means that the name of the person is written in the book of life, and the person is in line for everlasting life. The resurrection of judgment means that the resurrection is for a test; the name of the person is not written in the book of life, and he or she is not in line for everlasting life. The “judgment” means that the person will be tested and educated in the truth of Jehovah, and he will be evaluated. If he or she starts to serve Jehovah, he or she will be in line for everlasting life. If he or she refuses to serve Jehovah, the final outcome will be eternal annihilation.

The new definition of “resurrection of judgment” contradicts the words of Revelation 20:12, 13. In both verses, the verb *kerinō* (“to judge”) that corresponds to the substantive *kerisis* (“judgment”), is used. This verb describes a test. And who is judged or tested? **All those** who have been resurrected. This means the new interpretation of the Governing Body that those who are written in the book of life will not get a resurrection of judgment (to be tested) is wrong! The verses clearly say that **all** the resurrected ones will be judged.

The two verses show that all the resurrected ones will be judged **individually** according to their deeds. And according to Romans 6:7, “the deeds” of which they are judged must be deeds they do during the millennium. At the end of the 1,000 years, the final test will occur, as we read in Revelation 20:7-9, 15:

⁷Now as soon as the 1,000 years have ended, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸and he will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Ma'gog, to gather them together for the war. The number of these is as the sand of the sea. ⁹And they advanced over the whole earth and encircled the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and consumed them... ¹⁵Furthermore, whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the lake of fire.

There are two groups, those who support Jehovah, who will get everlasting life, and those who oppose Jehovah, who will be eternally annihilated in the lake of fire. After this final test, we can take a retrospective viewpoint. We can now see that some got a “resurrection of life” (to everlasting life) and some got a “resurrection of judgment” (to eternal annihilation).

The new interpretation of John 5:28, 29 joins the ranks of all the ambiguous and unclear new interpretations of the members of the present Governing Body. And Geoffrey Jackson and those who made this new interpretation and approved it do not have a clear and accurate understanding of what the Bible says about the resurrection of the dead.

A DISCUSSION OF DANIEL 12:1-3

The Watchtower of September 2022 has the article, “Bringing the Many to Righteousness,” and this article discusses Daniel 12:1-3. I compare the comments of *The Watchtower* with the book, *Pay Attention to Daniel’s Prophecy* (1999). Daniel 12:1 says:

¹“During that time Mi’cha·el will stand up, the great prince who is standing in behalf of your people. And there will occur a time of distress such as has not occurred since there came to be a nation until that time. And during that time your people will escape, everyone who is found written down in the book.

Both the comments of the book *Pay Attention to Daniel’s Prophecy* and of *The Watchtower* agree that the “standing” of Michael, which is Jesus Christ, refers to his presence from 1914 to the great tribulation, and that the words “will stand up” refer to his rising to take special action and defend his people in the great tribulation. The interpretation of verse 2 regarding those who “will wake up” is different in the two sources.

²And many of those asleep in the dust of the earth will wake up, some to everlasting life and others to reproach and to everlasting contempt.

Below I quote what the book, page 292, (above) and *The Watchtower*, pages 21, 22, (below) say about those who “will wake up:

⁹ Consider the context. The first verse of Da chapter 12 applies, as we have seen, not only to the end of this system of things but also to the entire period of the last days. In fact, the bulk of the chapter finds fulfillment, not in the coming earthly paradise, but during the time of the end. Has there been a resurrection during this period? The apostle Paul wrote of the resurrection of “those who belong to the Christ” as occurring “*during his presence.*” However, those who are resurrected to life in heaven are raised “incorruptible.” (1 Corinthians 15:23, 52) None of them are raised “to reproaches and to indefinitely lasting abhorrence” foretold at Daniel 12:2. Is there another kind of resurrection? In the Bible, resurrection sometimes has a spiritual significance. For example, both Ezekiel and Revelation contain prophetic passages that apply to a spiritual revival, or resurrection.—Ezekiel 37:1-14; Revelation 11:3, 7, 11.

¹⁰ Has there been such a spiritual revival of God’s anointed servants in the time of the end? Yes! It is a historical reality that in 1918 a small remnant of faithful Christians were subjected to an extraordinary attack that disrupted their organized public ministry. Then, against all likelihood, in 1919 they returned to life in a spiritual sense. These facts fit the description of the resurrection foretold at Daniel 12:2. Some did “wake up” spiritually at that time and thereafter. Sadly, though, not all remained in a spiritually alive state. Those who after being awakened chose to reject the Messianic King and who left God’s service earned for themselves the ‘reproaches and indefinitely lasting abhorrence’ described at Daniel 12:2. (Hebrews 6:4-6) However, the faithful anointed ones, making good use of their spiritually revived state, loyally supported the Messianic King. Ultimately, their faithfulness leads, as the prophecy states, to “indefinitely lasting life.” Today, their spiritual vitality in the face of opposition helps us to identify them.

⁶ Read Daniel 12:2. What happens after the great crowd survive this time of distress? This prophecy is not referring to a symbolic resurrection, a spiritual revival of God’s servants that occurs during the last days, as we previously understood. Rather, these words refer to the resurrection of the dead that takes place in the coming new world. Why can we draw that conclusion? The expression “the dust” is also used at Job 17:16 as a parallel of the expression “the Grave.” This fact indicates that Daniel 12:2 is referring to the literal resurrection that will occur after the last days have ended and after the battle of Armageddon.

⁷ What does Daniel 12:2 mean, though, when it says that some will be resurrected to “everlasting life”? It means that those who are resurrected and come to know, or continue to know, and obey Jehovah and Jesus during the 1,000 years will ultimately receive everlasting life. (John 17:3) This will be “a better resurrection” than the one in the past that brought certain humans back to life. (Heb. 11:35) Why? Because those im- perfect humans died again.

⁸ But not all resurrected ones will accept Jehovah’s educational program. Daniel’s prophecy says that some will be resurrected “to reproach and to everlasting contempt.” Because they will show a rebellious spirit, their names will not be written in the book of life and they will not receive everlasting life. Instead, they will receive “everlasting contempt,” or destruction. So Daniel 12:2 is speaking of the ultimate outcome for all resurrected ones based on what they do after their resurrection. (Rev. 20:12) Some will gain everlasting life; others will not.

The old interpretation was that the phrase “those who sleep...will wake up” was that it referred to a symbolic resurrection or awakening during the time of the end. The new interpretation is that it refers to a literal resurrection in the millennium. The principle that I always follow is to take the words of a text in their literal meaning if the context does not clearly show that the words are symbolic.

I will compare the literal resurrection mentioned in Daniel 12:13 with the words of 12:2:

¹³ You will rest, but you will stand up for your lot at the end of the days.

² And many of those asleep in the dust of the earth will wake up.

The Hebrew word translated by “stand up” in verse 13 is *‘amad*, whose meaning is “stand; stand up,” and it is used in contrast with “rest” (*nūah*). In verse 2, the contrast is between “sleep” (*yāshān*) and “wake up” (*qits*). The verb form is hifil, so the meaning is “cause to wake up.” That the words in verse 2 are different from the words in verse 13 that refer to a literal resurrection does not prove that verse 2 does not refer to a literal resurrection. But if the word *‘amad* had occurred in verse 2, that would have suggested a literal resurrection.

Whether the old interpretation that the phrase “will wake up” refers to a symbolic resurrection, i.e., an awaking, or to a literal resurrection in the millennium, is difficult to know. But the argument of the book that Daniel chapter 12 refers to events during the time of the end, which is the same as the presence of Jesus Christ, and therefore a symbolic resurrection or awakening is referred to, is rather strong.

And the argument of *The Watchtower* that the words “the dust” prove that Daniel pointed to a literal resurrection has no weight whatsoever. The book refers to Ezekiel 37:1-14 which describes a symbolic resurrection. But the words used could also be a description of a literal resurrection. So even if “the dust” refers to “the grave,” that would also fit a symbolic resurrection. However, the fact that “the time of distress,” which refers to the great tribulation, is mentioned in verse 1, is an argument in favor of the interpretation of a literal resurrection after the great tribulation.

As mentioned, we cannot with certainty know the real meaning of verse 2. But because the whole of chapter 12 discusses the time of the end, I find the explanation of a symbolic resurrection or awakening more likely. If the words refer to a literal resurrection, they support the old interpretation of John 5:28, 29 presented above that “a resurrection of life” refers to a resurrection that gives the persons everlasting life, and “a resurrection of

judgment” refers to a resurrection leading to everlasting annihilation. Verse 3 is also viewed differently in the two sources:

³ “And those having insight will shine as brightly as the expanse of heaven, and those bringing the many to righteousness like the stars, forever and ever.

Below I quote what the book, page 293, (above) and *The Watchtower*, pages 21, 22, (below) say about those who “will wake up:

¹¹ The next two verses of Daniel chapter 12 do even more to help us identify “the holy ones of the Supreme One.” In verse 3 the angel tells Daniel: “The ones having insight will shine like the brightness of the expanse; and those who are bringing the many to righteousness, like the stars to time indefinite, even forever.” Who are “the ones having insight” today? Again, the evidence points to the same “holy ones of the Supreme One.” After all, who but the faithful anointed remnant had the insight to discern that Michael, the Great Prince, began standing as King in 1914? By preaching such truths as this—as well as by maintaining Christian conduct—they have been “shining as illuminators” in this spiritually bedarkened world. (Philippians 2:15; John 8:12) Concerning them, Jesus prophesied: “At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—Matthew 13:43.

¹² Daniel 12:3 even tells us what work would occupy these anointed Christians in the time of the end. They would be “bringing the many to righteousness.” The anointed remnant set about gathering the remaining number of the 144,000 joint heirs of Christ. (Romans 8:16, 17; Revelation 7:3, 4) When that work was completed—evidently by the mid-1930’s—they began gathering the “great crowd” of “other sheep.” (Revelation 7:9; John 10:16) These too exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they have a clean standing before Jehovah. Numbering into the millions today, they cherish the hope of surviving the coming destruction of this wicked world. During Christ’s Thousand Year Reign, Jesus and his 144,000 fellow kings and priests will apply to obedient mankind on earth the full benefits of the ransom, thereby helping all of those exercising faith to shed every last trace of sin inherited from Adam. (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 7:13, 14; 20:5, 6) In the fullest sense, the anointed will then share in “bringing the many to righteousness” and will ‘shine like the stars’ in heaven. Do you value the hope of living on earth under the glorious heavenly government of Christ and his corulers? What a privilege it is to share with “the holy ones” in preaching this good news of God’s Kingdom!—Matthew 24:14.

⁹ Read Daniel 12:3. What else will happen after the coming “time of distress”? In addition to Daniel 12:2, verse 3 refers to something that happens *after* the great tribulation.

¹⁰ Who “will shine as brightly as the expanse of heaven”? We find a clue in Jesus’ words recorded at Matthew 13: 43: “At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” In the context of these words, Jesus was speaking about “the sons of the Kingdom,” his anointed brothers, who will serve with him in the heavenly Kingdom. (Matt. 13: 38) So Daniel 12:3 must be referring to the anointed and the work they will do during the Thousand Year Reign.

¹² How will the anointed bring “the many to righteousness”? The anointed will cooperate closely with Jesus Christ to direct the educational program that will be carried out here on earth during the 1,000 years. The 144,000 will not only rule as kings but also serve as priests. (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6) As such, they will assist with “the healing of the nations”—gradually bringing mankind back to perfection. (Rev. 22:1, 2; Ezek. 47:12) What a joy that will be for the anointed!

¹³ Who will be among “the many” brought to righteousness? These will include those who are resurrected and also those who survive Armageddon together with any children who may be

born in the new world. By the end of the 1,000 years, all living on earth will be perfect. So at what point will their names be written permanently in ink and not in pencil in the book of life?

Both sources view the anointed Christians as those who “will shine brightly as the expanse of heaven.” However, the view of time is different. The book argues that during the time of the end the anointed Christians will have brought “many to righteousness.” But *The Watchtower* of September 2022 argues that it is during the millennium that the anointed Christians will “bring many to righteousness.” However, during the millennium the anointed Christians have received their heavenly resurrection, and they can only indirectly “bring many to righteousness.”

That Daniel 11:33 and 12:3 describe the same persons doing similar actions, and that 11:33 clearly refers to the time of the end, is the strongest argument in favor of the interpretation of the book that verses 2 and 3 in Daniel chapter 12 are fulfilled during the time of the end:

³³ and those having insight (*shakhal*, *bifil participle masculine plural*) among the people will impart understanding to the many (*hārabīm*).

³ And those having insight (*shakhal*, *bifil participle masculine plural*) ...those bringing the many (*hārabīm*) to righteousness.

The Hebrew verb *shakhal* has the meaning “be wise, prudent, understanding.” Both in 11:33 and 12:3 this verb is used as the substantivized participle. The rendering, “those having insight” is excellent. According to 11:33, they will “impart understanding” to “the many” (*hārabīm*), and according to 12:3, they will bring “the many” (*hārabīm*) “to righteousness.” The two verses are clearly related because to “impart understanding” can lead “to righteousness.”

The time setting of 11:33 is the time of the end, and this suggests that the time setting of 12:3 is the time of the end as well, just as the rest of chapter 12. The comparison of the two verses argues in favor of 12:2 referring to the old understanding of a symbolic resurrection during the time of the end rather than to a literal resurrection during the millennium.

The Governing Body’s new interpretation of the resurrection contradicts the Scriptures, as most of the new interpretations that have been presented in the 21st century do. Geoffrey Jackson, who first presented the new view in a lecture, the person who wrote *The Watchtower* article, and the members of the Governing Body who read the article and approved it, show that they do not know Greek. This is one reason why the new conclusions of *The Watchtower* article contradict the Scriptures.

The words of Jesus in John 5:28, 29 about “a resurrection of life” and “a resurrection of judgment” are the focus of the new interpretation. The discussion above gives strong evidence in favor of the old view that Jesus spoke about the final destiny of the resurrected ones, either getting everlasting life or experiencing eternal annihilation.

The wrong understanding:

The actions persons did before they died, lead to a “resurrection of life” (being in line for everlasting life), or to a resurrection of judgement (not being in line for everlasting life but being tested with this possibility).

The correct understanding:

In John 5:28, 29, Jesus looks back after the end of the millennium: the “resurrection of life” shows that some got everlasting life and the “resurrection of judgement” shows that others got everlasting annihilation.

THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF TEXTS USED TO PROVE A LIMITED RESURRECTION

REVIEW—

There has been a zigzag development in the views of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection from the years 1938/1939. But from the year 1939 to the present, one view has not changed, that billions of people have been and will be eternally annihilated without having had the opportunity to learn the truth about Jehovah and the ransom sacrifice. This view is based on a misunderstanding of particular texts in the Bible that will be discussed in this chapter.

Different views of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection

For 60 years until 1938, there was a correct view of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection. For 27 years from 1938 to 1965, there was a wrong view, and for 23 years from 1965 to 1988, there was a correct view. Then, for 35 years from 1988 to the present, there has been a wrong view of the resurrection, and for 23 years from 2000 to the present, there has a wrong view of the ransom sacrifice.

The restoration of all things

The view the members of the Governing Body that the purpose of the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom is to separate all people into two groups and that the billions that are not true Christians will be eternally annihilated, is wrong. The ransom sacrifice guarantees that each descendant of Adam, except the few that have sinned against the holy spirit, will get the same opportunity that Adam got: As perfect humans without inherited sin, each one will have the opportunity of choosing to serve God or to serve the Devil. The resurrection in the millennium is necessary to achieve this.

Most people living in the time of the end will not be eternally annihilated

Only people living in the time of the end who have sinned against the holy spirit will be eternally annihilated. Most of the 8 billion+ people that are living when the great tribulation comes have not sinned against the holy spirit. These people will not be eternally annihilated but will get a resurrection.

An analysis of the texts used to prove that the 8 billion+ people will be eternally annihilated

The “weeds” in the illustration of the wheat and the weeds do not include the hundreds of millions of people claiming to be Christians. But the weeds are persons with the heavenly calling who have been true Christians but who have rejected the ransom sacrifice and sinned against the holy spirit. They will be eternally annihilated.

The “goats” in the illustration of the sheep and the goats are not all the inhabitants of the nations of the world that are not true Christians. But they are persons who have been members of the true Christian congregations who have refused to support the brothers of Jesus, which are those with a heavenly calling. They have sinned against the holy spirit and will be eternally annihilated.

The everlasting destruction mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 1:6 does not refer to all people outside the Christian congregations. But it refers to those people who are like those who persecuted the Thessalonians in the 1st century CE.

The Governing Body: All who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses will be eternally annihilated

It is not true that the 8 billion+ persons who live when the great tribulation comes will be everlastingly annihilated. Only the few persons who are “willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked, those without the slightest spark remaining of conscience or love of righteousness” will not get a resurrection.

The cleaning of the earth

The atonement between God and man will be completed at the end of the millennium, when all those living on the earth have reached sinlessness and human perfection. Before the millennium starts the great tribulation will come. At that time 8 billion+ persons who are not serving God live on the earth. All these people will die in connection with the great tribulation, in order to clean the earth. But all these people, except those who have sinned against the holy spirit, will get a resurrection. And they will get the chance to accept or reject the salvation they are offered in the millennium.

The view of C.T. Russell and the Bible Students as well as J.F. Rutherford and the other leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses was that Jesus bought Adam and all his descendants, and therefore, they will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. The only error in this view was that Adam would get a resurrection. It is correct that he was bought by Jesus Christ and the ransom sacrifice was applied for him. But because he had sinned against the holy spirit, and there was no sacrifice for this sin, he will not get a resurrection.

In 1938, new and erroneous views of the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection were published in *The Watchtower*. Jesus did not die for all Adam's descendants but only for those who believed in him and were obedient to him. This would limit the resurrection, but this was not explicitly stated. In 1952, *The Watchtower* published an article that really limited the resurrection. It argued the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and those who died in the great flood will not get a resurrection. The article even rejected the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 11, that the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will get a resurrection.

This was, in reality, an attack on the full inspiration of the Bible. But there were leading brothers among Jehovah's Witnesses who could not accept all the conclusions of the article in *The Watchtower* in 1952. These brothers undertook a thorough study of what the Bible says regarding the ransom sacrifice and the resurrection. The result was the publication of 12 articles on the resurrection in *The Watchtower* of 1965. The views of a limited ransom sacrifice and a limited resurrection were now rejected.

The conclusion of the articles was that "the vast majority of dead humanity" will get a resurrection during the millennium.

Other articles in *The Watchtower* pointed out that Jesus bought all Adam's descendants, and that the ransom sacrifice would be applied to all these, even when they did not ask for it. This was the true teaching of the Bible.

However, in 1988, *The Watchtower* published an article that rejected what Jesus said about who will be resurrected, and the view of a limited resurrection was now reestablished. After this, in the 21st century, the Governing Body also devalued and restricted the ransom sacrifice: Jesus did not die for "all" humans, but for "all sorts of humans," those that will be saved. As we see, the view of the ransom sacrifice and resurrection have vacillated and gone back and forth in a zigzag fashion, with a correct view for 60 years until 1939, a wrong view for 27 years from 1938 to 1965, a right view for 23 years from 1965 to 1988, and a wrong view for 35 years from 1988 to the present.

THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

In contrast to all this wavering that is described above, there is one viewpoint that has stood firm for 84 years from the year 1939, and this viewpoint is wrong! This is seen in the following quotation from *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1939, page 181:

⁸ The foregoing text of Acts 15: 14-18 shows that the only ones that are going to be saved before and at Armageddon are those who constitute the kingdom class and the great multitude.

Only Jehovah's Witnesses will be saved and all others will be eternally annihilated is what this quotation says. This means, for example, that 8 billion+ people, most of whom have not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice, will be eternally annihilated in the great tribulation.

The wrong understanding:

The purpose of the preaching of the good news in the first century and in our time is to separate all the people on the earth into two groups, the people for Jehovah's name that will be saved, either in heaven or on the new earth, and all the others that will be eternally annihilated.

THIS IS A COMPLETE MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSE OF THE PREACHING OF THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM.

The correct understanding:

The purpose of the preaching in the first century CE was to gather a part of the 144,000 that will reign with Jesus in heaven. The purpose of the preaching in our time is first, to gather the rest of the 144,000, and second, to gather god-fearing people to be a part of the great crowd that will survive the great tribulation. There is no purpose of separating others from these two groups.

The purpose of the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom is directly related to “the times of restoration of all things,” (Acts 3:21), that started in 1914 when Jesus became king, and will reach its climax in the millennium. As a matter of fact, if the purpose of the preaching was to separate all humans into two groups, that would contradict the purpose of “the restoration of all things.” How so?

The restoration of all things is expressed by Peter in Acts 3:21, (above) and by Paul in Ephesians 1:10, (below) — both from NWT84:

²¹ whom heaven, indeed, must hold within itself until the times of restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time.

¹⁰ for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.

The words in 1:10 refer to the situation in the universe before Adam and Eve sinned. There was peace and unity in heaven and on earth. But after the sin entered, there was a need for a restoration of all things. The expression “all things” relates to the purpose of God when he created the two first humans. We read in Genesis 1:28:

²⁸ Further, God blessed them, and God said to them: “Be fruitful and become many, fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving on the earth.”

Adam and Eve should procreate children, and the paradise should be expanded to the whole earth. The perfect humans should live and continue to live without ever dying. A “restoration of all things” and “to gather all things together again in the Christ” means that God’s original purpose must be fulfilled. The earth must become a paradise where perfect humans live without dying.

But who should the humans who would see this restoration be? The descendants of Adam. And here is the situation: When Adam and Eve sinned, God could have taken their lives and created two new humans. He did not do that, and the logical argument has been that if God had killed Adam and Eve, he would also have killed their unborn offspring, and you and I would not have been born. But God’s purpose was that the offspring of Adam, including you and me, should experience the restoration of all things.

The restoration of all things means that each descendant of Adam must become perfect like Adam, and in this state, each descendant will personally get the same opportunity as Adam, either to worship God or to follow the Devil.

And now we can see how the view of separating all humans into two groups contradicts God’s purpose of the restoration of all things. The view of separating all humans into two groups implies that a great number of Adam’s offspring will be annihilated forever in their situation where they are sinners without having had any opportunity to learn the truth about Jehovah and about the ransom sacrifice, and to see the restoration of all things, so they could choose life.

The members of the Governing Body teach that when the great tribulation comes in the near future, 8 billion+ people will be eternally annihilated. And as I will show below, 6 billion+ of these have not had any opportunity to learn about God with the possibility of choosing to serve him. This view is a severe violation of the value of the ransom sacrifice, that Jesus bought *all* Adam’s descendants and that the ransom sacrifice will be applied for each one of Adam’s descendants in connection with the restoration of all things.

ONLY PERSONS WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BE ETERNALLY ANNIHILATED

The wrong understanding:

All persons living in the time of the end who are not true Christians will be eternally annihilated, regardless of whether they have had the chance to learn the truth about God or not.

The correct understanding:

Persons living in the time of the end whom the Bible says will be eternally annihilated have sinned against the holy spirit.

Most of the 8 billion+ people who are living when the great tribulation comes have not sinned against the holy spirit and will not be eternally annihilated. They will get a resurrection.

The Bible Students and J.F. Rutherford believed that all Adam's descendants will be resurrected and have the same chance as Adam at the end of the 1,000 years, when all who live on the earth will be perfect. Why did the leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses discard this view? We cannot know what happened before the first article against this view was published in 1938. And we cannot know which persons were behind this new view. But what we can know is that this view builds on a serious misunderstanding of several texts in the Bible.

CHRISTIANS WHO SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

I have shown that Jesus when he died bought all Adam's descendants and that the ransom sacrifice is applied to all these, so they get a resurrection during the millennium. But I have also mentioned that there is one exception, people in the world who sin against the holy spirit, and Christians who reject the ransom sacrifice and by this sin against the holy spirit. As I show in chapter 2, the ransom sacrifice is applied to all, including those who sin against the holy spirit. But when they sin against the holy spirit there is no ransom sacrifice for this sin, and therefore these people will not get a resurrection. I have already discussed this subject, but I discuss it in this place again because of a misunderstanding of the members of the Governing Body. For example, I will show below that the "goats" who will be eternally annihilated are not the nations of this world but Christians who have sinned against the holy spirit.

I quote from Hebrews 6:4-8:

⁴For as regards those who were once enlightened and who have tasted the heavenly free gift and who have become partakers of holy spirit ⁵and who have tasted the fine word of God and powers of the coming system of things, ⁶but have fallen away (*parapiptō*), it is impossible to revive them again to repentance (*metanoia*), ***because they nail the Son of God to the stake again for themselves and expose him to public shame.*** ⁷For the ground receives a blessing from God when it drinks in the rain that frequently falls on it and then produces vegetation useful to those for whom it is cultivated. ⁸But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is rejected and is near to being cursed, and in the end it will be burned.

The expression "have fallen away" is translated from the Greek verb *parapiptō* with the meaning "to abandon a former association, or to disassociate (a type of reversal of beginning to associate)," according to Louw and Nida. This verb only occurs one time, and therefore, we cannot define the verb on the basis of different contexts. The one context where the verb occurs shows that a person who "has fallen away" is beyond repentance, and this means that he has sinned against the holy spirit.

According to 1 Corinthians 5:1, a member of the congregation was guilty of sexual immorality by living with his father's wife. Paul writes that this man had to be disfellowshipped (5:13). Sometime later, the man was reinstated and again became a member of the congregation, something Paul agreed with. (2 Corinthians 2:5-8) Because he continued to have sexual relations with his father's wife, his sin was grave. But he was not beyond repentance. In connection with the behavior of the Corinthians, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:9, 10:

⁹ now I rejoice, not because you were just saddened, but because you were saddened into repenting (metanoia). For you were saddened in a godly way, so that you suffered no harm because of us. ¹⁰ For sadness in a godly way produces repentance (*metanoia*) leading to salvation, leaving no regret; but the sadness of the world produces death.

Paul shows that sadness in a godly way leads to repentance, but that is not the case with the sadness of the world. A person who has “fallen away” (*parapiptō*) according to Hebrews 6:6, is not able to show sadness in a godly way that would lead to repentance.

The situation of “falling away” (*parapiptō*) is also described in Hebrews 10:26-31:

²⁶ **For if we practice sin (*hamartanō*) willfully (*ekousiōs*) after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left,** ²⁷ but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a burning indignation that is going to consume those in opposition.

²⁸ Anyone who has disregarded (*atheteō*) the Law of Moses dies without compassion on the testimony of two or three. ²⁹ How much greater punishment do you think a person will deserve who **has trampled on the Son of God and who has regarded as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified,** and who has outraged (*enybrizō*) the spirit of undeserved kindness with contempt? ³⁰ For we know the One who said: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again: “Jehovah will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The adverbial *ekousiōs* (“willfully”) in verse 26 has according to Louw and Nida the meaning “pertaining to being deliberately intentional.” The adverbial occurs only one other place, namely in 1 Peter 5:2, where NWT13 translates it as “willingly.” There is one example of the corresponding adjective *ekousios* in Philemon 14. The NWT13 translates this adjective as “free will,” and the contrast to this is “under compulsion.”

All persons are sinners, and most violate God's laws of their free will. As shown above, the lexical meaning of the adverbial *ekousiōs* in Hebrews 10:26 is general. But the general meaning of “free will,” that imperfect humans are sinning by their free will, cannot be what the writer of Hebrews had in mind. Therefore, we need to look at the context in order to pinpoint its exact meaning.

Verse 28 speaks about the one who “has disregarded (*atheteō*) the law of Moses.” The verb *atheteō* has, according to Louw and Nida, the meaning “to refuse to recognize the validity of something,” and the Accordance lexicon has the meaning “to reject; to rebel against.” The parallel to the example of rebelling against the law of Moses is that a Christian “has trampled on the Son of God” which means that the person “has regarded as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified.” This means that the person has refused “to recognize the validity” of the blood of Jesus; he has rejected this blood or has rebelled against the ransom sacrifice.

The last part of verse 29 is particularly important. We read that the person “has outraged the spirit of undeserved kindness with contempt.” Literally, the Greek text says, “and the spirit of undeserved kindness (he) has insulted.” The verb *enybrizō* means according to Louw and Nida “to speak against someone in an insolent and arrogant way,” and the Accordance lexicon has the meaning “insult; mock.” These last words in verse 26 show that “willingly” includes a conscious insult of the holy spirit.

What the writer of Hebrews presents in 10: 28, 29 is a description of sin against the holy spirit. This sin is defined as “an intentional wicked course of action that continues despite the fact that the actor knows that his or her course is wrong, and it is done because of pure selfishness.” Supporting the view that the verses describe sin against the holy spirit, is the use of the verb *hamartanō* (“to sin”) as present participle active. This verb is correctly translated by NWT13 as “practice sin.” As I have shown, all the sins that are caused by the sinfulness we have inherited from Adam can be forgiven. But sins that a person does because of his own wickedness, which are not caused by the sin he has inherited from Adam, cannot be forgiven. The adverb *ekousios* (willingly”) refer to such unforgivable sins. And the present participle of the verb shows that these sins continue, they are practiced.

In order to show that very few people sin against the holy spirit, I again list the definition of this sin as it was defined in the article “Resurrection — for whom?” in *Awake!* of May 22, 1963, page 28:

There will not be a resurrection for the willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked, those without the slightest spark remaining of conscience or love of righteousness.

The definition above refers to those that have not had the opportunity to learn the truth about God and accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. Those who have become Christians have originally accepted the ransom sacrifice. In order to sin against the holy spirit, they need not become wicked to the extent the definition above outlines. If they willfully reject the ransom sacrifice, they have sinned against the holy spirit, as the quotes above from Hebrews chapters 6 and 10 show.

It is in a similar way with the final test after the 1,000 years. At that time, all who live on the earth are perfect, and none of them have developed an extreme wickedness. But if they choose to follow the Devil instead of Jehovah, they have sinned against the holy spirit, and deserve to be eternally annihilated.

All Adam’s descendants are bought by Jesus, and the ransom sacrifice has been applied to all of them. Because of this, they deserve to have a resurrection to get the opportunity to accept or reject the salvation they are offered. Only those who are extremely wicked will not get a resurrection, “those without the slightest spark remaining of conscience or love of righteousness.” We can see this clearly if we consider all the texts from the Hebrew Scriptures regarding all the wicked people who came to *sheōl* and will get a resurrection. And we also see it clearly when we read the words of Jesus regarding “the wicked and adulterous generation,” including the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, that will get a resurrection.

I will now analyze the different Bible texts that the members of the Governing Body wrongly have used to show that all those who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses when the great

tribulation comes will be eternally annihilated. I will in detail show how these texts have been misunderstood.

THE ILLUSTRATION AND PROPHECY ABOUT THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS

Now we have a good background for the right understanding of the illustration of the wheat and the weeds in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43:

²⁴ He presented another illustration to them, saying: “The Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to a man who sowed fine seed in his field. ²⁵ While men were sleeping, his enemy came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat and left. ²⁶ When the stalk sprouted and produced fruit, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷ So the slaves of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow fine seed in your field? How, then, does it have weeds?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy, a man, did this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go out and collect them?’ ²⁹ He said, ‘No, for fear that while collecting the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest season, I will tell the reapers: First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up; then gather the wheat into my storehouse.’”...

³⁶ Then after dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples came to him and said: “Explain to us the illustration of the weeds in the field.” ³⁷ In response he said: “The sower of the fine seed is the Son of man; ³⁸ the field is the world. As for the fine seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom, but the weeds are the sons of the wicked one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore, just as the weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be in the conclusion of the system of things. ⁴¹ The Son of man will send his angels, and they will collect out from his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling and people who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and they will pitch them into the fiery furnace. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be. ⁴³ At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Let the one who has ears listen.

