

Book of Hebrews Part 17; Resurrection; Thief on the Cross; Transfiguration; Absent from the Body (1/12/ 2019)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://cornerfringe.com/media/gycq49w/book-of-hebrews-part-17>.

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

For the last couple weeks, we've been looking at the elementary principle of the resurrection of the dead. It is a very vital principle to our faith and part of what shapes and forms our identity of who we are in the Messiah Yeshua. We have looked at the fact the Bible has a little different take on what happens to us when we die and more specifically the timetable of the resurrection from what is commonly understood and presented by the modern-day Church. The popular take by the church is when you die everyone immediately has their own independent resurrection. So whenever you die, immediately you ascend to be with the LORD. You're mortality immediately turns into immortality. So this is a dichotomy between the two; we see there are two completely different takes on eschatology.

Today we're going to dig into some questions from the other side who take the position that the minute you die you are in heaven. I want to be clear on something; as we start to get into these questions and even objections, I think you're going to appreciate why it is so popular for the modern-day Church to believe the second you die you ascend into heaven. There's actually good reasons why they believe that and as I open up today in this first passage, you'll see why.

Here is what we read in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8—⁵ So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the LORD. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and **to be present with the LORD** (emphasis added).

How many have you ever heard this used, especially in a setting of a funeral? I've been to funerals, and I've heard this so many times. What you'll hear is the pastor utilizes this as great comfort, and he should be applauded for seeking to comfort the audience, but he'll be using this to say, "Right now we don't need to worry about this person because this person is ascended into heaven and is with Jesus now. So we can rejoice in that."

Let's be honest. When you read this verse—**to be absent from the body and to be present with the LORD**—what does that sound like? It sounds like when you die you're immediately in heaven. Given that, I don't fault many Christians for believing this. However, the question is, does this line up with Scripture? Is this consistent throughout Scripture? If you've been with us for the last two weeks, and have gone through the Bible verses, you know something's wrong because the Apostle Paul himself is explicitly clear in what he presents. The total text of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation is clear

on the timing of when we are resurrected, and it is not individual. It is universal. It's a collective resurrection. It will be the most awesome thing the world has ever seen.

So what do we do with this text— **to be absent from the body and to be present with the LORD?** As always I ask people who come and ask me about this, “What are your study techniques.” The first thing you do is put the passage into context. In other words, look at the broader passage; don't just look at one piece of a verse. Look at what's stated after. Make sure you understand the historical context in which it was said.

What is going to happen, as you start to dig into this, is you are going to find perfect clarity is going to come out of this, and the most beautiful thing of it is it will be perfectly consistent with the totality of Scripture. So let me put this into context. We're going to go back to 2 Corinthians 4:18—**while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal** (emphasis added).

Paul is laying out the fact there are two states of existence. The state of mortality and the state of immortality. Basically, what he is describing is the two ages. Remember how we looked at the imagery of Jacob holding Esau's heel? Was there anyone else involved? No, it was only Jacob and Esau. They represent the two ages. When we look at the verse, we have Esau who is the temporary age, and we have Jacob, the age or Israel, who is eternal. In order to draw the true understanding out of this, you need to understand this concept.

Paul builds on this as we get to 2 Corinthians 5:1—**For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed** (emphasis added). Paul is presenting this as a reference to the temporary. Our earthly house, our bodies, will be destroyed. Continuing—**we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens** (emphasis added). So Paul goes from talking about the temporary to the eternal, and now he brings out our flesh, living in this age, and living in the time of mortality. He then moves on to the time of immortality, to the eternal.

Having said that, there is something you need to understand about this passage, in fact, the whole book of 2 Corinthians. What Paul is expressing in this passage is old news to the Corinthians. This is merely a reiteration. In other words, there was a dialogue that took place between Paul and the Corinthians long before he made this statement. That original conversation, as recorded in 1 Corinthians, puts into context what he is stating here.

With that said, I want to take you back to 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 where Paul laid the foundation to help the Corinthians understand this elementary principle of the resurrection of the dead. Here is what Paul said—⁵¹ **Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--** ⁵² **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed** (emphasis added).

Do you see Paul's dealing with two states? Nothing else. He's talking about the temporary state in that the temporary state is going to be changed into the eternal state. However, he is very specific when that happens. It's at the last trumpet when it happens.

