

Is Hades, Or Paradise, a Real Place? - Part 1

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Changing A Punctuation Mark In A Verse Can Alter Its Meaning Significantly, Using Luke 23:43 As An Example, Definitions Of The Word "Paradise", Jesus' Three Days And Three Nights In The Tomb, Fallen Angels In Chains Of Darkness, Jesus Was The Firstfruits Of The Resurrection And The First Begotten Of The Dead, Nobody Could Precede Jesus' Resurrection, Mary Magdalene Encountered The Resurrected Christ, Jesus' Joyous Return To His Father's Loving Arms, Later Jewish Belief In A Sectioned Multi-Tiered "Hades" For Both Pious People And The Wicked, Did Jesus' Words To The Thief Validate Existence Of Hades Or Paradise?, Judgment Condemnation And Damnation, The Angel's Words To Prophet Daniel, Did Levitical Prohibition Of The Dark Arts Prove That They Were Real?, Witch Of Endor And The Raising Of Prophet Samuel, Why I Believe Witch At Endor Is A True Story, Scripturally And Logically Sound To Assume That Paradise Was/Is An Actual Place Within The Bowels Of The Earth, Jesus Spoke The Truth To The Thief Regarding Paradise

While working on another article called "Ancient Languages and KJV Bible Translation", it occurred to me -- as it has also occurred to me on previous occasions -- that changing even one punctuation mark in a particular Bible verse can alter its meaning to a certain degree. In fact, changing a single punctuation mark can even alter a verse to a rather significant degree. For example, take the classic example of Luke 23:43 which states the following in the Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible:

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:43, KJV

Just as word capitalization was done in the KJV Bible based on the discretion of the translators, and the printing and publishing norms which existed during that time in history, punctuation was likewise done by the translators at their own discretion as well, influenced by the factors I discuss

in the aforementioned article. But I do wonder if they got it exactly right in every single case. For example, with regard to Luke 23:43 above, which of the following two did Jesus actually say? Please notice the position of the comma before or after "To day" in the verse:

"Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

"Verily I say unto thee To day, thou shalt be with me in paradise."

You see, just moving that comma to a difference position in the verse can change the meaning of the verse entirely. Of course, a lot depends on how a person understands the word "paradise" in the verse as well. Now, according to Thayer's Greek-English lexicon, it's possible to understand the word "paradise" in the following different manners:

----- Begin Quote -----

1) among the Persians a grand enclosure or preserve, hunting ground, park, shady and well watered, in which wild animals, were kept for the hunt; it was enclosed by walls and furnished with towers for the hunters

2) a garden, pleasure ground

2a) grove, park

3) the part of Hades which was thought by the later Jews to be the abode of the souls of pious until the resurrection: but some understand this to be a heavenly paradise

4) the upper regions of the heavens.

According to the early church Fathers, the paradise in which our first parents dwelt before the fall still exists, neither on the earth or in the heavens, but above and beyond the world

5) heaven

----- End Quote -----

Based on "Paradise" meaning Heaven, if we accept the first

position of the comma, the verse does not make much sense at all. Why not? Well, because it was impossible for that thief to be with Jesus in Heaven that same day, because not only did Jesus have to spend three days and three nights in the tomb first, but the Lord likewise had to go down and preach to the spirits in prison -- meaning the Fallen Angels who were chained in darkness -- as per the writings of both the Apostles Peter and Jude. I am of course referring to these rather interesting Bible verses:

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

1 Peter 3:18-20, KJV

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;"

2 Peter 2:4-5, KJV

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Jude 1:6, KJV

On the other hand, if we accept the third definition of the word "Paradise" -- meaning a part of the underworld where pious souls were temporarily kept -- that sounds similar to Roman Catholicism's "Purgatory" -- the verse may still not seem to make a lot of sense to some people. Why not? Because the Lord's clear intention was to give the thief hope. Would telling him that he would be going to the underworld on that day give the man hope? Now, before you answer this question for yourself, please keep reading. On the other hand, if we move that comma to AFTER "To day" instead of before it, the verse could seem to make more sense. Consider this version:

"Verily I say unto thee to day, thou shalt be with me in paradise."

