

Salvation and the Grace Administration

Does “No Access” Mean No Hope?

A Working Study — King James Version

Acts 4:12

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

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Purpose and Method

This study takes up a specific question someone raised: if a person has no access to being witnessed to — living somewhere entirely cut off from gospel contact — can that person be saved? Would they be part of “the resurrection of the just”? The question widens naturally, since Genesis 1:1 and the Seven Administrations study already establish that scripture organizes biblical history into distinct administrations, each opened by its own audible declaration and its own governing basis. This study asks what each administration required for a right relationship with God, whether the Grace administration is really as different from what came before as it can appear, how the two resurrections (just and unjust) actually sort people, and then takes up the access question directly — what scripture states, where it stays silent, and where careful readers of scripture genuinely disagree.

Method follows this library's standing practice (Research-Method.md): King James Version as base text, each administration's governing basis drawn from the existing Seven Administrations Project findings rather than re-derived from scratch, direct scriptural statement kept distinct from inference, and — per principle 5, “show differing views” — the access question specifically is treated as a live disagreement among careful readers rather than forced to a single answer scripture does not clearly supply on its own.

Section 1: The Question

Acts 4:12 states plainly that salvation is found in no name but Christ's. Read against a person who never had any opportunity to hear that name — not through unbelief, not through rejection, but through simple absence of contact — the verse can feel like it closes a door that persons had no chance to walk through in the first place. That reaction is worth taking seriously rather than talking past. This study does not soften what Acts 4:12 states; it works outward from it, through what scripture says about salvation's basis in every administration, the structure of the two resurrections, and the specific texts that bear on those

without access, before laying out where the answer is direct and where it is genuinely disputed.

Section 2: Salvation's Basis, Administration by Administration

The Seven Administrations Project has already established each administration's own governing basis, anchored by an audible declaration from God (Seven_Administrations_Study_Reference.docx). This section draws directly on that framework rather than re-deriving it, and asks specifically what each administration required of a person in relation to God.

2.1 Eden — One Command

The first administration's governing basis was a single direct command — obedience to one stated instruction, tested and broken (Gen 2:16–17; 3:6). It stands apart from the rest of this study's question, since it describes a unique, unrepeatable situation (unmediated fellowship, one command, no distance to overcome) rather than a pattern for how someone at a remove from God comes to Him.

2.2 Patriarchal — Credited Faith

■ **Genesis 15:6** *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

From Eden's expulsion to Sinai, the governing basis was faith credited as righteousness — illustrated in Abel's offering (Gen 4:4; Heb 11:4), Enoch's walk with God (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5), Noah's obedience in building the ark “by faith” (Heb 11:7), and Abraham's belief in the promise (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3). Hebrews states the underlying principle in terms broad enough to matter for the rest of this study:

■ **Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

That verse describes what coming to God has always required in substance — belief that He is, and that He responds to those who seek Him — even before it names any specific content (a coming Messiah, a finished cross) to believe.

2.3 Mosaic Law — Vowed Obedience, With Faith Underneath

■ **Exodus 24:7** *And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.*

■ **Galatians 3:11–12** *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*

Israel's governing basis under this administration was a vowed covenant of obedience to a written code — categorically different in form from the Patriarchal administration's credited belief. Yet the Law's own sacrificial system rested on a substitutionary principle scripture states directly:

■ **Leviticus 17:11** *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

And Habakkuk, writing under this same administration, states the older principle had not disappeared beneath the code:

■ **Habakkuk 2:4** *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

Paul reads the Law's sacrifices, in retrospect, as never having been capable of actually removing sin on their own terms — pointing forward rather than accomplishing finally:

Romans 3:25 *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

So the Mosaic administration's governing basis was outwardly a vowed code, but scripture's own retrospective reading treats the code's sacrifices as a faith-based provision reaching forward, not a self-sufficient system of merit.

2.4 Christ — The Kingdom Message, Still Under Law

Matthew 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Matthew 5:17–18 *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

Christ's own earthly ministry operated inside the Law's continuing force while introducing the kingdom message and, increasingly, the call to believe on Him personally — a transitional administration, neither the old code alone nor the finished work the cross and resurrection had not yet accomplished:

John 6:29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

John 11:25–26 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

2.5 Grace — Faith in the Finished Work

Ephesians 2:8–9 *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.*

Romans 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

What changes with Grace is not the underlying principle (faith counted as righteousness, already present since Abel) but the content of what is believed — the cross and the resurrection are now finished, historical facts to be believed rather than a future hope to be trusted toward. Acts 4:12's exclusivity is stated inside this same administration, addressed to people who could, in principle, hear and respond — a point this study returns to directly in Section 4.

