

WHICH WAY, AMERICA?

Night 9

Death's Mystery Solved

1. Didn't the thief on the cross go to paradise with Christ the day he died? (Luke 23:42–43)

Answer: The thief asked Jesus to “remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). His focus was the second coming of Christ, not the moment of death. Not only that, Bible evidence implies that the thief didn't even die that Friday (see John 19:31–32). Add to that the fact that Jesus Himself didn't go to paradise that day, and this passage really poses a problem.

How do we know that Jesus didn't go to paradise on Friday? Because on Sunday morning, the day of His resurrection, Jesus met Mary at the garden tomb and said to her: “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father” (John 20:17).

The Father's throne is in paradise (see Revelation 2:7; 22:1–2), and Jesus is now telling Mary that He has not yet gone there, when on Friday it appears that He told thief that they would meet in paradise that day. Since Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6) and since God “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2), we know that Jesus was totally honest with both the thief on Friday and Mary on Sunday.

The problem with this passage is with the comma. Punctuation can change the whole meaning of a sentence. The punctuation in our Bibles was added by the translators, who inserted them where they thought they should be. The comma in Luke 23:43 should be placed after the word “today” rather than before. The text should read: “And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

Jesus is simply saying to the thief, “I assure you today—this day when it doesn't look like I can save anyone; this day when my own people have rejected me; this day of my death—I give you the assurance today that you will be with me in paradise.”

If we put the comma in its correct place, the words of Jesus to the thief in Luke 23 harmonize with everything else that He and the other Bible writers said about death (see John 6:39–40, 44, 54; John 5:38–39; John 14:1–3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Then, we discover that Jesus is completely honest with both the thief on Friday and Mary on Sunday! And when Jesus comes, that repentant thief along with all the other “dead in Christ” will rise to be with Jesus in paradise (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17).

2. How will God resurrect those who were cremated or blown apart in war?

Answer: Notice the Bible answer: “But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.... So also is the resurrection of the dead.

The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:35–44).

God will not need any part of our old decayed body to resurrect us with. The grain of wheat we harvest is not the same seed we planted. Just so, the righteous will come forth from the grave with glorious immortal (celestial - 1 Corinthians 15:40) bodies.

God preserves our identity, our personality, our character, but in the resurrection, those who have died will come forth with completely new bodies. Every feature will be so enhanced, so ennobled, so refined and perfected, yet we will still recognize each other! “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

3. Will we have real bodies in heaven? Doesn't the Bible say that flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of heaven?

Answer: Often people misquote the words of 1 Corinthians 15:50 in order to prove that heavenly beings will not have bodies. The passage states: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:50).

The context says just the opposite of what they are trying to prove. It says we will have “spiritual” bodies when we go to heaven (vs. 44). What are spiritual bodies? They are not the mortal, corruptible bodies which we now possess, but rather the new immortal, incorruptible bodies which we receive when Jesus comes. “We shall all be changed — in a moment, ... the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’” (1 Corinthians 15:51–54).

Paul wrote to the Philippians: “Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:21). Christ had a real body when He ascended to heaven after His resurrection (See Luke 24:36–40; 50–51). And “this same Jesus” which was “taken up from you into heaven” will return “in like manner” (Acts 1:9–11), and “will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). Heaven is a real place for real people with real bodies!

4. Doesn't the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) teach that the saved and lost go immediately to their reward at death?

Answer: Jesus is here addressing the Pharisees (vs. 14–15) who were covetous (money-lovers), and emphasizes that the doctrines which they “highly esteemed” (i.e. on divorce - vs. 18 and on death - vs. 19–30) are “an abomination in the sight of God” (vs. 15).

The Zondervan Companion Bibles states in the notes on Luke 16:19–31: “This commences the second part of the Lord’s address to the Pharisees, against their tradition making void God’s word as to the dead... It is not called a “parable,” because it cites a notable example of the Pharisees’ tradition, which had been brought from Babylon” — *Companion Study Bible, p. 1483, Zondervan Publishers.*

This story then is an example of what the Pharisees themselves taught concerning the state of the dead, contrary to the testimony of “the law and the prophets” (vs. 16,31).

