

Chapter 1 : St. Paul Lutheran Church & School Â» Events

I submit that you cannot live the Christian life properly unless you understand the Christian perspective on death. Our views of death must be based on the truthfulness of God's revelation to us in His Word, not on the speculations of people devoid of God's Word.

This article first appeared in the Christian Research Journal, volume 27, number 4 For further information or to subscribe to the Christian Research Journal go to: It should be noted, however, that some exclusivists contend that those who do not believe the gospel during their earthly lives will be given an opportunity to believe the gospel after they die and so be saved. This view is known as postmortem evangelism PME. The context of several key Bible passages, however, does not support his interpretation. In fact, these passages clearly say that everyone will die and be judged Heb. Finally, the description of the great white throne judgment in Revelation In these and other passages, physical death marks the boundary of human opportunity to be saved. Belief in PME, meanwhile, has serious negative implications for Christian evangelism and missions. The weakness of PME arguments and the total silence of Scripture regarding opportunities to hear the gospel after death, therefore, should cause Christians to reject this view. In part one, I dealt with a theory called pluralism, which explicitly denies that Jesus is the only Savior. In part two, I warned about a theory known as inclusivism, which teaches that Jesus is the only Savior, but denies that knowledge of, or belief in, Jesus is necessary for salvation. In this concluding installment, I will examine the belief that humans can be saved after death, sometimes known as the doctrine of postmortem evangelism PME. According to this view, those who have not had a chance to hear the gospel in this life before physical death will be presented with the gospel after death. Some proponents of PME appear to believe that even those humans who do hear the gospel before their death, but do not accept it, will have another chance after death. The question of salvation in the case of those who cannot understand the gospel, such as children who die in infancy or mentally challenged adults, was covered in part two of this series and in my book When a Baby Dies [Zondervan,]. Sanders finds that even some thinkers who represent more evangelical positions at times, such as Donald Bloesch, John Lawson, and Gabriel Fackre, also defend this view. They are actually exclusivists who believe that a conscious act of faith in Jesus Christ really is necessary for salvation. They reason that if God is going to save people who have not heard the gospel in this life and if explicit faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation, then only one conclusion is possible: The reason that the doctrine of PME is inconsistent with inclusivism should be apparent. According to PME, explicit faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation, but according to inclusivism, it is not. According to PME, general revelation cannot bring people to salvation, but according to inclusivism, it can. A well-known theologian, Clark Pinnock, however, appears to be a proponent both of salvation after death and of inclusivism even though the two theories seem to be logically contradictory. This view leaves open the possibility that their salvation may not be. This leaves Pinnock with a theology in which those who are believers in this life might end up being lost after death! This view, therefore, must be distinguished from a form of universalism wherein all humans, including those who have rejected the gospel in this life, are said to have a second chance after death. Some thinkers, like Pinnock, believe there is uncertainty about what constitutes a genuine and fair opportunity to accept the gospel. Maybe the person who rejected the gospel did not understand it because the Christian evangelist did not present it clearly or was having a bad day. Maybe the person who rejected the gospel was distracted. According to this modified view of the second chance doctrine, an unclear or misunderstood presentation of the gospel before death does not constitute a genuine first chance; therefore, any presentation of the gospel after death cannot be considered a second chance. First, he rejects inclusivism. Second, Fackre talks extensively about the importance of interpreting the Bible correctly. The principles of biblical interpretation he actually uses in his chapter, however, do not lead him to a biblically grounded position on the destiny of the unevangelized. He begins his interpretation of Scripture with a claim that seems to come out of nowhere. Suppose we concede that God may, if He chooses, continue to pursue unbelievers after their death. That is hardly the issue, I think; rather, the issue is whether that is what God teaches us in His Word. I have space to examine only four such texts.