2.6 Day of Wrath — Salvation Still Available

Revelation 7:9, 14 *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

The same gospel principle continues into the Day of Wrath — salvation remains available by the same means, even as the administration's character changes radically around it.

2.7 Day of Judgment and Beyond

Christ's Millennial reign introduces direct personal rule (Isa 2:2–4) rather than a new means of individual salvation as such. Matthew 25:31–46's sheep-and-goats scene, judging the treatment of “these my brethren,” is worked out as its own distinct question in Section 9.

2.8 What This Means for the “Very Different Routes” Observation

John's observation is correct at one level and needs qualifying at another. The content of saving faith genuinely develops — trust in God's bare word and promise, then in a coming Messiah, then in a crucified and risen Lord — and the outward form of each administration's governing basis differs sharply (one command; credited belief; a vowed code; a kingdom message; grace through faith in a finished work). But the underlying principle Hebrews 11:6 states — faith reckoned as righteousness, not autonomous merit — runs through every administration from Abel onward without a single exception scripture records. The routes differ in what exactly must be believed; they do not differ in the kind of response God has always looked for.

Section 3: The Resurrections — Just and Unjust

Daniel 12:2 *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.*

John 5:28–29 *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Acts 24:15 *And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*

Scripture states the two-category structure directly. Revelation 20 supplies the timing and the basis for each:

Revelation 20:4, 6 *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... 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 20:11–12, 15 *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it... And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened... and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

The first resurrection (“the resurrection of the just”) gathers Old Testament and tribulation saints together with the Grace administration's own dead — the latter specifically described at 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 — and takes place before the Millennium; the Great White Throne (“the resurrection of the unjust”) takes place after it, and its subjects are judged “according to their works” against whether their name was already written in the Book of Life.

This reframes the question precisely. Which resurrection a person is part of is not itself a separate, live legal proceeding decided at that moment — it reflects a status already settled. The real question a “no access” case actually raises is the one Section 2 already opened: was this person's name written in the Book of Life, and on what ground could that be true for someone who never heard the name of Christ. That is the question Section 5 takes up directly.

Section 4: Acts 4:12 in Its Own Context

Per this library's standing method (who / to whom), Acts 4:12 is Peter's answer to the Sanhedrin — Israel's own religious leadership — demanding by what name he had healed a lame man and preached Christ (Acts 4:5–7). It is spoken into a specific historical confrontation about Israel's rejection of its own Messiah, not composed as a freestanding abstract statement designed to resolve every possible case of someone with no access at all. That context does not soften what the verse states — there genuinely is no other name or means — but it means the verse itself is establishing who saves, not by itself settling how every individual case connects to that fact. Paul restates the same exclusivity elsewhere, so it is not a peculiarity of this one verse or this one audience:

1 Timothy 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

Salvation is in Christ alone — stated consistently, addressed to different audiences, never qualified elsewhere in scripture. What is not stated with the same directness is the mechanism by which that fact reaches, or applies to, a person entirely without contact. That is the actual gap this study is working to close as far as scripture allows.

Section 5: What Scripture Says About Those With No Direct Access

Romans 1:19–20 *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

Romans 1 establishes universal guilt through general revelation — creation itself makes base ungodliness and idolatry inexcusable. This passage's own argument (continuing through Romans 3:9, 23, “all have sinned”) is aimed at proving every person is under sin, Jew and Gentile alike; it is not, by itself, an answer to the fairness question about access to salvation. The passage that speaks to that question directly comes one chapter later:

Romans 2:12, 14–16 *For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law... For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

This is the most direct statement scripture supplies on the question itself: God does not judge a person by a standard — the written Law, or by extension the gospel proclamation — they never had access to. He judges by what they did have: conscience, and the work of the law written on the heart.

How Far Does This Go? A Closer Look at Romans 2

The V1 draft of this study flagged, as genuinely open, whether Romans 2:14–15 describes a real path to salvation for a Gentile who responds rightly to conscience, or only states the standard by which such a person is judged. A closer look at where this passage sits in Paul's larger argument resolves it, and the resolution matters for how the rest of this study's position should be stated.