Paul goes on and says in 1 Corinthians 15:53—**For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality** (emphasis added). Does that sound familiar? Temporary and eternal. These are the words he's using in 2 Corinthians. Believe me when I say, as the Corinthians are reading

Paul's second epistle to them, they're tracking with him. They already have this information from his first epistle to them. This is a reiteration.

So here you have the corruptible and incorruption, which is to say temporary and eternal or mortal and immortality. Over and over again Paul is using this to state two different states. He then goes on in 1 Corinthians 15:54—⁵⁴ **So when this corruptible has put on incorruption [mortality; our flesh], and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory"** (emphasis added). Remember that the last enemy destroyed is death, and only then do you move from a state of mortality to immortality?

So as we look at this passage in 2 Corinthians 5:1—**For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens** (emphasis added)—this is a reiteration. He's continuing this dialogue he had in 1 Corinthians 15 in which he was very specific with the time line.

Now continuing on in 2 Corinthians 5:2. I want you to pay close attention to what we're getting into and what Paul is saying here because this is a key component of the resurrection of the dead. Period! If you want to appreciate this principle, which is something we briefly mentioned before, you've got to have this. 2 Corinthians 5:2—**For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven.**

Paul is mourning. The only thing he is yearning for is to ascend to reach that eternal state; he wants to reach that immortal state. He wants to get into the Kingdom of God. There is nothing in this earth for him. He wants nothing the world has to offer.

Think about Yeshua's words recorded in John 12:25—**He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.** You must hate your life in this age. This is the impression we're getting with the Apostle Paul. We are to groan; we are to mourn for this.

Continuing in 2 Corinthians 5:3-6—³ **if indeed having been clothed we shall not be found naked.** ⁴ **for we who are in this tent grown [he is referring to the tent of mortality] being burdened not because we want to be unclothed but further clothes that mortality may be swallowed up by life.** ⁵ **Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.** ⁶ **So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body [Do you understand when Paul says—while we are at home in this body—he's referring to as long as you are in the state of mortality.] we are absent from the LORD** (emphasis added).

Let me share something with you. When you die, that's a state of mortality. To be dead in the ground is the very definition of mortality. Right? So think of it in these terms: to be in that state you are absent from the LORD. Period.

Paul continues in 2 Corinthians 5:7-8—⁷ **For we walk by faith, not by sight.** ⁸ **We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the LORD** (emphasis added). In other words, Paul is sharing the idea, "I don't want to be in the state of mortality. I don't want death to have power and victory over me. I yearn for that moment where this mortality puts on immortality." But again, when does that happen? 1 Corinthians 15:52—**in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be**

changed (emphasis added). That's when we reach the state of immortality. This is when mortality puts on immortality.

Take a look at Colossians 3:4—When Christ who is our life appears, **then** you also will appear with Him in glory (emphasis added). Again in Job 14:12—So man lies down and does not rise. **Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep** (emphasis added). This is the constant testimony going through Scripture.

Let's look at one more in 2 Timothy 4:1—I charge you therefore before God and the LORD Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead **at His appearing and His kingdom** (emphasis added). This is when it happens. So **to be absent from the body is to be present with the LORD** as stated in 2 Corinthians 5:7-8, and to be absent from death is to be present in life. To be absent from the grave is to be present in the resurrection.

That is all Paul is saying. Paul is not crazy. He has not changed his theology moving from 1 Corinthians to 2 Corinthians, which is what he would have to do if we were to walk away with this idea that now we have independent resurrections. To think that, means we have our eschatology wrong. We would have to believe our timings are individual. That idea doesn't work with Paul's writing. Paul spent so much time establishing the fact that that is not the case. So by the time you get to 2 Corinthians, which praise the LORD follows 1 Corinthians, we have this information. We have, if you will, the decoder ring to get through this. So hopefully that makes sense.

So this is just one of the pieces of Scripture we have heard so many times over the years, probably more than anything else, with regard to when we start getting into the discussion of the Gospel and the elementary principles. This is something you run up against right away.

Now there is another passage, that is really interesting, I want to bring to the table. I would say this is probably, with the exception of maybe this last one, the most predominant passage of why I appreciate and would understand why the modern-day Church would possess the eschatology that it does regarding the timing of the resurrection. I think you'll see this. The story is the thief on the cross.