Most of the illustrations of Jesus express general truths and are time indifferent. The illustration about the man who planted a vineyard in Luke 20:9-13 speaks about the killing of the son of the man, and this may refer to the killing of Jesus in 33 CE. Apart from this, I am aware of only four illustrations that have a clear time element, namely the illustration of the wheat and the weeds, the illustration of the sheep and the goats, the illustration of the dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50), and the illustration of the minas (Luke 19:11-27). All four illustrations give several concrete details, and they must be viewed as prophecies.

Verse 24 in chapter 13 shows that the illustration about the wheat and the weeds is an illustration about the Kingdom of the heavens. This means that all the prophetic elements of the illustration exclusively refer to the group of those who are called and chosen for a life in heaven and not to persons outside this group.

In the 1st century CE, the fine seed was sown when sincere persons entered the Kingdom of God, i.e., the Kingdom of his beloved Son. In the last part of that century, Satan the Devil sowed weeds when persons in the Christian congregation introduced false teachings and violated God’s laws. This bad influence is described in Jude, 2. Peter, 1 John, 2 John, and in Revelation, which were written at the end of the 1st century CE. In the second century, elders gave themselves more power and they made themselves into

bishops. And later a clergy of priests and bishops developed. Throughout the centuries, only a few sincere persons served God in spirit and truth according to the illustration. But there was no separate group of true Christians. This situation would continue until the harvest.

In the explanation of Jesus, there is a clear time frame. Verse 39 says that the harvest is *synteleia aiōnos*, which can correctly be translated as “a conclusion of a system of things” as does NWT13. In Matthew 24:3 we find the expression *synteleias tou aiōnos*, which is the same as the expression in 13:39. In 24:3, Matthew parallels *synteleias tou aiōnos* with the *parousia* (“presence”) of Jesus. This presence began in 1914 when Jesus started to reign in the midst of his enemies and the Kingdom of God was established. This period is also called “the time of the end” in Daniel 12:9.

At the beginning of this harvest time, aka “the conclusion of the system of things,” aka “the time of the end, aka “the presence of Jesus” between the year 1914 and the great tribulation the angels would do the harvest work.

According to verse 41, the angels “will *collect out from his Kingdom* all things that cause stumbling and people who practice lawlessness.” How can we understand these words? We note the words “The Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to...,” and this shows that the illustration exclusively relates to the heavenly Kingdom and to the 144 000 who would be chosen to reign with Jesus Christ in the heavens.

After his death and resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven, and while the Kingdom of God was not yet established, his use of kingly power entered a new phase. This is seen in Paul’s words in Colossians 1:13, 14:

¹³ He rescued us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ by means of whom we have our release by ransom, the forgiveness of our sins.

The Watchtower of April 1, 1966, page 198, (above) and of October 1, 2002, page 18, (below) have the following comments on the mentioned “Kingdom”:

The Kingdom promises first began to be realized when Christ Jesus was resurrected to heaven. On Pentecost 33 C.E. he poured out holy spirit on those believers present who were in line to be joint heirs with him in his kingdom. He thus began ruling as king toward such ones. That is why the apostle in his day could say that God “delivered us from the authority of the darkness and *transplanted us into the kingdom* of the Son of his love.” (Col. 1:13) God chose them to be heirs with his Son in the heavenly kingdom.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, he did not immediately take up the scepter of rulership over the peoples of the world. (Psalm 110:1) However, he did receive a “kingdom” with subjects that obeyed him. The apostle Paul identified that kingdom when he wrote: “[God] delivered us [spirit-anointed Christians] from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into *the kingdom of the Son of his love.*” (Colossians 1:13) This deliverance began at Pentecost 33 C.E. when holy spirit was poured out on Jesus’ faithful followers.—Acts 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:9.

Those who were baptized at Pentecost in 33 CE were “rescued” and “transferred into the Kingdom of his beloved Son.” Jesus acted now as a king toward the members of “the Kingdom of his beloved son,” i.e., the members of the Christian congregations. It is important to note that the world of mankind consisted of two different groups or entities: “the authority of the darkness” and “the Kingdom of the Son of his love.” Christians were rescued from one group and transferred to the other group.

The illustration shows that from the end of the 1st century CE and through the centuries there should be a few sincere individuals who served God among the false Christians. But no group of sincere Christians would be formed. However, this situation would change in the harvest time, which began in the year 1914. Historically speaking, the change started in the 1870s. Sincere persons from different Christian denominations came together to study the Bible in order to find the true Christian doctrines. This group was led by Charles T. Russell. In the 19th century, there was a loosely connected group of Bible Students. This means that “the Kingdom of his beloved Son” was now again functioning. Jesus acted as the leader for these sincere Christians, and as was the case in the first century, these Christians were “transferred into the Kingdom of his beloved Son.”

In 1914, Jesus became king and the heavenly Kingdom was established. This was the time of the harvest, and according to the prophecy, and as the fulfillment of the words of verse 30 in chapter 13, the angels “would gather the wheat into my storehouse.” This happened when the congregations that were loosely connected in the days of Russell now became united into one organization under the leadership of Joseph F. Rutherford. This organization is still functioning and God is still using it. But what is the fulfillment of the words in 13:41 that the angels “will collect out from his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling and people who practice lawlessness”?

In *The Watchtower* of March 1, 1984, page 31, the following question was discussed:

In Jesus’ parable of the wheat among the weeds, do the “weeds” include those who recently have become apostates?

No, for strictly speaking they are not “weeds.”

This illustration and Jesus’ explanation of it are found at Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43. In the “field,” which is the world, the “Son of man” sowed “fine seed,” representing “the sons of the kingdom,” genuine anointed Christians. Then the Devil sowed “weeds” that might appear to be “wheat,” but are actually “the sons of the wicked one,” evidently imitation Christians that exist at the same time as the wheatlike true Christians. This developed particularly after the apostles died. (2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7) *Through the centuries there have been many who merely claimed to be Christians, including the clergy who have spread false teachings.*

Jesus said that during the harvest period, the “conclusion of a system of things,” the “weeds” would be collected out and “burned with fire.” Some might view the small number of persons who recently turned apostate as “weeds” being collected out. But Jesus did not say that the “weeds” had once been “wheat” and then turned bad. They were sown as “weeds” and remained such, consistent with the genetic rule that vegetation reproduces “according to its kind.” (Genesis 1:11, 12) *We need to bear in mind, though, that in speaking of the “weeds” Jesus was foretelling a particular sort of false, or imitation, Christians who would appear. He was not discussing individuals of the “wheat” class who might go bad, becoming like rotten wheat stalks.*

The explanation that “the weeds” are false Christians “including the clergy who have spread false teachings” is only partially true. It is clear that the weeds are false Christians. But because the clergy and the members of Christian religions with unbiblical doctrines have never “been transferred into the Kingdom of his beloved Son” and they have never been a part of the true religion, they cannot be symbolized by the weeds. Jesus said that

the weeds would “be **collected out of** his Kingdom,” and therefore, they must be a part of this Kingdom, a part of the true Christian congregations.

A.H. Macmillan wrote the book *Faith on the March* (1957), where he tells about his life as a servant of Jehovah in the days when C.T. Russell, J.F. Rutherford, and N.H. Knorr were the leaders of Jehovah’s people. He does not discuss the prophecy about the wheat and the weeds, but in his book, we can see the fulfillment of this prophecy and the identification of the weeds.

Nelson Barbour cooperated with Russell for some time. But then he discarded the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and he and his followers showed that they were weeds. After the death of Russell, P.S.L. Johnson started a rebellion, and he and his friends showed that they were weeds. To this day, there are some groups of Russelites in different countries that originated in this rebellion.

The wheat was sown in the first century, and there are accounts of the increase of new believers. Acts 2:41 tells that 3,000 new believers were added to the congregations, 5:14 says that “great numbers of men and women” were added, 6:7 says that “the number of disciples kept multiplying very much in Jerusalem, and a large crowd of priests began to be obedient to the faith, and 11:21 says that “a great number became believers and turned to the Lord.” We do not know how many new believers were added to the faith in the first century. But the quotes above show that the number was quite large.

The wheat was gathered into the storehouse during the harvest, which is the presence of Jesus from the year 1914. In modern times, the sign that a person professed to have been called to the heavenly kingdom was that he or she ate the bread and drank the wine at the yearly celebrations of the Lord’s evening meal. What do the numbers of those who took the bread and wine tell us? I present the following numbers: 1922: 32,661; 1923: 42,000; 1924: 62,696; and 1925: 90,434.¹⁸ In addition to the highest number of 90,000 from 1925, there must have been a great number of Bible students during the 50 years from the 1870s to 1922 who also professed to have the heavenly calling. And during the 97 years from 1926 to the present, there have also been a great number who professed to have the heavenly calling.

If we add these numbers to the numbers from the 1st century CE, we get a number of several hundred thousand persons who professed to have been called to the heavenly kingdom. But the number of kingdom heirs is only 144,000. How can we interpret this discrepancy? There are two possible explanations.

First, there have been some of those professing to have the heavenly calling that did not have this calling. These persons were not wicked, and because of the ransom sacrifice, they are in line for a resurrection during the millennium. **Second**, the illustration of the olive tree in Romans chapter 11 shows that people of the nations that were grafted into the trunk would be broken off if they became unfaithful. And here we may have the fulfillment of verse 41 in Matthew chapter 13, that the angels “will collect out from his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling and people who practice lawlessness.” This is the same as breaking off branches on the olive tree.

Some of these people have “trampled on the Son of God and have regarded as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified,” as Hebrews 10:29

18. Source: *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1960, page 282.

says, and they have sinned against the holy spirit. Because of this, they have been collected out of God's kingdom, and they will be everlastingly annihilated. It is very important to realize that the "weeds" are not people of the nations, outside the Christian congregations, such as the members of Christian denominations with false doctrines.

The weeds are persons who were declared righteous, baptized with holy spirit, and who had become new creations, or persons who were in line of this, but who have turned against God and have rejected the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ and have practiced lawlessness.

Because these persons that are compared to weeds, have sinned against the holy spirit, the words that the angels "will pitch them into the fiery furnace" mean that they will be eternally annihilated.

THE ILLUSTRATION AND PROPHECY ABOUT THE SEPARATION OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

In *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1939, page 181, we read:

⁸The foregoing text of Acts 15: 14-18 shows that the only ones that are going to be saved before and at Armageddon are those who constitute the kingdom class and the great multitude.

This view that only Jehovah's Witnesses will be saved was particularly based on the illustration of the separation of the sheep and the goats. I quote from *The Watchtower* of April 1, 1938, page 110, (above) and October 1, 1939, pages 297, 298, (below):

110 Bible prophecy and the events of our day in fulfillment thereof prove that Christ Jesus is at the temple now, as a divine spirit, upon his throne of judgment and glory, *and before him are gathered all the nations for the purpose of being separated and judged*, as pictured in the parable of the sheep and goats.

297 The division is now rapidly taking place, *and the people of the nations are dividing themselves into the two classes, one designated "the goats"; and the other, who are of good will toward God, are known as the "other sheep" of the Lord*...When the battle of Armageddon begins, the winepress or vats will be full, because the dividing of the people will then be completed and the "goats" will be on the left hand and those of good will, the "other sheep", on the right hand of Christ Jesus, the Judge.

The words in the quotations show that the penalty of the goats has for 84 years been used as proof that only Jehovah's Witnesses will be saved in the great tribulation and that all others will be eternally annihilated. Let us look at the prophecy in Matthew 25:31-46:

³¹ "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right: 'Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. ³⁵ For I became hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you received me hospitably; ³⁶ naked and you clothed me. I fell sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and

you visited me.’³⁷ Then the righteous ones will answer him with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and receive you hospitably, or naked and clothe you?’³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’⁴⁰ In reply the King will say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’⁴¹ ‘Then he will say to those on his left: ‘Go away from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.’⁴² For I became hungry, but you gave me nothing to eat; and I was thirsty, but you gave me nothing to drink.’⁴³ I was a stranger, but you did not receive me hospitably; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not look after me.’⁴⁴ Then they too will answer with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying: ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.’⁴⁶ These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.’

The only denomination of which I am aware that is teaching that there are two different groups that will get everlasting life, one group of 144 000 that will rule with Jesus Christ in heaven, and another group without number that will live on the paradise earth, is Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The only hope that is given in the Hebrew Scriptures is that there will be a resurrection on the paradise earth. This is, for example, seen in Isaiah 65:21-25. The hope that is given in the Christian Greek Scriptures is that persons will be called and chosen to rule with Jesus Christ in heaven. However, that there will be a heavenly class and an earthly class is also clearly expressed in the Christian Greek Scriptures, as I have shown in chapter 1. One example is Hebrews 2:5, where we read about “the coming inhabited earth (*oikoumenē* “inhabited earth”; *mello* “to occur at a point of time” in the future”). This is a contrast to Hebrews 2:11-12 which speaks about “the children of God,” who are “the brothers of Christ,” and 3:1, where these brothers of Jesus are said to have “the heavenly calling.” The letter of Hebrews discusses Jehovah’s spiritual temple, and 10:19 says that based on his ransom sacrifice Jesus has opened a way for his brothers into the holy place, which means heaven.

In most instances where Jesus speaks about the future, either directly or by illustrations, he refers to the heavenly hope. But in his great prophecy about his presence and the conclusion of the system of things in Matthew chapters 24 and 25, he also discusses the earthly hope about the coming paradise. In 25:1 he speaks about the Kingdom of the heavens as a setting for the illustration of the foolish and discreet virgins, and in 25:31-46 he speaks about the coming earthly Kingdom. I will elucidate this.

THE PROPHECY IN MATTHEW 25:31-46 REFERS TO THE PRESENCE OF JESUS AND NOT TO HIS COMING IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

From the year 1923 and for 72 years, the view was that the words in 25:31 “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne,” refer to the establishment of the heavenly Kingdom in the year 1914 when Jesus Christ started to rule in the midst of his enemies. But *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1995, pages 22, 23, presented a different view:

²¹ How, though, will people in those nations fare when the Son of man arrives in his glory? Let us find out from the parable of the sheep and the goats, which begins with the words: “When

the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him.”—Matthew 25:31, 32.

²² Does this parable apply when Jesus sat down in kingly power in 1914, as we have long understood? Well, Matthew 25:34 does speak of him as King, so the parable logically finds application since Jesus became King in 1914. But what judging did he do soon thereafter? It was not a judging of “all the nations.” Rather, he turned his attention to those claiming to make up “*the house of God.*” (1 Peter 4:17) In line with Malachi 3:1-3, Jesus, as Jehovah’s messenger, judicially inspected the anointed Christians remaining on earth. It was also time for judicial sentence on Christendom, who falsely claimed to be “the house of God.” (Revelation 17:1, 2; 18:4-8) Yet nothing indicates that at that time, or for that matter since, Jesus sat to **judge people of all the nations finally as sheep or goats.**

²³ ***If we analyze Jesus’ activity in the parable, we observe him finally judging all the nations.*** The parable does not show that such judging would continue over an extended period of many years, as if every person dying during these past decades were judged worthy of everlasting death or everlasting life. It seems that the majority who have died in recent decades have gone to mankind’s common grave. (Revelation 6:8; 20:13) ***The parable, though, depicts the time when Jesus judges the people of “all the nations” who are then alive and facing the execution of his judicial sentence.***

²⁴ In other words, the parable points to the future when the Son of man will come in his glory. He will sit down to judge people then living. His judgment will be based on what they have manifested themselves to be. At that time “the distinction between a righteous one and a wicked one” will have been clearly established. (Malachi 3:18) The actual pronouncing and executing of judgment will be carried out in a limited time. Jesus will render just decisions based on what has become evident about individuals.—See also 2 Corinthians 5:10.

²⁵ ***This means, then, that Jesus’ ‘sitting down on his glorious throne’ for judgment, mentioned at Matthew 25:31, applies to the future point when this powerful King will sit down to pronounce and execute judgment on the nations.*** Yes, the judgment scene that involves Jesus at Matthew 25:31-33, 46 is comparable to the scene in Daniel chapter 7, where the reigning King, the Ancient of Days, sat down to carry out his role as Judge.

²⁶ ***Understanding the parable of the sheep and the goats in this way indicates that the rendering of judgment on the sheep and the goats is future. It will take place after “the tribulation” mentioned at Matthew 24:29, 30 breaks out and the Son of man ‘arrives in his glory.’ (Compare Mark 13:24-26.) Then, with the entire wicked system at its end, Jesus will hold court and render and execute judgment.—John 5:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.***

²⁷ This clarifies our understanding of the timing of Jesus’ parable, which shows when the sheep and the goats will be judged. But how does it affect us who are zealously preaching the Kingdom good news? (Matthew 24:14) Does it make our work less significant, or does it bring a greater weight of responsibility? Let us see in the next article how we are affected.

The person who wrote this article and the members of the Governing Body that read the article and approved it for publication showed that they did not know Greek, and therefore, they had not analyzed the Greek text of the verses. The reason I can say that is that the Greek text contradicts the basic claim of the article, ***that the illustration shows that all the nations of the world shall be judged as sheep or goats.*** I will show below that it is not all the nations of the world that will be judged as sheep and goats. ***But this judgment refers to some individuals that are inhabitants of these nations.*** Before I discuss this, I will look at the time setting.

THE TIME SETTING

The word “comes” in 25:31 is *erkbomai* (“come”) and we can find its reference on the basis of the context. In Acts 1:11 the word refers to Jesus’ return as king in 1914. But in Matthew 24:30, 42, 44, 46 it refers to the coming of Jesus in the great tribulation. However, the words about the transfiguration of Jesus on the holy mountain can help us find the correct time setting for Matthew 25:31.

I will now compare the words in Matthew 25:31 with what the gospel writers say about the transfiguration:

Matthew 25:31: ³¹“When the Son of man *comes in his glory, and all the angels* with him, *then he will sit down on his glorious throne.*”

Matthew 16:27, 28: ²⁷For the Son of man is to *come in the glory of his Father with his angels*, and then he will repay each one according to his behavior. ²⁸Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here who will not taste death at all until first they *see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom.*”

Mark 8:38, 9:1: ³⁸For whoever becomes ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man will also be ashamed of him when *he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.* ¹ Furthermore, he said to them: “Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here who will not taste death at all until first they *see the Kingdom of God already having come* (*erkbomai*, perfect participle active) *in power.*”

Luke 9:26, 27: ²⁶For whoever becomes ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of man will be ashamed of that person when *he comes in his glory and that of the Father and of the holy angels.* ²⁷ But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death at all until first they *see the Kingdom of God.*”

There are three important points in Matthew 25:31, 1) “*comes in his glory,*” 2) “*with the angels,*” and 3) “*sit down on his glorious throne.*” In the presentation of the transfiguration, the three gospel writers use the words “glory” and “angels” that we also find in Matthew 25:31. And the words “*sit down on his glorious throne*” in Matthew 25:31 has a parallel as well.

Six days after Jesus spoke his words, the apostles saw his transfiguration, and what they *saw in the vision* was not Jesus acting as judge in the great tribulation, but they saw “the Kingdom of God” and “the Son of man coming in his Kingdom.” These words can only refer to the Kingdom of God that was established in the year 1914. The words of Mark are particularly illuminating. He uses the perfect active participle of the verb *erkbomai* (“come”), and the translation must be “see the Kingdom of God having come.” (The word “already” in NWT13 is added and is not in the Greek text.) The point here is that the transfiguration *pictured* that the Kingdom of God had come, it was established. And what they saw was not the great tribulation that was the end of the presence of Jesus but rather its beginning.

One of the apostles who were on the holy mountain with Jesus and who saw his transfiguration was Peter. In his second letter, he referred to the transfiguration, and his words are important. 2 Peter 1:16-18 says:

¹⁶No, it was not by following artfully contrived false stories that *we made known to you the power and presence* (*parousia*) *of our Lord Jesus Christ*, but rather, we were eyewitnesses of his magnificence. ¹⁷For he received from God the Father honor and glory when words such as

these were conveyed to him by the magnificent glory: “This is my Son, my beloved, whom I myself have approved.”¹⁸ Yes, these words we heard coming from heaven while we were with him in the holy mountain.

Peter confirms the conclusion I already have reached that the transfiguration referred to the coming of Jesus as king in the year 1914 and the establishment of the heavenly Kingdom. Peter says directly that the transfiguration showed *the presence* of Jesus. When the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:31 parallels his words about the transfiguration, we have strong evidence that the words in verse 31 refer to the presence of Jesus from the year 1914 and not to his coming in the great tribulation.

One decisive argument against the fulfillment of the illustration in the great tribulation is that the view that all the inhabitants of the nations shall be separated into two groups, sheep and goats, contradict the Greek text of the illustration, as I will demonstrate. Therefore, it is completely wrong to claim that Jesus, according to Matthew 25:31, 32, will sit on his throne as judge in the great tribulation, and separate all humans in two groups, as sheep and goats.

THE EARTHLY KINGDOM THAT WILL MAKE THE EARTH A PARADISE

The illustration of Jesus does not refer to the Kingdom of the heavens as does the illustration of the five discreet and five foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. But verse 34 in chapter 25 shows that the reference is to the coming earthly Kingdom:

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right: ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit *the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.*’

When we look for clues that can identify “the Kingdom” that is mentioned, we need to consider the time factor that is mentioned in the verse, namely “the founding of the world.” According to Luke 11:50, 51, the foundation/founding (*katabolē*) of the world (the human family) was laid at the time of Abel when children were born to Adam and Eve. Hebrews 11:11 confirms that *katabolē* is connected with the procreation of children.

The expression “the founding of the world” is used in the letter to the Ephesians, and we read in 1:3, 4, (above) and 2:6, (below):

³ Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in union with Christ, ⁴ as he chose us to be in union with him *before the founding of the world*, that we should be holy and unblemished before him in love...

⁶ Moreover, he raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus.

These verses show that the hope of members of the congregation in Ephesus was to rule with Jesus Christ in his heavenly kingdom. What is particularly important in 1:4 is the use of the preposition. The verse says that the Ephesians whose hope was the heavenly Kingdom were chosen *before (pro) the founding of the world*. However, the Kingdom that the sheep would inherit according to Matthew 25:34 was prepared *from (apo) the founding of the world*. The two prepositions are mutually exclusive, and this shows that the Kingdom mentioned in 25:34 is a kingdom that is different from the heavenly Kingdom. The only alternative is the earthly Kingdom that will exist on the earth during the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus Christ. That there is both a heavenly Kingdom and an earthly Kingdom is

confirmed by Hebrews 2:5, where we read about “the coming inhabited earth” and 3:1 where we read about those who are “partakers of the heavenly calling.” We appreciate very much that Jesus mentions both the heavenly and the earthly kingdoms in his great prophecy about his presence.

The two different hopes, the heavenly one and the earthly one are not only seen in the use of the preposition *apo* (“from”) in contrast with the preposition *pro* (“before”) in the letter to the Ephesians. But it is also seen in the relationship with the persons that are mentioned.

The word “sheep” refers to persons who have God’s approval and who will inherit the earthly Kingdom. But there is another group that is mentioned, namely, “the brothers of Jesus” in 25:40. We have already seen that the group called the brothers of Jesus in Hebrews 2:11, who also are children of God according to 2:13, are “partakers of the heavenly calling,” according to 3:1. In chapter 1, I have shown that the brothers of Jesus that are mentioned together with the sheep also are partakers of the heavenly calling.

This conclusion is confirmed in the letter to Romans, chapter 8. Verses 29 and 30 say that Jesus is “the firstborn among many brothers,” whom God called to the heavenly Kingdom. Being brothers of Jesus, these individuals are also the children of God. Just as is the case in Matthew 25:31-46, two different groups are also mentioned in Romans 8:14-23:

¹⁴For all who are led by God’s spirit are indeed God’s sons. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: “*Abba, Father!*” ¹⁶The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that *we are God’s children*. ¹⁷If, then, we are children, we are also heirs—heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ—provided we suffer together so that we may also be glorified together. ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of the present time do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us. ¹⁹For *the creation* is waiting with eager expectation for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope ²¹*that the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God*. ²²For we know that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now. ²³Not only that, but we ourselves also who have the firstfruits, namely, the spirit, yes, we ourselves groan within ourselves while we are earnestly waiting for adoption as sons, the release from our bodies by ransom.

Paul shows that he and the Romans to whom his letter was addressed, were God’s sons or children (verses 14, 15). They were also joint heirs with Christ (verse 16), and they were earnestly waiting for the release of their bodies (Verse 23). Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:50 that “flesh and blood cannot inherit God’s Kingdom,” and in verses 35 to 49 he shows that in order to reign with Jesus Christ in heaven a person must die and get a spiritual body in his resurrection. This is “the release from our bodies.”

In addition to the mentioned group of God’s children who have the heavenly calling there is another group, “the creation” (verse 19), which refers to Adam’s descendants. They are “subjected to futility” (verse 20). But by the help of God’s children in the heavenly government they “will be set free from enslavement to corruption” during the millennium. At the end of this period when they have reached perfection, they themselves will “have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” Thus, we see that the earthly Kingdom is mentioned together with the heavenly kingdom in Romans chapter 8 and Hebrews chapters

2 and 3. And the heavenly kingdom is implied together with the earthly Kingdom in Matthew chapter 25.

THE IDENTITY OF THE GOATS

I have already mentioned that the conclusion in *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1995, that the words in Matthew 25:31 that Jesus “will sit down on his glorious throne” means that he will “**judge people of all the nations finally as sheep or goats**” in the great tribulation,” is contradicted by the Greek text of verse 32. I will elucidate this below but first I will discuss the view of the members of the Governing Body as to what is the basis for the adverse judgment of the goats. We find this in the book, *Our Incoming World Government —Gods Kingdom* (1977), pages 170-172:

NONSUPPORTERS OF THE INCOMING WORLD GOVERNMENT

¹⁷ In contrast with the King’s invitation to “inherit the kingdom [realm] prepared for [the righteous sheep] from the founding of the world,” there is the judgment pronounced upon the symbolic “goats” of the illustration. Regarding these the parable goes on to say:

¹⁸ “Then he will say, in turn, to those on his left, ‘Be on your way from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. For I became hungry, but you gave me nothing to eat, and I got thirsty, but you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger, but you did not receive me hospitably; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not look after me.’ Then they also will answer with the words, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them with the words, ‘Truly I say to you, To the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.’”—Matthew 25:41-45.

¹⁹ Here we might well ask, Does the King consider the matter as a mere unintentional oversight on the part of the “goat” class? ***Does he account their conduct as expressing merely ignorant neglect on their part? Certainly not, when we see that he calls these neglectful ones “cursed” and orders them to go off into the “everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.” The King must rate or judge them as being wicked, according to the Scriptural rule: “The curse of Jehovah is on the house of the wicked one, but the abiding place of the righteous ones he blesses.” (Proverbs 3:33) But why should the “goat” class be cursed for mere failure to come to the aid and relief of Christ’s “brothers”?***

²⁰ If we say that the symbolic “goats” were “cursed” and condemned to destruction with the Devil and his angels merely for *ignorantly* neglecting Christ’s “brothers,” then, logically, we must argue that the symbolic “sheep” were blessed and rewarded with a place in the Kingdom realm merely for *ignorantly* doing good to Christ’s “brothers.” What real merit would there be, then, in the good that the “sheep” did to Christ’s “brothers”? Or what demerit in the neglect that the “goats” did not realize that they were committing? Where, then, is the justice in rewarding the one ignorant class and punishing the other ignorant class? Justice is apparently nowhere in such treatment.

²¹ Let us grant that both classes were ignorant of the rule that what they did or did not do to Christ’s spiritual “brothers” they did or did not do to Christ himself. Still, they were not ignorant of the fact that they were dealing with his “brothers”! Why not?

²² We have to take Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats along with what he said earlier in his prophecy on “the sign of [his] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matthew 24:3) He spoke of the approved work for his spiritual “brothers” when, at Matthew 24:14, he told them: ***“This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.” Not just to the so-called Christian nations or to***

Christendom, but to “all the nations” in “all the inhabited earth.” Yet Jesus also told his spiritual “brothers”: “Then people will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name.”—Matthew 24:9.

²³ Hatred on account of his name means that Christ’s “brothers” would identify themselves by their preaching of “this good news of the kingdom” world wide and by their making disciples for him, baptizing these. (Matthew 28:19, 20) *In general, the people or the national governments that these people support refuse to acknowledge that these preachers of the Kingdom “good news” are Christ’s spiritual “brothers.”* But does this really disprove that they are actually Christ’s spiritual “brothers”? No!

²⁴ *This general refusal of people to recognize Christ’s spiritual “brothers” as being such, and this international hatred of them because of what they are preaching about the Kingdom have influenced people in their treatment of these.* Where a nation has a Bill of Rights defending freedom of worship, individuals may not join in violently persecuting Christ’s “brothers.” But out of fear of public opinion or because of agreeing with it, such abstainers from persecution refuse willfully to aid, relieve or support Christ’s “brothers.” So their negative attitude, their neglect, is not excusable.—Proverbs 29:18.

²⁵ *Jesus’ illustration of the sheep and the goats takes all of this into consideration. Failure to come to the aid and relief of Christ’s “brothers” carries along with it a failure to aid and support Christ’s kingdom, the incoming world government. This is a serious matter, and there is no middle ground, no compromise, no straddling of the fence, with respect to the issue of world government. Jesus Christ the King hates lukewarmness. (Revelation 3:16) Jesus also said: “He that is not on my side is against me, and he that does not gather with me scatters.” (Matthew 12:30; Luke 11:23) On this basis there is no injustice on Jesus’ part in declaring that the goatlike nonsupporters of his “throne” or kingdom are “cursed” and to be punished with the Devil and his angels.* The title “Devil” means “Slanderer,” and these “goats” are classed with the Chief Devil because they listen to the slanders of the Devil and his angels and are prejudiced against Christ’s “brothers.” (Revelation 12:10) They should share his fate.

²⁶ Let us, then, not be guilty of making excuses for the “goats” and thereby call into question the justice of Christ the King. Regardless of whether anyone likes the thought of it or not, Jesus’ illustration closes with regard to the judgment executed on the faulty “goats” and the righteous “sheep,” saying: “And these [symbolic goats] will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.” (Matthew 25:46) When will Christ the King tell these cursed “goats” to go off into the symbolic “fire,” the “cutting-off” (Greek: *ko’la·sis*)? After the preaching of the Kingdom good news has been carried on earth wide by his spiritual “brothers” and “the end” comes on this system of things that is now in its “conclusion.” (Matthew 24:3, 14) Then the “great tribulation” will break out world wide, but the “goats” will never survive it.—Matthew 24:21, 22.

²⁷ The everlasting “cutting-off” (*ko’la·sis*) of the “goats” is the opposite of the “everlasting life” with which the “sheep” are rewarded. It is an everlasting punishment, because this form of punishment will never be lifted from these “goats” who are executed in the “great tribulation.” They will never have a resurrection from the dead. They suffer that other death that the Bible speaks of, “the second death,” which is symbolized by “the lake of fire.” They will no more be released from this symbolic “lake of fire” than Satan the Devil and his demon angels will. (Revelation 20:10-15; Genesis 3:15) They will perish in the “great tribulation” that will reach its peak in the “war of the great day of God the Almighty” at Har-Magedon.—Revelation 16:14, 16; 19:11-21.