The hope that Paul had in view was not postmortem salvation but the resurrection vv. The text simply is not relevant to the issue of postmortem salvation. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. I urge the reader to check as many evangelical commentaries as he or she likes; none of them follow this interpretation. Once again, the text Fackre uses has no relevance to salvation after death. The context of this passage, however, does not support his interpretation. A little theological background will be helpful. The two kinds of death are physical death the death of the physical body and spiritual death separation from God in this life. Corresponding to these two kinds of death are two kinds of life: Corresponding to these two pairs, there are physical resurrection the raising of our bodies from death; see 1Cor. The still future fulfillment is found in the coming bodily resurrection of believers. This understanding is clear from John5: A preview of this was when Jesus ordered Lazarus to come forth from his tomb see John Perhaps the reason Fackre ignores John 5: Not only does this passage not teach what Fackre claims it does, but it also goes on to teach things that flatly contradict his myth of salvation after death. I must say that I find the kind of creativity Fackre demonstrates in his approach to Scripture to be irresponsible. His doctrine, I conclude, is a product of his imagination, and I fail to see how it reflects compassion to offer people a totally false hope about the eternal future of the unevangelized. Every advocate of PME does this. Peter wrote in 4: There is, however, no reason to think this. Fackre and turn to the teachings of Jesus. Wise students of Scripture know that a proper approach to the parables of Jesus is to distinguish between the main point of the parable and secondary points that sometimes may simply provide helpful background. Jesus then made clear the essential message of the parable: Jesus taught the same thing in His parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke In these and other teachings of Jesus that we will examine shortly, He repeatedly taught that physical death seals our eternal destiny. Other teachings relevant to the issue before us appear in Matthew7. The emphasis, once again, is on what occurs during an earthly lifetime. Away from me, you evildoers! Once again, postmortem judgment is based on premortem conditions. Some decisions in this life have eternal consequences. Explaining the parable of the weeds vv. There are no qualifications in this or other passages; there are no hints of exceptions arising from events after death. A similar point appears in Matthew The clear message again is that judgment is based on our earthly lives. In these passages and others, I contend, one simple point stands out: Anyone who wishes to argue that Jesus and the authors of the New Testament believed otherwise must shoulder the burden of proof. Given the serious implications of a belief in postmortem salvation for evangelism and missions, the total silence of Scripture regarding opportunities after death should convince us that this idea is wrong; moreover, the theological arguments offered by Fackre and others are highly suspect. I also suggest that comments as clear as 2Clement8. Even if it is the only explicit passage, we have just examined several other New Testament passages about divine judgment that presuppose this fact. John Sanders and Clark Pinnock my two representatives of inclusivism and Gabriel Fackre my representative of postmortem salvation speak for the still small number of people within evangelicalism who dispute this understanding of the Christian gospel. The seriousness of such claims advanced by these men surely will result in their assuming the burden of proof for their positions, and this burden thus far has not been met. Their arguments, rather, have proven to be logically inconsistent and lacking in biblical support. I am not suggesting that large numbers of Christians cannot be wrong about some commonly accepted interpretation of Scripture. In fact, I think this is the case with regard to some widely held beliefs about the second coming of Christ. Such beliefs, however, seldom touch any matter so central to the Christian faith as the scope of salvation. It is one thing to disagree over the timing of the second coming in relation to the tribulation and the millennium; it is quite another to discover that we have been mistaken about the meaning of such essential passages as Romans Sanders, Pinnock, and Fackre, nevertheless, are asking Christians today to reshuffle the deck and commit themselves to a totally new understanding of who and how God saves. Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age Philadelphia: Zondervan, , All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson repr. Eerdmans, , Christian Research Institute Our Mission: To provide Christians worldwide with carefully researched information and well-reasoned answers that encourage them in their faith and equip them to intelligently represent it to people influenced by ideas and teachings that assault or undermine orthodox, biblical Christianity. Do you like what you are seeing?

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Chapter 2 : St. Augustine - Christian Classics Ethereal Library - Christian Classics Ethereal Library

But the fact that the world is having conversations about the dignity of human life, the penalty for sin, and the finality of death, gives Christians the opportunity to get God back into the conversation.

Constantine, an orthodox Catholic, ruled the West from 306 to 337. He became sole emperor in 324. The family, which included two brothers and a sister, was respectable but somewhat impoverished. Determined to secure a future for his intelligent son, Constantine made great financial sacrifices to see that Augustine received a classical Latin education in the local school. Augustine delighted in Latin literature, but he detested the brutally enforced rote learning of arithmetic and Greek. He reestablished toleration for Christian practice. He was the last emperor to subscribe to Arianism. A formal command of rhetorical art, i. e. a year of idleness led the adolescent student into acts of dissipation and sexual adventure, vividly recounted in Book II of *The Confessions*. At the time he merited from his son a cold contempt for his marital infidelity and for failing to give Augustine the guidance and sense of self-discipline he needed during his turbulent adolescence. At the conclusion of Book IX of *The Confessions*, Augustine beseeches his readers that both his parents be remembered in prayer with "devout affection. It was a gnostic religious system based on a fundamental concept of the duality of light and darkness. Goodness was thought to be manifested in what belongs to the realm of light: Evil, or darkness, was viewed as connected to ignorance, matter, and the body. Redemption was to be achieved through a special, intuitive knowledge and through moral practices that included abstinence from meat, wine, and sex for those who were fully initiated. He accepted the Manichaean rejection of the Old Testament along with its highly critical approach to the New Testament. This dialogue on the necessity of philosophical thinking inspired him to dedicate himself to the study of philosophy. He abandoned his career as a lawyer in the imperial civil service, a career planned for him by his father and by Romanianus, a wealthy patron who had supported his studies. The Hortensius counseled against the pursuit of sensual pleasure as inimical to the discipline of thought. However, Augustine stayed with his lover and continued to be influenced by Manichaeism for the next nine years. He began to question deeply the meaning of evil and the power of sin. Monica, appalled at his alliance with the heretical Manichees, at first refused to allow him to enter her house. She prayed unceasingly for his conversion to the Catholic Church. In Carthage he opened a school of rhetoric. The rowdiness and pranks of the students made teaching extremely difficult and wore on his nerves. He persisted, however, in this career for eight years. During this period, orthodox Christianity was established as the official state religion and Arianism was suppressed. All subjects of the Roman Empire were enjoined to accept the Nicene Creed, formulated at the Council of Nicea in 325, which is still in use today to express Catholic Trinitarian theology. He deceived Monica about his departure so that she could not follow him. After suffering a siege of illness upon arrival, Augustine then had to endure cheating students who skipped out on him when it was time to pay their fees. But good fortune came his way when Symmachus, prefect of the city, chose Augustine for a post in Milan as professor of rhetoric. He became increasingly disillusioned with Manichaean materialism and with the New Academy skepticism about certitude that was fashionable at the time. This was a Greek school of thought that had its origin in pre-Socratic philosophy; it insisted that no certainty about truth can ever be attained, that there are only degrees of probability, and that all judgments are thereby relative. Augustine would write *Contra academicos* in the fall of 387 to refute these ideas. The basic Christian principles his mother had taught him remained intact. Augustine eventually decided to become a catechumen in the Catholic Church of Milan after being impressed by the sermons of Bishop Ambrose, who showed him how to appreciate the Bible in spiritual terms, and whose discourses were mystical, with Neoplatonic concepts of the soul. Augustine recognized clearly now that his carnal activity weakened his efforts at introspective contemplation. He had been faithful to his lover for some fourteen years, and this separation was emotionally wrenching for both of them. However, instead of accepting the period of celibacy, Augustine soon after replaced her with another woman to satisfy his needs. Anthony and the desert monks of Egypt who had left all they had in the world to devote themselves to lives of asceticism and prayer. Augustine began to feel his heart burn in his breast with the power that the call to a life of renunciation was exerting on him. He repaired to the garden of