In Luke 23:39-43, it reads—³⁹ Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." ⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?" ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said to Jesus, "LORD, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." ⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you, **today you will be with Me in Paradise**" (emphasis added).

The word, today, in the Greek is σήμερον. I want to be very clear; you cannot twist it or contort it to mean anything else other than what it means, which is this day, today. It can't mean tomorrow, sometime in the future, or perhaps sometime in the past. It only means one thing. It means this day, today.

So let's read this—Assuredly I say to you, **today you will be with me in Paradise**. When you do a simple reading of this, it seems pretty clear. When you die, you're going to be resurrected. Yeshua said the thief would be with him in Paradise that very day. So can you understand how this can be interpreted? The question remains, is that what the passage is saying especially in light of what we've covered for the

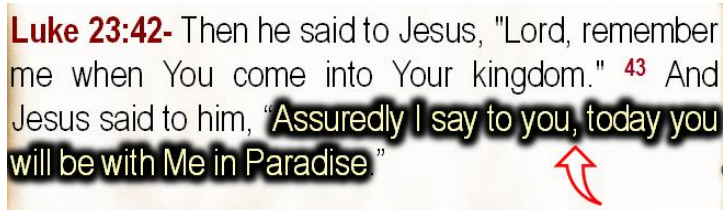
last two weeks. Especially in light of what we've covered in the few verses we have covered today where we know Scripture must be consistent throughout, and then we come across this passage, and it seems so crystal clear. What do we do with this? Are we misreading this? The answer is, yes. Unfortunately we are.

You might say, "Daniel, that's presumptuous of you because it's so straightforward." I would say this is probably the most straightforward verse we have in the Bible to suggest independent resurrection. I can tell you this; I know for a fact we are misreading this. All you have to do is finish the story to realize we are misreading this. The story doesn't end with Yeshua hanging on the cross. He resurrects; He comes back to life, and there's interesting dialogue that takes place between Him and Mary Magdalene. Mary comes to the grave, and she's weeping because nobody is in the tomb. Yeshua is gone. So she's there weeping, and look at what happens. Look at this discourse. John 20:15-17—¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "**Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father** (emphasis added).

Now let that sink in. Jesus said—I **have not yet ascended to my Father**. Keep in mind Yeshua rose the third day. We are talking three days later. So we read Luke 23:43—**Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise**—yet we know for a Scriptural fact Yeshua wasn't in heaven and neither was the thief. What do you do with this? This is a fundamental story we stand on. We believe Yeshua was crucified for the sins of the world. He died, He was buried, and He did not rise until the third day.

So understand something; that very day, which he was taken down from the cross before sundown, He was dead. They eventually buried Him, and that's where He stayed until the third day. So when we look at this passage—**Assuredly I say to you, today** [σήμερον, this day] **you will be with me in Paradise**.

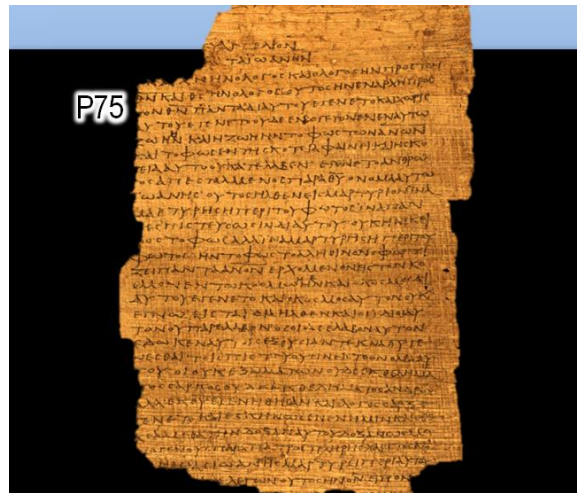
How else do we interpret what is going on? What are we missing with this passage because it's so clear? What I will tell you is what we are missing is so tiny. It's the tiniest of things being smaller than the tip of your finger. And what is that? It is the comma. Do you have any idea how powerful these little guys are?

A screenshot of a Bible passage from Luke 23:42-43. The text reads: "Luke 23:42- Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.'" ⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." A red arrow points to the comma after the word "today" in the second sentence.

