Leave No One Behind

Never Will I Abandon You

Bible Study
The Church of God International, Philippines
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It is estimated that 100 billion people had lived and died since the time of Adam.

With the population at 7.85 billion as of February 2021, the 100 billion estimate seems reasonable.
How many of the 100 billion people are saved and how many are condemned?

According to statistics, one in three individuals is a Christian, someone who believes in Christ in one manner or the other. If that is the case, then even if we include all Christian denominations, twice as many people will be condemned to eternal hell fire than those who will be saved.

Taking the 100 billion number as a basis; 70 billion people must be currently burning in hell.
If this were true, then we could say that God has failed in His plan of saving mankind. If salvation were a competition between God and Satan, it seems that Satan has the upper hand. God is losing at the ratio of 2:1.

The odds are not encouraging even with the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. Out of the hundreds of thousands of people in Jerusalem on Pentecost, only 3,000 were baptized into Christ.
So, what is wrong? Is God losing the war of saving souls against Satan? Is God ineffective in saving mankind?

What is God thinking? What is He doing? What is His over-all plan? What is His end game?
Left Behind
One night while surfing Amazon Prime Video for a movie to watch, I came across the Left Behind movie series.

The movie is based on the end-time belief that the saints, both the dead and the living, will be raptured to heaven receiving their reward. However, the billions of unbelievers were left behind to look after themselves.
These are horrible teachings. One doctrine consigns 2/3 of mankind to hell fire and another leaves unbelievers behind.

Unfortunately, many unsuspecting Christians accepted these bad theologies as truth.
Condemning people to everlasting hell fire and leaving them behind to fend for themselves is definitely not God’s way of dealing with His beloved creation.

We are precious to God for we are created and fashioned in His own image and likeness. God loves us and He will not leave us nor forsake us. His ultimate goal is to bring His children to glory.
God made a promise. He said: “Never will I leave you, never will I abandon you.”
(Hebrews 13:5)

Why are there so many erroneous beliefs? Why is the divine truth missing in the topic of salvation?
1 Corinthians 2
In 1 Corinthians 2 Paul explains the reason for the missing dimensions of truth.

Paul reasoned it was because most preachers do not know God. Paul emphasizes that to understand the deep things of God, one must have the spirit of God.

One must possess the mind of Christ. That person must be spiritually discerned taught by the Holy Spirit.
1 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.
1 Corinthians 2

4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power,

5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.
6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

7 No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.
8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love him—

10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.
1 Corinthians 2

11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12 What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.
13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

14 The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.
15 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,

16 for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.
God’s Plan
For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
Everything that God does is according to His gracious plan. His plan is not to harm you, condemn you or abandon you. His plan is to prosper you, to give you hope and a future.

People who teach these horrible doctrines of consigning people to hell fire and leaving them behind do not know God. They do not reflect the gracious benevolent mind of God.
Parables of Luke 15
Luke 15

Parable of the Lost Sheep

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus.

2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 Then Jesus told them this parable:
4 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders

6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’
7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.
8 “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?

9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’

10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
These two (2) parables were followed by the parable of the Prodigal Son – the story of the lost son who was found.

Jesus illustrated that every single person will be saved. No one will be left behind. He will look out for the lost. He will take the special effort to find them.

Everyone will be given his/her opportunity to know God and be saved. Peter said God is not condemning the world nor bringing the world to an end. God is patiently waiting for everyone to come to repentance. He won’t leave anyone behind.
Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day.

The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
15 Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.
This is good, and pleases God our Savior,

who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,

6 who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

7 And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.
God’s plan of salvation involves everyone and not just a few. Losing a vast majority to Satan is not in the plan.

God’s plan is so glorious and so encompassing that everyone will have a genuine chance at salvation.
This grand and awesome plan involves the sacrifice of His One and Only Begotten Son. God did not send His precious begotten Son just to save a few.

God is trying to save the world.
16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.
In God’s grand salvation plan, a vast majority of humanity will be saved. Only a small amount of incorrigibly wicked will be lost.

If I were to make a guess, only a small fraction of less than 1% will be lost. 99% of humanity will be saved!
22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.
24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree
Romans 11

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in,

26 and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”
28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs,

29 for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.
30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience,

31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you.

32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.
God’s Plan of Salvation
How is this possible? Paul has just turned the common salvation perception upside down!

How can all Israel be saved? How can everyone come to repentance and be saved?
The key is the understanding of God’s plan of salvation. God’s salvific plan involves phases of salvation.

Today is a day of salvation but not the only day of salvation. Otherwise, Christ’s sacrifice would have been an utter failure and mankind doomed to destruction.
God is not calling everyone to salvation today. You may be surprised at this statement. But, it is the scriptural truth.

Jesus said: many are invited but few are chosen. This means only a few are being chosen at the present time.
Further Jesus said: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.” John 6:44.

Do these scriptures suggest to you that God is calling everyone? They categorically state that God is choosing only a few. Jesus called them the “little flock.”
People chosen at this time are called in the scripture as the “firstfruits” or in another translation “Firstborn.”

They are the first group of people whom God has called to salvation.
13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.
Paul said God is choosing individuals to be part of the firstfruits. This group of individuals will be saved.