the house, where he wrestled with the demands of his flesh and wept with great, tormented sobs over his inability to accept the challenge of continence. Hearing an unseen child say, "Pick up and read. Pick up and read," Augustine opened the book of St. Paul, which he had been studying, to Romans 13, where he read: Augustine reported all this to his mother, who rejoiced in God for His answer to her lifelong prayer for her son. Here Augustine and his mother, standing together as they looked out into a garden, shared a mystical vision as they talked about the utter silence in which God may be heard once the clamor of the flesh, the appeals of the world, and even the sounds of the heavens and soul are stilled. A few days later, Monica fell ill with a fever and died, age fifty-six, leaving Augustine resigned to, though deeply aggrieved over, her death. In Book X, Augustine gives an account of his state of mind at the time when he was composing *The Confessions*. He then returned to Thagaste in Africa with Alypius and Adeodatus, settled his property, established his own monastic community, and began to live a contemplative life as a lay "servant of God. While at Mass one day, when Bishop Valerius was describing the urgent needs of the Catholic minority, besieged and persecuted by heretical sects, the congregation turned to Augustine and importuned him to accept ordination. He was made a priest on the spot. Augustine remained in Hippo for the rest of his life. The subject about which he spoke to them clearly and eloquently was "On the Faith and the Creed. During this period and through A. The Donatists turned away from the world to face inwardly toward their own static community, made up of an elite that vigorously and violently persecuted nonmembers. Augustine held that the Church must, on the contrary, be coextensive with society and function as a leaven in the world. In less than two years he would be made bishop. During his episcopate, he drove out of Hippo the Donatists and other heretical Christian rivals. He led the community like a father heads a family, adjudicating disputes, intervening for prisoners to save them from torture and execution, advocating for the poor, buying freedom for badly treated slaves, and charging religious women with the care of abandoned and orphaned children. He preached abundantly and wrote *On Christian Doctrine*. By Augustine had written thirty-three books. He granted legal recognition to the orthodox Catholic Church in Africa. This gave Augustine political power in his struggle with the Donatists. He remained in this office until his own death in This work expresses three main concerns. He also wrote in order to confess his own Christian faith and to clearly repudiate any supposed lingering connections on his part with Manichaeism. This extraordinary document is a formidable act of memory by which Augustine reveals, vividly and specifically, the personal deeds, events, men and women, and ideas that formed the texture of his life. The *Confessions* are written as a long prayer addressed directly to God and are an exercise in scrupulous honesty and candor. The theme is stated in the opening paragraph: In it he exposed the errors of the Manichaeans, Donatists, Pelagians, and Arians. It included exegetical works and commentaries on scripture. Rome was besieged twice during this time and the citizens starved into acts of cannibalism. In the year , on August 24, the Gothic army general Alaric and his men sacked Rome, burning parts of the city. The battle against the Donatist heresy, which Augustine had fought vigorously for years, would be succeeded by his controversies with Pelagianism. Contrary to Augustine, Pelagius taught that human beings achieve salvation through personal acts of will by which they take total responsibility for their actions. He denied the doctrine of original sin, which held that the human will was weakened by sin and in need of divine assistance. With no concession in his system for "amazing grace," Pelagius placed on each individual the burden of and blame for every sin as a fully deliberate act. A person can be saved if he or she makes up his or her mind to live a correct, moral life by exercising self-control. One must choose the good and reject what is evil. Jesus is more model than savior in the view of Pelagius. His compassionate tolerance for the weakness of human nature contrasted sharply with the Pelagian stoic puritanism which allowed no excuse for personal sin. Pelagius ultimately moved onto the Holy Land without ever meeting Augustine face-to-face. The bishop of Hippo fought with Pelagius on the basis of his written works. In its wake the charge had come from all corners of the empire that this tragic event was the result of the forsaking of old pagan deities in favor of the Christian religion. Augustine refuted this charge by citing the fall of Troy, "the parent of Rome," which had been faithful to all its gods. Augustine, instead, viewed the immense suffering caused by the invasion as a necessary discipline, or remediation, of human society. Envy, pride, and the lust to dominate lead to the misery of the human race and are tendencies present in every human heart. But in disasters, souls are sifted by what they endure. Those who are evil

blaspheme against God, while those who are humble and pious revere Him. However, both good and evil persons are similarly taught that the goods of this world, all gifts from God but liable to misuse, are temporary and will pass away. The rewards of heaven will eclipse with their splendor all the brilliance of Creation as we know it now. He and all of his supporters were forbidden to remain in Rome. He ruled until Catholic bishops and refugees fled to Hippo, which was a fortified city. On August 28, Augustine died after suffering a fever for several days. He had prayed with his frightened flock for the gift of perseverance in the faith by which the weak individual can come to share in the eternal stability of Christ. Though Hippo was partly burned, the library of Augustine was preserved from destruction. It contained much of what he felt and believed and has been handed down to us as our priceless inheritance.