The identification of the goats and their sins is pure nonsense! The goats are identified as all the people of the nations that are not Jehovah’s Witnesses, and this identification is impossible for at least three reasons:

- 1) In order to fail to do good to the brothers of Jesus, the few Witnesses with heavenly calling, the goats have to be acquainted with these. But they refuse to support them. This means that the goats must be a part of the true Christian organization or being associated with this organization. This excludes most of the inhabitants of the earth that do not know and have not had any contact with Christ's brothers.
- 2) Today there are 8 billion people on the earth, and I will show below that more than 6 billion+ of these are ignorant regarding God's Kingdom and they have never had the opportunity to do anything good to Jesus' brothers or support God's Kingdom. That these ignorant persons are cursed and will be eternally annihilated would be a violation of God's righteousness and his love for mankind.
- 3) Greek grammar contradicts the view that the goats are identical to the nations of the world.

WHAT THE GREEK GRAMMAR TELLS US

The grammar that is important to understand are the rules regarding Greek nouns and the pronouns that refer back to these nouns. The rules in English regarding pronouns that refer back to nouns are quite similar to the rules in Greek. In order to illustrate the issue, I use an English example, namely, Matthew 5:28:

But I say to you that everyone who keeps on looking at a woman (*gynaika*, *feminine* singular accusative) so as to have a passion for her (*autēn*, third person *feminine* singular accusative) has already committed adultery with her (*autēn*, third person *feminine* singular accusative) in his heart.

*But I say to you that everyone who keeps on looking at a woman (*gynaika*, *feminine* singular accusative) so as to have a passion for him (*auton*, third person *masculine* singular accusative) has already committed adultery with him (*auton*, third person *masculine* singular accusative) in his heart.

The first quotation is grammatical because the pronouns referring back to the woman are feminine and “woman” (*gynaika*) is feminine. The second clause is marked with an asterisk because it is ungrammatical. It is not possible to use a masculine singular pronoun to refer back to a feminine singular noun. The rule is the same in Greek. A pronoun that refers back to a noun must have the same gender and number as the noun. Now we understand the rules that can help us answer the questions regarding the goats and the nations.

Below is my translation of Matthew 25:32:

And all the nations (*panta ta ethne*, plural nominative *neuter*) will be gathered before him. And he will separate **them** (*autous*, third person *masculine* plural accusative) from each other (*allēlōn*; *masculine* plural genitive), just as the shepherd is separating the sheep from the goats.

Just as “him” in the ungrammatical example above cannot refer back to “the woman,” the pronoun “them” that is masculine cannot refer back to “the nations” that are neuter. The conclusion is that those who will experience everlasting cutting-off are not all the inhabitants of the nations of the world who are not Jehovah's Witnesses, but they are **some unidentified persons** among these inhabitants. A parallel example is found in Matthew 28:19, with my literal translation (above) and NWT13 (below):

¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples **of all nations** (*ta ethnē*, *neuter* plural accusative), baptizing **them** (*autous*, personal pronoun third *masculine* plural accusative) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Go, therefore, and make disciples of **people of all the nations** (*panta ta ethne*, plural nominative *neuter*), baptizing them (*autous*, personal pronoun third *masculine* plural accusative) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.

The grammatical construction in Matthew 28:19 is similar to the construction in 25:32. “All the nations” are neuter and the following personal pronoun is masculine. Therefore, the personal pronoun cannot refer back to “all the nations.” The translators of NWT13 realized this, and therefore they added the words “**people of**” before “all the nations.” Thus, the personal pronoun “them” refers back to “**people of**” all the nations. Because the construction of 28:19 is similar to the construction of 25:32, those who are separated as goats are **people of** all the nations and not all the inhabitants of all the nations.

There is also a parallel example in Revelation 20:8, 9, and my translation is:

⁸And he [Satan] will go out to mislead (*planaō*, aorist active infinitive) the nations (*ta ethnē*, *neuter* plural accusative) those in the four corners of the earth, the Gog (masculine singular accusative) and Magog, to gather (aorist active infinitive) **them** (*autous*, personal pronoun third person *masculine* plural accusative) to the war, being (*ōn*, relative pronoun, masculine plural accusative) their (*autōn*, personal pronoun third person *masculine* plural accusative) number like the sand of the sea. ⁹And they went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the encampment of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and devoured them (*autous*, personal pronoun third person *masculine* plural accusative)

In verse 8, the verb “mislead” (*planaō*) is aorist infinitive. An infinitive has no temporal reference, and this infinitive shows the purpose of Satan, namely, “to go out to mislead the nations.” But the text does not say that he succeeded in misleading the nations. To the contrary, the text says that Satan will “gather **them**.” The personal pronoun “**them**” is masculine, and therefore it cannot refer back to the nations that are neuter.

So, the situation is exactly the same as with those that would be baptized (Matthew 28:19): people of all the nations and not all the nations would be baptized. The situation is also the same as with the goats: they are not all the inhabitants of the nations, but some of these inhabitants. Satan will not mislead the nations at the four corners of the earth, but some people of these nations. This is seen by the use of the masculine personal pronoun three times in Revelation 20: 8, 9.

What about Gog and Magog? The word “Gog” has the masculine singular article, and therefore, Gog cannot refer back to the nations that are neuter plural. The word Magog does not have the article, but grammatically speaking, when two names are connected with “and,” only the first name has the article, and the article is implied in connection with the second name. This means that Gog and Magog are grammatically dual, and because of this, the plural pronoun “them” refers back to Gog and Magog. This means that “Gog and Magog” are not the designations of the nations at the four corners of the earth. But the people of these nations who attack the encampment of the holy ones and the beloved city are called “Gog and Magog.”¹⁹

19. The distinction between the nations of the earth and those who will be judged is seen by expositors of the gospel of Matthew. For example, Robert H. Gundry says in his book *Matthew A*

After I had written this chapter, I discovered that *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1949, pages 150 and 156, used the same argument that I have used. We read:

Not the nations as political bodies, but the people, the individuals in all these nations, are the ones that are separated into two classes. This is indicated for us in the original Greek text of the parable. *There the word nations is in the neuter gender, but the pronoun them (referring to those who are separated) is in the masculine gender and hence does not refer to nations.* A few modern translations take note of this fact and read, at Matthew 25: 32: “And all the nations shall be gathered together before him. And he shall separate men one from another, as the shepherd doth separate the sheep from the goats.” The people as individuals are the ones separated from one another. The political nations, being all in opposition to earth's rightful King, are all on his left side and are doomed to be smashed to pieces by his iron rod. So the question is, Which individuals of the people will perish then with the nations....

In the parable the “goats” are all those people on earth at this time who have been reached directly or indirectly by the issue over Christ's brothers and who take a willful stand on the issue, and that against the King. Only such persons the King could address as he does, saying they had an opportunity to do good to his brothers whose condition they saw and yet they refused to do so, thus sinning.

I have shown in my book, *My Beloved Religion — And The Governing Body*, third edition, and in several articles that the Watchtower literature in the four decades after the end of World War II stressed deep interactive Bible study. This is an example of such a study. The problem today when deep interactive study no longer is done is that the present members of the Governing Body either are not aware of what the Greek text of the illustration of the sheep and the goat says, or they simply ignore it.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE NATIONS ARE NOT THE GOATS

It was important for the author of the book *Our Incoming World Government — Gods Kingdom* (1977) to show that the goats do not get an adverse judgment because of ignorance but because they fail to support the Kingdom of God. It is correct that the prophecy says that the goats are wicked, and this means that they are responsible for their actions. But the responsibility that the book ascribes to the goats simply is fiction. Verse 40 in chapter 25 says that the goats will be judged because they did not do the right things to “these my brothers.” And Jesus said according to verse 45 that “to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.”

During the last 60 years, the number of Christians with the heavenly calling has been low. Those who are taking the bread and vine at the memorial of the death of Jesus, and by this signifying that they have the heavenly calling, have been between 10,000 and 20,000. Anointed brothers have taken the lead in the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, and doing good to the brothers of Jesus would mean to support the organization where

Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art, page 512, “The shift from the neuter *panta ta ethnē*, “all the nations,” to the masculine *autous*, “them,” implies individual rather than national judgment (cf. 28:19, 29).

they are taking the lead. And in order to do that, it is not enough having heard about God's organization, or having heard the good news of the kingdom being preached by one of Jehovah's servants.

I will illustrate this with two quotations about the people of Capernaum. We read in Mark 1:21-28, (above) and Matthew 11:23, 24, (below):

²¹ And they went into Ca·per'na·um. As soon as the Sabbath began, he went into the synagogue and started to teach. ²² And they were astounded at his way of teaching, for he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was a man in their synagogue who was under the power of an unclean spirit, and he shouted: ²⁴ "What have we to do with you, Jesus the Naz'a·rene'? Did you come to destroy us? I know exactly who you are, the Holy One of God!" ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked it, saying: "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, after throwing the man into a convulsion and yelling at the top of its voice, came out of him. ²⁷ ***Well, the people were all so astonished that they began to discuss it among themselves, saying: "What is this? A new teaching! He authoritatively orders even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."*** ²⁸ So the report about him spread quickly in all directions throughout the entire region of Gal'i·lee.

²³ And you, Ca·per'na·um, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to the Grave (*hadēs*) you will come; because if the powerful works that took place in you had taken place in Sod'om, it would have remained until this very day. ²⁴ ***But I say to you, it will be more endurable for the land of Sod'om on Judgment Day than for you.***"

Most people of Capernaum would have been present in the synagogue in Capernaum when Jesus preached there. He taught with authority, and Matthew says that those who heard Jesus "were astounded at his way of teaching." In the synagogue, there was a man with an unclean spirit, and Jesus expelled the demon from the man. How did the people who heard his preaching and saw the expelling of the demon react? They began to discuss among themselves whether he presented a new teaching, and how he could give orders to the demons to the point where they obeyed him.

We can hardly find a situation where the people would get a better chance to accept God's truth than by hearing the preaching of Jesus and seeing his miracles. But what was the final outcome? The people of Capernaum refused to believe in Jesus. What would the destiny of these people be who rejected the good news of the Kingdom? After they were dead, they will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. They came to *hadēs*, according to Jesus, from where there is resurrection. And they will be present on Judgment Day.

This example shows that persons who have never had the opportunity to learn God's truth, and persons who have heard the preaching of the good news but have not responded to it, cannot be said to have refused to do good to "these my brothers." Only persons who are a part of the people of God or are closely associated with this people, and who personally know the brothers of Jesus, can be said to have refused to do good to the brothers of Jesus.

Let us now look at the inhabitants of the nations of the earth in connection with the preaching of the good news of the kingdom. According to the 2022 "Service Year Report of Jehovah's Witnesses," 8,699,048 publishers were preaching the good news of the Kingdom in 239 lands. And they spent 1,501,797,703 hours in this preaching. This seems very impressive. However, what has this preaching achieved in connection with giving

each living person a chance to hear the good news of the Kingdom and to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ?

Today, there are 8 billion inhabitants on the earth. Of these, there are 2 billion children below 14 years and 800 million persons with mental health disorders. These constitute 35% of the world population, and most of them neither have had the chance nor the capacity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.

When we look at the report of Jehovah's Witnesses, we see that there are relatively few preachers in India with 1.4 billion inhabitants, and in China also with 1.4 billion inhabitants. In Asia, there are 4.6 billion inhabitants, most of whom have not heard the good news of the kingdom. If we, to this number, add the 1 billion children and 400 million persons with mental health disorders from other parts of the earth, we get the number of 6,0 billion. This is 75% of the world's population, and most of them have not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice or to be acquainted with the brothers of Jesus.

In Europe, Australia, and America, there has been much preaching of the Kingdom. How will the situation develop toward the great tribulation? The world population increases by 140 million persons each year, and Jehovah's Witnesses increase with about 300,000 persons. This means that the ratio between the Witnesses and the world population increases each year. Therefore, the number of those who today have not had the chance to be acquainted with the brothers of Jesus increases each year until the great tribulation comes because the ratio between the preachers of the Kingdom and the world population will all the time increase. Thus, more than 75% of the humans who live on the earth when the great tribulation comes will be ignorant regarding the ransom sacrifice and the way to get everlasting life, and they will not know anything about the brothers of Jesus.

In spite of this, the members of the Governing Body claim that the 6 billion+ who live when the great tribulation comes and who are ignorant regarding God's Kingdom are cursed by God to go "into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." And the same is true with most of the 2 billion+ who live in countries with much preaching but who have not taken a standpoint in favor of God's Kingdom.

One of the reasons why Russell and the Bible Students rejected the doctrine of eternal torment was that it contradicted God's righteousness and love. And the doctrine that God will destroy more than 6 billion people forever, people who have not had the chance to choose everlasting life must be rejected for the very same reasons. This clearly contradicts Jehovah's righteousness and love. But the truth is, as I will demonstrate below, that the vast majority of the 8 billion+ people who live when the great tribulation comes, will be present in the millennium and then will get the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice.

THE TRUE IDENTIFICATION OF THE GOATS

I have shown above that Jesus did not say that *the nations of the world* would be separated as sheep and goats. But he said that *people from these nations* would be separated. Please take a look at the verses in Matthew 25:41-46 one time more:

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left: 'Go away from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. ⁴² For I became hungry, but you gave

me nothing to eat; and I was thirsty, but you gave me nothing to drink.⁴³ I was a stranger, but you did not receive me hospitably; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not look after me.’⁴⁴ Then they too will answer with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?’⁴⁵ *Then he will answer them, saying: ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.’*⁴⁶ *These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.”*

In order to refuse to come to the aid and relief of the brothers of Jesus (these least ones), the goats must have identified and known these brothers of Jesus. The only place where that would be possible would be inside the congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses where the anointed brothers of Jesus are. This means that the goats are not the several billion humans outside the Christian congregations who live on this earth. But the goats are persons who in one way or another have been associated with Jehovah’s Christian congregations, but who have followed the bad example of some anointed Christians that we read about in Hebrews 6:1-8:

¹ Therefore, now that we have moved beyond the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying a foundation again, namely, repentance from dead works and faith in God,² the teaching on baptisms and the laying on of the hands, the resurrection of the dead and everlasting judgment.³ And this we will do, if God indeed permits.⁴ For as regards those who were once enlightened and who have tasted the heavenly free gift and who have become partakers of holy spirit⁵ and who have tasted the fine word of God and powers of the coming system of things,⁶ but have fallen away, *it is impossible to revive them again to repentance, because they nail the Son of God to the stake again for themselves and expose him to public shame.*⁷ For the ground receives a blessing from God when it drinks in the rain that frequently falls on it and then produces vegetation useful to those for whom it is cultivated.⁸ But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is rejected and is near to being cursed, and in the end it will be burned.

The persons who are mentioned in these verses were not ignorant. They had been enlightened, and they had first accepted the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. But instead of accepting this free gift of everlasting life, they fell away. The word *parapiptō* has the meaning “to abandon a former relationship or association.” These persons consciously rejected the worship of Jehova and the kingship of Jesus Christ, and therefore they deserved to get an adverse judgment. In a similar way, the goats have also rejected the ransom sacrifice, and they have refused to support the brothers of Jesus who have taken the lead in the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom.

This means that there is a resemblance between “goats” in the illustration of Matthew chapter 25 and the “weeds” in the illustration of Matthew chapter 13. The “weeds” are persons of the heavenly calling, and those in line for this, who reject the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, and the “goats” are persons who are in line for the earthly paradise but who reject the ransom sacrifice.

THE NATIONS WILL NOT BE ETERNALLY ANNIHILATED BUT WILL BE PRESENT IN THE MILLENNIUM

In connection with the data showing that it is not “the nations” that will “depart into everlasting cutting-off” but “some people from the nations,” it is interesting to show that

“the nations” will be present on the earth during the millennium. We read in Revelation 20:2, 3:

²He seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years. ³And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, *so that he would not mislead the nations* (*ethnos*) anymore until the 1,000 years were ended. After this he must be released for a little while.

The Devil was bound to prevent him from misleading the nations, and this shows that “the nations” are present on earth during the millennium. This issue is discussed in detail in chapter 8. But here I quote three passages dealing with the nations, Revelation 20:7-9, (above) 21:23-26, (middle) and 22:1, 2 (below):

⁷Now as soon as the 1,000 years have ended, Satan will be released from his prison. ⁸and he will go out to mislead *those nations* (*ethnos*) in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Ma’gog, to gather them together for the war. The number of these is as the sand of the sea. ⁹And they advanced over the whole earth and encircled the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and consumed them.

²³And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp was the Lamb. ²⁴And *the nations* (*ethnos*) will walk by means of its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.²⁵Its gates will not be closed at all by day, for night will not exist there. ²⁶And they will bring the glory and the honor of *the nations* (*ethnos*) into it.

¹And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of its main street. On both sides of the river were trees of life producing 12 crops of fruit, yielding their fruit each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the healing of *the nations*.

Revelation 20:7-9 shows that the nations are present on earth at the end of the 1,000 years. The Devil will try to mislead them, but he will only be able to mislead some people of the nations. Chapters 21 and 22 in Revelation discusses events that will occur during the millennium. Verses 23-26 in chapter 21 show that the nations will walk in the light of New Jerusalem during the millennium and will be illuminated or taught by the heavenly government. And 22:1, 2 shows that the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations. The point is that the inhabitants of the nations will be present on the earth during the millennium and that they will be taught and healed. So, they have not been eternally annihilated.

WHO WILL EXPERIENCE EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION ACCORDING TO 2 THESSALONIANS 1:9?

The second letter to the congregation in Thessalonica tells about the revelation of Jesus in the great tribulation when some people will be judged. Second Thessalonians 1:9 says:

⁹These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of *everlasting destruction* (*olethros aiōn*) from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength.

The Greek word *olethros* means “a state of utter ruin or destruction” according to Louw and Nida. The Greek word *aiōn* can refer to the characteristics of a particular period of time, and it can be translated as “system of things,” as does NWT13. However, it can also refer exclusively to time. In that case, the meaning is “pertaining to an unlimited duration

of time,” according to the same source. It is logical that the two words *olethros* and *aiōn* together refer to an everlasting annihilation, as is the view of the members of the Governing Body. The important question is who those persons are who will be destroyed forever. Paul shows that the members of the congregation accepted the good news under difficult conditions, and 1. Thessalonians 1:6 says:

⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, seeing that you accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Mac·e·do·ni·a and in A·cha'ia.

The study note to the verse says:

under much tribulation: This refers to the persecution experienced by the Thessalonian congregation soon after Paul and Silas introduced the good news to them. Enraged by the spread of the good news, fanatic Jewish opposers incited a mob to storm the house where Paul was staying. Not finding Paul there, they dragged his host, Jason, and some others before the city rulers and accused them of sedition. The brothers urged Paul and Silas to leave the city under cover of night and travel to Beroea. (Ac 17:1-10) Remarkably, the holy spirit enabled those Thessalonian Christians to maintain joy despite this persecution.

This is a fine description. The members of the congregation in Thessalonica did not only accept the word under much tribulation. But they continued to suffer at the hands of the Greek population who lived around them. 1. Thessalonians 2:14-16 says:

¹⁴For you, brothers, became imitators of the congregations of God in union with Christ Jesus that are in Ju·de'a, *because you suffered at the hands of your own countrymen the same things that they also are suffering at the hands of the Jews,* ¹⁵ who even killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us. Furthermore, they are not pleasing God, but are against the interests of all men, ¹⁶ as they try to prevent us from speaking to people of the nations so that these might be saved. In this way they always fill up the measure of their sins. But his wrath has at last come upon them.

Paul says that the Thessalonians were suffering from their fellow Greeks in the same way as the congregations in Judea were suffering at the hands of their fellow Jews. Paul then refers to the Jews and he points out that they “fill up the measure of their sins.” Whether Paul means that their actions were sin against the holy spirit, as in the case of some of the Pharisees, we do not know.

In his second letter, Paul focuses on those who persecuted the Thessalonians, and in 1:3-10 he says:

³We are obligated always to give thanks to God for you, brothers. This is fitting, because your faith is growing exceedingly and the love of each and every one of you is increasing toward one another. ⁴As a result we ourselves take pride in you among the congregations of God because of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the hardships that you are suffering. ⁵This is a proof of the righteous judgment of God, leading to your being counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you are indeed suffering. ⁶*This takes into account that it is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you.* ⁷But you who suffer tribulation will be given relief along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels ⁸ in a flaming fire, *as he brings vengeance on those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.* ⁹*These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength,* ¹⁰ at the time when he comes to be glorified in connection

with his holy ones and to be regarded in that day with wonder among all those who exercised faith, because the witness we gave met with faith among you.

Verses 8 and 9 have been used in the Watchtower literature as proof that all persons who are alive when the great tribulation starts except Jehovah's Witnesses will experience everlasting annihilation. But the text does not say that. Three characteristics are mentioned in connection with those who will be annihilated, 1) they have made tribulation for the Thessalonians, 2) they do not know God, and 3) they do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus Christ.

Regarding point 2), the study note says:

those who do not know God: *Paul refers to those who willfully decide that they will not develop a relationship with Jehovah* and become his friends. In contrast, those who "know God" do more than acknowledge that he exists; they have more than superficial knowledge of him. They take steps to develop a close friendship with him; they know his likes and dislikes. They love him and live by his standards. (1Jo 2:3, 4; 4:8) Those who truly know God have the honor of being "known by him" (1Co 8:3), which means having his approval.—See study notes on Joh 17:3; Ga 4:9.

This is a logical explanation because "not knowing God" is mentioned in connection with "not obeying the good news." This suggests a *willful ignorance* as the study note says. Before Paul became a Christian, he persecuted the Christians. But as he says in 1 Timothy 1:13, "I acted in ignorance and with a lack of faith." This means that in addition to having the three characteristics, Jehovah sees that the actions of these persons are not caused by inherited sin but they are caused by wicked persons, just as some of the Pharisees were.

But how could the revelation of Jesus Christ be connected with the persecution of the Thessalonians in the first century CE? It could suggest that the revelation of Jesus Christ was imminent. However, the verses in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 are written to counter such a view:

¹ However, brothers, concerning the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you ²not to be quickly shaken from your reason nor to be alarmed either by an inspired statement or by a spoken message or by a letter appearing to be from us, **to the effect that the day of Jehovah is here** (*enistēmi*)³ Let no one lead you astray in any way, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness gets revealed, the son of destruction. ⁴ He stands in opposition and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits down in the temple of God, publicly showing himself to be a god. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is acting as a restraint, so that he will be revealed in his own due time. ⁷ True, the mystery of this lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who is right now acting as a restraint is out of the way. ⁸ **Then, indeed, the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will do away** (*anaireō*) **with by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing** (*katargeō*) **by the manifestation of his presence.** ⁹ But the lawless one's presence is by the operation of Satan with every powerful work and lying signs and wonders ¹⁰ and every unrighteous deception **for those who are perishing** (*apollymi*), **as a retribution because they did not accept the love of the truth in order that they might be saved.** ¹¹ That is why God lets a deceptive influence mislead them so that they may come to believe the lie, ¹² in order that they all may be judged because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness.

I will look at some of the expressions in the text. The verb in the clause in verse 2, "to the effect that the day of Jehovah is here," is *enistēmi*, and according to Mounce the

meaning is “to stand close upon; to be at hand; impend; to be present.” The verb is perfect active indicative, so the rendering “is here” is a good translation. However, the perfect can also refer “to the point of coming.” But this is a rare meaning and there is nothing in the context that would suggest this meaning.

The point of Paul is that before the revelation of Jesus, several things must happen. One thing is that “the lawless one” will come. This may be a reference to a group of people rather than to one person. Jesus will “do away with” and “bring to nothing” the lawless one. The verb *anairēō* in verse 8 has the meaning “to take up; lift, as from the ground; to take off; put to death; kill; murder,” according to Mounce. The verb *katargeō* in verse 8 has the meaning “to render useless or unproductive; occupy unprofitable,” according to the same source. The “lawless one” will be taken away, but we do not know exactly what that means for the future destiny of the “lawless one,” or for the group that is symbolized by these words.

Paul speaks about “those who are perishing,” in verse 10, and the verb “perishing” is translated from *apollymi*, with the meaning, “to destroy utterly; to kill; to bring to nought; make void, loose,” according to Mounce. Because the verb is present participle, the action is ongoing and not completed. The phrase, “that they might be saved,” can be misunderstood. This is an example of what I showed in chapter 1 that we must understand, that there are two different hopes of salvation in order to understand the text of the Bible.

The expression “be saved” has a restricted meaning because the Thessalonians were called to reign together with Jesus in the heavenly kingdom. So, “to be saved” refers to be a member of the heavenly kingdom. But “a deceptive influence misled them,” so they will not be saved. But to be misled is very far from being “willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked,” which is one definition of sin against the holy spirit. So, persons who have been misled may get a resurrection on Judgment Day.

Let us now return to the question of how the revelation of Jesus Christ, that is connected with the great tribulation, may have a bearing on the judgment of those who persecuted the Thessalonians in the first century CE. Revelation 1:7 may give an answer:

⁷ Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him. Yes, Amen.

These words probably refer to the revelation of Jesus in connection with the great tribulation. Those “who pierced him” will not be alive at the revelation of Jesus. But these words show that there will be persons present at his revelation *that are like* those who pierced him. In a similar way, those who persecuted the Thessalonians will not be present at the revelation of Jesus. But persons *that are like* them, who persecute the Christians because of their wickedness will be present. These will be “willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked,” and therefore they deserve everlasting destruction.

The important point to keep in mind is that “judicial punishment of everlasting destruction” cannot be applied to all persons that are not Jehovah’s Witnesses. In this context, it can only be applied to those who persecute Christians in the same way and with the same motive as those who persecuted the Thessalonians in the 1st century CE.

The wrong view of this section is:

*The “weeds,” the “goats,” and those who persecuted the Thessalonians represent **all** the people of the world that are outside the Christian organization, and these will be eternally annihilated.*

The correct view of this section is:

The “weeds” and the “goats” represent persons inside the Christian organization that have sinned against the holy spirit, and these will be eternally annihilated. Persons who persecute the Christians and are like those who persecuted the Thessalonians will be eternally annihilated as well.

ALL PERSONS WHO DIE DURING THE TIME OF THE END WILL GET A RESURRECTION, EXCEPT THE FEW THAT HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is very important that we do not read into the Scriptures ideas that are not there. This has been done over and over again by the members of the Governing Body. Therefore, it is important that we carefully analyze all the scriptures we use, so we can be certain that we present what these Scriptures really say.

THE VIEW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY REGARDING THOSE WHO LIVE WHEN THE GREAT TRIBULATION COMES

What is the reason why the members of the Governing Body will not take the words of Jesus regarding the resurrection at face value? The Study Edition of *The Watchtower* of May 2022, article 21, paragraphs 8 and 10 says:

⁸As mentioned in the preceding article, the political elements of this world will soon turn on Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. (Rev. 17:16, 17) This action will mark the beginning of the great tribulation. Will this result in a flood of new ones deciding to turn to worship Jehovah? No. To the contrary, Revelation chapter 6 shows that at that critical time, people who are not serving Jehovah will seek protection from the political and commercial systems of this world, which are compared to mountains. **Since those people will not take a stand in favor of God’s Kingdom, Jehovah will consider them to be opposers.**— Luke 11:23; Rev. 6:15-17...

¹⁰ How will Jehovah react to this vicious attack? He tells us: “My great rage will flare up.” (Ezek. 38:18, 21-23) Revelation chapter 19 describes what happens next. Jehovah sends forth His Son to defend His people and to defeat their enemies. Jesus will be joined in this counterattack by “the armies in heaven”—the faithful angels together with the 144,000. (Rev. 17:14; 19:11-15)

What is the outcome of this war? The total annihilation of all humans and organizations opposing Jehovah!—Read Revelation 19:19-21.

The quotation says that all who have not taken a stand for God’s Kingdom are opposers, and those who are opposing Jehovah will experience total annihilation. Their situation is described in the same article in paragraph 17:

¹⁷ Does this mean that everyone will be resurrected to life on earth during the Thousand Year Reign? No. ***Those who wickedly rejected the opportunity to serve Jehovah before their death will not be raised to life.*** They had their chance and proved that they were not worthy of life on the Paradise earth.—Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 17:8; 20:15.

There are several points in the quotations above that we must note. The setting in the article is clear. There is a group of Jehovah’s Witnesses when the great tribulation starts, and all other persons are against Jehovah and his Kingdom. The Witnesses (20 million+) will survive the great tribulation but all others (8 billion+) will experience total annihilation.

In the discussion that follows I will show:

- 1) The view that people who die in connection with the great tribulation will be eternally annihilated is wrong.
- 2) Most persons who have died during the time of the end and who die in connection with the great tribulation have not had a full opportunity to serve God, and therefore, they have not “wickedly rejected” this opportunity, as the quotation above says.
- 3) Only those few persons who sin against the holy spirit will be eternally annihilated. These are Christians who have rejected the ransom sacrifice and persons who are incorrigibly wicked.

I again quote the article, “Resurrection — for whom?” in *Awake!* of May 22, 1963, page 28. Regarding those who will not get a resurrection the article, the article says:

There will not be a resurrection for the willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked, those without the slightest spark remaining of conscience or love of righteousness.

This is an excellent definition of sin against the holy spirit. Only persons who match this definition and Christians who have rejected the ransom sacrifice will not get a resurrection.

THE TRANSITION FROM THE OLD SYSTEM OF THINGS TO THE NEW SYSTEM OF THINGS

Peter speaks about the restoration of “all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old” in Acts 3:21. This restoration started when Jesus became king in the year 1914, but the grand fulfillment of Peter’s words will come during the millennium. The purpose of the millennium is that all the descendants of Adam, except the few that have sinned against the holy spirit, will get a resurrection so they can have the opportunity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice of Jesus.

The 144,000 brothers of Jesus will serve as kings, priests, and judges, during the millennium, and they will ensure that the laws of God are followed and that justice will

be served while the earth gradually becomes a paradise. In order to understand what will happen during the millennium we must look at texts that directly and indirectly give this information. I will do that in chapter 8. But before I do that, I will refer to an important principle and procedure that we find in the account of the death and resurrection of Lazarus in John 11:38-44:

³⁸Then Jesus, after groaning again within himself, came to the tomb. It was, in fact, a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said: ***“Take the stone away.”*** Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to him: “Lord, by now he must smell, for it has been four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her: “Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took the stone away. Then Jesus raised his eyes heavenward and said: “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.” ⁴²True, I knew that you always hear me; but I spoke on account of the crowd standing around, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said these things, ***he cried out with a loud voice: “Laz’ar-us, come out!”*** ⁴⁴The man who had been dead came out with his feet and hands bound with wrappings, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them: ***“Free him and let him go.”***

In the millennium, billions of people will be resurrected, and each resurrection is a miracle. In connection with Lazarus, Jesus performed a miracle by resurrecting him. Why did he not continue his miracles by telling the stone to move away from the entrance of the grave and by miraculously remove the wrappings of Lazarus and then clothing him? Jesus demonstrated a principle and procedure that will be followed in the millennium:

The things that humans are able to do, they must do. But things that humans cannot do, Jehovah will do.

According to the book *Avot* 4:16 in the *Mishnah*, Rabbi A.R. Jacob said, “This world (*hā ‘ōlām hazzē’*) is like a vestibule before the world to come’ (*hā ‘ōlām habbā’*.” By this he evidently meant that the life in this system of things is a temporary or preliminary stage for each human being, and this is true. In 1 Timothy 6:19, Paul refers to the life in the new heavens and on the new earth as the “real life” or “truly life.”

Today, there is an enormous contrast between “the vestibule” and the new system of things. Eight billion people are living on the earth, and most of them are not following the laws of God. The result is that there are wars, famines, sicknesses, climate change, and huge problems for countless millions of people. So, the very important question is: How will the transition from this old degraded system of things to the new system of things ruled by the heavenly government be?

The simple answer is that the earth must be completely cleaned from this old wicked system of things before the restoration of the new system of things begins.

But how can this be done? Let us first look at some descriptions of the millennium.