Romans 1:18–3:20 is one sustained case that all humanity — Gentile and Jew alike — stands guilty before God. It closes like this:

Romans 3:9–10 *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Romans 3:19–20 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight...*

That conclusion covers the very Gentiles 2:14–15 describes. Paul's point in naming them is not that some Gentiles clear their own bar and stand justified by it — it is that even Gentiles without the written Law have some bar (conscience, “the work of the law written in their hearts”) by which they are justly judged, exactly as Jews are judged by the written Law they have. Verse 16 names who does the judging even in this no-law case — “by Jesus Christ,” not a separate, Christ-free arrangement. Read this way, Romans 2:12–16 states the fairness of the standard — no one is judged by a law they never had — not a second path to salvation running alongside faith in Christ. Every person, however judged, still falls short of whatever standard applies to them, and still needs the one remedy Paul names without a Jew/Gentile or law/no-law distinction:

Romans 3:22–23 *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

This sharpens, rather than removes, the access question this study opened with. Romans 2 is not itself an alternate route to salvation for the sincere-but-unreached; it is a statement that they will be judged fairly, by what they had, when the same universal verdict of 3:23 catches up with them too. What still stands from the rest of this section — God's stated character, His arrangement of history toward being sought and found, and the Cornelius narrative's own pattern — still stands, and still matters for Section 7's working position. But it is no longer accurate to describe Romans 2:14–16 as itself the ground of a person's salvation apart from Christ; it is the ground of a fair verdict, not a substitute for one.

Acts 17:26–27 *And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*

Paul states this as God's own arrangement and intention for every nation, not only Israel — that people in every place and era should be positioned to seek Him. The nearest scriptural narrative to a real test case is Cornelius:

Acts 10:2, 4, 34–35 *A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway... Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God... Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*

Cornelius was already devout, already praying, already described as “accepted” in that state — and God still sent an angel to arrange for Peter to reach him with the actual message, specifically so that Cornelius and his household could be saved:

Acts 11:13–14 *And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*

Two things follow directly from the narrative, and neither should be read past the other: genuine seeking under limited light is seen and answered by God — and God still supplied the actual message rather than leaving devout sincerity, on its own, to stand in Christ's place. This fits exactly the sharpened reading of Romans 2 above: Cornelius's devoutness under his available light did not itself save him; it made him the

kind of person to whom God ensured the fuller message came. Paul's own statement of the ordinary means points the same direction:

Romans 10:13–15 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?*

God's ordinary appointed means is real proclamation, carried by people sent for that purpose — not a bypass. Paul immediately adds, quoting Psalm 19:4, that the message's reach was already extensive in his own day (“their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world,” Rom 10:18) — most plausibly a typological application of a creation-revelation psalm to the gospel's intended universal reach, rather than a literal claim every living person had already heard verbal preaching by the mid-first century (Paul was still planning to reach unevangelized regions himself; Rom 15:20–24). It should not be read as denying real access gaps existed, but it does affirm the gospel's reach was, in God's intention, as universal as creation's own testimony. Alongside the ordinary means stands God's own stated disposition:

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

1 Timothy 2:3–4 *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

God's stated will is that none perish and all be saved — real and worth weighing directly, though a stated desire is not itself a stated method for every individual case. One further verse is sometimes brought into this question and is worth noting for what it does and does not say:

John 1:9 *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

Read in its own immediate context, this verse's “lighteth every man” sits beside verses 10–13, which tie actual reception — becoming a child of God — specifically to those who “received him” and “believed on his name.” The verse most directly describes universal exposure or conviction, not automatic salvation apart from a response.

1 Peter 3:19–20 and 4:6 — Examined Directly

The V1 draft logged these two texts to Abeyance-List.md without using them in either direction. A closer look, applying this project's four-check resolution procedure (translation / transcription / punctuation-clause-division / context-grammar), gives this study a stated position rather than a bare flag — offered as this study's own best-supported reading, not as beyond dispute, since both verses remain among the most debated in the New Testament.

1 Peter 3:18–20 *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.*

Three things bear directly on what this text describes:

- The verb translated “preached” here is ekēryxen, from kērussō — “proclaimed” or “heralded” — not the New Testament's ordinary word for gospel-preaching, euangelizō, which appears one chapter later at 4:6. Peter had the gospel-preaching word available and did not use it here; whatever this proclamation was, the text itself does not call it evangelism.