Chapter 3 : Home - Harvest: Greg Laurie

Patrick Zukeran, former Probe staffer, is the founder and Executive Director of Evidence and Answers, a research and teaching ministry specializing in Christian apologetics, the defense of the Christian faith.

Was it unjust and unjustified? Justification through that which was the most unjust – even death on a cross – is the very crux of the matter. We live in a fallen world where people do horrible things to one another. When Paul writes to the Christians in Rome that God has empowered the government to wield the sword he does so knowing that Christians are dying in Rome every day by that sword. So, it turns out, will he. But that unjust use of power does not change the reality that the state wields the sword to carry out justice, restrain evil, and if necessary, carry out capital punishment. The penalty of sin is death and while Jesus has paid that penalty once and for all, not all yet bow the knee to His authority, rule as Lord, nor reign over life here and now. In the meantime – and the mean time is mean – there are governments, rulers, principalities and powers. They do not all wield the sword justly, but they do wield the sword nonetheless. Conversations about capital punishment Christians need to have with fellow believers, with our non-believing neighbors and with the powers that be in this generation: We need to talk about morality, law, justice and from where and whom these ideas and ideals are derived. Guilt, innocence, confession, repentance, restitution, the debt to society, deterrent, and justice must each be discussed – brining the eternal to bear on the everyday. We need to talk about the legitimate role of the state in carrying out justice and restraining evil. Here we must also talk about the reality of injustice – individual and systemic. We cannot have a conversation about capital punishment in the context of America without very honest conversations about its misuse in our own history. We need to get to the conversation about sin and its consequences – and the concern for those who are sinned against. What is the just penalty for the sin of murder, mass murder, or the slaughter of innocents? If capital punishment is never justified, under any circumstances, how then shall we live – and who shall have to live with, care for and financially supply for – the Hitlers of the world? Certainly God says "vengeance is mine," but not everyone is operating as if God even exists, let alone that God will bring about justice for all. Bringing Scripture to bear, we must talk about wages of sin – which is death. We also understand this penalty is paid by Christ, propitiation is accomplished, the debt is paid, the curse broken, the wrath satisfied. But again, we are not living in a global theocracy. While we acknowledge that the Kingdom of God is instituted by the risen Christ, we also recognize that we do not live in the day promised in Philippians when every knee will bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. We yet await that day when the kingdoms of this world will all bow to the Kingdom of our Christ. Until that day, God allows thieves to die on crosses – and even to them He offers the grace of salvation and the promise of paradise. Which brings us to a conversation about the Cross, which is the crux of the matter. The reality of false accusation, false imprisonment, wrongful convictions and the grossly unjust execution of innocent people takes us right to the experience of Jesus. Why did He intentionally set His face toward Jerusalem where He knew and forecast that He would suffer and die – and where He fantastically promised to rise again? Who is this Jesus? Where is He now? What is He doing? How does the fact that Jesus is Lord of my life influence my view of life itself? How do I see the world and the kingdoms of this world differently because I am Ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven? How am I bringing the principles of that Kingdom to bear right here, right now, in this conversation? But the fact that the world is having conversations about the dignity of human life, the penalty for sin, and the finality of death, gives Christians the opportunity to get God back into the conversation. Engaging views and analysis from outside contributors on the issues affecting society and faith today. Opinions expressed are solely those of the author s.

Chapter 4 : Chronology of the Life of Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (A.D.)

Known as the 'Queen of the Outcasts,' Mavia was born the illegitimate daughter of a slave. But meeting Yeshua, she discovers unimagined strength and peace. She soon gathers her own desert community of pariahs and seeks Yeshua's help.