“The Pharisees taught that there were three places [where the righteous would go at death]: (1) Abraham’s bosom; (2) ‘under the throne of glory’; (3) in the garden of Eden (Greek Paradise). Speaking of death, they would say ‘this day he sits in Abraham’s bosom’.... The Pharisees taught that in life two men may be ‘coupled together’, and one sees the other after death, and conversations take place. The Pharisees gave long stories of similar imaginary conversations and discourses” —***Companion Study Bible, p. 1484, Zondervan Publishers.***

Jesus is here warning the Pharisees of their fate, by using their own doctrine and tradition.

There are eight reasons why this story that Jesus told the Pharisees of the rich man and Lazarus, cannot be a literal picture of what takes place at death.

1. A man cannot literally enter into “the bosom” or chest of Abraham. This is obviously a figurative picture of heaven. Since the illustration of heaven is figurative, the illustration of hell must also be figurative.
2. It is impossible for anyone who is literally burning in fire to carry on a conversation.
3. Can those in heaven and hell talk to each other?
4. The rich man is in hell with a body! He has eyes, a tongue, etc. How did his body get into hellfire instead of the grave? Bodies of the dead have been exhumed, and they still had their body parts. Also, Lazarus is in Abraham’s bosom with a body. He has fingers. This story could not be literal. A real person suffering in hell would call for far more than a drop of water on someone’s finger! How much water would be left on the tip of Lazarus’ finger by the time he got through the fire to the rich man? And how much relief would it bring to someone burning in hell? The whole story is unrealistic and figurative.
5. Jesus made no attempt to interpret this story, taken from the Pharisees tradition. He did interpret the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13. In His interpretation of this parable, Jesus plainly said that hellfire would take place at the end of the world rather than at death (Matthew 13:40–42; 49–50).
6. This example of the Pharisees tradition concerning death contradicts the rest of the Bible. (See Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Psalm 6:5; 115:17; 146:4; etc.)
7. Jesus Himself taught that the dead go into their graves to await the resurrection (John 5:38–39).
8. In his epistle, Peter states that the lost will not be punished until the end on the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:9).

Jesus’ use of the story of the rich man and Lazarus was given to teach an important lesson, and to expose a “highly esteemed” tradition of the Pharisees which is an “abomination in the sight of God.” The Pharisees believed that riches were a sign of God’s blessing, and poverty was a sign of God’s curse, and having abandoned the “sure word of prophecy,” they were following tradition (Mark 7:7, 9) and had adopted the pagan concept of the immortal soul.

In this story, Jesus clearly emphasizes that if a person did not believe Moses and the prophets, a resurrection would not convince them (vs. 29, 31). Thus Jesus declared that we must believe Moses and the prophets. Nowhere in the writings of “Moses and the prophets” do people instantly go to heaven or hell at death.

Christ probably chose the name of Lazarus to use in this illustration because later He would actually raise Lazarus from the dead. The climactic point of the entire story is found in verse 31. The Pharisees didn’t believe in Jesus even when one named Lazarus was raised to life! (See John 11:1–53.)

5. What about the soul that departed from Rachel and the child who died?

Answer: The passages referred to are Genesis 35:18 and 1 Kings 17:21–22. “And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin” (Genesis 35:18). “And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.’ Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived” (1 Kings 17:21–22).

Since it is not possible for a soul to exist outside of the body, how can we explain these apparent contradictions? The word “soul” is translated from the Hebrew word “nephesh” which has been translated 118 times in the Old Testament as “life.” If we use the more proper word “life” in reference to Rachel and the child, we discover that everything harmonizes. “And it came to pass, as her [life] was in departing, (for she died)...” (Genesis 35:18).

“...I pray thee, let this child’s [life] come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the [life] of the child came into him again, and he revived” (1 Kings 17:21–22).

Concerning these individuals, their life had slipped away, and when the life (nephesh) is gone, they were dead! In the case of the child, his life (nephesh) returned to him when the prophet prayed. The soul (nephesh - life) cannot exist in a conscious state separate from the body (see Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 146:4).