- “Spirits” (pneumasin), used here without qualification, is the New Testament's standard designation for angelic or demonic beings, not deceased human beings — who are elsewhere called “souls” or simply “the dead.” The one place scripture does mean human dead by “spirits,” it marks the exception by naming it: “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb 12:23). 1 Peter 3:19 supplies no such qualifier.
- Peter's own second letter pairs the identical two elements — imprisoned sinning beings, and Noah's flood — in a passage where the referent is unambiguous:

2 Peter 2:4–5 *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;*

The same author connecting the same two elements — imprisoned sinning spirits, the days of Noah — in a passage where the referent is explicit favors reading 1 Peter 3:19–20 the same way: a proclamation, of triumph or of judgment already settled, made to fallen angelic beings associated with Noah's generation (cf. Gen 6:1–4; Jude 6), not to deceased human beings at all.

1 Peter 4:6 is a separate statement, and it does use the actual gospel-preaching word:

1 Peter 4:5–6 *Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

Here the verb is euēngelisthē, from euangelizō — the ordinary gospel-preaching word. But the tense and context both point backward, not forward: “was preached” is a completed past action, and the surrounding argument (v. 5's “quick and the dead” together) is explaining why people who heard and believed the gospel during their lifetime, and have since died, are not thereby excluded from final vindication — “judged according to men in the flesh” (they died, as every human does) “but live according to God in the spirit” (yet they are alive with God). Read this way, 4:6 describes believers who received the gospel while living and have since passed on, not an offer extended to them after death.

Taken together, neither text supports a postmortem opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel. 3:19–20 most likely does not concern human beings at all; 4:6 most likely concerns people who already believed in life. This reading does not settle every question these verses have generated across church history, but it means they cannot be used, in either direction, to argue that scripture promises a second, after-death opportunity to those in this section's “no access” case. What stands for that case is what this section and Section 7 state directly, not an appeal to postmortem preaching.

Section 6: The Range of Views

Careful, scripture-committed readers genuinely disagree on exactly how far the texts in Section 5 reach. Per this library's standing principle of showing differing views rather than asserting one as settled where the text itself does not force a single reading, three positions are laid out here fairly.

Exclusivism (strict)

Conscious, explicit faith in the name of Jesus Christ, in this life, is required without exception; those who never hear are lost. This position reads Romans 10:14's questions as stating a universally binding requirement, not merely describing God's ordinary means, and draws its force from the same texts that make salvation exclusively Christ's (Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5).

Accessibilism / the “wideness of God's mercy”

God judges each person by the light actually available to them; a person who responds rightly, in genuine faith, to the light they have is saved on the ground of Christ's atonement even without explicit knowledge of His name, and scripture shows God actively working to bring fuller knowledge to genuine seekers (Cornelius) rather than abandoning them. This study's own closer reading of Romans 2 (Section 5) finds that passage establishes the fairness of the judgment standard rather than a separate salvific path, which narrows — without fully removing — the textual support this position draws from that specific passage; its strongest remaining ground is God's stated character (2 Pet 3:9; 1 Tim 2:3–4) and the Cornelius narrative's own pattern, rather than Romans 2:14–16 read as a stand-alone proof text.

Universalism / broad inclusivism

Noted here only for completeness, not held by this study: the view that all, or nearly all, people are eventually saved regardless of response. This is rejected as contradicted directly by the plain exclusivity of Acts 4:12, John 14:6, and 1 Timothy 2:5, and by the Great White Throne's own structure (Rev 20:11–15), which presupposes that some are, in fact, not found written in the Book of Life.

Section 7: A Working Position

Scripture states clearly who saves — Christ alone, in every administration, without exception (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5). It states clearly that no one is judged by a standard they never had access to (Rom 2:12–16) — though the closer look in Section 5 shows that passage establishes the fairness of the verdict rather than a separate path to salvation running alongside faith in Christ: by whatever standard a person is judged, all fall short of it (Rom 3:23), and all need the one remedy Paul names without a law/no-law distinction (Rom 3:22).

Scripture does not supply a postmortem opportunity to close that gap after death. The two texts sometimes read that way (1 Pet 3:19–20; 4:6) most likely describe something else entirely on close examination — a proclamation to fallen angels, and gospel preaching to people who believed during their lifetime, respectively (Section 5).