For example, he refers to Apuleius as "the most notorious of us Africans," [24] [28] to Ponticianus as "a country man of ours, insofar as being African," [24] [29] and to Faustus of Mileve as "an African Gentleman". There he became familiar with Latin literature, as well as pagan beliefs and practices. He tells this story in his autobiography, *The Confessions*. He remembers that he did not steal the fruit because he was hungry, but because "it was not permitted. I loved my own error" not that for which I erred, but the error itself. At the age of 17, through the generosity of his fellow citizen Romanianus, [36] Augustine went to Carthage to continue his education in rhetoric. The need to gain their acceptance forced inexperienced boys like Augustine to seek or make up stories about sexual experiences. Though his mother wanted him to marry a person of his class, the woman remained his lover [41] for over fifteen years [42] and gave birth to his son Adeodatus b. In , Augustine ended his relationship with his lover in order to prepare himself to marry a ten-year-old heiress. He had to wait for two years because the legal age of marriage for women was twelve. By the time he was able to marry her, however, he instead decided to become a celibate priest. By the time he realized that he needed to know Greek, it was too late; and although he acquired a smattering of the language, he was never eloquent with it. However, his mastery of Latin was another matter. He became an expert both in the eloquent use of the language and in the use of clever arguments to make his points. The following year he moved to Carthage to conduct a school of rhetoric and would remain there for the next nine years. However, Augustine was disappointed with the apathetic reception. It was the custom for students to pay their fees to the professor on the last day of the term, and many students attended faithfully all term, and then did not pay. Manichaean friends introduced him to the prefect of the City of Rome, Symmachus, who while traveling through Carthage had been asked by the imperial court at Milan [46] to provide a rhetoric professor. Augustine won the job and headed north to take his position in Milan in late . Thirty years old, he had won the most visible academic position in the Latin world at a time when such posts gave ready access to political careers. Because of his education, Augustine had great rhetorical prowess and was very knowledgeable of the philosophies behind many faiths. Like Augustine, Ambrose was a master of rhetoric, but older and more experienced. Augustine arrived in Milan and was immediately taken under the wing by Ambrose. Within his *Confessions*, Augustine states, "That man of God received me as a father would, and welcomed my coming as a good bishop should. More interested in his speaking skills than the topic of speech, Augustine quickly discovered that Ambrose was a spectacular orator. Eventually, Augustine says that he was spiritually led into the faith of Christianity. Although Augustine accepted this marriage, for which he had to abandon his concubine, he was deeply hurt by the loss of his lover. He wrote, "My mistress being torn from my side as an impediment to my marriage, my heart, which clave to her, was racked, and wounded, and bleeding. However, his emotional wound was not healed, even began to fester. Alypius of Thagaste steered Augustine away from marriage, saying that they could not live a life together in the love of wisdom if he married. Augustine looked back years later on the life at Cassiciacum, a villa outside of Milan where he gathered with his followers, and described it as *Christianae vitae otium*" the leisure of Christian life.

Chapter 5 : Is there Salvation after Death? - Christian Research Institute

Pope Francis' Death Penalty Announcement is an Opportunity for Christians to Talk About God August 7, Pope Francis speaks during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Oct.

What Happens After Death? A Christian Perspective , October 6, Dr. Zukeran brings a biblical perspective to a question we all would like to know: He looks to the Bible to determine what we can and cannot know about our life after we pass out of our present bodies. Although many avoid the issue, we must sooner or later address the question. There are many competing answers to this question. Atheists believe that at death one ceases to exist. There is no afterlife or eternal soul that continues in eternity. All there is to look forward to is our inevitable death, the future death of mankind, and the universe. It is in the face of this future that the atheist must seek to find meaning and purpose for his own existence. The Eastern and New Age religions that hold to a pantheistic worldview teach that one goes through an endless cycle of reincarnation until the cycle is broken and the person becomes one with the divine. What form a person becomes in the next life depends on the quality of life lived in the previous life. When one unites with the divine, he ceases to exist as an individual, but becomes part of the divine life force, like a drop of water returning to the ocean. Those who hold to the animistic or tribal religions believe that after death the human soul remains on the earth or travels to join the departed spirits of the ancestors in the underworld, also called the realm of the shadows. For eternity they wander in darkness, experiencing neither joy nor sorrow. Some of the spirits of the deceased may be called upon to aid or torment those on earth. Islam teaches that at the end of history, God will judge the works of all men. Those whose good deeds outweigh their bad deeds will enter into paradise. The rest will be consigned to hell. The Koran teaches that in paradise men will be drinking wine and entertained by heavenly maidens and that they may take several of these maidens for their wives. The Bible gives us the true view of what happens after death. However, many Christians have a misunderstanding of the afterlife. In this article, we will examine some popular misconceptions of what lies beyond the grave and perceive what the Bible teaches. Christians can be assured that death is not something to be feared. Instead, at death we arrive home in heaven. To live means we exist in a foreign country. Death has lost its sting and now is a victory through the resurrection of Jesus our Lord. Near Death Experiences For the past thirty years, thousands of people have reported experiencing what are called near death experiences NDEs. NDEs are encounters where a person, being in full awareness, leaves the body and enters another world. Such experiences have resulted in life transformation in many individuals. What are we to make of these accounts? Let us understand that NDEs come from those who have been clinically dead, not biologically dead. In clinical death, external life signs such as consciousness, pulse, and breathing cease. In such cases, biological death results if no steps are taken to reverse the process. Biological death, on the other hand, is not affected by any amount of attention, for it is physically irreversible. Some occur when the patient is comatose, very close to death, or pronounced clinically dead. There have not been any cases of biological or irreversible death for a significant amount of time followed by a resurrection. What has intrigued scientists and theologians in their study of NDEs is that many of the patients have similar experiences. These include leaving the body and watching from above as doctors work on it, entering a dark tunnel, seeing light, seeing others, meeting a spirit being, experiencing peace, and then returning to the body. Scientists and doctors from various worldviews have sought to explain this phenomenon. Those from an atheistic worldview have sought to give naturalistic explanations. Their explanations range from hallucination induced by medication, chemical reactions the brain experiences in near death crises, previous encounters long forgotten, and others. These fall short of explaining NDE events. Many NDEs have occurred without medication. Drowning victims are one example. Also, thousands of NDE victims were able to clearly describe places and people with exact detail while they were clinically dead. One girl, while near dead, was able to describe what her family did that night at home, what was made for dinner, where everyone sat and even what was said. Others were able to describe in detail objects in rooms nearby and far away from them. One patient described a shoe on the rooftop of a hospital. When the nurses looked, they found the shoe exactly as described. Gary Habermas and J. Moreland provide a comprehensive discussion of