Let me share an illustration with you that a pastor gave years ago. I'm just going to give you the nuts and bolts of it. The story goes like this—there was a guy who was purchasing product from a vendor. So they are emailing back and forth, and the guy is trying to get all the right stuff he needed. They finally get to the point in the order where he has exactly what he needs. He sends the order off. The vendor sends a message back that because of the guys urgent need, they will type up the proposal and will email it over to him. So the vendor emails this proposal over to him, and he looks at it and is shocked. The proposal is like two to three times more expensive than what he was expecting.

So the guy emails the vendor back and says, “No, price too high.” Here is what is interesting. A couple days later the order starts coming in, and he's like, “Whoa. Time out. What is going on? This was like three times more costly than I was willing to spend.” The vendor responds with, “You okayed it.” He said, “No I didn't. I sent you an email.” The vendor responded with, “Yeah. We got your email.” So the guy goes back to his email and looks at it again. That is when he realized he forgot the comma. Instead of saying, “No, price too high,” he forgot the comma and said, “No price too high.” It cost him thousands. Do you see the power of the comma? Unfortunately, we have that situation right here.

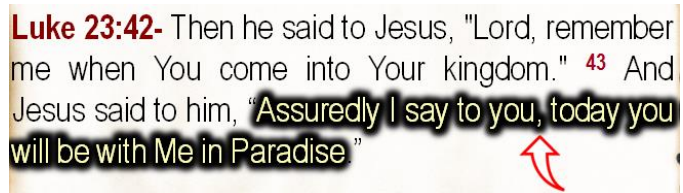
The first thing I want to do is bring up P75. It's one of the oldest manuscripts we have on record, which contains chunks of the gospels of Luke and John. Although the picture is not that big, what you will notice is early manuscripts were written in a majuscule text or uncial text. What that means is all the letters were in Greek capital letters. In the English language, we have capital letters and we have lower case letters. The Greek is the same way, but their early manuscripts were all written in these large capital letters with no spacing between the words. So it's all lumped and pressed together. I'm going to tell you, this is very hard to read. Scholars can navigate these really well, but anyone else will have a very hard time reading this. It would be hard to read English if all the letters were in caps with no spaces. You would have to force yourself to look; you can't go on muscle memory. You would really have to focus on what it was saying. Imagine doing this in Greek?



The point that I want to make here is you will not find a comma. In other words, the commas were added later by the translators and copyist. This is what they did. One thing I want you to understand about the translators putting the comma in the Luke 23:43 verse—**Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise**—it was not done for grammatical reasons. It was for theological ones. Do you understand? This is critical to understand. They did it because of the theological conviction that when we die we immediately ascend to our inheritance. We immediately get to receive our reward.

The problem is if you put the comma here—**Assuredly I say to you, today**—it doesn't work. It contradicts other Scripture. It contradicts the story of Yeshua who was not Himself in heaven that day, nor was the thief. It contradicts the totality of Scripture we have from Genesis to Revelation.

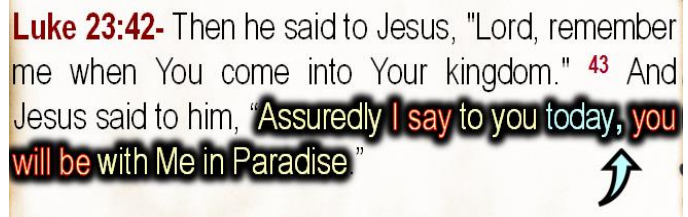
So what do we do with this? Well, I'm going to tell you very simply if we want to do this right, put the common the right place. Read it this way. Instead of putting it before the word today, put it after today. Then it reads—**Assuredly I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise**. In other words, it's a declaration.



In addition to this, unless you think I'm just moving commas around, I'm going to say that you can virtually look at every single modern translation of the Bible such as the New American Standard, NIV, and New King James. All the way down the line you

will find they all have the comma here before the word today. They all look like this. But the comma really should be after the word today for a number of reasons.

First, theologically, this is the most important, but second, grammatically. I highlighted this to help better explain this concept. Notice that “I say” is highlighted. It is λέγω (*legō*) in the Greek. I say, λέγω, is a verb. Then we have the word “today,” which is σήμερον (*sēmeron*) as we already learned. That is an adverb. It modifies the verb.



Luke 23:42- Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." ⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise."