In others words, with the comma in that position, the Lord could have actually said to the thief, "I am informing you today that you will be with me in paradise." Now, in this case, we could interpret that verse as meaning that Jesus was NOT telling the thief that he would be in Paradise that very same day. Rather, Jesus was simply saying that at some point in the future, the man would be with Him in Paradise, meaning in Heaven, according to the fifth definition above. Exactly how far into the future? Just read on and you will soon find out.

This second rendition of the verse seems to make more sense, because it allows Jesus to spend three days and three nights in the grave, and to descend to the Greek "phulake" -- that is to say, prison -- exactly as the Apostle Peter writes in his first Epistle. Furthermore, the thief could not possibly ascend anywhere that same day, because it would not be until three days later when Jesus would become the Firstfruits of the Resurrection, and the first begotten of the dead, just as we read in the following group of Bible verses:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [Jesus] might be THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN."

Romans 8:29, KJV

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, AND BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Corinthians 15:20-23, KJV

"Who is the image of the invisible God, THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE . . . And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:15, 18, KJV

"To the general assembly and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

Hebrews 12:23, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD, and the prince of the kings of

the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 1:5, 18, KJV

Thus, only then, AFTER Jesus himself had gloriously risen from the dead, could any other departed souls follow after Him into Eternal Life, and thus enter into Heaven. In fact, you may likewise remember that when Mary Magdalene first encountered Jesus following His resurrection from the dead, He specifically told Mary not to touch Him, because He had not yet ascended to His Father, as we can easily determine by these two Bible verses:

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

John 20:16-17, KJV

Isn't that just wonderful and beautiful?! Jesus wanted to race Home to Heaven and be embraced by the loving arms of His own Father FIRST, before He would allow anyone on the Earth to touch Him. He probably wanted to say, "Father, I did it! I fulfilled Your Will! Now they are free from the penalty of sin, which is death, if they will simply choose to believe in me." Personally, I find that scenario to be extremely touching, don't you?

So to reiterate this important point, if we interpret the word "paradise" as actually meaning Heaven -- as opposed to referring to the underworld of the dead and the grave -- Jesus could NOT be saying to the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in Heaven on the very same day that they both died. This would seem to indicate that the comma may possibly be in the wrong position in the verse. But is it really? Not necessarily so. "What?! But Bill, you just said ..." I know, my friends, but I have not shared with you the final piece of this interesting puzzle just yet.

You will recall that a moment ago, we saw that according to later Jewish beliefs, Hades -- the spiritual underworld -- was divided into DIFFERENT SECTIONS. One section was for the pious who were awaiting for their resurrection, while on the other hand, there was also a section reserved for the wicked.

So, assuming that the Jews already believed in a multi-tiered Hades during the First Century AD, then Jesus informing the thief that he would be with Him in Paradise that very same day was a good thing, and good news. In other words, all the thief had to do was wait in Paradise until Jesus himself had resurrected, and then the thief would be resurrected as well.

My friends, this would indeed give that thief on the cross great comfort and hope. In short, the comma may very well be in the correct place after all. The fact that the Lord would even mention Paradise -- or Hades -- to the thief, seems to indicate that such a place in the underworld of the dead was in fact real. In other words, Jesus' words seem to validate it. After all, prior to Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the departed souls of everyone who had ever lived -- going back all the way to Adam and Eve -- had to go somewhere to await either resurrection to Eternal Life, or resurrection to judgment, condemnation and damnation, right? I am also reminded of Bible verses such as the following:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Daniel 12:2, KJV

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

John 5:29, KJV

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

John 3:19-20, KJV

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 5:24, KJV

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

Romans 5:18, KJV

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Romans 8:1, KJV

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

Matthew 23:14, KJV

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Matthew 23:33, KJV

"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:"

Mark 3:29, KJV

"Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith."