6. Does the word “soul” ever mean anything other than a living being?

Answer: Yes, it may mean also (1) life itself or (2) the mind or intellect. But regardless of which meaning is intended, the soul is still a combination of two things (body and breath), and ceases to exist at death.

7. What about the souls crying out from under the altar in Revelation 6:9–10? Doesn’t this show that souls do not die?

Answer: The passage in question reads as follows: “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” (Revelation 6:9–11).

Is this picture literal or symbolic? Suppose that it is literal. If so, we discover that the souls of the most saintly martyrs are not in heaven as many churches teach, but rather under an altar somewhere. Not only do these saints show signs of being unhappy, they appear to be in torment!

What is the cause of their distress? They are crying for vengeance on their persecutors, who for centuries had carried on these persecutions. If we accept the popular doctrine of the soul being immortal, the persecutors of the martyrs should be now suffering untold anguish and torture in the fires of hell. Yet the martyrs aren’t satisfied, and cry out for more vengeance! Does this make sense?

Also we notice that quite contrary to Christ’s instruction to pray for them which persecute you (Matthew 5:44), these saintly souls are represented as demanding vengeance on their persecutors. Obviously this cannot be a literal picture of what happens after death. The fifth seal (Revelation 6:9–11) is as symbolic as the preceding four seals. The “souls under the altar” scene follows immediately after “the fourth seal”

scene. In the scene which opens with the fourth seal, “Hell” is seen following “a pale horse” ridden by “Death” (Revelation 6:7–8). Both these pictures (the fourth and fifth seals) are symbolic.

What does the symbolism of the fifth seal (the souls under the altar) represent? Since an altar is a place where sacrifices are made (where animals died), the altar in this symbolic picture must be the place where the martyrs sacrificed their lives for the Word of God. Their lives (their souls—soul in the Bible generally means “life” or the “living being”), cry out to God for vengeance just as the blood of Abel who was martyred by Cain cried out to God (Genesis 4:9–10).

If this is not figurative language and if souls are disembodied, how do they wear robes? Clearly the picture here is not a literal representation of what happens to the righteous dead. It is figurative.

8. What does Paul mean in 2 Corinthians 5:8, when he talks about being absent from the body and present with the Lord?

Answer: Before seeking an answer to this question, let’s first read the passage. “So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ... We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6, 8).

In verses one to eight, Paul is contrasting the present mortal state with the future immortal life in heaven. Notice the expressions he uses for the two conditions:

Present Life	Future Life
Earthly house	Building from God
Tent	House not made with hands
Mortality	Our house from heaven
In the [mortal] body	Absent from the [mortal] body
Absent from the Lord	Present with the Lord

He also speaks of being clothed with “our habitation which is from heaven” (vs. 2), and again, he longs “that mortality may be swallowed up by life” (vs. 4). But the key to the entire discourse lies in the description of a third condition. After desiring to be clothed with immortality Paul states that “having been clothed, we shall not be found naked” (vs. 3). Putting it yet another way he said, “not because we want to be unclothed...” (vs. 4).

Clearly the naked or unclothed state was neither mortality, nor immortality, but death and the grave. Paul realized that one did not pass instantly from being clothed with this tabernacle into being clothed with our house from heaven. Death and the grave came in between, and he referred to it as being unclothed and naked.

In his previous letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that “mortality” would be “swallowed up” at the resurrection when Jesus comes. “We shall all be changed — in a moment, at the last trumpet ... the dead will be raised incorruptible ... this mortal must put on immortality ... then ... Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:51–54).

Paul expected “to be present with the Lord” at the second coming. “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ... and the dead in Christ will rise ... and thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

Jesus also said we will be with Him when He comes again to “receive you to Myself” (John 14:1–3).

9. In 2 Corinthians 12:2–3 Paul speaks of the possibility of being “out of body,” showing that his soul or spirit was independent of his body.

Answer: Was Paul referring to death in this passage? He is referring to an experience that took place “fourteen years ago.” Does this mean the he died and was resurrected at that time? There is nothing in the context or anywhere else in the writings of the Scriptures to bring us to such a conclusion.