You'll notice right after “today,” σήμερον (*sēmeron*) is another verb, “you will be.” It is ἔσῃ (*esē*) in the Greek. So what you have is “today,” σήμερον (*sēmeron*), which is an adverb, stuck in between two verbs. I want to be clear on something. There is nothing in Greek syntax or grammatical law that stipulates that the adverb modifying the verb has to precede the verb it modifies or it has to follow it. Do you hear what I'm saying? In other words, on a grammatical basis of Greek, there's nothing to say the comma would absolutely have to be placed before the word “today.” There are no Greek grammar laws or syntax that says that is how it has to be. There is nothing. That's very important to understand in knowing where to place the comma.

Secondly, and this is what I find interesting, when Luke, who we attribute to writing the gospel Luke and the book of Acts, uses this adverb σήμερον (*sēmeron*), it is natural for Luke to utilize it, coincided it, with the preceding verb. Now that's interesting because when we know this is a natural habit of Luke in regard to placing a comma, we would put the comma right where it is, which is after the word “today.” So this dramatically changes everything.

Just for clarity, we're not changing the sentence structure by adding or taking away from Scripture. We're dealing with punctuation marks that can affect the interpretation of Scripture. I do not subscribe to adding and taking away. However, if you're going to use the comma, put it in the right place.

One more thing about this that I find really interesting, which are the words of the thief. What does he say here? Let me jump to Luke 23:42—**Then he said to Jesus, "LORD, remember me when you come into Your kingdom"** (emphasis added). Have you ever noticed that statement? That should grab your attention especially after what we have been covering. The thief asks Yeshua to—**remember me**. That is interesting because Job says the same thing—**Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!** (Emphasis added, Job 14:13). We also know from Numbers 10 that at the last trumpet sounding, we are going to be remembered before our God.

I want to move on and talk about another one. Unfortunately, we're not going to be able to get to all of them today, and I'm probably not even going to cover all of them in this series because it tends to get tedious, and I want to move on; however, I'm going to cover the big ones I've been hearing for years.

With that said, let's go the story of the transfiguration found in Matthew 17:1-3—**¹ Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ² and He**

was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.
³ **And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him** (emphasis added).

Isn't this interesting because this is an extremely unique situation. This is what I would call unusual. It's not normal to see Moses and Elijah talking to Yeshua. The Apostles were shocked at what they saw. Peter was terrified.

What are Moses and Elijah doing talking to Yeshua when in fact the totality of Scripture says when the righteous died they rest in the grave? How is this even possible? Well, with Elijah, it's no surprise because Elijah didn't die. The chariot of fire came out of heaven with horses of fire. We know this because it gives us the story in 2 Kings how the chariot of fire came down and literally took him into heaven. So the fact the Apostles are seeing Elijah is not a surprise.

Now one thing you have to understand is this was extraordinary, right? It was not normal. It was an exception because Elijah was the exception to the rule. What does it say in Hebrews 9:27? It says—**it is appointed for man to die once, but after this the Judgment.**

Look at the history of mankind. We find that rule being consistent except for two people. Enoch didn't follow that rule. Enoch never tasted death. Why not? We are not told. I've read the book of Enoch, and I can't find it anywhere. There's nothing to say other than God took him.

What about Elijah? We know God took him. It's recorded in Scripture. But again, why is he taken and not appointed to die once as the rest of mankind is? He was born of a woman; who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. I mean, this is an exception to the rule. But when we look at Moses, what do we know about Moses, and this is where it gets really perplexing. Moses died.

So what happened? I mean, we know Moses died. I'm going to take you there and we're going to read something interesting in the midst of this in Deuteronomy 34:5-6—⁵ **So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.** ⁶ **And He buried him** (emphasis added).

You have to understand this is very unusual; this is an exception to the rule. What just happened is the LORD tended to the burial Himself. God buried Moses. I challenge you to go through the Scriptures; you will not find anywhere other than this verse where God did this. The only argument you could probably give me is the LORD tending to the burial of Korah and company when He opened up the Earth and buried them. But as far as a righteous man, you're not going to see anything like this. This is so unusual.

Then we have the rest of the Deuteronomy 34:6 verse—**in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day** (emphasis added). So we have two things that are very instrumental— **He buried him**, and **but no one knows his grave to this day**. Both of these are shouting that God is going to do something extraordinary. The fact God Himself tended to Moses' burial, and the fact that no one knew where his grave was. Now keep in mind there was the whole of Israel. Some estimate the population at that time to be over two million people, yet you are telling me nobody knows where Moses is buried?