1 Timothy 5:12, KJV

"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

2 Peter 2:3, KJV

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Mark 16:16, KJV

"That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

2 Thessalonians 2:12, KJV

So again, it seems that there had to be some location where departed souls who had already left the land of the living had to temporarily wait for their future judgment, because they could not yet rise up to Heaven, until AFTER Jesus had fulfilled His earthly mission, and had Himself resurrected FIRST. Furthermore, the existence of such a place where Old Testament believers waited for their resurrection is given added weight when we consider what the Angelic Messenger said to the Prophet Daniel, as we see by the following two Bible verses:

"And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end . . . But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Daniel 12:9, 13, KJV

So the question in my mind is this: Exactly where did Daniel rest? While his body may have laid unconscious in the grave, is it just possible that his spiritual essence abode in that place which the Greeks referred to as Hades, and which the Jews called Paradise? I am likewise reminded of the incident involving the witch at Endor who raised up the Prophet Samuel at the behest of King Saul. As some of my readers will know, Saul foolishly defied the Lord and did that which was clearly forbidden by the Levitical Law, when he sought out the witch at Endor.

Before proceeding with the actual story concerning Saul and the witch at Endor, let me ask you an interesting question. If the prohibited arts -- meaning necromancy, spiritism and witchcraft were not even real -- or are not real even today? -- and were simply imaginary practices which actually had no real spiritual power, then why would the Lord even consider it necessary to give Moses specific laws which prohibited them, and which also severely punished people for engaging in those very same practices? Interesting question indeed.

According to the account which we find in the first Book of Samuel, King Saul was rather troubled regarding the war with the Philistines. Thus, he hatched the stupid idea of going to the witch at Endor, in the hope that she could help him to determine what the outcome of the war would be. Thus, he requested of the witch that she call up the departed spirit of the Prophet Samuel. This was due to the fact that Samuel had already died. As a result, Saul could no longer request direct counsel from the Prophet. And so, Saul went to this necromancer with the petition to raise up the Prophet Samuel from the realm of the dead. Consider the following group of verses which describe this event:

"And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar

spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

1 Samuel 28:5-19, KJV

Personally, I believe that this was a very literal story. I will explain why I believe this in just a moment. Of course, there are those Christians who adamantly reject the account as being true. To the contrary, they erroneously claim that this witch did not really raise up the spirit of the Prophet Samuel. Supposedly, she simply pretended to do so. However, I do not agree with their conjecture. There are two reasons why I hold this particular position. For one thing, notice

how surprised the necromancer was when Samuel's spirit was actually raised, and she was informed that the mysterious man was really King Saul. Someone who was simply faking it would not have reacted in this way, because they would have had complete control of the situation.

But there's an even more important reason why I'm personally convinced that the witch really did raise the spirit of the Prophet Samuel from the abode of the dead -- that is to say, from Hades, or Paradise -- and that the Prophet Samuel did in fact speak to a very frightened King Saul. That reason is found in the following Bible verse:

"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."
Ezekiel 33:33, KJV

As we just read in the previous account from the first Book of Samuel, the Prophet Samuel very specifically told King Saul that he and his sons would die in battle the very next day, and then join Samuel in the underworld of the dead. As we know from the Scriptures, that is exactly what happened. In my view, there is simply no possible way that that evil woman could have known that, particularly if she was faking it. So that convinces me personally that it had to actually be the disembodied spirit of the real Prophet Samuel. Of course, you are free to disagree if you so like. I won't argue the point with anyone.

So as I hope you can see, this particular Bible incident about King Saul, the witch of Endor and the Prophet Samuel offers the perfect example regarding why the Jews believed that Paradise was actually a part of the underworld -- or Hades in Greek mythology -- where the spirits of the dead abode. As I have already made quite clear, until the Lord was resurrected from the dead and became the Firstborn of the Dead, it was simply not possible for others to be fully raised from the dead, except, of course, for those people who Jesus raised from the dead in the Gospels by the Power and very Authority of His very own Father. So the idea of a holding place or way station for departed spirits within the bowels of the Earth as both the Jews and Greeks clearly believed seems to have a strong degree of merit in my view. It is both a Scripturally and logically sound belief.

Returning for a moment to the issue of the placement of the comma in Luke 23:43, and the two versions of the verse I

shared with you previously, it all really depends on which meaning of the word "paradise" we are willing to accept as being the correct one. If we accept the current position of the comma -- that is to say, before "To day" -- then a good section of Hades for the pious makes sense. However, if we accept the word "paradise" as actually meaning Heaven, then it would appear that the comma might be in the wrong place.