EVENTS THAT WILL OCCUR DURING THE MILLENNIUM

Today, there are millions of God’s servants who look forward to the millennium with hope, either to survive the great tribulation or to be resurrected if they die. In Romans 15:4, Paul speaks about hope:

⁴For all the things that were written beforehand were written for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have ***hope.***

Those who believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and who study the Scriptures “might have hope” because all things that are written in the Scriptures are written for our instruction. He continues his words about hope in verses 7-13:

⁷ So welcome one another, just as the Christ also welcomed you, with glory to God in view.⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a minister of those who are circumcised in behalf of God’s truthfulness, so as to verify the promises He made to their forefathers,⁹ and that the nations might glorify God for his mercy. Just as it is written: “That is why I will openly acknowledge you among the nations, and to your name I will sing praises.”¹⁰ And again he says: “Be glad, you nations, with his people.”¹¹ And again: “Praise Jehovah, all you nations, and let all the peoples praise him.”¹² And again Isaiah says: ***“There will be the root of Jes’s’e, the one arising to rule nations; on him nations will rest their hope.”***¹³ May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace by your trusting in him, ***so that you may abound in hope with power of holy spirit.***

In verse 12, Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10 as the basis for hope. I will now quote Isaiah 11:1-10 and make some comments:

¹ A twig will grow out of the stump of Jes’s’e, And a sprout from his roots will bear fruit. ² And the spirit of Jehovah will settle upon him, The spirit of wisdom and of understanding, The spirit of counsel and of mightiness, The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. ³ And he will find delight in the fear of Jehovah. He will not judge by what appears to his eyes, Nor reprove simply according to what his ears hear. ⁴ He will judge the lowly with fairness, And with uprightness he will give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth And put the wicked to death with the breath of his lips. ⁵ Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, And faithfulness the belt of his hips. ⁶ The wolf will reside for a while with the lamb, And with the young goat the leopard will lie down, And the calf and the lion and the fattened animal will all be together; And a little boy will lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear will feed together, And their young will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the bull. ⁸ The nursing child will play over the lair of a cobra, And a weaned child will put his hand over the den of a poisonous snake. ⁹ They will not cause any harm Or any ruin in all my holy mountain, Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah As the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ ***In that day the root of Jes’s’e will stand up as a signal (nes) for the peoples (‘ammim). To him the nations (gōyim) will turn for guidance,*** And his resting-place will become glorious.

The man Jesse was the father of David, as Ruth 4:17 says, and Jesus was a descendant of David. The Hebrew word *‘am* is a general word referring to the peoples of the world, and *gōy* refers to all the peoples that are not Jews. The focus on peoples and nations in 11:10 is important. The Hebrew Scriptures were written for the Jews who were the people of God. But there are also many words about the non-Jewish nations and how they will serve Jehovah. This is the focus in Isaiah 11:10.

When Jacob was about to die, he called his sons and he had a message to each of them. To Judah he said according to Genesis 49:10:

¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah, neither the commander’s staff from between his feet, until Shi’loh comes, and to him the obedience of the peoples (*‘ammim*) will belong.

The word Shiloh is somewhat cryptic. Its meaning is “he whose it is,” and it refers to someone from the tribe of Judah to whom the peoples (*‘ammim*) will be obedient. This means that Isaiah 10:10 is related to Jacob’s prophecy. This prophecy and the prophecy

of Isaiah go far beyond the nation of Israel and its relationship to Jehovah. But can we connect these prophecies with the millennium? Let us see.

The idea of raising a signal for the nations is also found in Isaiah 49:22, 23:

²²This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “**Look! I will raise up my hand to the nations, And I will lift up my signal to the peoples.** They will bring your sons in their arms And carry your daughters on their shoulders. ²³Kings will become caretakers for you, And their princesses will be your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the ground And lick the dust of your feet, And you will have to know that I am Jehovah; Those hoping in me will not be put to shame.”

The words in the quotations above about the nations that will serve Jehovah have several parallels in Isaiah chapter 60, and I quote verses 2-5:

² “Arise, O woman, shed light, for your light has come. The glory of Jehovah shines on you. ² For look! darkness will cover the earth And thick gloom the nations; But on you Jehovah will shine, And on you his glory will be seen. ³ Nations will go to your light And kings to your shining splendor. ⁴ Raise your eyes and look all around you! They have all been assembled; they are coming to you. From far away your sons keep coming, And your daughters being supported on the hip. ⁵ At that time you will see and become radiant, And your heart will throb and overflow, Because the wealth of the sea will be directed to you; The resources of the nations will come to you.

What is of particular importance is that words in the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 60 are quoted in Revelation chapter 22 where the millennium is described. Thus, the prophecy in Isaiah 11:10 can be applied to the millennium. And as I already have pointed out, “**the nations**” will be present in the millennium.

Chapter 8 has a detailed discussion of the millennium. But here I will refer to some of the things that will happen. The twig from the stump of Jesse that is mentioned in 11:1, is Jesus Christ. He is led by the spirit of God, and he started to reign in the year 1914. He is a righteous and faithful person, as we see in Isaiah 11:5. He will “strike the earth with the rod of his mouth” as verse 4 says. And “he will judge the lowly with fairness,” as we also read in 11:4.

Jesus promised the criminal at his side when he was fastened to the stake that he would be with him in paradise, and the description in Isaiah 11: 6-9 is taken from the paradise in Eden. In the millennium, the earth will be like the garden of Eden, and as verse 9 says, “the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah.” This is a time when **the nations** will turn to him for guidance.

There is also a prophecy in Isaiah 9:6, 7 about the rulership of the Son of God:

⁶ For a child has been born to us, A son has been given to us; And the rulership will rest on his shoulder. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ To the increase of his rulership And to peace, there will be no end, On the throne of David and on his kingdom In order to establish it firmly and to sustain it Through justice and righteousness, From now on and forever. The zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this.

During his rulership, there will be peace based on justice and righteousness, and this peace will last forever. So, this is a prophecy about the millennium and about the time that will follow. In his second letter, Peter writes about the future, and in 3:13 he says:

¹³ But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell.

The period I am discussing can be designated as “the new system of things,” “Judgment Day,” “the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus,” and “the millennium,” and according to Peter, “the new earth.” Peter quotes the prophecy in Isaiah 65:17, and because Peter speaks of future “new heavens and a new earth,” the whole prophecy must refer to the millennium. I quote Isaiah 65:17-25:

¹⁷ For look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be called to mind, Nor will they come up into the heart. ¹⁸ So exult and be joyful forever in what I am creating. For look! I am creating Jerusalem a cause for joy And her people a cause for exultation. ¹⁹ And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult in my people; No more will there be heard in her the sound of weeping or a cry of distress.” ²⁰ “No more will there be an infant from that place who lives but a few days, Nor an old man who fails to live out his days. For anyone who dies at a hundred will be considered a mere boy, And the sinner will be cursed, even though he is a hundred years of age. ²¹ They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. ²² They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full. ²³ They will not toil for nothing, Nor will they bear children for distress, Because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, And their descendants with them. ²⁴ Even before they call out, I will answer; While they are yet speaking, I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb will feed together, The lion will eat straw just like the bull, And the serpent’s food will be dust. They will do no harm nor cause any ruin in all my holy mountain,” says Jehovah.

Verse 25 parallels 11:6-8 about the peace between the animals and the animals and humans. Verse 20 that speaks about a person who will be cursed at the age of hundred years may refer to a situation when a person has received a resurrection but refuses to follow the laws of God. Such a person must be removed so he will not harm the lives of those who follow the laws of God.

The words about building and planting are taken from the situation in Israel when the people returned from the Babylonian captivity, and during the millennium, houses will be built and food will be cultivated as well. Every tear will be wiped from the eyes of the people, and there will be no distress, according to Revelation 21:4.

THE GREAT CROWD THAT SURVIVES THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The great tribulation is mentioned in Revelation chapter 7, and I quote verses 9-17:

9 After this I saw, and look! *a great crowd*, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. 10 And they keep shouting with a loud voice, saying: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.” 11 All the angels were standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell facedown before the throne and worshipped God, 12 saying: “Amen! Let the praise and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” 13 In response one of the elders said to me: “These who are dressed in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from?” 14 So right away I said to him: “My lord, you are the one who knows.” And he said to me: “These are the ones who *come out of the great tribulation*, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 That is why they are before the throne

of God, and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. 16 They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat down on them nor any scorching heat, 17 because the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them and will guide them to springs of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes.”

I have already shown that the phrase “come out of the great tribulation” means that the great crowd will survive the great tribulation. The blood of Jesus “has ransoming value.” Because the verbs “wash” (*phynō*) and “whiten” (*leukainō*) are aorists, their actions make a contrast to the verb *erkehomai* (“come”) in the present in the phrase “coming out of.” This means that each member of the great crowd has accepted the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, and that is the reason for their survival. However, after the great tribulation, they are still imperfect, and they still need the ransom sacrifice. This is shown in Revelation 7:17 where we read that the Lamb “will guide them to springs of waters of life.”

Who are the members of the great crowd? One interesting historical observation is that no other religion than Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that there will be a great tribulation when those who serve God will survive, and that those who survive will cultivate the earth into a paradise and make it ready for the resurrection. This means that those who will survive the great tribulation will be Jehovah’s Witnesses.

THE NEED FOR THE CLEANING OF THE EARTH

We now have a good background for understanding what will happen to the 8 billion+ people who live today, most of whom do not follow the laws of Jehovah God. Their destiny must be seen in the light of what will happen in the millennium after the great tribulation is over. On the basis of the principle that what humans are able to do, they must do, but what humans are not able to do, God will do, what will be the duty of those who have survived during the first time after the great tribulation?

Those who will have survived must prepare the earth for the resurrection of billions of dead people. According to the prophet Isaiah, there will be a great work of cultivating the earth in order to have food for those who have survived and for the first ones who will be resurrected. These people will also need places to live and to sleep, and a great building work is necessary. At some point, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah, and a great educational work both for those who survive and for those who are resurrected is necessary. Will those who survive be able to do all this work?

At the end of the 1960s, there was a great persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Malawi in Africa. Their houses were burned by mobs, many were beaten, and some were killed. Because of this, most of the Witnesses in Malawi fled the country, and many of them crossed the border to Mozambique. At one time, there was a refugee camp or rather a city with 30,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses in Mozambique. In this city, the Witnesses were organized in the same way as they are throughout the earth. There were congregations and circuits, and there were qualified brothers who took the responsibility for the congregations and the circuits. All the different normal services in this city were carried out by Witnesses and there was no need for police.

I would like to mention that not only are Jehovah’s Witnesses the only ones who believe that they will survive the great tribulation. But the program in their congregations have trained them in a way so they can work together in unity and do the required work after

the great tribulation. Therefore, they were able to manage the city in Mozambique so everyone got their needs covered in a peaceful way.

What would have been the situation if 30,000 non-Witnesses, some of which were soldiers and criminals, were sent to live in the city of the Witnesses? That would have resulted in utter chaos and great problems for the Witnesses. And the situation is similar in connection with the great tribulation. If there are 20 million+ Jehovah's Witnesses who survive the great tribulation and 20 million+ persons who survive but who do not follow the laws of God, there will be utter chaos and great problems for the Witnesses.

This shows that there is only one way that the transition from this wicked system of things to the new system of things (the millennium) can occur, and that is that all the inhabitants of this old system must die, so they later can get a resurrection in the millennium after the earth has been prepared for the resurrection.

HOW THE EARTH WILL BE CLEANED

Less than 4,400 years ago, the whole earth was cleaned for all wickedness. We read in Genesis 6:5-7:

⁵ Consequently, Jehovah saw that man's wickedness was great on the earth and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. ⁶ Jehovah regretted that he had made men on the earth, and his heart was saddened. ⁷ So Jehovah said: "I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground, man together with domestic animals, creeping animals, and flying creatures of the heavens, for I regret that I have made them."

The members of the Governing Body claim that all those who died in the great flood are eternally annihilated. But this has no basis in any text in the Bible, and the words of Revelation 20:13 that the dead who are in the sea will get a resurrection, contradicts the view of the Governing Body. Jesus drew a parallel between what happened in the great flood and what will happen in connection with the great tribulation in Luke 17:26-32:

²⁶ Moreover, just as it occurred in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of man: ²⁷ they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being given in marriage until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise, just as it occurred in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. ²⁹ But on the day that Lot went out of Sod'om, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰ It will be the same on that day when the Son of man is revealed. ³¹ "On that day let the person who is on the housetop but whose belongings are in the house not come down to pick these up, and likewise, the person out in the field must not return to the things behind. ³² *Remember the wife of Lot.*

With a parallel reference to the great flood and to Sodom and Gomorrah, Jesus said in verse 30: "It will be the same on that day when the Son of man is revealed." This suggests that all the persons who are not serving God will die before the millennium, and Jesus implies what will be the destiny of these people by his words: "Remember the wife of Lot." I show in chapter 4 that Lot's wife was a righteous person who did not follow the words of the angel, and she died. But because she was a righteous person, even though she did something stupid, she will get a resurrection. In his conversation with the angel of Jehovah about Sodom, Abraham said according to Genesis 18:25:

²⁵ It is unthinkable that you would act in this manner by putting the righteous man to death with the wicked one so that the outcome for the righteous man and the wicked is the same!

This is true, and the *Awake!* of May 22, 1963, page 28, that I already have quoted several times, correctly said that only ***“the willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked, those without the slightest spark remaining of conscience or love of righteousness*** will be everlastingly annihilated.

When Jesus used Lot’s wife as an example of those who will die in connection with the great tribulation, it indicates that they who die will get a resurrection because she will get a resurrection.²⁰ I have also shown that 6 billion + of those who live when the great tribulation comes have not had the chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. God’s righteousness and love for humans, and that Jesus bought all Adam’s descendants, will be the reason why all these people will get a resurrection.

There are two passages that may throw some light on how the earth will be cleaned; one of them is Ezekiel 38:10-23:

¹⁰ “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘In that day thoughts will come into your heart, and you will devise an evil plan. ¹¹ You will say: “I will invade the land of unprotected settlements. I will come against those living in security, without disturbance, all of them living in settlements unprotected by walls, bars, or gates.” ¹² It will be to take much spoil and plunder, to attack the devastated places that are now inhabited and a people regathered from the nations, who are accumulating wealth and property, those who are living in the center of the earth. ¹³ “She’ba and De’dan, the merchants of Tar’shish and all its warriors will say to you: “Are you invading to get much spoil and plunder? Have you assembled your armies to carry off silver and gold, to take wealth and property, to seize a very great spoil?””

¹⁴ “So prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “On that day when my people Israel are dwelling in security, will you not know it? ¹⁵ You will come from your place, from the remotest parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly, a vast army. ¹⁶ Like clouds covering the land, you will come against my people Israel. In the final part of the days I will bring you against my land so that the nations may know me when I sanctify myself through you before their eyes, O Gog.”’

¹⁷ “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Are you not the same one I spoke about in the former days through my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for many years that you would be brought against them?’¹⁸ “On that day, the day when Gog invades the land of Israel,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, ‘my great rage will flare up. ¹⁹ In my zeal, in the fire of my fury, I will speak; and in that day ***there will be a great earthquake*** in the land of Israel.²⁰ Because of me the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the wild beasts of the field, all the reptiles that creep on the ground, and all humans on the surface of the earth will tremble, and ***the mountains will be thrown down, and the cliffs will fall, and every wall will collapse to the ground.***²¹ “I will call for a sword against him on all my mountains,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. ***‘Every man’s sword will be against his own brother.*** ²² I will bring my judgment against him with ***pestilence and bloodshed; and I will rain down a torrential downpour and hailstones and fire and sulfur*** on him and on his troops and on the many peoples with him. ²³ And I will certainly magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known before the eyes of many nations; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.’

20. I use the expression “who will die ***in connection*** with the great tribulation” because it is not clear whether a great number of people will die immediately before the great tribulation or in the great tribulation.

Gog of Magog may be a symbol of Satan the Devil, and the account describes an attack on the people of God by Gog and the nations that he is leading. Can we believe that the events that are described in connection with the attack literally will happen? There are reasons to answer Yes. In connection with the great tribulation, Jesus said according to Matthew 24:29:

²⁹“Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Jesus shows that the powers of heaven will be shaken, and this may be a parallel to “hailstones, fire and sulfur” that will rain down on the peoples that are led by Gog. What will happen to the humans living on the earth if the described events literally occur — a great earthquake, mountains and cliffs will fall down, there will be pestilence and bloodshed, and every man’s sword will be against his own brother? This would mean that a great number of lives would be taken at the time before or in the great tribulation. The words of Zechariah 14:12, 13 may also be applied to the cleansing of the earth:

¹²“And this is the scourge with which Jehovah will scourge all the peoples who wage war against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot away while they stand on their feet, their eyes will rot away in their sockets, and their tongues will rot away in their mouths.”¹³“In that day confusion from Jehovah will be widespread among them; and each one will grab hold of the hand of his companion, and his hand will come against the hand of his companion.

Both the prophecy of Ezekiel and of Zechariah mention pestilence that will kill people and that brothers or companions will kill each other. Chapters 17, 18, and 19 in Revelation discusses how organizations that are enemies of God will be destroyed. But there is no account showing that humans who fight with God will be eternally annihilated. I will discuss one of these accounts.

THE ARMIES OF THE EARTH AND THE NATIONS

The Watchtower of June 1, 1988, page 30, draws a parallel between the goats and those who are fighting against the King Jesus Christ, according to Revelation chapter 19:

Furthermore, Matthew 25:31-46 and Revelation 19:11-21 indicate that “the goats” cut off in the coming war of God will experience “everlasting cutting-off” in “the lake of fire,” which symbolizes permanent annihilation.—Revelation 20:10, 14.

Let us consider the situation that is expressed in Revelation 19:17-21:

¹⁷I saw also an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice and said to all the birds that fly in midheaven: “Come here, be gathered together to the great evening meal of God, ¹⁸so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of military commanders and the flesh of strong men and the flesh of horses and of those seated on them, and the flesh of all, of freemen as well as of slaves and of small ones and great.”¹⁹ And I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the one seated on the horse and against his army. ²⁰And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who worship its image. ***While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulfur.*** ²¹***But the rest were killed off with the long sword that proceeded out of the mouth of the one seated on the horse.*** And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Verse 19 says that the armies of the kings of the earth waged war against the judge Jesus Christ. How can that be? According to the vision of Paul in Acts 9:3-5 when he was on his way to Damascus, persecuting the followers of Jesus is the same as persecuting Jesus. This means that because Jesus is invisible, the armies of the kings of the earth will wage war with Jesus by waging war with his followers on the earth. Exactly how this will happen we do not know, but the context suggests that this will happen shortly before or during the great tribulation.

What is the destiny of the soldiers in the armies of the kings? Verse 20 shows that the wild beast and the false prophet, which are symbols of organizations, will be hurled into the symbolic lake of fire. ***But the soldiers of the armies of the kings will be killed by the judge Jesus Christ.*** Will the killing of the mentioned persons indicate eternal destruction? The lake of fire is the symbol of the second death, eternal destruction, and those persons who at the end of the millennium will not serve God, are said in 20:15 to be hurled into the lake of fire, thus being annihilated forever. Because the soldiers in the armies of the kings are said to be killed but not hurled into the lake of fire, we have no reason to believe that these soldiers will not get a resurrection.

I will also discuss Revelation 19:15:

¹⁵ And out of his mouth protrudes a sharp, long sword with which to strike (*patassō*) the nations, and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron. Moreover, he treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

The word *patassō* has the meaning, “to strike a heavy blow; to slay by means of a mortal blow or disease,” according to Louw and Nida. This means that both the nations (19:15) and the soldiers of the kings of the earth (19:21) will be killed by the one seated on the white horse. But because the nations will be present in the millennium, as I already have shown, the inhabitants of the nations must get a resurrection. And this must also be the case with the soldiers of the kings of the earth.

Regarding the killing of the soldiers and the inhabitants of the nations, *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1995, page 27, mentions a possible reason why they will be eternally annihilated:

Many are exposed to our message as we preach from house to house or informally. Others may learn of Jehovah’s Witnesses and what we represent in ways unknown to us. ***When judgment time arrives, to what extent will Jesus consider community responsibility and family merit? We cannot say, and it is pointless to speculate.***

The words that it is pointless to speculate seem to be wise. ***But just bringing up the issue of community responsibility is in reality a rejection of the ransom sacrifice.*** In the article “Manslaughter” in the category “The eleven disfellowshipping offenses,” I demonstrate in detail that “community responsibility” in connection with a person’s final destiny is nothing but fiction and does not exist. The words quoted from *The Watchtower* present the possibility that persons may be eternally destroyed without having had the possibility of accepting or rejecting the ransom sacrifice, and just the mention of this possibility is the same as the rejection of the value of Jesus’ sacrifice.

THE ROLE OF JEHOVAH IN CONNECTION WITH THE CLEANING OF THE EARTH

Revelation 19:21 says: “But the rest were killed off with the long sword that proceeded out of the mouth of the one seated on the horse.” Does this mean that Jesus personally will kill all the soldiers in the armies of the kings, as well as the nations? There is no need to draw such a conclusion.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, we read that when God did different things, he only indirectly did these things. Two examples are Isaiah 54:16, (above) and Malachi 2:10, (below):

¹⁶“Look! I myself created the craftsman (*bāra*), Who blows on the charcoal fire, And his work produces a weapon. I myself also created (*bāra*) the destructive man to bring ruin.

¹⁰“Do we not all have one father? Was it not one God who created (*bāra*) us? So why do we deal treacherously with one another, profaning the covenant of our forefathers?”

The two examples have the verb *bāra*’, which is the same verb that is used for the creation of heaven and earth. God did not create the craftsman, and he did not create the persons to whom Malachi was speaking. But indirectly it can be said that God created them because he created the first man and woman, and that Jehovah is indirectly responsible for things that happen.

In the conversation with Abraham, Jehovah said according to Genesis 18:32 that he would not destroy Sodom “for the sake of ten (righteous persons).” What did that mean? According to Genesis 19:13, the angels that visited Lot said that “*we* are going to destroy this place.” In the morning the angels were in a hurry, and we read in Genesis 19:15-17:

¹⁵ As dawn was breaking, the angels became urgent with Lot, saying: “Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here with you, so that you will not be swept away in the error of the city!” ¹⁶ When he kept lingering, then because of Jehovah’s compassion for him, the men seized hold of his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, and they brought him out and stationed him outside the city. ¹⁷ As soon as they had brought them to the outskirts, he said: “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you and do not stand still in any part of the district! Escape to the mountainous region so that you may not be swept away!”

Why was it so important for the angels to get Lot and his family out of Sodom so quickly? In the area where Sodom and Gomorrah were located, there are oil, bitumen, salt, and sulfur. There was a “natural phenomenon” that caused the destruction of Sodom, probably an explosion caused by leaked gas from the oil that was ignited. The angels knew that this was about to happen, and therefore the righteous family had to leave the city quickly. If there had been ten righteous persons in Sodom, the city would not have been destroyed. And in that case, Jehovah would have stopped the explosion that was about to happen. This shows that Jehovah indirectly destroyed Sodom. Because he did not stop the explosion, he was responsible for the destruction.

We have a similar situation in connection with the great flood. It was caused by enormous amounts of water above the atmosphere. There could not have been a thin or a thick canopy immediately above the atmosphere before the flood because that would have risen the temperatures on the earth so much that no one could have lived there. So, it is likely that the water that fell down in the great flood over a period of 40 days, moved

toward the atmosphere from somewhere in the solar system in connection with the great flood. This could also be described as a “natural phenomenon.” But if God had wanted, he could miraculously have moved the water away from the atmosphere. Because he did not do that, he was indirectly responsible for the great flood.

What about the great tribulation? Again, Jehovah is only indirectly responsible for the deaths that will occur in connection with the great tribulation, as we see in Revelation 7:1-3:

¹After this I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding tight the four winds of the earth, so that no wind could blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. ²And I saw another angel ascending from the sunrise, having a seal of the living God; and he called with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³saying: “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads.”

The four winds will probably cause the great tribulation. But four angels are “holding tight” these winds. So, Jehovah’s angels are holding back the great tribulation. But when he tells them to release the winds, the tribulation will come. So again, Jehovah is indirectly responsible for the great tribulation because he is not stopping it from coming.

I will use one more example. Both Ezekiel and Zechariah speak about pestilence, and let us use the Spanish Flu and Covid 19 as examples. In 1918, the world population was 1,8 billion, and of these, 500 million, which is about one third of the world population, were infected and 50 million died. In the USA, about 25% of the population died. In the Covid 19 pandemic, about 690 million, which is 8,6% of the world population, were affected, and around 7 million persons died.

There are some viruses that are more deadly than other viruses. If such a deadly virus will infect the human population, hundreds of millions of people may die. If God does not stop such a virus, he is indirectly responsible for the deaths. As the quotations above show, there may be wars or natural catastrophes that will take many lives in connection with the great tribulation. But Jehovah knows that all the ungodly people of this wicked system of things must lose their lives in order to pave the way for the new earth where righteousness is to dwell. Therefore, he does not stop any of the mentioned catastrophes. But the vast majority of those who die will get a resurrection during the millennium.

IS IT DIFFICULT TO BE SAVED?

—REVIEW—

A man asked Jesus the question in the title? We do not know anything about the man, and neither do we know what he meant by his use of the word “saved.” The use of the word “save” in the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Mishna is discussed.

The use of words about salvation

In order to show that the words “save” and “salvation” were used among contemporary Jews, I show that the Mishnah speaks about “this world” (system of things) and “the world to come.” I also show that the concepts “judgment day,” “salvation,” and “everlasting life” are mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls. So, the man could have had some of this in mind when he asked his question.

The symbolic drama of the Jewish nation and the Kingdom of the heavens

The answer of Jesus dealt with how the members of the Jewish nation (the first) were offered membership in the Kingdom of the heavens, but they did not accept the offer. Therefore, the offer was given to the nations of the world (the last). It is important to realize that the answer of Jesus is a symbolic drama and all its parts are symbolic, including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The answer to the man’s question is both Yes and No. Only a few Jews would be saved into the Kingdom of the heavens, which was what Jesus spoke about. But several billion people will be saved by a resurrection during the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus.

The requirements of salvation

The different meanings of the words “save” and “salvation” in the Christian Greek Scriptures are discussed, as well as the requirements for those that will be saved. Peter says that baptism “is saving you,” and the parallel between the great flood in Noah’s days is discussed in detail.

At the end of the article, I show that the vast majority of Adam’s descendants will be saved by resurrection on Judgment Day.

Arguments against the view of a general resurrection

People who may stumble and be lost will get a resurrection. The description of wicked people outside New Jerusalem does not contradict the general resurrection.

A man approached Jesus and asked the question, “Are those being saved few?” In his answer, Jesus said, “Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able.” These words seem to show that it is difficult to be saved, and that many who want to be saved will not be able to achieve that.

In chapter 4, I show that according to Jesus, the inhabitants in Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, will be saved from death by a resurrection during the millennium. But these people heard the preaching of Jesus and saw his miracles, and yet, they did not believe in him. These people will be saved from death without having done anything to achieve this salvation. Therefore, we must ask: When these people will be saved without having done anything to achieve salvation, and even refused to believe in Jesus, why did Jesus say that those who will be saved must “exert themselves vigorously,” and that many who want to be saved, will not be able to do so?

This situation is an excellent example of what I stressed in chapter 1, that if we do not have an accurate understanding of the two different kinds of salvation that exist, the heavenly salvation and the earthly salvation, we will not be able to understand the Holy Scriptures. I will show in this chapter that the words of Jesus relate to a special situation in connection with the heavenly resurrection and that his words cannot be applied to people in general.

The word *sōzō* (“save; rescue; heal”) occurs 51 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures, and *sōtēria* (“salvation”) occurs 45 times. The context shows that the words are used in many different ways, and I will consider these uses below.

THE USE OF “SAVE” AND “SALVATION” IN THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES AND IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Luke says that a man asked Jesus: “Lord, are those being saved few?” There is no context showing why the man asked this question, and there is no explanation of what the man meant by using the word “saved.” The account is found in Luke 13:23-30:

²³Now a man said to him: “Lord, are those being saved few?” He said to them: ²⁴“Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able. ²⁵When the householder gets up and locks the door, you will stand outside knocking at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us.’ But in answer he will say to you: ‘I do not know where you are from.’ ²⁶Then you will start saying, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our main streets.’ ²⁷But he will say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from. Get away from me, all you workers of unrighteousness!’ ²⁸There is where your weeping and the gnashing of your teeth will be, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown outside. ²⁹Furthermore, people will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the Kingdom of God. ³⁰And look! there are those last who will be first, and there are those first who will be last.”

The man spoke Hebrew, and the word he used must have been *yāsha*; the corresponding Greek verb is *sōzō*. Both verbs have the meaning “rescue; deliver; save,” and this indicates that there must be an object or a complement, clearly expressed or implied — a person must be rescued or saved from something or into something. There are two problems with the question of the man, 1) We do not know the background for the question, and 2) and there is no expressed object or complement.

THE USE OF “SAVE” WITH AN EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT OBJECT OR COMPLEMENT

I will look at the way the word is used in the gospels. Often the verb is used with the meaning “heal” or “save from sickness.” This is seen in Matthew 9:21, 22:

²¹ for she kept saying to herself: “If I only touch his outer garment, I will get well (*sōzō*).”²² Jesus turned around and, noticing her, said: “Take courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well.” And from that hour the woman was made well (*sōzō*), for she kept saying to herself: “If I only touch his outer garment, I will get well.”²² Jesus turned around and, noticing her, said: “Take courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well.” And from that hour the woman was made well (*sōzō*).

There are several examples in the Gospels where the object or complement of *sōzō* is a sickness — to save from a sickness. The object that most often is used is “life” — to save the life. Two examples are Luke 6:9, (above) and Mark 8:35, (below):

⁹ Then Jesus said to them: “I ask you men, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save (*sōzō*) a life or to destroy it?”

³⁵ For whoever wants to save (*sōzō*) his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the good news will save (*sōzō*) it.

The object “life” can also be implied, as is the case in Matthew 24:13, (above) and 24:22, (below):

¹³ But the one who has endured to the end will be saved (*sōzō*).

²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved (*sōzō*); but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.

In 24:13, “the end” (*telos*) refers to the coming of Jesus as the judge at the end of his presence. At that time, the life of those who have endured will be saved in the way God decides. The second example refers to the tribulation when people would be killed if God had not cut short those days.

There is also one example where the object is “what is lost,” in Luke 19:10:

¹⁰ For the Son of man came to seek and to save (*sōzō*) what was lost.”

Adam lost the right to live forever on this earth for himself and his offspring. Because Jesus bought Adam and all Adam’s descendants when he died, he came to save what Adam lost.

In the example below, the word “save” is used with the meaning “enter into God’s Kingdom.” I quote Matthew 19:24-27:

²⁴ Jesus looked at him and said: “How difficult it will be for those having money to make their way into the Kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier, in fact, for a camel to get through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”²⁶ Those who heard this said: “Who possibly can be saved (*sōzō*)?”²⁷ He said: “The things impossible with men are possible with God.”

The setting here is God’s Kingdom, and the words of those who were present, “Who possibly can be saved?” must refer to being saved into God’s Kingdom. There are also

four other sayings by Jesus where he used the word “saved,” and this naturally would refer to being saved into God’s Kingdom:

Luke 8:10-12:

¹⁰ He said: “To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the Kingdom of God, but for the rest it is in illustrations so that, though looking, they may look in vain, and though hearing, they may not get the sense. ¹¹ Now the illustration means this: The seed is the word of God. ¹² Those alongside the road are the ones who have heard, and then the Devil comes and takes the word away from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved (*sōzō*).