So the LORD tended to it, and it's a sign the LORD would do something exceptional with Moses. To show you what that was, I'm going to take you to the book of Jude because what we have is Moses with Elijah, who didn't die, but we know Moses died. So we need an answer as to why this was.

This is what we read in Jude 1:6—**Yet Michael the archangel**. Most of us have heard of this guy. I want to give you a little backdrop so we can dig into this and really understand what's going on here. Do you know when Jude is writing his short epistle, he has a particular book in mind? It is the book of Enoch. We know this and it can't be debated because he quotes Enoch 1:9 verbatim in verse 14 of Jude.

Why is this important? This is very important because if you've ever read the book of Enoch, this Jewish, apocalyptic book, the book talks of Michael all over the place. One of the amazing things we are told about him is he is one of the innermost sanctum of the kingdom of God. He is the closest to God of all the angels with the exception of a few others such as Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel. These are the four angels on the four sides of the throne, like the Beast that we read about in Revelation, and they declare the praises of God. It is absolutely amazing.

Here's where I'm going with this and why I'm sharing this background. There's something that Enoch records, with regard to Michael, which is vital and plays a direct role in the epistle of Jude. I want to show you what that is. **Michael, one of the holy angels to wit, he that is set over the best part of mankind and over chaos** (emphasis added, Enoch 20:5). I want you to think about that statement. Michael the archangel has the task assigned to him by the LORD, to be over the best of mankind.

Would you say Moses fits that special group? Absolutely. Why is that important? Well, let's go back to Jude 1:6 and look at the entire verse because Jude brings up Michael the archangel—**Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The LORD rebuke you!"** (Emphasis added).

Michael, the very one who God himself set over the best of mankind, was told to go get the body of Moses. Remember how we learned it is the angels of God who are going to come and get us at the resurrection? They're going to come one by one and take us. When Elijah was taken, they came out of Heaven with the chariots of fire to grab Elijah. God sent the closest, one of the most powerful angels in the entire Kingdom, to go get His servant Moses, and He raised him from the dead.

We talked a little bit about this in this series. Why would God do that? Well, when you look at Yeshua and what was prophesied, He was to be a Prophet like unto Moses. There are things in Moses' life that would be a typology, a shadow, of the Prophet like Him that was to come, and this is one of the things. Moses rose before the resurrection. He's an exception to the rule.

So when you're looking at the Mount of Transfiguration, you're looking at exceptions to the rule. You have the Torah and the Prophets standing with Yeshua testifying about Him, and they're not normal. There's nothing normal about that meeting other than the fact that our expectation is the Torah and the Prophets would testify.

So that helps you understand the transfiguration why we would see Moses resurrected. It's an exception to the rule just as Enoch, and just as Elijah.

I want to share another one with you, but this is one that is not so much an objection. When you talk about dead people, forums have been lit up over this one passage. It's found in Revelation 6:9—**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.**

Revelation 6:9- 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.

This is a really bizarre situation where you have men and women who have been killed, martyred, for—**the word of God and for the testimony which they held**. Not to get sidetracked, but here again we find an example of the structure of the faith. Do you see it?

This is why they were slain, the word of God. This is the testimony. They would not compromise the Torah. They would not abandon the Law no matter who was telling them to walk away from it. They would not abandon the Commandments of God. They clung to them unto death. They will die before they compromise.

The other thing they possess is the testimony of the Messiah Yeshua. He is the Savior of the world. He is the way the truth and the life, and this is their testimony they bear. So can we be in agreement on what we're reading here? These souls are righteous. These are the elect of God who have been martyred for the holy name of Yeshua.

But what's really interesting, as John is looking at these righteous, is he sees them under the altar. What is this about? Why would they be under the altar? As I have been asked, are they stuck in some spiritual cavern under the altar and are not allowed to escape for some unbeknownst reason? To that I was say, "No. That is not what is being described here."

One thing I want to say, as we dig into this a little bit deeper, is when you go to the book of Revelation, please do me a favor, do not read it hyper literally. There are dragons, women riding dragons, and women who are clothed in the sun with the moon under their feet. There is a dragon drawing stars out of Heaven. Part of the book is meant to be taken literally, but there are a lot of very metaphorical and symbolic pieces in this book. These things represent something else just as when Yeshua tells parables. Like the parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and the tares. The wheat and tare represent the righteous and the wicked. So when you go to Revelation, you have to be very careful.