What scripture does show, through its one sustained narrative example, is that God does not appear content to leave a genuine seeker permanently stranded in this life (Acts 10–11; Acts 17:26–27) — He supplies the means, even when that means requires sending someone a long way to do it.

For infants, young children, and those otherwise incapable of believing for themselves, scripture speaks with real, converging directness (Section 8): a believing parent's faith stands for the child until the child can believe on their own account, the same structure of one person's faith-filled intercession standing in for another's incapacity is confirmed independently for the sick (James 5:15), and scripture marks out a real threshold of moral accountability before which this arrangement applies. This category is comparatively better supported textually than the harder case below, since scripture speaks to it through a real converging pattern of direct texts rather than through inference alone.

For the harder case this study opened with — an adult, morally accountable, with truly zero access to the gospel in any form across an entire lifetime — the exact mechanism by which such a person could come to stand in the Book of Life is not laid out with the same verse-by-verse directness scripture uses for the Grace administration's own ordinary requirements (Rom 10:9–13). That specific edge case is held here with real epistemic humility rather than forced to a proof-text conclusion — while everything else scripture states plainly is affirmed without softening: God's character is not willing that any perish (2 Pet 3:9); His arrangement of history is aimed at being sought and found (Acts 17:26–27); and where He finds a genuine seeker, the pattern scripture shows is that He acts to close the distance, not widen it.

Section 8: Infants, Young Children, and the Mentally Incapable

This is a distinct category from the geographic “no access” question above. What stands between this person and the Grace administration's own stated requirement (Rom 10:9–13) is not their location but their incapacity — they are not yet, or may never be, able to exercise the belief that requirement describes. Scripture speaks to this category more directly than it does the geographic case.

8.1 The Believing Parent Standing for the Child

1 Corinthians 7:14 *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*

Paul states directly that the children of even one believing parent are counted “holy” (hagia — the same word elsewhere translated “saints”), not on the strength of the child's own faith, which an infant cannot yet exercise, but on the believing parent's standing extended over the child. The alternative stated in the same breath — “else were your children unclean” — shows Paul treats this as a real, operative principle, not a figure of speech. The same pairing (an unbelieving spouse sanctified by a believing one) extends the identical logic to a husband or wife who has not yet believed, standing in relation to the believing spouse.

This fits a consistent pattern elsewhere in the New Testament of whole households — including, presumably, children too young to make an independent profession — described together with the head of household's own faith:

Acts 16:31, 34 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house... And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

Acts 18:8 *And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*

8.2 The Prayer of Faith for Those Who Cannot Act for Themselves

James 5:14–16 *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

This describes the identical structure for someone incapacitated a different way — by illness rather than age. Unable to act in their own strength, another believer's faith-filled prayer stands in the gap, and forgiveness of sins is explicitly said to follow from that intercession. The same principle — one person's faith, exercised on behalf of another who cannot exercise it for themselves, honored by God — runs under both this text and 1 Corinthians 7:14, giving the parent-for-child pattern above a second, independent confirmation from a different kind of incapacity.

8.3 A Real Threshold of Moral Accountability

Deuteronomy 1:39 *Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.*

Isaiah 7:15–16 *Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that*

thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Jonah 4:11 *And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more then sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?*

Romans 7:9 *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

Ezekiel 18:20 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

Scripture repeatedly marks out a real developmental threshold before which a person is not held to the same accountability as afterward: the wilderness generation's young children, who “had no knowledge between good and evil,” were explicitly excluded from the adults' judgment and entered the land where their parents could not; Isaiah names the same threshold directly (“before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good”); Nineveh's youngest — those who “cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand” — are held up as an object of God's own compassion, distinct from the culpable adults the book has just described repenting; and Paul's own testimony describes a time, in his own account, “alive without the law,” before the commandment's arrival made him accountable in a new way. The general principle underneath all of this is Ezekiel's: a person answers for their own response, not for a status imposed before they were capable of any response at all.

2 Samuel 12:22–23 *And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

Matthew 19:14 *But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

David's own confidence, after his infant son's death, that he would be reunited with the child is the nearest scriptural narrative expressing personal certainty about an infant's destiny. Christ's own words state the same thing as a settled fact about children generally, not conditioned on a profession of faith they could not yet make.