NDEs in their book *Beyond Death*, arguing that naturalistic explanations cannot satisfactorily explain the events that occur in NDEs. However, NDEs do not accurately reflect what lies beyond the grave. NDEs deal with accounts that give a short glimpse behind the curtain of death and therefore they give us an incomplete picture. His supremacy over everything was established through His resurrection. Also, we know that Satan masquerades as an angel of light and can produce counterfeit appearances. It is imperative that we evaluate all experiences in light of Scripture. Can We Communicate with the Dead? Do the spirits of the dead have the ability to communicate with the living? He, like other psychics, claims to have the ability to communicate with the spirits of the deceased. He amazes spectators with his ability to reveal details about which only the deceased loved one may have known. From this communication, people attempt to receive comfort, advice, and encouragement. The Bible teaches that communication with the dead is not possible. Throughout the Bible God commands His people not to indulge in the practice of necromancy, the art of communicating with the dead. The Canaanites consulted spirits and the dead in hopes of gaining power and predicting future events. This practice is an abomination to God and it is for this reason the Canaanites were ejected from the land. Israel was warned not to imitate the Canaanites or they too would suffer a similar fate. Contacting the dead is forbidden because the spirits of the dead cannot contact the living. In Luke 16, the rich man who was suffering in hell sought a way to communicate with his living family to warn them of their fate. However, he was not able to communicate in any way nor could the living communicate with him. Who, then, are mediums and spiritists contacting? If they are indeed contacting a spiritual being, it is most likely a demonic counterfeit. Although the demonic spirit may communicate some truths, the ultimate intention of the spirit is to deceive and take one away from the Lord. This practice can ultimately lead to demonic possession and injury to the person. Knowing this, Paul eventually cast the spirit out of the girl. Throughout the Bible the practice of necromancy is forbidden. Some will try to defend necromancy by pointing to 1 Samuel Here Saul requests the Witch of Endor to call up Samuel from the grave. The spirit of Samuel arises and delivers a prophetic message to Saul. Bible scholars take two views on this. Some believe it was a demonic counterfeit masquerading as Samuel. I believe since the prophecy given came to pass, this was indeed Samuel the prophet. Whichever view you take, it is clear this verse does not encourage one to consult mediums. In desperation, he disobeyed God as was the pattern of his life and suffered the consequence. His story teaches us a lesson and is not an example to follow. One Minute After Death What happens when we breathe our final breath? The Bible teaches what will occur. First our immaterial soul and spirit will be separated from our physical body. Second, we will immediately receive the judgment that will determine our eternal destiny. Second, the soul in heaven is made perfect in holiness and our old sin nature is eradicated. The struggle with sin that Paul described and all Christians fight comes to an end forever when we, after death, enter our glorified state. Those who reject this gift, will receive what they have chosen, eternity separated from God in Hell. Our eternal destiny is determined by the decision we make for Christ here on earth. Many assume that after receiving Christ all that remains is a joyful entrance into heaven. Scripture teaches that Jesus will reward us according to how we lived our life on earth. He taught this principle in the parable of the talents in Luke Each servant was entrusted to administer the talents the master gave him. Upon the return of the master, each servant had to give an account for his stewardship. The wise servants were rewarded doubly while the wicked servant was removed.

Chapter 6 : SALVATION: CAN NON-CHRISTIANS BE SAVED?

â€” Born November 13 in Thagaste in the province of Numidia in North Africa (today Souk Ahras in Algeria), Aurelius Augustinus was the son of a pagan father, Patricius, and a Berber Christian mother, Monica.

LU Spotlight Take a Look at Our Campus Located in Central Virginia Experience campus life at Liberty on over 7, acres with state-of-the-art facilities that include a Center for Natural Sciences, Center for Music and the Worship Arts, three high-rise residential halls, a recreation and fitness center, baseball and softball stadiums, and an astronomical observatory. The building includes a theater, meeting rooms, and offers a beautiful view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. View Location Located directly behind Arthur S. DeMoss Hall, the Montview Student Union is a 4-story, ,square-foot structure that includes a lounge overlooking the Academic Commons, retail dining venues, an art gallery, a ballroom, and a bowling alley. The building also has space for academics, meetings, and offices. Home to Liberty University Flames Basketball and Volleyball teams, the Vines Center is also used for concerts, church services, conferences, and Convocation. View Location Jerry Falwell Library houses an array of study spaces including six learning commons, one technology commons, and 30 group-study rooms. Multiple terraces and balconies provide additional space to relax, and several dining options are available. View Location The Liberty Baseball Stadium features the latest turf playing surface, as well as full-length, major league-style dugouts, a fully-equipped media area, two suites, a club room, and a spectator picnic area. Tower Theater features a Broadway-style fly tower and professional rigging system and has over 12, square feet of backstage and support area. View Location The Liberty Mountain Snowflex Centre offers students the opportunity to ski, snowboard, and tube year-round with its cutting-edge terrain technology. View Location The observatory includes a roll-off roof room with several 8-inch telescopes and a foot DIA dome with a high-powered research-quality telescope. View Location As the primary academic building on campus, Arthur S. DeMoss Hall spans , square feet over four floors and houses computer labs, classrooms and student resource centers, and a rooftop terrace. Recently renovated, the ice center seats 4, fans and includes 10 box suites. View Location The Residential Commons are comprised of three residence halls. The rooms feature a private bath, and every floor provides laundry facilities and a common lounge. Additional residential facilities are also planned for the site. The Center for Natural Sciences houses classrooms, an auditorium, and more than 30 laboratories designed for hands-on learning, including an advanced anatomy lab and a cell culture lab. The Center for Music and the Worship Arts features Steinway pianos and 43 teaching studios complete with piano, songwriting, and music computer labs. Additionally, the center includes a 1,seat concert hall. Home to the Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine, the Center for Health and Medical Sciences includes lecture halls, a research center, standardized patient and simulation facilities, clinical medicine and anatomy labs, an extensive library, and incredible views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Chapter 7 : Liberty University Christian College Education