So how do we understand this passage? One of the first things I want to focus on here is specifically regarding where the souls are. There's a reason John sees them, and they're under the altar. I want to be clear regarding what altar is being discussed. In Revelation, it is almost obsessed, if you will, about the altar of incense. Over and over and over again, that altar is mentioned. This is the altar that is being discussed by John.

Now, I want to take this a step further to put this into context for you. Moving to Revelation 8:3—**Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne**. So here's this golden altar, and where is it located? It is before the Throne. It is close to the Living God.

Moving to Revelation 8:4—**And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand** (emphasis added). Notice how these two things—**smoke of the incense, with the prayers** [voices] **of the saints**—are likened together. They're brought together; they ascend together.

So when we look at this statement in Revelation 6:9 where John is looking at these righteous men and women who have died for the faith, and he sees that they, these souls, are under the altar. The placement is very significant, and you will see this as we continue. Revelation 6:10—**And they cried out**

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?”

Think about that. That is why these questions arise in regard to where people go when they die. People want to know why people would be stuck in this spiritual cavern under the altar wailing, crying out, for justice? Yet we know the golden altar of incense is before the Throne of God in Heaven.

How is this possible? What is being communicated? It's metaphorical.

To help you understand this further, let me take you to a well-known story in Genesis 4:8—**Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field.** I wish I had time to spend time here because Cain and Abel like Jacob and Esau represent the two ages. Cain and Abel represent the wheat and the tares Yeshua talks about in Matthew 13. So isn't it interesting what Yeshua called this world or this age? He calls it the field. That's literally what he calls it.

So here you have Cain and Abel, and it specifies they are in the field. Continuing—**that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.** This is what the wicked due to the righteous. This is what has happened to these souls under the altar. They've been slain by the wicked. The tares have cut them to shreds.

Moving to Genesis 4:9-10—⁹ **Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”** ¹⁰ **And He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground** (emphasis added).

That is amazing. Abel is slain, and the LORD says— **The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.** What an amazing concept. This ties in exactly with what we see happening with these souls John sees under the altar. Their voices are ascending with the incense. It is an amazing thing.

Now to put this into context to help you understand this, let me quickly take you back to the book of Enoch because the comments on this situation with Cain and Abel give us a very important piece of information that applies to Revelation 6. So in Enoch 22:5-7, this is what we read—⁵ **I saw the spirits of the children of men who were dead** [it is very specific regarding they were dead], **and their voice went forth to heaven and made suit.** ⁶ **Then I asked Raphael the angel who was with me, and I said unto him: “This spirit – whose is it whose voice goeth forth and maketh suit? ”** ⁷ **And he answered me saying: “This is the spirit which went forth from Abel, whom his brother Cain slew, and he makes his suit against him till his seed is destroyed from the face of the earth and his seed is annihilated from amongst the seed of men** (emphasis added).

Now, this is what I want you to see—**till his seed is destroyed from the face of the earth and his seed annihilated from amongst the seed of men.** So this is very important. John is looking at these souls that appeared to be trapped under the altar, but their voices are going up to heaven. We have Abel's blood, the voice of his blood, crying out before the Throne of God. Here is something that is critical to understand. God never stops hearing the voices of His martyred ones until He reins judgment.

Think about that concept? When the righteous are slain, when they go away, God has not forgotten them. He never stops hearing their voice. This is such powerful imagery. However, here is the thing. They are dead. Enoch just said they were dead. The book of Hebrews 11:4, in regard to Abel, says this—**By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained**

witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it **he being dead** still speaks (emphasis added).

Although we don't fully understand it, there is a spiritual reality that when you have those who have been martyred by the wicked, there's a cry the LORD God never stops hearing. But think this through for a second. Have they been resurrected? Absolutely not because there will be no more crying; God is going to wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more sorrow in the age to come. So to attempt to say these men are literally in heaven doesn't work. To say they have been resurrected doesn't work. To say they are being held under the altar, they are trapped now, and are going to be released after God judges the wicked doesn't really work either.

There's nothing to support that proposition. Abel is dead. He still buried today. He's dead to this very day. So with that we are going to close here.