The previous verse introduces the subject. He is talking about “visions and revelations of the Lord.” (vs. 1) Virtually all Bible commentators believe that Paul is describing his own experience, because he spoke in the context of his own revelations. He was concerned that no one think he was glorying or boasting about his visions. For this reason he probably ascribed the experience to a man he knew.

What he saw was so real and vivid that he was not sure if he had actually been transported to heaven for a short period, or that he had simply seen a vision, and heard in that vision the revelation which it was “not lawful” for him “to utter.” If he was not literally taken to heaven in body, he seemed to be there, nevertheless. He was not puzzled over whether he had died or not. He was only uncertain as to how he was able to see paradise in that vision. The physical impressions seemed as though he were “out of the body,” in a way of speaking.

He uses a similar expression in writing to the Colossian church: “For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ” (Colossians 2:5).

No one interprets this to mean that some immortal soul or spirit left Paul’s body to be with friends. We sometimes ourselves use similar expressions when circumstances prevent us from being with friends or relatives on a certain occasion. We may say, “I’ll be with you in spirit.” We simply mean that our thoughts, sympathies, and feelings are with them.

Paul is not talking about disembodied spirits, nor even about death; he is talking about being in vision.

10. Please explain 1 Peter 3:18–20.

Answer: This Bible passage states: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (1 Peter 3:18–20).

Some have concluded from this passage that only Jesus’ flesh died, and that before His bodily resurrection, His spirit traveled to where the souls of the lost are in prison—be that hell, purgatory, or limbo—and preached to them. This is far from what the text actually says. Notice these facts:

1. It was Jesus who died, not merely His flesh. This point is vital to Christianity, because our whole salvation depends upon the death and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:13–14). If Christ did

not really die, then we must pay the penalty for our sins (“the wages of sin is death” Romans 6:23) by ourselves.

Peter makes it very plain that Jesus was “put to death in the flesh” (1 Peter 3:18). Christ’s death was complete, paying the full penalty for sin.

2. Christ was made alive by the Spirit. Christ was made alive again (resurrected) by the Holy Spirit. The Bible says: “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Romans 8:11).
3. Peter states that it was by the Holy Spirit “by whom also...” — that is, the same Spirit that resurrected Jesus), that Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. It was through the Holy Spirit that Christ was appealing to the antediluvians.
4. The term “spirits in prison” referred to here, does not mean disembodied ghosts, but rather individuals in bondage to sin. Notice: “Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name” (Psalm 142:7). David is speaking of himself here, not some invisible spirit or soul.
5. The “prison” that Peter speaks of in 1 Peter 3:19 is NOT hell or purgatory. There is not a single Bible reference that teaches that prison means hellfire. In Isaiah 61, we find reference to those who are in prison.

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound” (Isaiah 61:1; see also Isaiah 42:6–7).

In Luke 4:18 Jesus cited these words of Isaiah 61:1 to refer to His ministry. Throughout His life Jesus proclaimed “liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”

From these verses we can see that to be bound in prison does not refer to a place of burning, but rather to be bound by the chains of evil habits and sin.

6. The key question to this whole passage in 1 Peter is this: “When did Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, preach to those antediluvians that were in bondage to sin?” The answer is contained in the text itself: “who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (1 Peter 3:20).

Jesus did not go to the spirit world to preach to people burning in hell, but by the Holy Spirit (Genesis 6:3), preached through Noah to the people who lived before the flood (“while the ark was being prepared”) and brought eight of them out of the prison house of sin into the ark of salvation.

11. Please explain 1 Peter 4:6.

Answer: The text states: “For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:6)

The context of 1 Peter 4:1–6 seems to imply the spiritual rather than the physical. Peter is referring to spiritual death rather than physical death. In the first verse he states that those who have “suffered in the flesh [have] ceased from sin.” Paul echoes the same thought in Romans 6: “For he who has died has been freed from sin” (Romans 6:7). Paul is clearly speaking of the spiritual (death to sin) rather than the physical (physical death). He states: “How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Romans 6:2).