Welcome to Christian Forums, a Christian Forum that recognizes that all Christians are a work in progress. You will need to register to be able to join in fellowship with Christians all over the world.

We think of death as a terrible loss, not a gain. Sometimes, if the person was suffering a great deal, we say that death was merciful, since it released them from their pain. But normally, we view death as tragic and we go to great effort and expense to hang on to life for as long as possible. Also, we tend to avoid thinking or talking about death unless it is absolutely necessary. When author William Saroyan was within days of his own death from cancer in , he issued this statement to the Associated Press: But, as has often been stated, a person is not ready to live unless he is ready to die. To live properly, we must live purposefully, and always in view of both the certainty of death and the uncertainty of when it will occur. Many of the great Christians of the past thought often about death. Jonathan Edwards, as a young man, wrote down 70 resolutions which he read weekly to help keep his life focused. As I developed last week, the apostle Paul was clear on his purpose: But, what does this mean? We first must consider what Paul did not hate life. To the contrary, he was filled with joy, even though his circumstances were difficult 1: He viewed life as sweet fellowship with Christ and the joy of serving Christ. So he was not viewing life as tough and death as escape or relief. Sometimes when life is difficult, or when a person suffers from a chronic, painful disease, he longs for relief and may be tempted even to take his own life. Sometimes even godly men get into such a state of depression that they would rather die than live. It does not exalt Christ, as Paul here wants his death to do. It is always a selfish act, done in disregard of those left behind to grieve. Christians should love life and view it as an opportunity to serve the Lord thankfully. It is not wrong to seek to extend our lives through proper medical procedures when we face a life-threatening illness. Because of modern medicine, there are difficult decisions that we may have to face for ourselves or with loved ones. As a general rule, if a medical procedure will not restore a person to life, but only prolongs the process of dying, then it probably should not be used. But as Christians, our motive for wanting to extend life should be so that we can further serve the Lord, not just so that we can enjoy ourselves. But, the point is, God wants us to live life to the fullest, to serve Him joyfully as long as we have life. Paul was not suicidal or morbid. But he was expendable. He is saying here, that if God were to call him to heaven, that suited him just fine, because he knew he would be with the Lord. Until Christ returns, death is still our enemy that robs us of the presence of our loved ones. As Christians, we do not grieve as those who have no hope 1 Thess. It is not unspiritual to grieve or weep at the death of a loved one. In two places in Scripture that I know of people were forbidden to grieve. Apparently their grief would have given the impression that Aaron and his other sons were on the side of the sons who died, over against the Lord. God told Ezekiel he could groan silently, but he was not to shed tears or grieve outwardly, as a sign of the impending judgment on Judah Ezek. But clearly, this was an exceptional situation. The norm is for Christians to grieve, and it is not a sign of weakness. If, by his faithful witness in dying, Paul could bear witness to the hope of the gospel, then he was ready to go. The time of death, for the believer, should be a time of bearing witness to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. These faithful martyrs viewed their deaths as a means of exalting Christ. The first to die was a godly pastor named John Rogers. He had not been allowed to see his family while he was held in prison. On the way to his execution, his wife and ten children stood by the road. He was hardly allowed to stop and say farewell. As he marched to the stake, he calmly repeated Psalm The French ambassador who witnessed the execution wrote that Rogers went to death as if he was walking to his wedding J. In a sense, he was! The second martyr, Bishop John Hooper, was entreated with many tears by a friend whom he had led to Christ, to recant and thus spare his life. The third Reformer to die, Rowland Taylor, was sent from London to the town where he had been pastor, to be burned in front of his former church members. When he got within two miles of the town, the sheriff asked him how he felt. For now I am almost at home. The fourth martyr, Bishop Robert Farrar, told a friend before his execution that if he saw him once stir in the fire from the pain of his burning, he need not believe the doctrines he had taught. The fifth to die was John Bradford, age Beware of idolatry; beware of false Antichrists! Take heed they do not deceive you! But let me tell you of one other, the