Personally, after conducting my own research, I do lean more towards the belief that the comma is exactly where it ought to be. Otherwise, the Lord would not have said what He did say to the thief. In other words, Jesus and the thief did go to the Paradise of Hades that day, or what is referred to in the Old Testament as Sheol. Does it make any sense that the Lord would tell the thief that they would both be together in a place called Paradise, if it was merely a fictitious, imaginary place which had been invented by the Jews? Would this not even make Jesus a liar if the place did not really exist? Thus, Jesus spoke the truth, plain and simple. They both went to Hades.

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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Is Hades, Or Paradise, a Real Place? - Part 2

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Major Change Following Jesus' Resurrection, Matthew 27 And The First Resurrection, Matthew 27 Was An Actual Physical Bodily Resurrection Of The Saints, First Resurrection Is A Past Event, Jesus Is The Door And The Only Way To Heaven, Apostle Paul Was Convinced That He Would Rise Straight To Heaven Upon His Demise, I Believe The Same As The Apostle Paul, The Final Resurrection Judgment And Second Death, We Saints Are Judged In Our Current Life And Will Receive Our Rewards Afterward In Heaven, Unsaved People Will Be Judged

According To Their Works At The Final Resurrection, A Very Dismal Outlook For The Unsavd, A Challenge To The Unsavd, Brevity Of Our Human Life Span, BBB Suggesting Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part one, allow me to address an issue which I likewise mention in a number of other BBB articles as well. In a word, I have been personally convinced by the Scriptures that with the Lord's resurrection from the dead, everything changed dramatically. At the very least, the situation changed for those individuals who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah and Savior of the whole world.

As we've already amply discussed, prior to the resurrection from the dead of the Lord himself, the bodies of the people who had placed their faith in Him -- both throughout the Old Testament period, and in the early New Testament era as well -- laid resting in the ground -- that is to say, in Sheol or the grave -- while their spirits waited in the good side of Hades, which Jesus called Paradise. However, once the Lord rose from the dead, I'm convinced that all the Old Testament Saints and early New Testament believers rose as well. In my opinion, this seems to be what is indicated in the following group of Bible verses:

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

Matthew 27:52-53, KJV

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

Revelation 20:4-5, KJV

In my view, the previous group of verses which are found in the Gospel of Matthew sound very much like a real physical resurrection of the dead, similar to what happened with the

Lord's dear friend, Lazarus, in Bethany. Please notice that the verses do say that their actual bodies arose. They were NOT just ethereal spirits floating around the city. As far as I can tell, they had bodies just like the Lord had when He appeared to the Apostles following His own resurrection from the dead. As I explain in articles such as "Sex, a Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels", Jesus could still consume food, build fires, and do other things that we humans do.

Please also carefully notice that this amazing resurrection occurred AFTER Jesus Himself had risen from the dead, thus clearly proving once again that the Lord had to rise first before all others, thus truly making Him the Firstborn of the Dead. It was Jesus' resurrection which made it possible for others to arise as well. This point should be very clear to you.

In short, contrary to Futurist beliefs, I am convinced that the First Resurrection is a PAST event, and NOT any kind of future event. Furthermore, based on even more Bible verses, I likewise believe that ever since Jesus died and rose from the dead, anyone who dies believing in the Lord immediately rises to Heaven. In other words, there's really no longer a need for them to remain in a temporary holding place or way station called Paradise -- or Hades or Sheol -- because the Lord has ALREADY become the Firstfruits of the Resurrection, and the Firstborn of the Dead. As such, Jesus has obviously ALREADY opened the door to Heaven for us all. Jesus is that very Door and the only Way to the Father. I base this belief on the following group of Bible verses:

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."
John 10:9, KJV

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:6, KJV

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this

is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART, AND TO BE WITH CHRIST; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again."

Philippians 1:20-26, KJV

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY, AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD."