8.4 Working Position on This Category

Unlike the geographic “no access” question, which scripture addresses only indirectly and leaves genuinely underspecified at its hardest edge (Section 7), this category is addressed by a real, converging pattern of direct texts: a believing parent's faith is explicitly said to extend a holy status to a child not yet capable of independent faith (1 Cor 7:14); the same structure — one person's faith-filled intercession standing in for another's incapacity, with forgiveness of sins following from it — is stated independently for the sick (James 5:15); and scripture repeatedly marks out a real developmental threshold before which a person is not yet held to the same accountability as afterward (Deut 1:39; Isa 7:15–16; Rom 7:9; Ezek 18:20's general principle). Taken together, these converge on a single position with more direct textual support than the geographic case: an infant, young child, or a person otherwise incapable of exercising faith for themselves is not left exposed to a standard they were never capable of meeting; a believing parent — or, by the same principle, another believer's faith-filled intercession — stands in that gap until the child is capable of believing on their own account. This does not remove the child's own eventual accountability once that capacity arrives; the same Deuteronomy passage that excuses “the little ones” holds the next generation fully responsible once grown. It describes the arrangement while that capacity is not yet present, not a permanent exemption from it.

Section 9: Matthew 25's Sheep and Goats — A Distinct Judgment

The V1 draft flagged, as open, how Matthew 25:31–46 relates to the individual justification-by-faith texts elsewhere in this study. A closer look resolves it.

Matthew 25:31–32 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

Matthew 25:34, 40 *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Three features of the text point to a specific reading. First, the subjects are “all nations” gathered before a returned, reigning King — a scene of living nations at Christ's Second Coming, not the resurrected dead (contrast the Great White Throne's own subjects, “the dead, small and great,” Rev 20:12). Second, “brethren” (adelphoi) is a word Matthew's own Gospel uses elsewhere for Christ's actual kinsmen and followers specifically, not as a generic term for any person in need (Matt 12:48–50; 28:10). Third, this scene fits directly into this library's own Day of Judgment administration (Section 2.7) — Christ's return to reign, entrance into the earthly Millennial kingdom — a distinct arrangement from the individual eternal-destiny judgments of Section 3.

Read this way, Matthew 25 is best understood as a national or corporate judgment of the living nations at Christ's return, sorting entrance into the Millennial kingdom by how those nations treated Christ's own brethren — Israel, or His messengers, during the Day of Wrath immediately preceding — rather than a separate, works-based path to individual eternal salvation set against Ephesians 2:8–9 and the rest of this study's findings. This is offered as an interpretation, consistent with this project's own established framework and with Matthew's own usage elsewhere, not as a directly stated equivalence scripture spells out in so many words.

Section 10: Open Questions Flagged for Further Study

- The harder edge case this study opened with — an adult, morally accountable, with truly zero gospel access in any form across an entire lifetime — is not a gap in research so much as a limit of what scripture states directly. Section 7's working position holds it with real epistemic humility rather than forcing a proof-texted conclusion; this remains the one place this study stops short of a fully direct answer.
- The precise age or threshold of moral accountability (Section 8.3) — scripture affirms such a threshold exists without specifying a numeric age or uniform test. How this applies to hard cases such as significant cognitive impairment arising in adulthood, rather than from birth, is not worked out here beyond the general principle.
- Whether Romans 10:18's citation of Psalm 19:4 (“their sound went into all the earth”) is best read as a literal historical claim about first-century gospel reach, a figurative/typological application of a creation-revelation psalm, or both (Section 5) — a minor point that does not change this study's conclusions either way, but worth precision in a future pass.
- Whether 1 Peter 3:19–20's proclamation to imprisoned spirits, now read here as directed at fallen angels rather than human dead, has any further bearing on the timing or content of Genesis 6:1–4

and the Nephilim question — a related but separate line of inquiry this study does not pursue.

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Sources Consulted

The Holy Bible, King James Version, throughout.

Seven Administrations Project/Seven_Administrations_Study_Reference.docx — source for each administration's governing basis, audible-declaration boundaries, and the resurrection/Day of Wrath salvation material in Sections 2 and 3.

Research-Method.md — governing method, including principle 5 (show differing views) and the four-check abeyance-resolution procedure applied to 1 Peter 3:19–20 and 4:6 in Section 5.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance — G2784 kēruṣṣō, G2097 euangelizō, G4151 pneuma, consulted for the verb and noun distinctions underlying the Section 5 reading of 1 Peter 3:19–20 and 4:6.