They are sanctified by the Holy Spirit and believe in the truth.
18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a \textit{kind of firstfruits} of all he created.
The same thought is expressed here: God chose you by His truth. Being chosen, you now belong to the first spiritual harvest — “fruitfruits” of God!

If you are called today, the scripture further says you now belong to the assembly of the firstborn.
22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,

23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.
And, when you belong to the first spiritual harvest “firstborn” of God, your name is written in heaven. You now belong to the household of God.

Once you become a part of the household of God, this is when you will be judged!
17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.
The scripture is clear. Judgment begins with God’s household. Those not part of God’s household are not judged today. Their judgment will come later on at the Great White Throne judgment. That is the day God judges the rest of mankind.
This does not mean that the rest of mankind not called today are lost and condemned forever. It simply means they are not being called and not being judged today.

Their judgment will come in the future. They will be given an opportunity to know Christ and to attain salvation. That will be their time of salvation.
The Sequence of Resurrection
20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.
22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

We are told that Jesus is the first to be resurrected. Then, those who are His, the first to be born – the firstborn, at His coming.
24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

After the resurrection of the firstborn, the first group to attain salvation, the end comes.

So, what happens toward the end of God’s plan?
25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

What does it mean that Christ will reign until the enemy is destroyed, even death?

This means that there is a final period of judgment when many will be saved!
This brings us to the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Here the sequence of salvation is overtly clear.
1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.

2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.
Revelation 20

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.
6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.
It is very clear here that there is a first group of people who will attain salvation who will be resurrected at Christ’s coming and will reign with Christ for a thousand years.

How about the rest of the dead? The scripture says in verse 5 that they will all come to life until the thousand years ended!
Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.
13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.

14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.
The dead who had not know Christ will be judged. Judge here does not mean sentencing. Judgment means their turn at salvation. They will all come to know Christ and His righteousness and many will be saved.

All the house of Israel will be resurrected. They will all come to know Christ. All will repent. All will be saved! This is what we have read earlier in Romans 11:26 that all Israel will be saved.

Anyone who is still stubborn and rebellious at this time, the incorrigibly wicked, will be destroyed. The numbers will be very few!
Prophesy and Description of 2nd Resurrection
The general physical resurrection to Great White Throne judgment is prophesied and described by the prophet Ezekiel.
1 The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones.

2 He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry.
3 He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”

4 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!”
5 This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”"
7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone.

8 I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.
9 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’”

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.
11 Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’

12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.”
13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.

14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.”
This prophecy refers to a future physical resurrection of all the dead, the Israelites were just a classic example. The dead will be raised back to life for their chance to know the One True God. They will be judged and eventually attain salvation.

If you are not yet convinced, let’s consider John 5 from Jesus own words. Here Jesus clearly talks about the phases of salvation; the firstborn and the rest of mankind.
21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes.

22 Furthermore, the Father does not judge anyone, but has assigned all judgment to the Son,

23 so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.
John 5

24 “I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears my message and believes the one who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life.

Who are these people who hear the message now and believe? This is the current, present group of people, the firstborn who belongs to the assembly of the firstborn.

They have crossed over from death to life. They are the group that belongs to the first phase of salvation. They will be resurrected at the coming of Christ and reign with Christ for a thousand years!
John 5

25 I tell you the solemn truth, **a time is coming—and is now here—when the dead will hear the voice** of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

This is talking about a future time. It also talks about the dead who will hear the voice or the calling of Christ.

And, when that happens they will live again. **Live again** here means they will live for a period again. They will have regained their physical life.
John 5

26 For just as the Father has life in himself, thus he has granted the Son to have life in himself,

27 and he has granted the Son authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man.

Christ will execute judgment meaning this is a period of judgment.
28 “Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice

29 and will come out—the ones who have done what is good to the resurrection resulting in life, and the ones who have done what is evil to the resurrection resulting in condemnation.
John 5

30 I can do nothing on my own initiative. Just as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the one who sent me.

The dead will live again. They will be resurrected to life. Here is the judgment. Here is their time of salvation.

The gospel will be preached to them. Those who do good will live and those who insist on doing evil will be condemned.
Summation
Our God is a loving God. He will not consign majority of mankind to hell and destruction or leave them behind to fend for themselves. People who say these things don’t know God.

God did not send His son to save only a few. God wants to save the world, everyone if possible. And, He will accomplish it.
We should not be too conceited to think that we are saved while the rest of humanity is condemned. That is not the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is to leave no one behind. Every single person will be given a true chance to know Christ and be saved. Anything short of this is not acceptable to God.

God has said (Hebrews 13:5) “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” God leaves no one left behind. God wants everyone – all people to be saved! 1 Timothy 2:4.
If you ever wondered what happened to a loved one who passed but did not know Christ, be of good cheer. They are not burning in hell. They will have their day of salvation.
God is love. He is gracious, compassionate and merciful. He has yet reserved a day for judgment and salvation for all!

Our God is the God of the living and not the dead! In Him, all will live to see His glory and the glory of His Kingdom!

No one will be left behind.
To which group do you want to belong? The firstborn or the last born? The decision is yours.

You have come to know the truth. As such, you are invited to participate in the assembly of the firstborn. You now have a life decision to make.

Praise to the greatness of our God! And, may He make you wise unto salvation!

The Lord be with you!
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