John 5:34:

³⁴ However, I do not accept the witness from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved (*sōzō*).

John 10:9:

⁹ I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved (*sōzō*), and that one will go in and out and find pasturage.

I have now used passages where Jesus used the verb “save” (*sōzō*), and we see that in all instances there is an object or complement explicit or implicit. However, the question in Luke 13:23, “Are those being saved few?” does not have a clear object or complement. So, we cannot know what was behind the question of the man.

THE VIEW OF “SALVATION” AMONG THE JEWS

There are two sources that can be used to learn about Jewish beliefs regarding salvation, namely the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Mishnah. The Mishnah was compiled around 250 CE. But it contains many traditions that were written in BCE and in the first and second centuries CE. The book *Avot* 4:16 in the *Mishnah* says “A.R. Jacob says, ‘This world (*hā ‘ōlām hazzā*) is like a vestibule before the world to come’ (*hā ‘ōlām habbā*).” There are different viewpoints in the Jewish literature as to what “this world to come” is. But it is agreed that it is a world with blessings from God.

The community at Qumran used the Hebrew Scriptures extensively, and on this basis, they had viewpoints regarding judgment day, salvation, and everlasting life. The Day of Judgment is mentioned in four different manuscripts. The commentary of Habakkuk (1QpHab) 12:12 -14 refers to idols mentioned in Habakkuk 2:18 and says:

¹² This refers to all ¹³ idols of the Gentiles that they made to worship and bow down to, ¹⁴ though they will not save them on *the day of judgment*.

The manuscript 1Q14 8f 10:8, 9, says:

⁸ [God, the ones who observe the law] in the party of the Yahad who will be saved (*nātsal*, take away, deliver) on *the Day of* ⁹ *Judgment* ...]

The text in brackets is reconstructed. The word “Yahad” refers to the community at Qumran, and the members of this community will be saved on Judgment Day. The phrase “day of judgment” is not found in the Hebrew scriptures. But the word “judgment” with reference to God’s last judgment of humans is found in Ecclesiastes 11:9 and 12:14, and

Luke uses the word “judgment” where Matthew uses the words “judgment day.” That God will judge people is mentioned in many places in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The words “everlasting life” (*hayyim netsach*) are found in five Qumran manuscripts: 4Q228f1i9 says:

⁹ [... *lif*]e everlasting. For thus is it written in the divisions of ¹⁰ [the times (?)]

The Damascus Document (CD) 3:19, 20, says:

¹⁹ So He built for them a faithful house in Israel, like none that had ever appeared before; and even ²⁰ at this day, those who hold firm to it shall receive *everlasting life*, and all human honor is rightly theirs

The Community Rule (1QS) IV:6-8, says:

⁶ To these ends is the earthly counsel of the spirit to those whose nature yearns for truth. Through a gracious visitation all who walk in this spirit will know healing, ⁷ bountiful peace, long life, and multiple progeny, followed by eternal (*’olamim*) blessings and perpetual joy through *life everlasting* (*hayyim netsach*). They will receive a crown of glory ⁸ with a robe of honor, resplendent forever and ever.

The last word of interest in this discussion is “to save” or “salvation.” The noun occurs 49 times and the verb occurs 52 times in the Qumran manuscripts. I have already quoted The Habbakuk commentary 12:12-14 in connection with Judgment Day. I quote it again because it also has the word “salvation” in a negative context:

¹²This refers to all ¹³ idols of the Gentiles that they made to worship and bow down to, ¹⁴ though *they will not save them* on *the day of judgment*.

The Thanksgiving Psalms (1QHa) 7:28-30 has the word “salvation” in a positive context.

²⁸ the righteous one, and from the womb You established him to give heed to Your covenant at the appointed time of grace and to walk in all things, nourishing himself ²⁹ in the abundance of Your compassion, and relieving all the distress of his soul for *an eternal salvation* (*lishūat ’olam*) and everlasting peace without want. Thus You raise ³⁰ his glory above the mortal. But the wicked You created for [the time of] Your [w]rath, and from the womb You set them apart for the day of slaughter.

The Damascus Document (CD) 20:34 also speaks of “salvation” in a positive context:

³⁴ All the inhabitants of the earth. Then God will make atonement for them and they will experience His *salvation* (*yeshūah*) because they have trusted in His holy name.

The War Scroll (1QM) 1:5 also speaks of the “salvation” of the people of God:

⁵ [Israel. Then the]re shall be *a time of salvation* for the People of God, and time of dominion for all the men of His forces, and *eternal annihilation* for all the forces of Belial.

The picture we get by comparing the quotations above is that there will be a day of judgment, and the people of God will be saved on that day. The reward of those that are saved will be everlasting life. This is what both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures say as well. The contrast, is seen in the last quotation. Those who are in the army of Belial, i.e., those who do not belong to Yahad, the Qumran community, will be eternally annihilated.

We now have a background from which we can look at the question, “Are those being saved few?” The man could have heard the preaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God directly or indirectly, and that could have been the background for his question. Or, he could have had the Jewish view of salvation in mind. The view of the Jews as seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Mishna was that salvation was connected with the world to come and with the Day of Judgment. Those who were saved would get everlasting life in the world to come. If this was the background of the man, he could have wondered if salvation was for the few or for the many. The War Scroll from Qumran could also have been his background. It describes the war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. And because the Sons of Light were the small community at Qumran, he could have wondered whether only this small group would be saved into the world to come.

THE ANSWER OF JESUS TO THE QUESTION OF THE MAN

I will again quote the words of Jesus in Luke 13:23-30:

²³ Now a man said to him: “Lord, are those being saved (*σῶζοι*) few?” He said to them: ²⁴ ***“Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able.”*** ²⁵ When the householder gets up and locks the door, you will stand outside knocking at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us.’ But in answer he will say to you: ‘I do not know where you are from.’ ²⁶ Then you will start saying, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our main streets.’ ²⁷ But he will say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from. Get away from me, all you workers of unrighteousness!’ ²⁸ There is where your weeping and the gnashing of your teeth will be, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown outside. ²⁹ Furthermore, people will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the Kingdom of God. ³⁰ And look! there are those last who will be first, and there are those first who will be last.”

There is a parallel account in Matthew 8:10-12:

¹⁰ When Jesus heard that, he was amazed and said to those following him: “I tell you the truth, with no one in Israel have I found so great a faith. ¹¹ But I tell you that many from east and west will come and recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of the heavens; ¹² whereas the sons of the Kingdom will be thrown into the darkness outside. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be.”

I have already pointed out that the words of Jesus represent a symbolic drama (*allegoreō*), so let us try to find the allegorical meaning of the parts of the account.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB USED AS SYMBOLS

It is important to remember that there are several requirements for those who will be a part of the heavenly government of 144 000 kings. These requirements could not be met by persons who lived before Jesus Christ came to the earth. One reason for this is that one requirement is the application of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, and this sacrifice could not be applied to persons who lived before the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Another requirement is expressed by Jesus when he spoke with Nicodemus, and by Peter. We read in John 3:1-8, (above) and 1 Peter 1:3, 4, (below)

¹ There was a man of the Pharisees named Nic·o·de·mus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This one came to him in the night and said to him: “Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher,

for no one can perform these signs that you perform unless God is with him.”³ In response Jesus said to him: “Most truly I say to you, *unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*”⁴ Nic·o·de·mus said to him: “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter into the womb of his mother a second time and be born, can he?”⁵ Jesus answered: “Most truly I say to you, *unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*”⁶ What has been born from the flesh is flesh, and what has been born from the spirit is spirit.⁷ Do not be amazed because I told you: You people must be born again.⁸ The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who has been born from the spirit.”

³ Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you.

Jesus shows that to become a part of the kingdom of God, a person must be born again, which means to be born from water and spirit. Peter shows that the new birth leads to an unfading inheritance that is reserved in the heavens. He also shows that the basis for the new birth is the resurrection of Jesus. In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus also shows that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were dead, and who were not born again, had not ascended to heaven. John 3:13 says:

¹³ Moreover, no man has ascended into heaven but the one who descended from heaven, the Son of man.

In his speech on the day of Pentecost in the year 33 CE, Peter confirmed that the righteous persons of old had not ascended to heaven. We read in Acts 2:34:

³⁴ For David did not ascend to the heavens, but he himself says, ‘Jehovah said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand³⁵ until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet.”’

I do not want to tamper with the Scriptures, and therefore I take a text in its literal meaning if the context does not clearly show that the text has a non-literal meaning or is part of a symbolic drama. When I use the word “context,” I refer to the text around the clauses under consideration, and I also refer to other texts that have a bearing on the text under consideration. I will now look at the words of Jesus in Luke 11:28, 29, and Matthew 8:11-12. I take the words of Matthew as the point of departure.

¹¹ But I tell you that many from east and west will come and recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of the heavens;¹² whereas the sons of the Kingdom will be thrown into the darkness outside.

The Kingdom of the heavens is a literal entity. It is the heavenly government of 144 000 members and Jesus Christ. But apart from that, the words of Jesus cannot be understood in a literal way because they are used as an illustration. Jesus compared the Kingdom of the heavens with a building on the earth where there was a feast. People would be traveling from east, west, north, and south, and they would have a meal at the table in the house together with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets.

The important point with the illustration is that “the sons of the Kingdom will be thrown into the darkness outside” of the house where the feast is. Who are “the sons of the Kingdom”? They are the nation of the Jews who first were invited to be members of the Kingdom of the heavens. But as Paul shows in Romans chapter 11, most of the Jews refused to accept that invitation. In Luke 11:30, Jesus describes the Jews as “the first who

will be last.” Those of the nations who will come from all directions are “the last who will be first.” They were not a part of the Jewish people who first got the invitation to become members of the Kingdom of the heavens, but they would be invited, and many of them would accept the invitation.

The only thing that must be understood literally in the account of Jesus is “the Kingdom of the heavens.” The following points are a part of the symbolic drama.

- 1) The house of the feast.
- 2) The table in the house.
- 3) The meal that is served on the table.
- 4) The traveling of people from all directions.
- 5) Being thrown outside of the house.
- 6) The darkness outside.
- 7) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets.

We should note that each of the points above does not symbolize one particular thing. But they are there in order to show the totality of the symbolic drama — the Kingdom of the heavens portrayed as a feast in a house. However, the persons mentioned have a particular symbolic reference. Those who come traveling from all directions symbolize those people of the nations that will become members of the heavenly Kingdom. Let us then look at the patriarchs and the prophets and their symbolic references.

The reasons why I say that the patriarchs and the prophets cannot be understood literally are the points I already have discussed, showing that none of these will be a part of the heavenly Kingdom.

One example where a historical person is used as part of a symbolic drama (*allégorie*) is Melchizedek who pictured God’s Son, Jesus Christ, as we read in Hebrews 7:1-3:

¹ For this Mel·chiz’e·dek, king of Sa’lem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name is translated “King of Righteousness,” and then also king of Sa’lem, that is, “King of Peace.” ³ In being fatherless, motherless, without genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor an end of life, but being made like the Son of God, he remains a priest for all time.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul explains a symbolic drama in the same way as the symbolic drama in connection with Melchizedek. We read in Galatians 4:21-31:

²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under law, Do you not hear the Law? ²² For example, it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the servant girl and one by the free woman; ²³ but the one by the servant girl was actually born through natural descent and the other by the free woman through a promise. ²⁴ These things may be taken as *a symbolic drama* (*allégorie*); for these women mean two covenants, the one from Mount Si’nai, which bears children for slavery and which is Ha’gar. ²⁵ Now Ha’gar means Si’nai, a mountain in Arabia, and she corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written: “Be glad, you barren woman who does not give birth; break into joyful shouting, you woman who does not have birth pains; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than those of her who has the husband.” ²⁸ Now you, brothers, are children of the promise the same as Isaac was. ²⁹ But just as then the one born through natural descent began persecuting the one born through spirit, so also now. ³⁰ Nevertheless, what does the scripture say? “Drive out the servant girl and her son, for the son of the servant girl will by

no means be an heir with the son of the free woman.”³¹ So, brothers, we are children, not of a servant girl, but of the free woman.

The word in verse 24 that is translated as “a symbolic drama” is *allegoreō*. The meaning of this word according to Louw and Nida is; “To employ an analogy or likeness in communication; speak allegorically,” and Mounce has the definition: “to say what is either designed or fitted to convey a meaning other than the literal one; to allegorize.” This Greek word is not used in other passages in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

In the drama, the symbolic meaning of the wives of Abraham is described, and if we would ask for the symbolic meaning of Abraham himself, that must be Jehovah God. God was the husband of the “Jerusalem above,” the heavenly creatures, and he was also the husband of Israel, according to Isaiah 54:1-5. When Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham pictured Jehovah who would sacrifice his Son, Jesus Christ.

I have already pointed out that the words of Jesus in Luke 13:23-30 and Matthew 8:11, 12 describe a symbolic drama. And on the basis of Paul’s symbolic drama, we can draw the conclusion that Abraham pictures Jehovah God, Isaac pictures Jesus Christ, Jacob pictures spiritual Israel, and the same do all the prophets. People of the nations who come from all directions, will participate in a feast in the Kingdom of the heavens together with Jehovah, Jesus, and the other heavenly kings.

IS IT DIFFICULT TO BE SAVED?

The answer of Jesus to the man’s question could at first glance be that there are few people who will be saved. Jesus said according to Luke 13:24, 25:

²⁴ “Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able. ²⁵ When the householder gets up and locks the door, you will stand outside knocking at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us.’”

We should always consider the context in order to understand a text. **First**, we must keep in mind that the salvation Jesus spoke about is to be one of the kings in the Kingdom of the heavens. And for a Jew to achieve this when the Jewish nation had rejected God’s offer, would require vigorous exertion, as Jesus said. This means that “salvation” in this context is to be saved into the Kingdom of the heavens. **Second**, the context shows that “the first,” which refers to the Jews, will be “the last” and not be saved into the Kingdom of the heavens. But individuals from among the Jews could be saved into the Kingdom of the heavens if they “exerted themselves vigorously.”

The words of Jesus in Matthew 12:41, 42 show that a great number of people will be saved by getting a resurrection on Judgment Day. But this is a different “salvation” compared to the one Jesus is speaking about in Luke chapter 13.

⁴¹ Men of Nin’ē-veh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented at what Jo’nah preached. But look! something more than Jo’nah is here. ⁴² The queen of the south will be raised up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Sol’o·mon. But look! something more than Sol’o·mon is here.

Jesus said that the inhabitants of Nineveh and the queen of the south will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. We also note that “this generation,” which is called “this

wicked and adulterous generation” in verse 39, which includes the whole people of the Jewish nation, will get a resurrection as well and will be saved into the millennium by this resurrection. And in order to get this resurrection there is no requirement to “exert oneself vigorously.” The basis for this resurrection is the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The application of this sacrifice means that the vast majority of all those who have lived on the earth will be saved by a resurrection. Only the few that are willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked will not get a resurrection. Therefore, we can say that only a few persons will be saved into the Kingdom of the heavens, but several billion people will be saved by resurrection during the 1000-year-long Judgment Day.

THE WORDS “SAVE” AND “SALVATION” USED IN THE RELIGIOUS SENSE

When we study the words “save” and “salvation” used in the religious sense of the words, we need to distinguish between the two hopes that we find in the Holy Scriptures. The hope that is expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures is to live in the future paradise on the earth. The hope that is expressed in the Christian Greek Scriptures is to become a member among the 144 000 kings that will rule together with Jesus Christ. Most of the requirements are the same for both groups, but baptism with holy spirit, i.e., being born again and being declared righteous are only for those with the heavenly hope. The three following scriptures indicate that there are two different hopes, 2 Timothy 4:18, (above) Luke 19:10, (middle) and John 3:16, 17, (below):

¹⁸The Lord will rescue (*ruomai*, “deliver”) me from every wicked work and will save (*sōzō*, “save”) me for his heavenly Kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁰ For the Son of man came to seek and to save (*sōzō*, “save”) what was lost.” ¹⁶

¹⁶ “For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save (*sōzō*, “save”) the world through him.

Paul had the heavenly hope, and he would be saved into “his heavenly Kingdom.” Adam sold the human race under sin, and each descendant of Adam lost his or her right to live forever on the earth. By his death, Jesus bought Adam and all Adam’s descendants, and because of this, each descendant will get a chance to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice with the possibility of living forever on the paradise earth. In this way, Jesus saved what was lost — everlasting life on the paradise earth. And in his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus said that he had come to save the world, which refers to all Adam’s descendants.

The words “save” and “salvation” are used with reference to the Christians in their present life, and they are used with reference to their future life.

BEING SAVED IN THE PRESENT LIFE AND FOR THE FUTURE LIFE

Paul is the one who shows that “salvation” is used with reference to the Christians in their present life, and it is used with reference to their future life. In Galatians 1:4 we read:

⁴He gave himself for our sins so that he might rescue us (*exaireō*, “take out; deliver”) **from the present wicked system of things** (*aiōn*) according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Some translations have the words “from the evil age,” others have “from the evil world” for the Greek word *aiōn*. The problem with both renderings is that the Christians were still a part of the evil world or the evil age. Therefore, it does not make sense to say that they are rescued **from** “the world” or “the age.” The Greek word *aiōn* can refer to time, and express a time period whose end we cannot see. But it can also refer to a time period with certain characteristics. Therefore, the rendering of NWT13 as “system of things” is excellent. So, the Christians, who still were in the world, were rescued from the wicked system that surrounded them — their way of living, their faith, and their hope were different from the people around them. Acts 2:47, (above) and 11:21, (below) support the words of Galatians:

⁴⁷praising God and finding favor with all the people. At the same time Jehovah continued to add to them daily those being saved (*σῶζοι*).

²¹Furthermore, the hand of Jehovah was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord.

The three scriptures quoted above show that Christians are at present saved from this wicked system of things. However, the future salvation of the servants of God both with a heavenly and an earthly hope is based on their continual faithfulness to God, as shown in Matthew 10:22, (above) and 1 Corinthians 15:2, (below):

²²And you will be hated by all people on account of my name, but the one who has endured to the end will be saved (*σῶζοι*).

²Through it you are also being saved (*σῶζοι*) if you hold firmly to the good news I declared to you, unless you became believers for nothing.

James 5:20 shows that people can be saved from death, and getting a resurrection from the dead is also salvation. In an article about resurrection in *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1965, pages 178 and 179, we read:

⁶Consequently, it is Scripturally wrong to think that there is salvation through ignorance. There will indeed be a resurrection of many ignorant people, **the vast majority of dead mankind;** but their ignorance is not what makes them worthy of a resurrection and of eternal life.

It is true that “the vast majority of dead mankind” will be saved from death by a resurrection. Only those who have sinned against the holy spirit will not be saved from death. From this point of view, the man’s question to Jesus, “Are those being saved few?” must be answered by No. But those who will be saved into the heavenly Kingdom are few. *The Watchtower* of April 1, 1982, page 20, has calculated that between 14 and 20 billion, of Adam’s descendants have lived on the earth. If we add those that have been born since 1982, the number will be between 20 and 27 billion. Most of these will be saved from death by a resurrection. How many of these that will continue to serve Jehovah after the millennium we do not know. But we have no reason to believe that a huge number of perfect humans will follow Satan against Jehovah in connection with the test after the 1,000 years. I will now look at the requirements for salvation.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF SALVATION

The following discussion relates to the salvation of the 144000 heirs of the heavenly Kingdom and the earthly salvation. Reigning with Jesus in heaven was the only hope that was preached in the first century CE. However, the preaching with the focus on life in the earthly paradise that started in 1935 CE, pointed to the same requirements for salvation of those with an earthly hope as for those with a heavenly hope. In addition to these same requirements, those with a heavenly hope must be declared righteous and be born again, i.e., baptized in holy spirit. Salvation is connected with Jesus Christ, as John 4:22, (above) and Acts 4:12, (below) show:

²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, because salvation (*sōtēria*) begins with the Jews (literally: “salvation out of the Jews is” = “salvation is from the Jews”).

¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

One purpose with the separation of the Jews from other people was that the Messiah should come from this people and that he could be identified through this people. In this way, it is true that “salvation is from the Jews.” Only through the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is there salvation. One requirement for salvation is accurate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and faith in Jesus Christ, as is seen in 2 Timothy 3:15, (above) and Acts 16:30, 31, (below):

¹⁵and that from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation (*sōtēria*) through faith in Christ Jesus.

³⁰He brought them outside and said: “Sirs, what must I do to get saved (*σῶξθε*)?”³¹ They said: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will get saved (*σῶξθε*), you and your household.”

The Hebrew Scriptures have prophecies about the Messiah and how Jehovah will save his people. Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies, and a good knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures will be of great help to understand this. However, a long study of the Scriptures is not necessary, because the jailer could be saved just by believing in Jesus Christ. On Pentecost in 33 CE, there were also many people who were saved by believing in Jesus Christ. However, these were proselytes and had already a good knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures.

One requirement showing that persons who lived before the death and resurrection of Jesus could not be saved into the heavenly Kingdom is baptism. The Greek word *baptismos* means “dipping in water, or being immersed in water,” according to Mounce. In other words, a person who is baptized is immersed in water and then taken out of water. There are two symbolic dramas where baptism is the antitype, the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites and the great flood in the days of Noah.

Paul discussed how the crossing of the Red Sea was a type of baptism in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4:

¹Now I want you to know, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea ²and all got baptized into Moses by means of the cloud and of the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they used to drink from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock meant the Christ.

On this occasion, the water formed a wall to their right and a wall to their left, as we read in Exodus 14:21, 22. And a pillar of cloud was above them, according to Exodus 13:21. Because of this, all the people in a way were immersed in water, and when they entered the other side of the Red Sea, they were taken out of the water.

Peter speaks about the great flood as a prophetic type of baptism in 1 Peter 3:20, 21, and he uses the Greek word *antitypos* (“antitype”):

²⁰ who had formerly been disobedient when God was patiently waiting in Noah’s day, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water. ²¹ Baptism, *which corresponds to this* (*antitypos*), is also now saving you (not by the removing of the filth of the flesh, but by the request to God for a good conscience), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In order to understand how the flood was the type we need to look at the grammar of the verse. Based on this grammar, I translate parts of verses 20 and 21 this way:

²⁰ when the ark was constructed, by which a few, eight souls, were saved by means of water;

²¹ that which now is an antitype, baptism, is saving you.

At the end of verse 20, NWT13 has the rendering “were carried safely through the water.” This is a possible rendering, and the preposition “through” is a translation of the Greek preposition *dia*. Instead of “through” I use the rendering “by means of,” which also is a legitimate rendering of *dia*. In 1 Corinthians 10:2, NWT13 uses the words “baptized into Moses by means of the cloud and the sea.” The words “by means of” in this case are translated from the preposition *en*. The meaning of a preposition must be construed from the context because each preposition can have numerous meanings. In this case, *en* has the meaning “by means of,” just as *dia* has in 1 Peter 3:20.

Verse 21 starts with the pronoun *ho* (“who, that, which”). This pronoun is neuter singular, so its antecedent must also be neuter singular. And the last word in verse 20 is *hydatos* (“water”), which is neuter singular. This must be the antecedent.

Expressed in English, verse 21 says “that which. . . is saving you” and the grammar shows that “that which” refers to the last word “water” in verse 20. The water in the flood saved Noah and his family, and they were baptized by this water that saved them. Peter then uses the Greek word *antitypos*, (“antitype, copy”), and the antitype is baptism. The point of Peter, is that Noah and his family were saved by means of water in the flood, and Christians will correspondingly be saved from this system of things (Galatians 1:4) by means of the baptismal water.

Table 7.1 Being saved by baptism

Baptism	Immersed in water	Taken through the water	Saved by means of the water
1 Corinthians 10:2	Immersed in the water and the cloud in the Red Sea.	Taken through the water of the Red Sea by crossing it.	Saved by means of the water in the Red Sea.
1 Peter 3:20	Immersed in the water of the flood.	Taken through the water of the flood by the ark.	Saved by means of the water of the flood.

The parallels are clear. Those being baptized in the Red Sea, the nation of Israel, and Noah and his family in the flood, were all “immersed” in water. But none of them

drowned in the water because they were carried through the water and up from the water. And by being taken up, the nation of Israel and Noah and his family were saved from death by means of the water. And in a similar way, the one being immersed in water by baptism and taken up from the water is being saved from the wicked system of things by means of the water.

The Greek word “request” in the expression “request for a good conscience” in 1 Peter 3:21 is *eperōtēma*, and the meaning of the word can be both “request; appeal” and “pledge.” Regardless of whether we translate “a pledge for a good conscience” or “request for a good conscience,” the words show that baptism is the person’s dedication to God.

The conclusion of this section is that to be saved, either as one of the 144,000 heavenly kings, or as one of the great crowd that will survive the great tribulation, a person has to “exert himself vigorously,” as Jesus said in Luke 13:24. This means to repent one’s sins, dedicate oneself to Jehovah, and symbolize this by baptism. In order to reach the goal, one has to endure to the end. (Mathew 24:13).

PERSONS WHO ARE NOT “EXERTING THEMSELVES VIGOROUSLY” WILL ALSO BE SAVED

But what can we say regarding all those who are not Kingdom heirs or belong to the great crowd? They can be saved even though they are not fulfilling the requirements mentioned. How so? Because Jesus bought all Adam’s descendants when he died, all Adam’s descendants that are not willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked will be saved from death by a resurrection during the millennium. Then each one will get the opportunity to accept or reject the ransom sacrifice. As *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1989, page 687, says:

“Thus Jesus Christ, by presenting to God the life value of his human sacrifice, ransomed all mankind, purchased them, even without their requesting him to do so.

But what can we say regarding those who have dedicated themselves to Jehovah but who do not endure to the end? There can be many reasons for this that do not make the person an enemy of God. For example, a young woman is sexually abused by a man in her congregation, and the elders do not handle the situation in the correct way. She feels that they take sides with the abuser, and this breaks her down to the point where she starts hating the congregation. She leaves the congregation, and for years to come, she is not even able to open a Bible because this reminds her of the bad situation that she experienced. What will be her destiny if she dies?

I have several times quoted the words of Jesus about the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida. Jesus preached to these inhabitants, and they saw his miracles, but nevertheless, they did not put faith in Jesus. In spite of this, Jesus said that “this adulterous and wicked generation” which includes the inhabitants of the three mentioned cities, will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. (Matthew 12:39-42)

What can we say about the mentioned woman who left her congregation? Is she more guilty than the members of the mentioned “adulterous and wicked generation”? Or what can we say about persons who have been Christians but have left the congregation for various reasons? Have they had a better chance than the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida to choose or reject the truth of God? There are two verses

that will cut through this issue, so we can see the issue in its right perspective, and that is Matthew 12:31, 32:

³¹ “For this reason I say to you, every sort of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven.³² For example, whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in this system of things nor in that to come.

There is a simple answer to the questions that I have asked, and this answer is posed as another question: Has the person sinned against the holy spirit? If the answer is no, this person will get a resurrection on Judgment Day. And only God knows whether a person has sinned against the holy spirit. But sad to say, the members of the Governing Body behave as if they were authorized by God to be judges. They say that not only persons who have left the Christian congregation will be eternally annihilated. But they say that all persons who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses when the great tribulation comes will be eternally annihilated. This goes against the love and righteousness of God and the purpose of the ransom sacrifice. And most important, they have completely misunderstood the verses in the Christian Greek Scriptures that they use to show that so many will be eternally annihilated.

Instead of accepting the words of the present members of the Governing Body, we should believe in the wise words of the leaders of Jehovah’s Witnesses that were published in *The Watchtower* in 1965, six years before the Governing Body was established. They wrote that “the vast majority” of the dead will get a resurrection. And all these people will be saved from death by their resurrection. So, the question of the man to Jesus: “Are those being saved few”? must be answered with a clear No. Most of the persons who have lived on the earth will be saved by their resurrection on Judgment Day.

The heirs of the heavenly Kingdom and the members of the great crowd must “exert themselves vigorously” and by this fulfill the requirements in order to be saved.

All other descendants of Adam were bought when Jesus died. All of these, except the few who have sinned against the holy spirit, will be saved from death by a resurrection. They must not fulfill any requirements while they are living in this old system of things; it is the ransom sacrifice that saves them.

THREE PASSAGES THAT SEEM TO CONTRADICT THE VIEW OF A GENERAL RESURRECTION

I have shown that according to the Bible, all Adam’s descendants, except those that have sinned against the holy spirit, will get a resurrection. This includes the inhabitants of Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida who heard the preaching of Jesus and saw his miracles but refused to believe in him.

EATING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

The issue of eating food offered to idols is discussed in 1 Corinthians chapter 8, and I quote verses 9-13:

⁹ But keep watching that your right to choose does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone should see you who have knowledge having a meal in an idol temple, will not the conscience of that one who is weak be emboldened to the point of eating food offered to idols? ¹¹ *So by your knowledge the man who is weak is being ruined (apollymi), your brother for whose sake Christ died.* ¹² When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ. ¹³ That is why if food makes my brother stumble (*skandalizō*), I will never again eat meat at all, so that I will not make my brother stumble.

Some will say that the phrase “is being ruined” means that a person can be eternally annihilated just because he or she takes offense in this minor matter. Paul got a question about meat from animals that previously had been offered to an idol, but after that it was sold at the market or eaten in a public restaurant connected with an idol temple. Could Christians buy this meat and eat it? Paul shows that when the meat was sold at the market or served in a restaurant it was no longer an idol sacrifice. So, whether buying it or not was a matter of conscience.

However, even though a Christian had the freedom to choose to buy and eat such food, a weak brother could take offense if he saw his brother eating this food in a restaurant connected to an idol temple. In that case, it was right not to insist on using his or her Christian freedom. The words of Paul in verse 11 show what the result could be by using the freedom:

So by your knowledge the man who is weak *is being ruined (apollymi)*, your brother for whose sake Christ died.”

The important Greek word here is *apollymi*, and according to Mounce its meaning is, “to destroy utterly; to kill; to bring to nought; make void; to lose.” As I already have shown, NWT13 uses the words “is being ruined,” which is a good rendering. An alternative rendering is “is being lost.” The words “make my brother stumble” in verse 13 are parallel to “is being ruined” in verse 11. The Greek word *skandalizō* has the meaning “to cause to stumble; to offend; shock; excite feeling of repugnance,” according to Mounce. So, the idea here is that if a Christian uses his freedom to choose, and a weak Christian is stumbled, that does not lead to the eternal destruction of the weak brother. But he may be lost as a member of the heavenly government. He has not chosen to reject the ransom sacrifice, and he has not become wicked, but he has stumbled. Therefore, he will get a resurrection during the millennium.

WICKED ACTIONS MENTIONED IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 21 AND 22

Some would claim that particular words in the two last chapters of Revelation contradict the resurrection of the vast majority of Adam’s descendants. I quote Revelation 21:7, 8, (above) and 22:12-15, (below):

⁷ *Anyone conquering (nikao)* will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ *But as for the cowards and those without faith and those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and the sexually immoral and those practicing spiritism and idolaters and all*

the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This means the second death.”

¹²“Look! I am coming quickly, and the reward I give is with me, to repay each one according to his work. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. ¹⁴Happy are those who wash their robes, so that they may have authority to go to the trees of life and that they may gain entrance into the city through its gates. ¹⁵*Outside are the dogs and those who practice spiritism and those who are sexually immoral and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices lying.*”

The quotations above also represent an example of the importance of distinguishing between the two kinds of salvation, the heavenly one and the earthly one. Revelation and the other books of the Christian Greek Scriptures are addressed to those with the heavenly calling. This is also shown by the first words in verse 7 in chapter 21. The Greek word *nikao* that is translated with “conquering” has the meaning, “conquer; overcome; prevail,” according to Mounce. Those who conquer “will inherit these things.” The word *nikao* is used six times in Revelation, and they show the meaning of the words “inheriting these things”:

2:7: “To the one *who conquers* I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

2:11: The one *who conquers* will by no means be harmed by the second death.’

2:17: “To the one *who conquers* I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white pebble, and written on the pebble is a new name that no one knows except the one receiving it.”

3:5: The one *who conquers* will thus be dressed in white garments, and I will by no means blot out his name from the book of life, but I will acknowledge his name before my Father and before his angels.

3:12: ““The one *who conquers*—I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will by no means go out from it anymore, and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem that descends out of heaven from my God, and my own new name.’”

3:21: “To the one *who conquers* I will grant to sit down with me on my throne, just as I conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

It is clear that the words about conquering are addressed to each of the members of the heavenly government. He or she will be “a pillar in the temple of my God” (3:12) and will “sit down with me on my throne.” (3:21) This means that those with a heavenly calling who does not conquer but have practiced one of the sins mentioned in 21:8, have sinned against the holy spirit, which is discussed in Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-31. There is no sacrifice for sin against the holy spirit, and therefore those who commit this sin deserve the second death.

The words in Revelation 22:12-15 are also addressed to persons with the heavenly calling. The words “repay each one according to his work” in verse 12 can only be applied to the new creations who are judged for what they do when they live on the earth — all others will be judged for what they do during the millennium. The focus is on new Jerusalem, and gaining entrance “into the city through its gates.” (21:27) And outside the city are persons that grossly violate God’s laws. This parallels the words of Isaiah 52:1-3:

¹ Awake! Awake! Clothe yourself with strength, O Zion! Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For no more will the uncircumcised and unclean one enter into you. ² Shake off the dust, rise and take a seat, O Jerusalem. Loosen the bonds on your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. ³ For this is what Jehovah says: “You were sold for nothing, And without money you will be repurchased.”

The words addressed to Zion are: “For no more will the uncircumcised and unclean one enter into you.” The destiny of those who are outside is not stated. But some persons of the “wicked and adulterous generation” in the days of Jesus were guilty of the same bad actions of those that are outside New Jerusalem. And the members of “this wicked and adulterous generation” will get a resurrection. If those who are mentioned in 22:15 are willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked, they will not get a resurrection. If not, they will get a resurrection during the millennium.

The important point is that the words in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 do not contradict the texts showing that billions of wicked people will get a resurrection during the millennium.

THE ATONEMENT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN IS COMPLETED AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM

—REVIEW—

The purpose of the atonement between God and man is that the inherited sin of each descendant of Adam should be removed, and that each one should get exactly the same chance that Adam got: As a perfect human being having the choice of serving God or not serving God. This will be the situation at the end of the millennium.

Judgement Day is Identical with the millennium

By comparing Paul's words that connect the judgment of the living and the dead with the words "manifestation" and "kingdom," which must refer to the great tribulation and the Kingdom on the new earth, we know that this earthly Kingdom of 1,000 years is the same as Judgment Day.

The first resurrection

Those who experience the first resurrection are the 144,000 anointed Christians with the heavenly calling. Different passages dealing with their resurrection, and with their functions as kings, priests, and judges are discussed.

The nations will be present in the millennium

The members of the Governing Body teach that the nations of the earth will be eternally annihilated in the great tribulation. Contrary to this teaching, Isaiah, Micah, and Revelation shows that the nations will be present during the millennium. What will happen with these nations during the millennium is discussed.

The rest of the dead will come to life at the end of the 1,000 years

I show that the words "will come to life" do not refer to the resurrection of the dead. But it refers to the application of the ransom sacrifice to all those living in the millennium, so they gradually will proceed toward perfection. At the end of the 1,000 years, all humans are perfect, and this means that they "have come to life."

"You will be with me in Paradise"

These words of Jesus are discussed. How the word "paradise" was understood by the Jews in the first century CE is discussed. And I show that the criminal who spoke to Jesus will get a resurrection when the new earth has become a paradise.

The second death

The origins of the words "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur" and "Gehenna" are discussed. Like most of the special expressions used in the Christian Greek Scriptures, these words have their origin in the Hebrew Scriptures

The grand climax of the atonement between God and man will come in the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus, the millennium. The Jews received a temporary forgiveness of sins when they sacrificed to Jehovah. After Jesus had presented his ransom sacrifice to Jehovah, those with the heavenly calling were declared righteous, and by this, they got a permanent forgiveness of sins — from God’s viewpoint they were new creatures without sin. Those who look forward to life in the earthly paradise also get a temporary forgiveness of sins.

The importance of the millennium is that the purpose of the ransom sacrifice will be completely carried through. Adam sold himself and his descendant under sin, and Jesus bought back Adam and his descendants and what Adam lost. This means that the purpose of the ransom sacrifice is that every descendant of Adam will reach human perfection. And each person will, as a perfect human being, get the same chance as Adam got, either to worship God or to refuse to worship God.

Those who survive the great tribulation and those who get a resurrection have inherited sin and are imperfect. During the 1,000 years, the ransom sacrifice will be applied to all who live on earth. And gradually throughout the millennium, all humans will proceed toward perfection. At the end of the 1,000 years, the inherited sin is gone, and all humans are perfect like Adam was before he sinned. Now the very purpose of the ransom sacrifice has been fulfilled, and the atonement between God and man is completed for the human race.

The purpose of the ransom sacrifice is that the inherited sin of all Adam’s descendants will be removed, and that each one will get exactly the same chance that Adam got: As a perfect human having the choice to worship God or to refuse worship God. This will be the situation at the end of the 1,000 years.

JUDGMENT DAY IS IDENTICAL WITH THE MILLENNIUM

The words “Judgment Day” is a familiar expression among the people of Norway, and it is used by many people in different circumstances. But very few have scrutinized the Scriptures in order to find out what the words refer to and what will happen on Judgment Day.

Hebrews 12:23 speaks about “God the judge of all.” However, while he is the supreme judge, he has appointed his Son Jesus Christ as the judge of the living and the dead. In his speech to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill, Paul referred to Jesus of Nazareth and said according to Acts 17:31:

³¹ Because he has set a day on which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has provided a guarantee to all men by resurrecting him from the dead.”

The object of the judgment according to Paul is “the inhabited earth.” But in 2 Timothy 4:1, Paul refers to the judgment from a different angle and says:

¹ I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his manifestation (*epifaneia*) and his Kingdom (*basileia*).

On the basis of Paul's words, we understand that Jesus has been appointed to judge all the descendants of Adam, the living and the dead. The words of Paul to Timothy also use some words that say something about the time of Judgment Day, namely, the words "manifestation" (*epifaneia*) and "kingdom" (*basileia*). Because the Greek words for the "living and dead" and "manifestation and Kingdom" all are in the accusative case, the judgment is connected with his "manifestation and Kingdom."

The word *epifaneia* ("manifestation") occurs five times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. In 1 Timothy 6:14, Paul admonishes Timothy to live a Christian life "until the manifestation (*epifaneia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ." Because judgement is connected with the "manifestation," and because Paul and others looked forward to this manifestation, it is logical that "his manifestation" is the same as Jesus' "revelation" in the great tribulation, according to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, when he will judge some of his enemies.

However, the use of the word *basileia* ("kingdom") by Paul is more specific regarding the time of Judgment Day. There are four different Kingdoms that are mentioned in the Scriptures.

- 1) God's Kingdom in Israel where the kings in the line of David sat on Jehovah's throne.
- 2) The Kingdom of God's beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). This Kingdom refers to the power Jesus had over the Christian congregations as their Lord.
- 3) The heavenly Kingdom that was prepared *before* the founding of the world (Ephesians 1:4), which is identical with the Kingdom and presence of Jesus from the year 1914 CE.
- 4) The earthly Kingdom that was prepared *from* the founding of the world. (Matthew 25:34), which is identical with the millennium.²¹

To which of these kingdoms did Paul refer in 2 Timothy 4:1 when he connected the judgment of the living and the dead with the "kingdom"? He could not refer to God's Kingdom in Israel because this kingdom did no longer exist. Neither could he refer to "the Kingdom of his beloved Son" because this Kingdom was only related to the Christian congregations. The heavenly Kingdom that was established in 1914 could not be Paul's reference because both righteous and unrighteous persons would get a resurrection when the mentioned kingdom existed and that required an earthly resurrection. So, Paul could only refer to the earthly Kingdom that was prepared from the founding of the world.

The important point that we now have established is that Judgment Day is identical with the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus Christ.

The Thousand Year Reign of Jesus is mentioned in Revelation chapter 20. The word *basileia* ("kingdom") is not used in that chapter. But I will analyze several other important words, such as "thrones," "judge," "rule as king," "resurrection," "the dead," and "their deeds." These are words that describe different sides of Judgment Day, and by scrutinizing these different words, we will understand what will happen on Judgment Day.

21. For a detailed discussion of the four Kingdoms, see the article, "For many are called, but few are chosen — What the members of the Governing Body do not understand," in the category "The Governing Body."

THOSE WHO ARE JUDGES, KINGS, AND PRIESTS, WILL HAVE PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION

We have seen that “God is the judge of all,” and we have seen that God has appointed Jesus Christ “to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness.” But there are also others who will serve as judges. According to Matthew 19:28, Jesus had promised his 12 apostles that they would serve as judges:

²⁸ Jesus said to them: “Truly I say to you, in the re-creation, when the Son of man sits down on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

In addition to the 12 apostles, other Christians should also serve as kings, as Paul shows in 2 Timothy 2:10-12.

¹⁰ For this reason I go on enduring all things for the sake of the chosen ones, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is through Christ Jesus, along with everlasting glory. ¹¹ This saying is trustworthy: Certainly if we died together, we will also live together; ¹² if we go on enduring, we will also *rule together as kings*; if we deny, he will also deny us;

We note that Paul says that in order to serve as king one must “go on enduring.” What does it mean to have part in the first resurrection? We read in 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23, 44, 49:

²² For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own proper order (tagma). Christ the firstfruits, *afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence...* ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body; it is raised up a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual one... ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we will bear also the image of the heavenly one.

The presence of Jesus as king in his Kingdom began in 1914, and it will end at the beginning of the millennium. Paul says in verse 23 that the resurrection of those who have the heavenly calling will occur *during the presence of Jesus*, while Jesus rules in the midst of his enemies, as Psalm 110:1, 2 says. That the heavenly resurrection occurs while the enemies of Jesus still exist is confirmed in Revelation 6:9-11:

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those slaughtered because of the word of God and because of the witness they had given. ¹⁰ They shouted with a loud voice, saying: “Until when, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, are you refraining from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ *And a white robe was given to each of them, and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the number was filled of their fellow slaves and their brothers who were about to be killed as they had been.*

When animals were sacrificed in the temple, their blood, which represented their souls, flowed down below the altar. Anointed Christians who have been slaughtered because they were faithful to God, and whose blood symbolically had flowed down beneath the altar, are the focus. They are given a white robe, and this symbolizes their resurrection. We can understand this from Revelation 3: 4, 5, 21 which is quoted below:

⁴ “Nevertheless, you do have a few individuals in Sar’dis who did not defile their garments, and they will walk with me in white ones, because they are worthy. ⁵ *The one who conquers will thus be dressed in white garments*, and I will by no means blot out his name from the book of life,

but I will acknowledge his name before my Father and before his angels... ²¹ *To the one who conquers I will grant to sit down with me on my throne*, just as I conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Verses 5 and 21 speaks about “the one who conquers,” and first when a person has lived a life faithful to God and he dies, can it be said that he has conquered. To “sit down with me on my throne” requires a heavenly resurrection in the future. A few individuals in Sardis “did not defile their garments.” They are also admonished to conquer, and this will be seen when they die. Verse 5 says that they will be dressed in white garments, and this requires a resurrection in a spiritual body. Thus, when each of those who have been slaughtered for their faith, were given “a white robe,” according to 6:11, this implies that they have conquered and have been resurrected.

The fact that they also speak, indicate that they have received a resurrection. They ask about how long it will take before God will judge those who dwell on the earth. The answer is that they have to wait until the number of those who will have been killed for their faith “is filled.” This does not seem to be the number of 144,000. But because of Satan’s accusations against God, it seems that the will of God is that a certain number of anointed Christians must be killed in faithfulness, to uphold the sovereignty of Jehovah, thus proving that Satan is a liar. When the heavenly resurrection began, some more Christians had to prove their faithfulness, and this shows that the old system of things was still standing when the resurrection of the anointed Christians who had died started.

And Revelation 20:4-6 gives some details as to what the anointed Christians have experienced and will experience:

⁴And I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority *to judge*. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed for the witness they gave about Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had not worshipped the wild beast or its image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they came to life and *ruled as kings* with the Christ for 1,000 years. ⁵(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be *priests* of God and of the Christ, and they *will rule as kings* with him for the 1,000 years.

The persons who are mentioned in these verses should be judges. But they should also rule as kings with the Christ and be priests. Their functions as priests are confirmed in Revelation 1:5, 6, (above) and 5:9, 10, (below):

⁵and from Jesus Christ, “the Faithful Witness,” “the firstborn from the dead,” and “the Ruler of the kings of the earth.” To him who loves us and who set us free from our sins by means of his own blood— ⁶and he made us to be *a kingdom, priests* to his God and Father—yes, to him be the glory and the might forever. Amen.

⁹And they sing a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought people for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰and you made them to be *a kingdom and priests* to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.”

Those who should be a kingdom and priests were bought from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Revelation 14:1-5 gives a further identification of these people.

¹Then I saw, and look! the Lamb *standing on Mount Zion*, and with him *144,000* who have his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. ²I heard a sound coming out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the sound that I heard was like singers who accompany themselves by playing on their harps. ³And they are singing what seems to be a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able to master that song except the 144,000, *who have been bought from the earth*. ⁴These are the ones who did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones who keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. *These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits* to God and to the Lamb, ⁵ and no deceit was found in their mouths; they are without blemish.

The verses above show that those who will be judges, kings, and priests, number 144,000. They are bought from the earth, and they stand on the heavenly mount Zion (Hebrews 12:22). This shows that they are kings, as Psalm 2:6 indicates. One important mark of identification is that they “*were bought from among mankind as firstfruits*.” This shows that they are identical to the group that is mentioned in Revelation 20:4-6 who were priests and judges, and ruled as kings with the Christ for 1,000 years because this group will experience *the first resurrection*.

BLESSINGS FOR THE NATIONS DURING THE MILLENNIUM

One of the most important prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures shows that the nations will be present during the millennium. We read in Genesis 22:17, 18:

¹⁷I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of *his enemies*. ¹⁸*And by means of your seed all nations (gōy) of the earth will certainly bless themselves (bārakb, hithpael perfect)* due to the fact that you have listened to my voice.

The word “nations” is translated from the Hebrew word *gōy*, which refers to all the nations outside Israel. Another related word is *‘am*, which can refer to all nations of the world, including or not including Israel. I have already quoted the words of Paul where he identifies those who are the seed of Abraham. But because this is important in this context, I quote these words again. We read in Galatians 3:16, 26-29:

¹⁶Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “and to your descendants,” in the sense of many. Rather, it says, “and to your offspring,” in the sense of one, *who is Christ*.

²⁶*You are all, in fact, sons of God* through your faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁹*Moreover, if you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham’s offspring, heirs with reference to a promise*.

Genesis 22:17 uses the words “*his enemies*,” which shows that the seed of Abraham is one person, and this is Christ. However, the same verse also says that Abraham’s seed would multiply, and Paul shows that the Galatians who had the heavenly calling also were Abraham’s seed. So, Jesus was the primary Abraham’s seed that would bless all the nations, and the anointed Christians with the heavenly call were the secondary seed. I will now discuss how the nations will be blessed.

THE NATIONS THAT WILL BE PRESENT IN THE MILLENNIUM ACCORDING TO ISAIAH AND MICAH

Prophecies about the future blessings of the nations are particularly found in the book of the prophet Isaiah. Some of the places where the blessings of the nations are mentioned are: 2:2; 2:4; 5:26; 11:10; 25:3, 7; 42:6; 49:6, 7, 22; 52:10; 55:5; 60: 3, 5, 11, 12, 16; 61:11; 62:2; 65:1; 66:18, 19.

The members of the Governing Body teach that all the nations will be eternally annihilated in the great tribulation. Therefore, they deny that the nations will be present in the millennium. Because of this, they apply some prophecies that refer to the millennium, to the presence of Jesus.

THE GREAT BANQUET FOR ALL THE PEOPLES

I will now discuss four prophecies that will be fulfilled during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 25:6-9 we read:

⁶In *this mountain Jehovah* of armies will make for *all the peoples* ('am) A banquet of rich dishes, A banquet of fine wine, Of rich dishes filled with marrow, Of fine, filtered wine. ⁷In this mountain he will do away with the shroud that is enveloping *all the peoples* ('am) And the covering that is woven over all the nations (gōy). ⁸*He will swallow up death forever, And the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces. The reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth*, For Jehovah himself has spoken it. ⁹In that day they will say: "Look! This is our God! We have hoped in him, And he will save us. This is Jehovah! We have hoped in him. Let us be joyful and rejoice in the salvation by him."

I will first discuss the words "this mountain." Because of the demonstrative pronoun, the particular mountain has already been mentioned. We read Isaiah 18:7 (above) and 24:23 (below):

⁷At that time a gift will be brought to Jehovah of armies, From a tall and smooth-skinned nation, From a people feared everywhere, From a strong, conquering nation, Whose land is washed away by rivers To the place that bears the name of Jehovah of armies, *Mount Zion*."

²³The full moon will be abashed, And the shining sun will be ashamed, For Jehovah of armies has become King in *Mount Zion* and in Jerusalem, Glorious before the elders of his people.

The mountain that already has been mentioned is Mount Zion, from which Jehovah will rule. The temple of Solomon was built on Mount Moriah. But the reference in Isaiah 25:6 is to the future house of Jehovah on Mount Zion, where he rules. This mountain is also mentioned in other prophecies dealing with the blessings of the nations during the millennium. The book, *Isaiah's Prophecy—Light for all mankind I* (2000), page 273, has the following comments regarding the fulfillment of the prophecy:

⁷The banquet is spread in Jehovah's "mountain." What is this mountain? It is "the mountain of the house of Jehovah" to which all nations stream "in the final part of the days." It is Jehovah's "holy mountain," where his faithful worshipers do no harm and cause no ruin. (*Isaiah 2:2; 11:9*) In this elevated place of worship, Jehovah spreads his lush banquet for faithful ones. *And the spiritual good things now supplied so generously foreshadow the physical good things*

that will be provided when God's Kingdom becomes the sole government of mankind. Then hunger will be no more. "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow."—Psalm 72:8, 16.

The book says that the banquet for all the peoples had a spiritual fulfillment from the year 1919. This may be the case, but the book also says that the spiritual banquet foreshadows the literal blessings in the millennium. This is seen by a comparison of the prophecies in Revelation 21:4,5 (above) and Isaiah 25:8 (below).

⁴ And *he will wipe out every tear from their eyes*, and *death will be no more*, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. *The former things have passed away.*"⁵ And the One seated on the throne said: "Look! I am making all things new." Also he says: "*Write, for these words are faithful and true.*"

⁸ *He will swallow up death forever, And the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces. The reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, For Jehovah himself has spoken it.*

When we compare the two passages, we see that John is quoting or referring to the words of Isaiah, 1) death is no more, 2) God will wipe away the tears, and 3) Jehovah has spoken/his words are faithful and true. Because John's words refer to the beginning of the millennium when Jerusalem comes down to the earth, and he quotes the words of Isaiah, therefore, the words of Isaiah in 25:6-9 must refer to the millennium. This is also confirmed by the words that "he will swallow death forever." It is during the thousand-year reign of Jesus that death will be "swallowed forever."

We note that those who will experience the fulfillment of the prophecy are "all the peoples." This means that the prophecy is a part of the blessings of all the nations by the seed of Abraham. And this will happen during the millennium. The prophecy shows that at that time, there will be enough good food for all the nations, and that all humans will rejoice in the salvation of Jehovah.

The *Isaiah's Prophecy* book interprets "the covering that is woven over all the nations" that is mentioned in 25:7 as the sin everyone inherited from Adam. This is possible because verse 8 says that God "will swallow up death forever." However, another possibility is that the covering that is taken away, is the lack of understanding of the purpose of God. (2 Corinthians 3:13-16) The great educational work during the millennium will give all humans an accurate knowledge of Jehovah. In any case, there can be no doubt that the prophecy about the blessings of the nations in Isaiah 25:6-9 refers to the millennium.

BEATING THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES

I will now discuss the prophecy in Isaiah 2:1-4 about the nations that will create peace on the earth. These four verses are replicated almost word for word in Micah 4:1-7, and because Micah adds several points, I quote his prophecy in 4:1-7:

¹ In the final part of the days (*'abarit hyyamim*), The mountain of the house of Jehovah Will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, And it will be raised up above the hills, And to it *peoples* (*'am*) will stream. ² And *many nations* (*goy*) will go and say: "Come, let us go up *to the mountain of Jehovah* And to *the house of the God* of Jacob. He will instruct us about his ways, And we will walk in his paths. "For law will go out of Zion, And the word of Jehovah out of

Jerusalem.³ He will *render judgment* among *many peoples* (*'am rab*) And set matters straight respecting *mighty nations* (*goy 'atsam*) far away. They will beat their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning shears. *Nation* (*gōy*) will not lift up sword against *nation* (*gōy*), Nor will they learn war anymore.⁴ They will sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one will make them afraid, For the mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken.

⁵ For *all the peoples* (*'am*) will walk, each in the name of its god, But we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God forever and ever. ⁶ “In that day,” declares Jehovah, “I will gather the one who was limping, And collect together the dispersed one, Along with those I treated harshly. ⁷ I will make the one who was limping a remnant, And the one far removed a mighty nation; *And Jehovah will rule as king over them in Mount Zion*, From now on and forever.

The setting of this prophecy is the same as the setting in Isaiah 25.6-9; it happens on the mountain of Jehovah, which is Mount Zion. In the days of C.T. Russel and the Bible Students, this prophecy was applied to the millennium.²² At least since the early 1940s, this prophecy has been believed to have a fulfillment among Jehovah’s Witnesses in the time before the great tribulation. It is true that the only worldwide religious denomination where all members refuse to take part in wars and who strive to live in a peaceful way are Jehovah’s Witnesses. But an analysis of the details of the prophecy indicates a fulfillment in the millennium.

I will first look at the time setting. The Hebrew words *'aharit hayyamim* means, “the last part of the days,” and this expression has been applied to the presence of Jesus from the year 1914 to the great tribulation. The words refer to a particular period of time, and in the last part of this time, the prophecy will be fulfilled. But the context does not tell which period of time this is. The question is whether “the last parts of the days” can refer to the millennium? Let us see.

When Jacob was close to death, he uttered prophetic words regarding his sons. In Genesis 49:1, 10 we read:

¹ And Jacob called his sons and said: “Gather yourselves together that I may tell you what will happen to you in *the final part of the days* (*aharit hayyamin*).

¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah, neither the commander’s staff from between his feet, until *Shi’loh comes, and to him the obedience of the peoples* (*'am*) *will belong*.

This prophecy is said to refer to “the final part of the days” (*aharit hayyamin*). Different parts of Jacob’s prophecy may be fulfilled before the millennium. But the words that “the obedience of the peoples will belong to Shiloh”, can only refer to the millennium. So, the millennium can be “the final part of the days.”

The last words of the prophecy of Daniel, in 12:13, are:

¹³ “But as for you, go on to the end. You will rest, but you will stand up for your lot at the end of the days (*qets hayyamim*).”

The Hebrew word *qets* has the meaning “end, limit”, and *'aharit* has the meaning “end; last part.” This means that the two words are synonyms. Because the resurrection will occur during the millennium, the expression “end of days” must refer to the millennium, when Daniel will get his life back. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, expressed her view of the

22. This is seen in the book *The At-one-ment Between God and Man* (1910), page 44.

resurrection in John 11:24 “I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day (*ekhatos hēmera*).” The Greek word *hēmera* means “day”, and *ekhatos* means “last part; end.” The text in Daniel has the plural “end/last part of the days” while Martha uses the singular expression “the last day.” A period can be seen as a whole or as a part of a unit. Because the resurrection will occur during the millennium, the words of Daniel and Martha refer to the millennium.

THE ANTITYPICAL SABBATH

How can the “final part of the days” refer to the millennium?

Hebrews 10.1 says: “The law has a shadow (*skia*) of the good things to come.” This shows that the whole law contains prophetic types that refer to a future antitype. The word *skia* means “shadow,” and it is also used in Colossians 2:16, 17. The shadow is the festivals, new moons, and sabbaths that were written in the law, and the body casting the shadow (the reality) is connected with Jesus Christ.

One prophetic type that is directly connected with Jesus in the Scriptures is “sabbaths.” Matthew 12:8 and Luke 6:5 say: “For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.” Jesus was not obliged to follow the sabbath rules made by the religious leaders. But because he was under the law, he had to follow the rules regarding the sabbath that were written in the law. This means that he was not Lord of the Jewish sabbath. So, he must be Lord of the antitypical sabbath.

The creation account in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 is a part of “the Law”, which represents “shadows of good things to come.” Jehovah created plants, animals and man during a period of six days (time periods). On the seventh day he rested, according to Genesis 2:2. His day of rest can be viewed as a sabbath related to the other six days. Hebrews 4:1-10 shows that Jehovah’s day of rest still continued when this letter was written 4,000 years after Jehovah started to rest. The text also says that the rest day will continue into the future.

If the understanding that Jehovah’s six days of creation, and the seventh day of rest represent a “shadow” is correct, there are two particular dates that will be of importance. The first date is the year 1914, when the presence of Jesus and the conclusion of the wicked system of things began. The importance of this date is that according to Matthew 24:33, 34 the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ would start within one generation.

The other important date is the year 1975, which is 6,000 years from the year when Adam was created. The year 1914 tells us something about the closeness of the millennium. But it does not tell us anything as to how the creation account may be a “shadow” or a “type” with an antitypical fulfillment. But this we can construe on the basis of the year 1975. Eve was created after Adam, and some animals may or may not have been created after Adam was created. After God had created Eve or the last animal, his day of rest started. But we do not know exactly the time between the creation of Adam and the start of the day of rest. However, because the year 1975, that is 6,000 years after the creation of Adam, is only 61 years after 1914, and we know that the millennium will start within the generation after 1914, we can draw the conclusion that

Jehovah's rest day is 7,000 years long. We can also draw the conclusion that there could not have been a very long time between Adam's creation and the start of Jehovah's day of rest.

Because Matthew 12:8 says that "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath," and this cannot refer to the Jewish sabbat, it must refer to an antitypical sabbat. For "the Scripture cannot be nullified," as Jesus said, according to John 10:35. The Hebrew Scriptures contain all the information we need to calculate the time from Adam to the present. And the calculation of the 6,000 years from the creation of Adam to 1975 help us identify the antitypical Sabbath as the last 1,000 years of Jehovah's rest day of 7,000 years.

On the background of the discussion above, it can rightly be said that the millennium is "the final part of the days" (Micah 4:1) — of the seven days of 1,000 years each inside Jehovah's rest day. Or it can be said to be "the last day" of these seven days of 1,000 years, according to Martha. (John 11:24)²³

The important conclusion of the discussion above is that the Hebrew expression "in the final part of the days" (*'aharit hayyamim*) in Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:1 can refer to the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. And the setting of the prophecy is the same as the setting of the prophecy in Isaiah 25:6-9, where the millennium is described. The banquet is made for **all the peoples** on **the mountain of Jehovah**, which is Mount Zion. (Isaiah 25:6), and **peoples** will stream to the "**the mountain of the house of Jehovah**" in order to worship him. (Isaiah 2:2).

We also note that Jehovah "will **render judgment** among **many peoples** (*'am rab*) And set matters straight respecting **mighty nations** (*gōy 'ātsam*) far away. The result of this judgment is that the "many peoples" and the "mighty nations" will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning shears," and there will be peace on earth. As I have shown above, the Judgment Day is the same as the millennium.

I will show below that also according to Revelation, the nations of the world will be present during the millennium. And this is the only time period when God will render judgment among many peoples and mighty nations. We see the results of this judgment of Jehovah in Micah 4:3:

They will beat their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning shears. **Nation** (*gōy*) will not lift up sword against **nation** (*gōy*), Nor will they learn war anymore.

The members of the Governing Body believe that the nations will be eternally annihilated in the great tribulation, and therefore they cannot accept that the nations will be present during the millennium, So, they have applied the prophecy of Micah 4:1-7 to The Bible Students and Jehovah's Witnesses from the year 1919. However, the Witnesses cannot be referred to as "many peoples" and "mighty nations." These expressions must refer to all the nations of the world. And Jehovah has not rendered judgment between the Witnesses that has led to world peace. But this will literally be the case for the whole world during the millennium.

23. A discussion of how the sabbaths and the Jubilee were prophetic antitypes is found in my book, *My Beloved Religion — And The Governing Body*, pages 354-361.

Not only will there be peace. But all the needs of the humans will be fully satisfied. We read in Micah 4:4, 6:

⁴They will sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one will make them afraid, For the mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken... ⁶In that day," declares Jehovah, "I will gather the one who was limping, And collect together the dispersed one, Along with those I treated harshly.

The words about sitting under the vine and the fig tree in a peaceful environment point to a situation like the paradise in Eden. Jehovah's heavenly government will help those with body deformities to regain healthy bodies. Some persons have been dispersed or have been treated harshly. And the priestly service of the government will help these to regain their mental balance and feel that they are worthy humans who can look forward to everlasting life as perfect humans.

I will now return to the promise of Abraham, that all the nations of the earth will **ble^ss themselves** by means of Abraham's seed. The heavenly government of 144, 000 members is the seed of Abraham. All the nations that are mentioned by Isaiah and Micah do something actively to receive the blessing. According to Micah 4:2, they stream to the mountain of Jehovah to the house of God, and they ask to be instructed by him. As a result of this instruction, they make their weapons into tools that can be used to cultivate the land, and they behave in a way that no one will be afraid of them. In this way they are blessing themselves by the help of the heavenly government, the seed of Abraham.

JEHOVAH'S HOLY MOUNTAIN IN THE EARTHLY PARADISE

We have now seen that Jehovah will arrange a huge banquet for the nations in the millennium, and that the nations will be judged by Jehova with the result that there will be peace on earth. I quote two other accounts about the millennium, Isaiah 11:1-10 (above), and 65:17-25 (below)

¹ A twig will grow out of the stump of Jes'se, And a sprout from his roots will bear fruit. ² And the spirit of Jehovah will settle upon him, The spirit of wisdom and of understanding, The spirit of counsel and of mightiness, The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. ³ And he will find delight in the fear of Jehovah. He will not judge by what appears to his eyes, Nor reprove simply according to what his ears hear. ⁴He will judge the lowly with fairness, And with uprightness he will give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth And put the wicked to death with the breath of his lips.

⁵ Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, And faithfulness the belt of his hips. ⁶The wolf will reside for a while with the lamb, And with the young goat the leopard will lie down, And the calf and the lion and the fattened animal will all be together; And a little boy will lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear will feed together, And their young will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the bull. ⁸The nursing child will play over the lair of a cobra, And a weaned child will put his hand over the den of a poisonous snake. ⁹They will not cause any harm Or any ruin in all **my holy mountain**, Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah As the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰In that day the root of Jes'se will stand up as a signal for **the peoples** (*'am*). To him the nations (*goy*) will turn for guidance, And his resting-place will become glorious.