Peter seems to be emphasizing the same thought in 1 Peter 4:1–6. In verses two and four he speaks of the sins that the true Christian has died to, and of the reaction of the unbelievers (those alive to sin) “they think it strange.” In this context we understand Peter to be saying, “For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead [to sin - spiritual death], that they might be judged according to men in the flesh [by their words and actions], but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:5–6). (See Romans 8 referring to those who live according to the spirit rather than following the fleshly lusts - sins)

Even if Peter is speaking of physical death, he did not imply that the gospel was then being preached to the souls of the dead, as some believe. He said the gospel “was preached” (past tense) to “those who are dead” (present tense). The preaching was done when they were yet alive, and they will be judged on the basis of how they lived “according to men in the flesh,” or according to the deeds they did while living. Peter is undoubtedly talking about Christians here, who chose to walk not after their fleshly lusts (sins), but rather live according to God in the spirit (see Romans 8).

It would be ridiculous to preach to people who are physically dead. It's hard enough to preach to those who are alive. It takes intelligence and knowledge to understand the gospel, and such intelligence is possessed only by those who are alive because the Bible states: “For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

12. Can you explain John 11:26?

Answer: The text states: “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:26). This refers not to the first death, which all people die (Hebrews 9:27; 1 Corinthians 15:22), but to the second death, which only the wicked die and from which there is no resurrection (Revelation 2:11; 21:8).

13. Doesn't Matthew 10:28 prove that the soul is undying?

Answer: The entire verse states: “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

The last half of the verse proves that souls *do* die. The word “soul” here means life and refers to eternal life, which is a gift (Romans 6:23) that will be given to the righteous at the last day (John 6:54). Though men may kill our bodies, no one can take away the gift of eternal life that God bestows. “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

14. Does the “spirit” of man only refer to the breath of life?

Answer: It sometimes refers to his thoughts, feelings, and emotions. At death however, the Bible states: “His thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4). “The dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5). “Their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished” (Ecclesiastes 9:6). “There is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). “For in death there is no remembrance of You [God]” (Psalm 6:5). “His sons come to honor, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he does not perceive it” (Job 14:21).

Man's spirit cannot “live” on anywhere separate from the body.

15. What about Moses and Elijah who met with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration?

Answer: On the mount of transfiguration, “two men ... Moses and Elijah ... appeared in glory” (Luke 9:27–36; see also Matthew 17:1–8; Mark 9:1–8). These were not spirits or disembodied souls, but “two men.” Elijah never died. He was translated without seeing death (2 Kings 2:11). Moses “died” and was “buried” (Deuteronomy 34:5–6). Yet the book of Jude reveals that Michael came from heaven, “contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses” (Jude 9). Moses was to be resurrected. The devil protested. Then Michael said, “the Lord rebuke you.” Paul states that death had never been broken “from Adam to Moses” (Romans 5:14). Obviously with Moses, death was broken. Moses was resurrected.

Thus it was a living, resurrected Moses and a translated Elijah that appeared on the mount. Immediately prior to this appearance, Jesus had told his disciples that they would soon “see the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:27). On the mount they saw it in miniature. Jesus Christ was glorified as Savior. Moses represented all the saints who would be resurrected, while Elijah represented those who would be translated without seeing death at the second coming of Jesus. Both groups are described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17.

16. Please explain 1 Corinthians 5:5.

Answer: The text reads: “Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 5:5).

The person under consideration had been guilty of unspeakable moral degeneracy. Paul’s recommendation is to disfellowship the man from the body of Christ. He used words that cannot be misconstrued: “purge out,” “put away,” “not to company with,” and “deliver such a one to Satan.”

Paul used this strong language because the man had chosen to follow Satan. The church was merely recognizing, and finally making official, what the man had openly decided and declared by his conduct. There was no thought to consign him to the devil, but rather to register on a temporary basis that the man preferred Satan’s path to the path of Christ.

What did Paul feel might be the result of this drastic action? His hope was for the “destruction of the flesh.” Paul’s favorite expression for the unconverted was “the flesh.” To the Romans he wrote, “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). Perhaps the shock of being expelled from the fellowship of the church would turn the sinner to repentance and cause him to crucify the flesh, thereby destroying the gross works of the flesh which had brought on his condemnation. Thus his spirit could be transformed, and he could be born again of the spirit (see John 3:1–8). He could then be restored to church fellowship and saved at the coming of Jesus.



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