2 Corinthians 5:8, KJV

As you can plainly see, the Apostle Paul was apparently very convinced that upon his death, he would immediately go to be with Jesus. After all, he clearly writes "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." and likewise "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." My dear friends, I honestly don't believe that Paul is saying that he expected to remain in Paradise/Sheol/Hades for thousands of years as he patiently awaited some future return of Jesus Christ as the Futurists currently -- and erroneously -- believe. But, this is a topic which I amply discuss in other BBB articles, such as the seven-part series "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?".

Thus, similar to the Apostle Paul, I likewise believe that upon our physical death one of these days, the spirits of we Christians will immediately ascend to Heaven to be with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. There won't be any way station in Paradise/Sheol/Hades for us. There will simply be a fast Gospel Train ride to Heaven's beautiful Pearly Gates where we will have already received our admission ticket due to our faith in Jesus Christ. Of course, again, you are free to agree or disagree as you like, but I will not argue the point with anyone.

Now, please notice that I have clearly made a distinction in what I have stated thus far. I have told you plainly that I believe that this is what happens to people who have accepted Jesus since His resurrection from the dead. However, there is the issue of all of the other unsaved people who rejected the Lord. If they died in their sins without Christ -- as Jesus told those unbelieving Jews in John 8 -- exactly where are their souls or spirits while they await their final judgment?

Well, it would seem from everything that we have examined and discussed in this article, that the souls of such rebellious people may in fact remain in that darker section of Hades -- or Paradise -- until the final resurrection, and the judgment of all of the remainder of the dead. Again, there has to be a current holding place for such people somewhere, right? This seems to be what is clearly indicated in the following group of Bible verses which are found in the Book of Revelation:

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

Revelation 20:5-6, KJV

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Revelation 20:12-15, KJV

At this point, let me add yet another interesting thought to challenge your thinking. Personally, I am not convinced that this final judgment pertains to the Saints of God. I believe that we Saints are judged in THIS life. The fact that we have ALREADY accepted Christ means that we are ALREADY saved and sealed by the Spirit of God forever. At least this is what I personally believe. If this is indeed the case, then perhaps our judgment in this present life is more about what we each do for the Lord, once we do come to Him. Stated another way, our judgment is more about what rewards we will each receive in the Afterlife, as I more amply explain in the BBB series entitled "Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service".

However, as for all of those other dead people, if they never received Jesus during this present life, they will be judged completely and entirely by their own works, and I don't think that it will end very well for any of them whatsoever. I see a very dismal outlook for them. Why do I say this? Because no

individual can ever be saved by their own self-righteous good works, as I have taught now for so many years. Try as hard as they might, those folks' own perceived righteousness will NOT be good enough. It won't suffice. They won't make the grade. They will all be in for a very rude awakening when it finally comes to their judgment before the holy throne of the Father and of His dear son, Jesus Christ. These truths are evident by Bible verses such as the following:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Matthew 7:13-14, KJV

"If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

Proverbs 24:12, KJV

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Matthew 16:27, KJV

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:"

1 Peter 1:17, KJV

". . . I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

Revelation 2:23, KJV

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write,

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:
Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their
labours; and their works do follow them."

Revelation 14:13, KJV

And with those verses, we have now come to the conclusion of this article, except for one extremely important question. What about you, dear reader? Are you a born-again Christian who has been saved and sealed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ? Have you placed your faith in Christ alone for your Salvation? Or have you deceived yourself into believing that you are a good person, and that God will allow you into His Kingdom based on your own good behavior and merits? If you should embrace the latter position, I urge you to repent of your foolish unbelief, and embrace Jesus Christ today. After all, you just never know when your time on this Earth may be up. You may think that you still have a long life ahead of you; but please consider the following Scriptural truths:

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

James 4:14, KJV

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Luke 12:20, KJV

"Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready."

John 7:6, KJV

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

Hebrews 9:27, KJV

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Psalms 90:10, KJV

"Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away."

Psalms 144:4, KJV

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Isaiah 40:7-8, KJV

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

John 6:63, KJV

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

1 Peter 1:23-25, KJV

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Are Ghosts Real?

Hell, the Lake of Fire and Universalism

Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?

Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service

Sex, a Bowl of Soup, and the Nature of Angels

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