¹⁷ For look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be called to mind. ¹⁸So exult and be joyful forever in what I am creating. For look! I am creating Jerusalem a cause for joy And her people a cause for exultation. ¹⁹ And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult

in my people; No more will there be heard in her the sound of weeping or a cry of distress.”

²⁰ “No more will there be an infant from that place who lives but a few days, Nor an old man who fails to live out his days. For anyone who dies at a hundred will be considered a mere boy, And the sinner will be cursed, even though he is a hundred years of age.

²¹ They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage.

²² They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full.²³ They will not toil for nothing, Nor will they bear children for distress, Because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, And their descendants with them. ²⁴ Even before they call out, I will answer; While they are yet speaking, I will hear.²⁵ The wolf and the lamb will feed together, The lion will eat straw just like the bull, And the serpent’s food will be dust. They will do no harm nor cause any ruin in all *my holy mountain*,” says Jehovah.

One of the things that bind the two previous accounts about the great banquet and the judgment of the nations to the two accounts above about the judgment by the stump of Jesse and new heavens and a new earth, is the holy mountain of Jehovah. The just judgments of Jesus Christ is described in Isaiah chapter 11, and the result is that no one who lives during the millennium will cause any harm or ruin on Jehovah’s holy mountain. The reason is that all humans are continuously being taught about Jehovah, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah. There will also be peace between the animals and the animals and humans.

The words about creating new heavens and a new earth show that the fulfillment of the prophecy will occur in the thousand-year reign of Jesus. Houses will be built, and all the hard work of the humans will be blessed. And again, it is said that there will be peace between the animals and then animals and the humans. In the accounts of the huge banquet and Jehovah’s judgments, the nations of the world play an important part. There is also focus on the nations in Isaiah 11:10: The root of Jesse will stand as a signal for the peoples (*‘am*), and “to him the nations (*gōy*) will turn for guidance.” In Isaiah chapter 65, the nations are not mentioned. But individual humans will be blessed by God, as we see in table 7.1

Table 7.1 Blessings in the millennium according to Isaiah and Micah

A great banquet with delicious food and drink.	Isaiah 25:6
The covering that is woven over all the nations (inherited sin?) is taken away.	Isaiah 25:7
Death will be no more.	Isaiah 25:8
Tears will be wiped from all eyes.	Isaiah 25:8
Every human will rejoice in Jehovah’s salvation.	Isaiah 25:9
All weapons will be destroyed, and there will be peace between the nations.	Micah 4:3
The vines and figs will sprout, and plants and trees will give their full yield.	Micah 4:4
No human being will make others afraid.	Micah 4:4
Those with deformed bodies will be healed.	Micah 4:6
The lowly and meek ones will be treated in fairness	Isaiah 11:4
There will be peace among animals and between animals and humans	Isaiah 11:6-8
The earth will be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah	Isaiah 11:9
No weeping or cry of distress will be heard.	Isaiah 65:19
Houses will be built with Jehovah’s blessing.	Isaiah 65:21

The earth will be cultivated, and the hard work will be blessed.	Isaiah 65:22
Children will be born with no problems.	Isaiah 65:23
Jehovah will come to help before help is asked.	Isaiah 65:24
No one will do any harm.	Isaiah 65:25.

The common denominator for all four accounts that describe events during the millennium is Jehovah’s holy mountain. On this mountain, there will be a banquet for all the nations. And all the peoples will stream to this mountain seeking salvation from Jehovah. And no one will do any harm or ruin on this mountain.

Another common denominator is the peoples and the nations of the world. They have a prominent place in three of the four accounts describing the millennium. There is also another account about the millennium where the nations and peoples have a prominent part, namely Isaiah 60:1-22. In this chapter, the word *gōy* (“nation”) is used seven times. Because this chapter is quoted several times in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 in connection with the nations mentioned in these chapters, I will discuss this chapter later.

THE PRESENCE OF THE NATIONS IN THE MILLENNIUM ACCORDING TO REVELATION

In the last account discussed above, dealing with Isaiah chapter 65, we find the prophecy about new heavens and a new earth in verse 17. After these words, the prophet describes a situation taken from the paradise in Eden. In his second letter 3:13, Peter also speaks about new heavens and a new earth where righteousness will dwell. Revelation chapter 20 describes the millennium from the point of view of the resurrection and the final test of all humans. Chapters 21 and 22 describes the millennium from the point of view of blessings that will come. We read in Revelation 21:1-4:

¹And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. ²I also saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: “Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his people (*laos*). And God himself will be with them. ⁴And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”

New Jerusalem is described as a bride, and the bridegroom is Jesus Christ. Revelation 3:12 says:

¹²“The one who conquers—I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will by no means go out from it anymore, and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem that descends out of heaven from my God, and my own new name.

We must remember that the Christian Greek Scriptures were written to Christians with the heavenly calling who were declared righteous. The verb that is translated as “conquer” is *nikaō*, with the meaning “conquer; subdue; overcome; prevail,” according to Mounce. The new creations that continue to serve Jehovah until their death will become a part of New Jerusalem. So, New Jerusalem is a name of the heavenly government of 144,000 members. The city is “coming down from heaven” in the sense that the members of the heavenly government will act as kings, judges, and priests, toward those who live on the earth during Judgment Day.

God will be with those who live on the earth, and they will be his people (*laos*). According to 21:4, there may be tears, but God will “wipe out every tear from their eyes.” The death that humans have inherited from Adam will be no more, and mourning, outcry and pain will be done away with.

One of the reasons why the members of the Governing Body believe that 8 billion+ people will be eternally annihilated in the great tribulation is that the “goats” in the illustration of the sheep and the goats, whom they interpret as all the inhabitants of the nations of the world, will experience “everlasting cutting-off.” But it is almost amusing that these nations who should not exist, so many places in the Scriptures are said to be present during the millennium. We read in Revelation 20:3:

And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not mislead **the nations** (*ethnos*) anymore until the 1,000 years were ended. After this he must be released for a little while.

I count that the word “nations” (*ethnos*) is used 23 times in Revelation, and the 19 occurrences of the word “nations” in the first 19 chapters always refer to the political nations of the world that are in opposition to God’s Kingdom and his sovereignty. The great prostitute Babylon the Great is mentioned in chapters 17 and 18, and 18:23 says that “by your spiritistic practices **all the nations** (*ethnos*) were misled.” Will the nations be present from the beginning of the millennium? We find the answer in Revelation 19:15:

¹⁵ And out of his [Jesus Christ] mouth protrudes a sharp, long sword with which **to strike** (*patassō*) **the nations** (*ethnos*), and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron. Moreover, he treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

The word *patassō* has the meaning, “to strike a heavy blow; to slay by means of a mortal blow or disease,” according to Louw and Nida. The nations will be among those who will be killed in connection with the great tribulation. Their presence in the millennium means that their inhabitants have received a resurrection, and the earth must be made ready for the resurrection before *hadēs* will deliver its dead.

Because the nations will be stricken down in the great tribulation but they are present in the millennium according to 20:3, it means that the inhabitants of the nations will receive a resurrection.

This is confirmed by Revelation 20:7-9: (The rendering of NWT13 above and my literal translation below):

⁷ Now as soon as the 1,000 years have ended, Satan will be released from his prison. ⁸ and he will go out to mislead **those nations** (*ethnos*) in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Ma’gog, to gather them together for the war. The number of these is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they advanced over the whole earth and encircled the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and consumed them.

⁷ And as soon as the 1,000 years have ended, Satan will be released from his prison. ⁸ and he will go out to mislead **the nations** (*neuter*), those in the four corners of the earth, **the Gog and Ma’gog** (*masculine*), to gather **them** (*masculine*) for the war, **they** (*masculine*) being the number of **them** (*masculine*) like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And **they** (*masculine*) went up upon the width of the earth and the surrounded the encampment of the holy ones and the beloved city. And came down fire out of heaven and devoured **them**.

Please note the rendering of verse 8: “and he will go out to mislead the nations, those in the four corners of the earth.” The verse shows explicitly that the nations (*ethnos*) **are established and are existing** in the four corners of the earth at the end of the millennium, as is the case today. In order to show that “the nations” are not enemies of God, as some think, I will analyze the text.

The most important point is that the word “nations” (*ethnos*, plural, *ethne*) is neuter, while those who are misled are referred to by the masculine pronoun “them,” and Gog and Magog are masculine as well. The grammatical situation here is similar to the grammatical situation in Matthew 25:32, where it is said that all the nations (neuter) are gathered before the King Jesus Christ, but those who are separated are referred to as “them” (masculine). This means that Jesus is not separating **the nations** as sheep and goats. But he is separating **some persons from the nations** as sheep and goats.

Revelation 20:8 says that the purpose of the Devil is to mislead the nations (*ta ethne*, neuter). But the text does not say that the nations are misled. Those who are misled are referred to by the personal pronoun “them/they” four times, and these pronouns are masculine plural. A masculine plural pronoun cannot refer back to a substantive that is neuter. This means that **those who are misled are some of the inhabitants of these nations** and not the whole nations.

Gog and Magog are mentioned in Ezekiel 38:2, and Gog in the land of Magog would lead an attack on God’s people. The word “Gog” has the masculine article but “Magog” does not have any article. The rule is that when two names are connected with “and”, and the first have the masculine article, both are masculine and definite. This means that the masculine pronoun “them” that Satan gather for the war must refer to the dual expression “Gog and Magog.” So, Satan will not mislead the nations at the four corners of the earth. But he will mislead some on their inhabitants, and those who are misled are called “Gog and Magog.”

Today the 195 nations of the world are spread all over the earth; we could say that they are at the four corners of the earth. At the end of the millennium, there is a similar situation; nations are spread all over the world. The inhabitants of the nations today have inherited sin, and because of this, they are on the point of ruining the earth. But the inhabitants of the nations referred to in Revelation 20:8 will, at the end of the 1,000 years, have no inherited sin but “they have come to life.” (Revelation 20:5) The important point in our context is that the fact that nations live all over the earth at the end of the 1,000 years supports the view that most of the inhabitants of all the nations that have existed on the earth will have received a resurrection on Judgment Day.

The number of the rebels is said to be like “the sand of the sea.” This means that the number is unknown. However, the number needs not be higher than 144,000. Genesis 22:17 says that the seed of Abraham would be like the sand of the sea, and according to the Christian Greek Scriptures, this seed turns out to be 144,000 in number. So just as the number of those who get a resurrection are counted in billions, it is likely that those who pass the final test after the 1,000 years and support the sovereignty of Jehovah God are counted in billions as well.

I will now return to the tableau in Revelation chapter 21, where the heavenly government, New Jerusalem, “comes down” from heaven at the beginning of the

millennium. Several blessings are mentioned, but let us look at blessings that the nations receive, according to 21:23-26:

²³ And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp was the Lamb. ²⁴ And *the nations* (*ethnos*) will walk by means of its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ Its gates will not be closed at all by day, for night will not exist there. ²⁶ And they will bring the glory and the honor of *the nations* (*ethnos*) into it.

Several words in the quotation are taken from the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 60. That God will illuminate New Jerusalem is taken from Isaiah 60: 19, 20:

¹⁹ For you the sun will no longer be a light by day, Nor will the shining of the moon give you light, For Jehovah will become to you an eternal light, And your God will be your beauty. ²⁰ No more will your sun set, Nor will your moon wane, For Jehovah will become for you an eternal light, And the days of your mourning will have ended.

The words that “nations will walk by means of its light” are taken from Isaiah 60:2, 3:

² For look! darkness will cover the earth And thick gloom the nations; But on you Jehovah will shine, And on you his glory will be seen. ³ *Nations* will go to your light And kings to your shining splendor.

In the prophecy of Isaiah 60, Jehovah speaks through the prophet to Jerusalem, which represents Jehovah’s people. The nations in Isaiah’s prophecy refer to different political nations that will support Jerusalem, and therefore, “the nations” in the fulfillment in the millennium must also be the nations of this world with their inhabitants. The perspective of chapters 21 and 22 is the millennium. When it is said that the nations “walk by means of the light of New Jerusalem,” this means that during the millennium they have a part in the great program of teaching the truth of Jehovah, including the contents of the new books with Jehovah’s instructions. The words that “They will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it” are taken from Isaiah 60:5:

⁵ At that time you will see and become radiant, And your heart will throb and overflow, Because the wealth of the sea will be directed to you; *The resources of the nations will come to you.*

The words that “the glory and honor of the nations” are brought into New Jerusalem show that the inhabitants of the nations that are present in the millennium support the work of the heavenly government.

The most important point in our context is that the actions of the nations in relation to New Jerusalem show explicitly that the nations are present in the millennium after New Jerusalem comes down from heaven and the millennium begins.

Chapter 22 in Revelation continues the description of the millennium after New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. We read in 22:1, 2:

¹And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of its main street. On both sides of the river were trees of life producing 12 crops of fruit, yielding their fruit each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the healing of *the nations*.

The members of the great crowd that survives the great tribulation have inherited sin and are imperfect. Therefore, they need the application of the ransom sacrifice, as seen by the words, “the Lamb...will guide them to springs of waters of life.” (Revelation 7:17) And the same is true with all those who will be resurrected. The members of the heavenly government, New Jerusalem, functions also as priests. This means that they will apply the ransom sacrifice for those who live on the earth, and all humans will gradually proceed toward human perfection. This is shown by the words that “the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations.” At the end of the 1,000 years the nations are completely healed, and their inhabitants are sinless and perfect as humans. I refer to a heart-warming comment in *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1992, page 7, regarding this situation:

Christ’s dying for the whole of mankind and balancing the scale upset by Adam is called the “ransom” arrangement. (Matthew 20:28) It may be likened to a medicine that works against the virus causing the fever. By applying the value of Jesus’ ransom to mankind, mankind’s sickly condition caused by sin—including death itself—can be cured. This healing process is described figuratively in the last book of the Bible: “On this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations.” (***Revelation 22:2***) ***Imagine! A figurative river of water of life flowing between trees of life with their leaves, all for the healing of mankind. These divinely inspired symbols represent God’s provision for restoring mankind to perfection on the basis of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice.***

Later I will demonstrate that restoring mankind to perfection is implied in verse 13 of Revelation chapter 20. But here there is a beautiful picture of the application of the ransom sacrifice. The river of water of life represents this sacrifice. And the leaves of the trees that were watered by the river “were for the healing of the nations.” This shows that the inhabitants of the nations were sick because of their inherited sin and their imperfection. That they must continue to use the leaves of the trees for healing illustrates the gradual process toward perfection that occurs during the 1,000 years.

And again:

That the nations used the leaves of the trees for healing show explicitly that the nations are present during the millennium after New Jerusalem comes down from heaven and the millennium begins. And this discussion of the presence of the nations, supports the view that the inhabitants of all the nations that have existed on the earth will get a resurrection during the millennium.

THE NATIONS AND THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

I started this section with Jehovah’s promise to Abraham, and I will end this section with this promise as well.

According to Genesis 22:18, Jehovah said to Abraham:

And by means of your seed ***all nations*** (*kol gōy*) of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice.

If we take the words at face value, *all the nations of the earth* (Hebrew: *gōy*; Greek: *ethnos*) must include *all the inhabitants of all the nations that have existed on the earth since Adam*.

The only way that all nations that have lived on the earth can be blessed by Abraham’s seed, is that all the inhabitants of these nations, except those who are incorrigibly wicked, will get a resurrection, and that they at the same time can be present on the earth. This can only happen during the Day of Judgment, during the millennium.

Paul identified “Abraham’s seed” as Jesus Christ and the 144,000 with the heavenly calling. They are identical to New Jerusalem that is coming down from heaven at the beginning of the millennium. This section has shown how all the inhabitants of the nations will receive blessings during the millennium. as is shown in table 7.2:

Table 7.2 Blessings of the nations during the millennium

All the nations will have a banquet with delicious dishes. Their tears will be wiped away, and the death will be no more.	Isaiah 25:6-9
Many peoples and mighty nations will stream to Jehovah’s mountain. They will beat their weapons into agricultural equipment. All their inhabitants will live in peace, and Jehovah will perfectly fill their needs.	Micah 4:1-7
The peoples will seek the guidance of Jehovah. The earth will become a paradise. There will be peace between the animals and between the animals and the humans.	Isaiah 11:1-10
The nations will walk by means of the light of New Jerusalem, which means that their inhabitants will benefit in the great educational program and learn deep truths about Jehovah and his purpose.	Revelation 21:23-26
The inhabitants of the nations will get a spiritual and a bodily healing by the leaves of the trees, when the priests apply the ransom sacrifice for them, and they gradually proceed toward sinlessness and human perfection.	Revelation 22:1, 2
Satan will try to mislead the inhabitants of the nations, but only a part of them will be misled. The others will worship Jehovah and live on the earth forever.	Revelation 20:7-9

The encouraging conclusion of this section is that the inhabitants of all the nations that live when the great tribulation comes, will not be eternally annihilated. All the inhabitants of all the nations that have existed on the earth, except the few that are incorrigibly wicked, will get a resurrection during the millennium and receive the blessings promised to Abraham, which means everlasting life on a paradise earth.

THE REST OF THE DEAD WILL COME TO LIFE

I have now demonstrated that the nations will be present on earth during the millennium and that the inhabitants of these nations gradually will progress toward perfection after their resurrection. But some see a problem in connection with this, namely the words of Revelation 20:5: “The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000

years were ended.” How can we say that the dead will get a resurrection during the 1,000 years in the light of these words?

Let us take a closer look at the verb translated as “come to life” ($\zeta a\bar{o}$, aorist active indicative). As we have seen, the Greek verb meaning “raise up” is *egeirō*, and it is not used in 20:5. And neither is the Greek substantive *anastasis* with the meaning “resurrection.” In 20:13 where the resurrection from the sea and from *hadēs* is mentioned, the verb *didomi* (“give; deliver”) is used. So, the word $\zeta a\bar{o}$ is not used with reference to the resurrection in Revelation. But what is the meaning of this verb?

According to Mounce, the Greek word $\zeta a\bar{o}$ has the meaning, “to live; to be possessed of vitality; to exercise the functions of life.” This means that we cannot at the outset take the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$ in Revelation 20:5 as a reference to the resurrection from the dead. Instead, I will argue that the meaning is that at the end of the 1,000 years, those who have been resurrected, have reached human perfection and have been freed from the sin they inherited from Adam. In this sense, they “have come to life.” I will now give some examples of the use of the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$.

In 1 Corinthians 9:14, the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$ has the meaning to use the good news as a breadwinner:

¹⁴ In this way, too, the Lord commanded for those proclaiming the good news to live ($\zeta a\bar{o}$) by means of the good news.

In Luke 2:36, the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$ has the meaning to live a normal life:

³⁶ Now there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phan'uel, of Ash'er's tribe. This woman was well along in years and had lived ($\zeta a\bar{o}$) with her husband for seven years after they were married.

In Luke 15:13, the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$ has the meaning to live his life:

¹³ A few days later, the younger son gathered all his things together and traveled to a distant country and there squandered his property by living ($\zeta a\bar{o}$) a debauched life.

In John 4:10, the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$ refers to water in motion that Jesus used in a symbolic way:

¹⁰ In answer Jesus said to her: “If you had known of the free gift of God and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living ($\zeta a\bar{o}$) water.”

In 1 Thessalonians 3:7, 8, the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$ has the meaning “to be possessed with spiritual vitality:

⁷ That is why, brothers, in all our distress and tribulation, we have been comforted because of you and the faithfulness you demonstrate. ⁸ Because we are revitalized ($\zeta a\bar{o}$) if you are standing firm in the Lord.

In 1 John 4:9, the verb $\zeta a\bar{o}$ has the meaning to get the right to live forever:

⁹ By this the love of God was revealed in our case, that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might gain life ($\zeta a\bar{o}$) through him.

The meaning “revitalized” in 1 Thessalonians 3:8 is rather close to the meaning I have suggested for the verb in Revelation 20:5. During the millennium the resurrected ones

will gradually grow toward perfection when the ransom sacrifice is applied to them. When the 1,000 years end, the resurrected ones are perfect and free of sin. Now they are no longer dependent on the ransom sacrifice. But as perfect humans free from sin, they have the right to live without dying.

In Revelation 3:1, the verb $\xi\alpha\theta\acute{o}$ has a meaning that is close to my definition in 20:5:

¹“To the angel of the congregation in Sar’dis write: These are the things that he says who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: ‘I know your deeds, that you have the name that you are alive ($\xi\alpha\theta\acute{o}$), but you are dead.

The members of the congregation in Sardis were living literally speaking. But because of their deeds, they were dead from a spiritual point of view. If they would repent and show this by Christian deeds, they might come to life. The important point to keep in mind is that the word $\xi\alpha\theta\acute{o}$ never is used with the meaning “to rise up,” that is, to be resurrected. But the examples above show some of the ways the verb has been used.

There is one phrase in Revelation 20:13 that is supporting my explanation of the verb $\xi\alpha\theta\acute{o}$ in 20:5. This is the phrase that “*death* gave up its dead.” The word “death” is used in different contexts with different referenses.

In order to understand the meaning of the word “death” in Revelation 20:13, we need to discuss the situation of the 144 000 who will get a heavenly resurrection and serve as judges, kings, and priests. When the books of the Christian Greek Scriptures were written, all the Christians were among the 144 000 and had the heavenly hope. Thus, the epistles and letters in the Christian Greek Scriptures were addressed to persons with the heavenly hope.

The subject we are discussing is Judgment Day. But those who have the heavenly hope will not be present in the millennium. But they must also be judged, and Paul says in Romans 14:10-12, (above) and 2 Corinthians 5:10, (below):

¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you also look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written: “‘As surely as I live,’ says Jehovah, ‘to me every knee will bend, and every tongue will make open acknowledgment to God.’” ¹² So, then, each of us will render an account for himself to God.

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of the Christ, so that each one may be repaid according to the things he has practiced while in the body, whether good or bad.

As I will discuss below, those who get a resurrection during the millennium have been acquitted of their sin by their death. Therefore, they will be judged on the basis of what they do after their resurrection. Those who have the heavenly hope will be judged on the basis of what they “practiced while in the body,” that is, when they lived on this earth. Paul discusses different sides of sin and righteousness in connection with those who have the heavenly hope. In Romans 5:17 he says:

¹⁷ For if by the trespass of the one man death ruled as king through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of the undeserved kindness and of the free gift of righteousness rule as kings in life through the one person, Jesus Christ!

All humans have inherited sin because of Adam’s trespass, and death ruled as king. This means that the bodies of all the descendants of Adam were subject to death. But because of God’s undeserved kindness and the free gift of righteousness, the Romans, to

whom the letter was addressed, will rule as kings with Jesus Christ. Paul continues his discussion of those who have the heavenly hope in Colossians 2:13, (above) and Ephesians 2:1-5, (below):

¹³ Furthermore, though you *were dead* in your trespasses and in the uncircumcised state of your flesh, God made you alive together with him. He kindly forgave us all our trespasses.

¹ Furthermore, God *made you alive*, though you *were dead* in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you at one time walked according to the system of things of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. ³ Yes, among them we all at one time conducted ourselves in harmony with the desires of our flesh, carrying out the will of the flesh and of our thoughts, and we were naturally children of wrath just as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, ⁵ *made us alive* together with the Christ, even when we *were dead* in trespasses—by undeserved kindness you have been saved.

The passages above illuminate the meaning of the words “*death* gave up its dead.” In Revelation 20:13. Paul shows that the Colossians and Ephesians were viewed as dead because of their trespasses and sins. But they were made alive even though they still had their sinful bodies. The verb in 2:5 that is translated by “made alive» is *synzōopoieō*. This is a compound verb made by the preposition *syn* (“with”), the verb *zōō* (“to live”), and the verb *poieō* (“to do”). The use of this verb with *zōō* as its nucleus, is a strong support for my explanation of *zōō* in Revelation 20:5, that it does not refer to at a resurrection but refers to humans when they become perfect and free of sin.

Both Jesus and John express the same view as Paul in John 5:24, (above) and 1 John 3:14, (below):

²⁴ Most truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes the One who sent me has everlasting life, and he does not come into judgment but **has passed over from death to life**.

¹⁴ We know that we **have passed over from death to life**, because we love the brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.

Those who believed in Jesus Christ and his Father had already received a positive judgment. They had passed over from death to life. That persons were viewed as dead because of their trespasses and sins is also expressed in Revelation 14:13.

¹³ And I heard a voice out of heaven say, “Write: Happy are **the dead who die** in union with the Lord from this time onward. Yes, says the spirit, let them rest from their labors, for the things they did go right with them.”

The words above refer to those “who are in union with the Lord,” those who have his approval. When they die, they will rest because the “things they did go right with them.” Paul shows in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that those with the heavenly hope “will appear before the judgment seat of the Christ,” and that “each one may be repaid according to the things he has practiced while in the body.” When Revelation 14:13 says that “the things they did will go right with them,” it shows that they get a positive judgment and get a heavenly resurrection. But did you note how they are described? They are called “**the dead who die**” because they are viewed as dead due to their sinful bodies. We have the same expression in Revelation 20:12, 13. The resurrection is described, but those who literally

had gotten a resurrection are called “the dead” two times in verse 12 *after their resurrection*.

Now we have a good basis for our understanding of the words that “the rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended” in Revelation 20:5. All those who are resurrected during the millennium still have their inherited sin. So, from the viewpoint of God, they are dead. After their resurrection, the 144 000 judges, kings, and priests, will help those who are resurrected to proceed toward becoming perfect like Adam. When the 1,000 years end, this process comes to an end. Because they are perfect and without inherited sin, they are no longer viewed as dead. But they “have come to life.”

“YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE”

At the beginning of the millennium, New Jerusalem will come down from heaven, and the result will be an earth that is the diametrical opposite to the present earth because God “will wipe out every tear from their eyes, death will be no more, neither will morning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” (Revelation 21:4) The situation presented here can be described as a paradise, and this is the word I now will discuss. Luke 23:42-43 tells that Jesus was fastened to the stake together with two criminals. One of the criminals spoke to him, and his answer is important:

⁴²Then he said: “Jesus, remember me when you get into your Kingdom.”⁴³ And he said to him: “Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise.”

Jesus spoke Hebrew, and he evidently used the Hebrew words *gan ‘edan* (the garden of Eden) in his answer. These words are translated by Luke as *paradeisos* (“paradise”). What did Jesus refer to when he used the words *gan ‘edan*? And how did the criminal understand these words? The answer depends on how the Jews in general viewed the words *gan ‘edan* and *paradeisos* at that time. Let us study this issue. Genesis 2:8 says:

⁸Further, Jehovah God planted a garden in E’den (*gan be ‘eden*), toward the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

The phrase “a garden in Eden” is translated from the Hebrew words *gan* (“garden”) *be* (“in”) *‘edan* (“Eden”), and this phrase is translated by the Septuagint as *paradeisos* (“paradise”) *en* (“in”) *edem* (“Eden”) The first books of the Greek Septuagint was translated in the third century BCE, and it has 32 occurrences of the word *paradeisos*. This means that from the third century BCE, the Greek word *paradeisos* became a part of the vocabulary of the Jews who understood Greek. We may get a clue as to the origin of the Greek word *paradaisos* in Song of Solomon 4:13:

¹³Your shoots are an orchard (*pardēs*) of pomegranates, and excellent fruit like henna with spikenard.”

The Septuagint translates the Hebrew word *pardes* with the Greek word *paradeisos*. The word *pardēs* is a Persian word referring to a big royal park surrounded by a wall, in which rare trees grow. There are good reasons to believe that Song of Solomon was written by

Solomon in the 10th century BCE, and at this time, there was a Persian influence of different countries in the ancient world, including Israel.²⁴

Different Pseudepigraphic books mention the Garden of Eden. 2 Enoch 9:1 says that the Garden of Eden is located in the third heaven:

¹This tree is of ineffable goodness and fragrance...Its root is in the garden at the Earth's end. And **Paradise** is between corruptibility and incorruptibility. And two springs come out...and they separate into four parts, and go round with quiet course, and go down into the paradise of Eden, between corruptibility and incorruptibility. And thence they go forth along the Earth, and have a revolution to their circle even as other Elements. And here there is no unfruitful tree, and every place is blessed.

The Book of Jubilees was written in the 2nd century BCE, and it also referred to the Garden of Eden as the Holy of Holies in heaven in 8:19:

¹⁹ 'And he knew that the Garden of Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord. And Mount Sinai was in the midst of the desert and Mount Zion (was) in the midst of the navel of the earth. The three of these were created as holy places, one facing the other'.

The Qumran community dwelled at the Dead Sea from the end of the 3rd century BCE until 68 CE. In their writings, we find references to salvation, to everlasting life, and to the new system of things. There are also some references to *gan 'edæn* ("the Garden of Eden"). Below is a quotation from The Thanksgiving Psalms chapter 16:5-15, 17-25.

⁵ I g[ive] thanks to You, O Lord, for] You set me by a fountain which flows in a dry land, a spring of water in a desolate land, a well watered ⁶ **garden** (*gan*) [and a pool ...] You [plan]ted a stand of juniper and pine together with cypress for Your glory; trees of ⁷ life at the secret spring, hidden among all the trees by the water so that a shoot might grow up into an eternal planting. ⁸ Taking root before they shoot up, they stretch out their roots to the watercourse, that its trunk might be open to the living water ⁹ and become an eternal fountain. On its leafy branches every wild animal of the forest shall graze, and its trunk shall become a gathering place to all who pass ¹⁰ and its branches roosts for all the birds. All the tre[es] by the water rise over it, for in their stand they grow tall, ¹¹ but they do not stretch out their root toward the watercourse. The shoot of h[o]liness grows up into a planting of truth, hidden ¹² and not esteemed. And because it is not known its secret is sealed up. (vacat) But You, O [G]od, You protect its fruit with the mystery of powerful warriors, ¹³ holy spirits, and the whirling flame of fire so that none may [come to the] fountain of life, nor with eternal trees ¹⁴ drink the waters of holiness, nor make his fruit flourish with [the plan]t of the heavens. Namely, the one though he sees has not recognized, ¹⁵ and considering has not believed in the **spring of life and so gives** [...] **eternal**. I have become the mockery of flooding rivers...

¹⁷The heavens shall not fail to open, ¹⁸ nor shall they run dry, but shall become a stream pouring out up[on ...] water and then to seas without en[d.] ¹⁹ Those hidden away flow suddenly [...] and they shall become a de[luge for every] ²⁰ green and dry tree; a lake for every wild animal and bi[rd as] lead in mighty water[s,] ²¹ ... fire and they dry up. But the planting of fruit [...] **eternally, to a glorious Eden** and frui[t ...] ²² And by my hand You have opened their spring with [its] channels [...] turning in accordance with the proper measurement, and the stand ²³ of their trees according to the plumb line of the sun for [...] glorious branches. When I extend my hand to weed ²⁴ its ditches, its roots stretch out into the flinty stone and [...] their trunk in the earth. In the time of heat it retains ²⁵ its strength.

24. See R.J. Furuli, *When Was the Book of Daniel Written? A Philological, Linguistic, and Historical Approach* (2017), pages 58-65.

The word “garden” is mentioned in verse 6, and “Eden” is mentioned in verse 21, and the description shows that this garden is identical with the “world to come” where God’s servants will achieve everlasting life. The document 4Q475 f1:1-7 also shows that the future Eden (the paradise) is on the earth:

¹ [... Zio]n (?) [did] He choose, and by a righteous life[...] ² [His laws (?)]they forgot and did not seek them, and a land[...] ³ [He stretched out (?)<His> h]ands in their midst, and told them all the[precepts (?) ...] ⁴ [... a]ll the earth, and there will no longer be any guilt in the land, and there will not b[e any more (?) ...] ⁵ [There will be (?) destruc]tion and great envy, ***all the earth will be like Eden***, and all who li[ve there like the grass of the field (?)] ⁶ [...]the land will be quiet for ever, and those who live[there] will seek (?) [...] ⁷ [Israel will be unto Him (?)]a beloved son, and they will seek it all, and ri[ghteousness (?) ...] ⁸ [...] for [...] ⁹ [....]

The word “Eden” is only found two times in the Mishnah, in Avot 5:19, 20.

¹⁹ Whoever possesses these three things, he is of the disciples of Abraham, our father; and [whoever possesses] three other things, he is of the disciples of Balaam, the wicked. A good eye, a humble spirit and a moderate appetite he is of the disciples of Abraham, our father. An evil eye, a haughty spirit and a limitless appetite he is of the disciples of Balaam, the wicked. What is the difference between the disciples of Abraham, our father, and the disciples of Balaam, the wicked? ***The disciples of Abraham, our father, enjoy this world, and inherit the world to come (gan ‘ēdān)***, as it is said: “I will endow those who love me with substance, I will fill their treasuries” (Proverbs 8:21). ***But the disciples of Balaam, the wicked, inherit Gehinnom***, and descend into the nethermost pit, as it is said: “For you, O God, will bring them down to the nethermost pit those murderous and treacherous men; they shall not live out half their days; but I trust in You” (Psalms 55:24).

²⁰ Judah ben Tema said: Be strong as a leopard, and swift as an eagle, and fleet as a gazelle, and brave as a lion, to do the will of your Father who is in heaven. ***He used to say: the arrogant is headed for Gehinnom and the blushing for the garden of Eden (gan ‘ēdān)***,. May it be the will, O Lord our God, that your city be rebuilt speedily in our days and set our portion in the studying of your Torah.²⁵

The contrast in this text is between the disciples of Abraham, who will inherit *gan ‘ēdān*, and the disciples of Balaam, who will inherit Gehenna. The English translator of the text rendered the first instance of *gan ‘ēdān* with “the world to come.” This is linguistically wrong, but factually correct. In the view of the Mishna writer, *gan ‘ēdān* was identical with the world to come (*hā ‘ōlam habba*).

Philo of Alexandria lived between 20 BCE and 50 CE., so he lived at the same time as Jesus. I have checked all his books, and I found 48 examples of the Greek word *paradeisos* (“paradise”). All the references were to the first paradise that God created, and there was no reference to a future paradise. The important point is that the Septuagint that was used by the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures and was known by many Jews in the first century CE had the word *paradeisos*.

The use of the word *paradeisos* in the Septuagint shows that this Greek word was known by people during the time when Jesus was on the earth. As mentioned, some Pseudepigraphic books written in BCE apply *paradeisos* to the spiritual realm. But both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Mishna equated *paradeisos* with the world to come. That Philo

25. https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.5.20?lang=bi.

used the word in his writings, show that *paradeisos* was a part of the vocabulary of the Jews at the time when Jesus was on the earth.

When we now have seen that the Hebrew words *gan 'ēden* and the corresponding Greek word *paradeisos* were known and used by the Jews in the days of Jesus, we must ask exactly what was the reference of Jesus. In addition to Luke 23:43, *paradeisos* occurs two times in the Christian Greek Scriptures, in 2 Corinthians 12:3, 4, (above) and Revelation 2:7, (below):

³Yes, I know such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body, I do not know; God knows—⁴who was caught away into *paradise* and heard words that cannot be spoken and that are not lawful for a man to say.

⁷Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says to the congregations: To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in *the paradise of God.*⁷

In 2 Corinthians 12:1, Paul speaks about supernatural revelations and of “being caught away into paradise.” What Paul meant by “paradise” is not clear. There is no context where “paradise” is mentioned in Revelation 2:7. But because the one who conquers is mentioned in connection with the tree of life and the paradise, and the expression, “the one who conquers” is consistently used in Revelation of those with the heavenly calling, the mentioned *paradise* must be in heaven.

Jesus shows in his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:3-6 that to become a member of the heavenly government and becoming a part of the heavenly paradise a person must be born again, which means to be baptized with holy spirit. The criminal who spoke to Jesus was not born again, and therefore he cannot be a part of the heavenly paradise. But as I stress over and over again in this book; Jesus bought Adam and all his descendants, including this criminal, and therefore he will get a resurrection during the millennium when the earth will have become a paradise.

The criminal asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus got into his Kingdom. This shows that the criminal had heard directly or indirectly the preaching of Jesus about God’s Kingdom. Therefore, when Jesus promised the criminal to be with him in *gan 'ēden*, the criminal would instantaneously think of the first paradise, and that this paradise would be restored in the future.

The words of Revelation 21:4 shows that the earth will become a paradise during the millennium. But on the basis of the principle, “everything humans can do, they must do, everything humans cannot do, God will do,” the humans who survive the great tribulation will cultivate the earth, and God will bless their hard work. I have quoted Isaiah 65:17-25 before. But because it describes the paradise, I quote it again:

¹⁷For look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be called to mind, Nor will they come up into the heart.¹⁸ So exult and be joyful forever in what I am creating. For look! I am creating Jerusalem a cause for joy And her people a cause for exultation.

¹⁹And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult in my people; No more will there be heard in her the sound of weeping or a cry of distress.”²⁰ “No more will there be an infant from that place who lives but a few days, Nor an old man who fails to live out his days. For anyone who dies at a hundred will be considered a mere boy, And the sinner will be cursed, even though he is a hundred years of age.²¹ They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage.²² They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their

hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full. ²³They will not toil for nothing, Nor will they bear children for distress, Because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, And their descendants with them. ²⁴Even before they call out, I will answer; While they are yet speaking, I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb will feed together, The lion will eat straw just like the bull, And the serpent's food will be dust. They will do no harm nor cause any ruin in all my holy mountain," says Jehovah.

When a part of the earth has become a paradise, the criminal who spoke to Jesus will get his resurrection.

THE LAKE THAT BURNS WITH FIRE AND SULPHUR AND GEHENNA

The "first death" is the death that all Adam's descendants will experience because of their inherited sin. From this death there is a resurrection. From the second death there is no resurrection, and the expression means eternal annihilation.

THE HEBREW *GĒ HINNOM*

I will now discuss the use of the word Gehenna (*geenna*) in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Christian Greek Scriptures. In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the word *geenna* occurs 11 times. According to these texts, *geenna* is associated with fire, and persons can be thrown into *geenna*. In Matthew 18:8, 9, Jesus uses the words "everlasting fire" as a parallel to *geenna*; in 13:42 he speaks about the "fiery furnace"; and in Matthew 25:41, Jesus speaks about "the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." Jesus spoke Hebrew, and *gē hinnōm* is the Hebrew equivalent to *geenna*. What did Jesus mean when he spoke about *geenna*? And how would his listeners understand his words?

The Valley of Hinnom (*gē hinnōm*) was located south and southwest of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8). Ahaz sacrificed his sons to Molech by burning them alive in the Valley of Hinnom. (2 Chronicles 28:1, 3; Jeremiah 32:35) The place in the Valley of Hinnom where the sacrifices were offered is called *tōpēt*. (Jeremiah 7:31, 32) King Josiah polluted the Valley of Hinnom to prevent idolatrous worship there. How could Topheth and the Valley of Hinnom be connected with the judgment of God? Jehovah would never command that living humans should be burned, as Jeremiah 32:35 shows. The Valley of Hinnom is never connected with torment by fire in the Hebrew Scriptures. But it is connected with the judgment of God against the wicked persons. Jeremiah 7:30-33 says:

³⁰ 'For the people of Judah have done what is bad in my eyes,' declares Jehovah. 'They have set up their disgusting idols in the house that bears my name, in order to defile it. ³¹ They have built the high places of To'pheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hin'nom, in order to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, something that I had not commanded and that had never even come into my heart.' ³² "Therefore look! the days are coming,' declares Jehovah, 'when it **will no longer be called To'pheth or the Valley of the Son of Hin'nom but the Valley of the Slaughter.** They will bury in To'pheth until there is no place left. ³³ And **the dead bodies** of this people will become food for the birds of the heavens and for the beasts of the earth, with no one to frighten them away.

We note that the Valley of Hinnom will be filled with **dead** bodies when God makes his judgment against Judah. This is also described in Jeremiah 19: 2, 6, 7, 10, 11. The judgment

of Assyria is also connected with the Valley of Hinnom. Isaiah 30:31 says that Jehovah will strike Assyria with his rod, and Assyria will be terrified. Then verse 33 says:

³³For his To'pheth is already prepared; It is also made ready for the king. He has made the woodpile deep and wide, With an abundance of fire and wood. The breath of Jehovah, like a torrent of sulfur, Will set fire to it.

Children were, contrary to the will of God, burned as sacrifices in *tōpet*. Now God speaks of a fire in *tōpet* that will consume the Assyrians. It is obvious that it is not a literal fire that will torment people, as we also can see from verse 27, “his tongue is like a consuming fire,” and verse 28, where we read that “his spirit is like a flooding torrent.” The imagery continues in verse 30 where we read: “Jehovah will make his majestic voice heard, and reveal his arm as it descends in the heat of anger, with the flame of a consuming fire, a cloudburst and a thunderstorm and hail stones.”²⁶ Because of this, we understand that the fire in *tōpet* is a consuming fire that led to the death of the Assyrians and not to their torment.

The place of *tōpet* in the Valley of Hinnom is also connected with the universal judgment of God. Isaiah 66: 22-23 first describes the new heaven and new earth where the nations will worship God. Then he says in verse 24:

²⁴And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.

As in the cases with the people of Judah and the Assyrians, the prophet does not speak of living persons but of dead ones—of corpses (*pəgər*). When a person dies and is buried, worms will feed on the body. (Isaiah 14:11) The worms are said to be “*their* worms,” the worms that feed on the dead body. Worms do not live forever, but these worms will not die as long as there is flesh to consume. The fire mentioned is “*their* fire,” and the fire must be treated in the same way as the worms—it will not be quenched before the bodies are totally consumed. The prophet Jeremiah (7:32, 33) describes a situation that has some similarities with Isaiah’s words; when *tōpet* is filled with dead bodies. Isaiah says that their bodies will be consumed by worms and fire, and Jeremiah says that they will be consumed by birds and animals. In both cases, a total annihilation of the bodies is described.

Isaiah also describes the judgment of other nations. In 34:2–8 he tells that God is angry with the nations, and he will destroy them and give them over to slaughter. A vivid imagery follows: The stench of the dead bodies will ascend, and the mountains will melt because of their blood. The heavens will be rolled up like a scroll, and all their army will wither away. In the heavens, God’s sword will be drenched with blood when it descends on Edom in judgment. The people of Edom are devoted to destruction, and there will be a great slaughter in the land of Edom. In order to show that the destruction of Edom is eternal, verses 9, 10 say regarding Edom:

⁹Her streams will be changed into pitch, And her dust into sulfur, And her land will become like burning pitch.¹⁰ By night or by day it will not be extinguished; Its smoke will keep ascending forever. From generation to generation she will remain devastated; No one will pass through her forever and ever.

26. See Isaiah 10:16–19, where fire also is said to consume the enemies.

To emphasize total destruction, strong pictures that do not describe literal situations are used: Burning pitch and sulfur are mentioned, and the smoke of the fire will always ascend to the heavens. Please note that the inhabitants of Edom are not everlastingly destroyed. Ezekiel 32:27-29 shows that they are in *sheol* and will get a resurrection. Let us now turn to the imagery related to the judgment of God and *geenna* in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

THE GREEK *GEENNA*

There are 11 occurrences of *geenna* in the Christian Greek Scriptures. I will now discuss two questions, 1) What do we know about *gē hinnōm* in the time of Jesus, and 2) what is the relationship between the words of Jesus regarding *geenna* and what is said about *gē hinnōm* in the Hebrew Scriptures?

There is no contemporary evidence from the time of Jesus showing what occurred in *gē hinnōm* and how the valley was viewed. Apart from the Christian Greek Scriptures, we must build on evidence before and after the time of Jesus. In the 6th century BCE, Jeremiah 31:40 speaks of “the valley of the corpses (*ḥaggar*) and the fatty ashes.” This refers most likely to the Valley of Hinnom, and it suggests that the polluted condition continued because corpses are unclean. Neither the Dead Sea Scrolls nor other documents from BCE tell us anything about *gē hinnōm*. As a matter of fact, we have no description of *gē hinnōm* before David Kimhi, who was born in 1160 CE. In his comments on Psalm 27:13 he wrote:

And it is a place in the land adjoining Jerusalem, and it is a loathsome place, and there they throw unclean things and carcasses. Also, there was a continual fire there to burn the unclean things and the bones of the carcasses. Hence, the judgment of the wicked ones is called parabolically Gehinnom.

The evidence we possess from the Christian Greek Scriptures, suggests that *gē hinnōm* was an unclean place where corpses or carcasses were thrown, and the carcasses and other rubbish were burned with fire.

How will the words about *geenna* in the Christian Greek Scriptures corroborate the words of Kimhi?

Table 8.1 Passages where geenna is mentioned

Matthew 5:22	will be in danger of the fire of Gehenna
Matthew 5:30	your whole body to go to Gehenna
Matthew 10:28	destroy both soul and body in Gehenna
Matthew 18:9	thrown into Gehenna of fire
Matthew 23:15	a son of Gehenna
Matthew 23:33	the judgment of Gehenna
Mark 9:43	go off into Gehenna, to the unquenchable fire
Mark 9:45	be thrown into Gehenna
Mark 9:47	be thrown into Gehenna
Luke 12:5	after killing has the authority to throw into Gehenna
James 3:6	set on fire by Gehenna

Jesus shows that *geenna* is a physical or geographical place. According to Matthew 5:30 and 10:28 the whole human **body** can be thrown into *geenna*. The same is implied in Luke 12:5, where it is said that first the person with his body is killed, and then the person, represented by the dead body, is thrown from the walls of Jerusalem into Gehenna. The

verb **throw** is used in Matthew 18:9 and Mark 9:45, 47 as well. This also indicates that the valley of *gē hinnōm* is referred to; bodies of dead persons would be thrown into this valley. In four places (Matthew 5:22; 18:9, Mark 9:43; James 3:6) fire is connected with *geenna*. This imagery evidently is taken from Isaiah 30:33 and the other places mentioned above where fire is connected with God's universal judgment. Mark 9:48 speaks of worms together with the fire. This imagery is taken from Isaiah 65:24, which refers to the dead bodies of God's enemies, and the prophet uses the same words as does Mark: "**their** worm will not die, and **their** fire will not be quenched," as long as there is anything left of the body.

The words in the Hebrew Scriptures about the judgment of different nations and God's universal judgment clearly refer to the death and destruction of God's enemies. It is obvious that Jesus' use of the same imagery refers to death and destruction as well. This is clearly expressed in Matthew 10:28, where Jesus shows there is a difference between body and soul. If the body of a person is killed, there may still be hope, because God can resurrect the person. The soul may here represent the person and his right to live, and if the soul is destroyed in Gehenna, the person is annihilated without any hope of a resurrection.

Please note the word **destroy**, which is translated from the Greek word *apollymi*. This word can refer to destruction and ruin, or to losing something. Thus, the right to live is lost, destroyed, or ruined. The words of Jesus in Mark 9:43, 45 express the same thought: "It is better to go lame **into life**, than to be thrown **into Gehenna**." The contrast is between "life" and "Gehenna"; thus, Gehenna is the opposite of life. Both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures show that we do not have an immortal soul or spirit. So, to get life and live in the heavenly Kingdom or the earthly Kingdom is an undeserved gift from God. Because God's enemies do not have life in themselves, they are completely destroyed. This is what Gehenna means.

THE LAKE THAT BURNS WITH FIRE AND SULPHUR

In Revelation, the second death is expressed in the following ways:

19:20: The fiery lake that burns with sulfur.

20:10: The lake of fire and sulfur.

20:14: The lake of fire.

21:8: The lake that burns with fire and sulfur.

These designations are rather strange because we cannot connect all the words with something in the real world. The expressions are clearly symbolic because the wild beast and the false prophet, both being symbolic expressions, were hurled into this lake, according to Revelation 19:20. And similarly, death and *hadēs*, which are symbolic expressions as well, were hurled into this lake, according to Revelation 20:14.

Special expressions in the Christian Greek Scriptures are often taken from the Hebrew Scriptures. In connection with fire and sulfur, I quote 2 Kings 23:10, (above) Jeremiah 7:32-34, (middle) and Isaiah 30:32,33, (below):

¹⁰ He also made unfit for worship 'To'pheth, which is in the Valley of the Sons of Hin'nom, so that no one could make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Mo'lech.

³² "Therefore look! the days are coming," declares Jehovah, "when it will no longer be called 'To'pheth or the Valley of the Son of Hin'nom but the Valley of the Slaughter. They will bury in

To'pheth until there is no place left.³³ And the dead bodies of this people will become food for the birds of the heavens and for the beasts of the earth, with no one to frighten them away.³⁴ I will put an end to the sound of exultation and the sound of rejoicing, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, for the land will be reduced to ruins.”

³² And every swing of his rod of punishment That Jehovah will bring down on As·syr'i·a Will be accompanied by tambourines and harps As he brandishes his arm against them in battle.

³³ For his To'pheth is already prepared; It is also made ready for the king. He has made the woodpile deep and wide, With an abundance of fire and wood. The breath of Jehovah, like a torrent of sulfur, Will set fire to it.

As already mentioned, Topheth was a place in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom that in the Christian Greek Scriptures is referred to as *geenna* (Gehenna). In this place, idol worshippers sacrificed their sons to Molech. King Josiah worshipped Jehovah, and he removed different things that was used by idol worshippers. And according to 2 Kings 23:10, he placed different unclean things at Topheth, so it became polluted and unfit for worship. Jeremiah prophesied about Topheth, and in 7:32 he says that Topheth will be a place where a great number of bodies will be buried. In this way the valley would be even more unclean.

In Isaiah 30:32, 33, we read about Jehovah's punishment of Assyria, and in a symbolic language the prophet says that Topheth is “made ready for the king” of Assyria. Symbolically speaking, the Assyrian king will be killed in Tophet by **a stream of burning sulfur**. The verb *bā'ār* (“to burn”) is used as well as the noun *gāperith* (“sulfur”). In a judgment against the people who turn away from Jehovah, Deuteronomy 29:23 says that the land will be **“a burning waste of sulfur and salt.”** And the words **“burning sulfur”** in connection with adverse judgments are found in Isaiah 34:9, Ezekiel 38:22, and Psalm 11:6.

But do we have any references to the word “lake” that is found in the expression “the lake that burns with fire and sulfur”? There is no passage in the Hebrew Scriptures where the word “lake” is found together with “fire and sulfur.” But there may be one connection that will bring that result. I quote Genesis 19:24, (above) and Genesis 14:1-3, (below):

²⁴ Then Jehovah made it rain sulfur and fire on Sod'om and Go·mor'rah—it came from Jehovah, from the heavens.

¹ Now in the days of Am'ra·phel king of Shi'nar, Ar'i·och king of El·la'sar, Ched·or·la·o·mer king of E'lam, and Ti'dal king of Goi'im, ² these made war with Be'ra king of Sod'om, Bir'sha king of Go·mor'rah, Shi'nab king of Ad'mah, Shem·e'ber king of Ze·boi'im, and the king of Be'la, that is, Zo'ar. ³ All of these joined forces at the Valley of Sid'dim, that is, the Salt Sea.

Genesis 19:24 says that “Jehovah made it rain sulfur and fire on Sodoma and Gomorrah.” Before this event, Genesis chapter 14 describes how particular kings made war with the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. The last words of verse 3 are interesting. The Hebrew text says literally, “it is sea of the salt.” New Jerusalem Bible has the following rendering of verse 3, “all the latter joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (now the Salt Sea). This is a correct rendering of the Hebrew text, and it shows that the area that was the Valley of Siddim when the war occurred, now is the Salt Sea.

When fire and sulfur rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah, this was evidently the result of an explosion caused by gas from the oil in the ground that was ignited. The words in verse 3 suggest that the topography of the area where Sodom and Gomorrah were located were changed. The area where Sodom and Gomorrah were located subsided in the explosion, and this area now became flooded by the Salt Sea (the Dead Sea). This indicates a total destruction. First, the cities were destroyed by a rain of fire and sulfur, and then the cities were utterly destroyed because the Dead Sea covered the area. The apostle John may have combined the three words “sulfur,” “fire,” and “sea” into the expression “the lake that is burning with fire and sulfur” to symbolize total destruction.

EVERY KNEE WILL BEND BEFORE JEHOVAH, AND EVERY TONGUE WILL SWEAR LOYALTY

People who believe that the whole Bible is inspired by God, believe that all the written prophecies about the future will be fulfilled. But there is one prophecy that is different from all other prophecies and whose fulfillment is difficult to imagine. That is the prophecy in Isaiah 45:23 that at one time in the future *every person living on the earth* will “bow their knees” before Jehovah and “swear loyalty” to him.

Today there are around 8 billion people on the earth, and to think that at some time in the future, every single one of these billions will believe in the truth about God, live according to the laws of God, and be completely loyal to him, simply is unthinkable. However, the study in the previous chapters of this book have pointed to a situation where this prophecy will be fulfilled. As a background for the fulfillment of this prophecy, I will discuss the judgements of God.

THE REASONS FOR GOD’S JUDGEMENTS

Both Isaiah and the other prophets write about God’s judgments against many peoples, and some Bible readers have wondered how these harsh judgments expressed by the prophets can be harmonized with the God of love that is described by Jesus and by those who wrote the Christian Greek Scriptures.

The key to the answer is the words of Rabbi A.R. Jacob in the tractate *Avot* 4:16 in the *Mishnah*, that I have quoted several times: “This world (*hā ‘ōlām hazzā*) is like a vestibule before the world to come’ (*hā ‘ōlām habbā*).” This old system of things (the vestibule) is governed by the Devil, as Jesus shows in Matthew 4:8, 9. Jehovah has allowed the descendants of Adam to live in this wicked system of things. But even though the system is wicked, the way we and our environment are created, has given us many pleasures. However, the life in the “vestibule” is not the “real life,” as Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:19.

One important purpose of the ransom sacrifice is to give all Adam’s descendants, except those who are willfully, deliberately, incorrigibly wicked, the chance to be free from the inherited sin and become perfect like Adam. This will happen during the millennium when the Devil is bound. I have shown that the only way that the restoration of all things during the millennium can start is that all humans living in this old system of things, must die — the exception is the great crowd that will survive the great tribulation. Those who die will come to *hadēs* (*sheōl*) and will get a resurrection during the millennium.

The judgements of God must be seen in the light of this situation. Most of the humans that have lived between Adam and the present time have died a “natural” death, or have been killed in war or by different catastrophes. But in situations of extreme wickedness, God has intervened so the wicked persons should not destroy the lives of other humans.

One example is the great flood in the days of Noah, and another example is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The prophets have also written about God's judgments regarding different wicked nations. And the last judgment of God relates to all humans who will die in connection with the great tribulation.

If we do not view these situations in their true setting, the mentioned judgments of God that include men, women, and children, may seem to be cruel and unloving. But when we realize that the earth must be wiped clean for all humans that do not serve God and of the whole wicked system of things in which they live, in order to pave the way for the millennium, and that all those who die will get a resurrection during the millennium, we see God's judgements in a different light.

We can illustrate the harsh judgments of God with a person with a big cancer tumor with several boils with pus on the skin. The whole cancer tumor must be removed. But the first intervention of the doctors is to remove the boils with pus. In a similar way, all the humans that are a part of this wicked system of things must be removed to pave the way for the millennium. But humans who are particularly wicked and ruin the life of others must first be removed like boils with pus.

The ransom sacrifice guarantees that all persons who are dead, except those who are incorrigibly wicked, will be offered the possibility to live forever on the earth. In view of this, the death of any human being, including the humans that are like boils with pus, only is a temporary situation because all these humans will get a resurrection during the millennium.

THE SALVATION OF THE HUMAN RACE

Jesus said that God loves the world, which is the human race, all the descendants of Adam. The prophet Isaiah expressed a similar sentiment, though stated with different words.

ALL ADAMS DESCENDANTS ARE INVITED TO BE SAVED

I quote Isaiah 45:22-25 (verses 22, 23 NWT13; my translation of verses 24 and 25).

²² Turn to me and be saved, all the ends (*'afas*) of the earth (*'arats*), For I am God, and there is no one else. ²³ By myself I have sworn; a word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and it will not return: To me every knee will bend. Every tongue will swear loyalty (*shāba*^δ).

²⁴ Only in Jehovah one will say to me, are true righteousness and strength, and one will come to him. All those who express violent anger against him will be put to shame (*bōsh*). All the seed of Israel are righteous (*tsādak*), and they will continue to be rejoicing (*hālal*) in Jehovah.

Jehovah's words as expressed by Isaiah represent an invitation of salvation for those who are "the ends of the earth." The identity of these is seen in Isaiah 52:10:

¹⁰ Jehovah has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; All the ends of the earth will see the acts of salvation of our God.

In this verse, there is a parallelism between "all the nations" and "the ends of the earth." This means that in 45:22 all the nations are invited to be saved.

ALL ADAM'S DESCENDANTS ACCEPT THE INVITATION TO BE SAVED

After God has invited all the nations to be saved, he speaks prophetically and shows that the inhabitants of all the nations will accept the invitation to be saved. This is expressed in 45:23 with the words, “To me every knee will bend, Every tongue will swear loyalty.”

The words of God in Isaiah 45:23 are quoted by Paul in Philippians 2:10-11, and he applies the prophecy to the situation at the end of the millennium. I quote Philippians 2:5-11:

⁵ Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although he was existing in God's form, did not even consider the idea of trying to be equal to God. ⁷ No, but he emptied himself and took a slave's form and became human. ⁸ More than that, when he came as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, yes, death on a torture stake. ⁹ For this very reason, God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend—of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground— ¹¹ and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Paul describes how Jesus humbled himself and came to the earth. He was obedient to God, and he died on the torture stake. Because of this, God exalted him to a superior position and gave him a name above every other name except his own name. Paul quotes the prophecy of Isaiah 45:23, saying that “in the name of Jesus every knee should bend.”

The difference between the words of the prophecy and the words of Paul is that Isaiah says that “to me [Jehovah] every knee will bend,” but Paul says that “in the name of Jesus every knee should bend.” There is no discrepancy here. The words “every knee” refers to all descendants of Adam who live when the prophecy is fulfilled. And every knee will bend because of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. This means that the salvation that God invited all the nations to obtain, was only possible because of the atonement of Jesus. And the result of this is that every knee will “openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” So, Jehovah is the one who gets the glory.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE INVITATION AFTER THE MILLENNIUM

Let us take a closer look at the details. The words “every knee” refers to all Adam's descendants. The words “those in heaven” refer to the 144,000 kings, priests, and judges, who owe their life to the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. The words, “those on earth” refer to all who live on the earth, and “those under the ground” refer to those who are dead and are in *hadēs* (*sheōl*). When will it be that “to me [Jehovah] every knee will bend, every tongue will swear loyalty,” as we read in Isaiah 45:23? And when will it be that “in the name of Jesus every knee should bend... and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father”?

Both the words in Isaiah 45:23 and in Philippians 2:10, 11 will be fulfilled after the end of the millennium. The bending of the knees of the 144,000 priests (those in heaven) and their acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord had happened before they got their heavenly resurrection. As I previously have discussed, the resurrection of the dead (those under the ground) will occur during the millennium, and the ransom sacrifice will be applied to these and to those who have survived the great tribulation. During the millennium, all who live

will gradually proceed toward perfection. And when the 1,000 years end, all humans are perfect like Adam and without sin, because of the application of the ransom sacrifice. At this time, “Satan will be released from his prison, and he will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth,” as Revelation 20:7, 8, says. The nations will not be misled, only some of their inhabitants. Those who are misled are called “God and Magog,” and they will be hurled into the lake of fire and sulfur, according to Revelation 20:10.

The words of Isaiah 45:23-25 excellently fit this situation (my translation):

²³To me every knee will bend, and every tongue will swear loyalty. ²⁴‘Only in Jehovah one will say to me, are true righteousness and strength, and one will come to him. All those who express violent anger against him will be put to shame (*bōsh*). ²⁵All the seed of Israel are righteous (*tsādak*), and they will continue to be rejoicing (*bālah*) in Jehovah.

There are two groups that are mentioned. One group consists of those who will swear loyalty and say, “Surely in Jehovah are true righteousness and strength.” The other group are those who express violent anger against Jehovah. The Hebrew verb *hārā* in the nifal stem can refer to violent anger, and this group will be put to shame, as the qal stem of *bōsh* can mean “being put to shame”. What “being put to shame” means can be construed on the basis of Isaiah 41:11:

¹¹Look! All those getting enraged (*hārā*) against you will be put to shame (*bōsh*) and humiliated. Those who fight with you will be brought to nothing and perish (*’abad*).

This verse is similar to 45:24. Both verses have the Hebrew verb *hārā* (show violent anger), and both verses have the verb *bōsh* (“be ashamed; put to shame”). The difference is that 41:11 has the verb *’abad* (“perish; destroy, die”) as a parallel to the words “be put to shame.” This shows that the words “be put to shame” in 45:25 indicate that the mentioned persons will die.

The verbs “will say” and “will come” in verse 24 are 3. persons singular qal, and I have added the words “one.” The words “every knee” and “every tongue” in verse 23 are grammatically singular but they are semantically plural — they refer to all humans on the earth. And similarly, the subject of “will say” and “will come” in verse 24, that I have translated with “one” is grammatically singular but semantically plural — they also refer to all humans on the earth.

So, every knee will bend and every tongue will swear loyalty, and all the humans on the earth to whom these words refer will say, “Only in Jehovah are true righteousness and strength,” and they will come to him.

This situation may refer to the time when the 1,000 years end and all humans living on the earth are perfect. Then Satan is released from his prison, and the result of his attempt to mislead the nations is that some “express violent anger against” Jehovah. These are put to shame and killed. But all the other humans “are righteous” and “they will continue to rejoice in Jehovah,” as verse 25 says.

This is the grand climax of the atonement between God and man. The purpose of the ransoming work of Jesus Christ has been accomplished. Everything that Adam lost for himself and for his descendants have now been restored. The earth has

been made into a paradise. And all the righteous and perfect humans who live on the earth will continue to rejoice in Jehovah throughout all eternity.

BOOKS FOR FREE DOWNLOADING

Later this year, ten books that I have written will be available for free downloading:

A New Understanding of the Verbal System of Classical Hebrew An Attempt to Distinguish Between Semantic and Pragmatic Factors, 508 pages, 2006 (doctoral dissertation).

The Role of Theology and Bias in Bible Translation With a Special Look at the New World Translation of Jehovah's Witnesses, second edition, 473 pages, 2011.

Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Persian Chronology Compared with the Chronology of the Bible—Volume I Persian Chronology and the Length of the Babylonian Exile of the Jews, second edition, 413 pages, 2012.

Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Persian Chronology Compared with the Chronology of the Bible—Volume II Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian Chronology, second edition, 502 pages, 2013.

When Was the Book of Daniel Written? A Philological, Linguistic, and Historical Approach, 329 pages, 2017.

The Tetragram—Its History-Its Place in the New Testament, and Its Pronunciation, 255 pages, 2018.

Can We Trust the Bible? With Focus on the Creation Account, the Worldwide Flood, and the Prophecies, 1,500 pages, 2018, EPUB edition.

The Fallacy of Prophetic Perfect — With Translations of Verses From the Prophets, 370 pages, 2019.

My Beloved Religion — And the Governing Body, 460 pages, 2022.

The Atonment Between God and Man, 215 pages, 2023.