ninth, Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. His story was different in that he stood firm through his trial and in prison for a long while. But, in the final month of his life, his courage failed. Under intense pressure, he signed a paper renouncing the doctrines of the Reformation and embracing Catholicism. But, his persecutors hated him so much that they made the mistake of resolving to burn him in spite of his recanting. On March 21, 1556, he was brought to St. To the utter shock of his Catholic captors, he boldly renounced Catholicism, declared the Pope to be Antichrist, and rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation. In a frenzy, his enemies hurried him out of the church and to the stake. Then, to die will be gain. Enter the joy of your Master. Paul had worked hard and suffered much for the cause of Christ. His body had endured one stoning, numerous beatings, several imprisonments, three shipwrecks, frequent dangers, many sleepless nights, often in hunger and thirst, in cold and exposure, plus the many concerns he bore for the work 2 Cor. The word was used of soldiers taking down their tents to move on. Paul says that at death our tent our body is taken down, while our spirit goes to be with the Lord 2 Cor. Sailors used the word to describe a ship being loosed from its moorings to set sail. It was also a political word, describing the freeing of a prisoner. This body holds us prisoner to various temptations and weaknesses, but death sets us free Rom. The word was also used by farmers, meaning to unyoke the oxen when their work was over. Death means laying down the burdens and concerns of our labors for Christ here, and to join Him in that place where there will be no death, no mourning, no crying, and no pain Rev. In 2 Corinthians 5: Some, notably the Seventh Day Adventists, teach that at death the soul sleeps while the body is in the grave until the future resurrection when Christ returns. They base this on the numerous places where the Bible refers to death as sleep. Some believe that at death, we just cease to exist, like animals. This view is usually held by those who reject Scripture. Further, the church pronounces anathema eternal condemnation on anyone who denies this doctrine The Council of Trent, cited by Hunt, p. The only support for purgatory comes from the apocryphal 2 Maccabees The doctrine was invented by Pope Gregory the Great in 590, but it was not accepted as official Catholic dogma for nearly years, in Hunt, p. It clearly contradicts the Scriptural teaching on the finished work of Christ, on the sufficiency of His atonement for sins, and salvation by grace through faith alone. It makes salvation depend on our works indulgences or suffering. It renders any assurance of salvation impossible. The great joy of heaven is to be with Christ. Conclusion During the Boxer Rebellion in China a century ago, a missionary came as near to death as anyone could and live to tell about it. He felt the sword of the Chinese executioner on his neck before it was lifted for the final blow, when the executioner changed his mind and let him go. The missionary told a friend that his first emotion was disappointment that he would not see the Savior that day. Fanny Crosby, the prolific hymn writer, became blind as a young infant. She said later in life that she would choose blindness over sight, because the first face she would ever see would be that of her Savior. Is it possible for a Christian to grieve too much? Which essential biblical truths are contradicted by the Catholic doctrine of purgatory? Copyright , Steven J. Cole, All Rights Reserved.

Chapter 8 : Augustine of Hippo - Wikipedia

The Chronography of , also known as the Calendar of , was a 4th-century illuminated manuscript, which was produced in AD for a wealthy Roman Christian named Valentinus by the calligrapher and illuminator Furius Dionysius Filocalus.

The most complete and faithful copies of the illustrations are the pen drawings in a 17th-century manuscript from the Barberini collection Vatican Library , cod. This was carefully copied, under the supervision of the great antiquary Nicholas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc , from a Carolingian copy, a Codex Luxemburgensis, which was itself lost in the 17th century. These drawings, although they are twice removed from the originals, show the variety of sources that the earliest illuminators used as models for manuscript illustration, including metalwork, frescoes, and floor mosaics. The Roman originals were probably fully painted miniatures. Various partial copies or adaptations survive from the Carolingian renaissance [3] and Renaissance periods. Botticelli adapted a figure of the city of Treberis Trier who grasps a bound barbarian by the hair for his painting, traditionally called Pallas and the Centaur. However some folios had already been lost from the Codex Luxemburgensis before Peiresc received it, and other copies have some of these. The suggestion of Carl Nordenfalk that the Codex Luxemburgensis copied by Peiresc was actually the Roman original has not been accepted. For a full list of manuscripts with copies after the originals, see the external link. Contents[edit] Furius Dionysius Filocalus was the leading scribe or calligrapher of the period, and possibly also executed the original miniatures. His name is on the dedication page. He was also a Christian, living in a moment that lay on the cusp between a pagan and a Christian Roman Empire. It also includes the important Liberian Catalogue , a list of Popes, and the Calendar of Filocalus or Philocalus, also known as the Philocalian Calendar, from which copies of eleven miniatures survive. Among other information, it contains the earliest reference to Christmas see Part 12 below and the dates of Roman Games, with their number of chariot-races. All surviving miniatures are full-page, often combined with some text in various ways: Copies of the emblematic drawings appear in a Carolingian text that portrays Mercury and Venus in heliocentric orbits. The 14 regions of the City [of Rome] Part Chronicle of the Bible Part Chronicle of the City of Rome a list of rulers with short comments According to the Codex-Calendar of , the Colosseum could accommodate 87, people. VIII "Conversions of intellectuals". The feast of the Epiphany had been celebrated for some time at this date. Vossianus Q79, noted in Salzmänn References[edit] Weitzmann, Kurt. University of California Press,

Chapter 9 : Pope Francis Death Penalty Announcement Is an Opportunity for Christians

Saint Augustine of Hippo (/ É"É• É^ Éj Êœ s t Éª n /; 13 November - 28 August AD) was a Roman African, early Christian theologian and philosopher from Numidia whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy.