

BLESSED AND HOLY IS HE...

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Phoenix Arizona
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The title this morning is: Blessed and Holy is he. And of course we read this in the Book of Revelation in chapter 20. So let's go ahead and go there.

We could read the first five verses – and we may this morning – but we'll start right now in verse 6. It says here:

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power,

Praise the Lord.

Revelation 20:6

but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Now *the identifier* of those who have part in *the first resurrection*, it says that they are *blessed and holy*.

In the simplest and clearest sense, these are *Christians*. Praise the Lord.

None of us are holy on our own. *He is Holy*. Amen. But it's by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ: his suffering, his sacrifice, and his giving of his own precious life. Jesus shed *his blood* which had *no death* so that you and I could apply the blood, praise the Lord, and have *eternal life imputed to us*.

So where it says: *blessed and holy is he*, it's not your righteousness, it's not my righteousness, but it's *by the Lord Jesus Christ*. Praise the Lord.

Now we know there are a lot of people who want to ignore what comes after that. If I can say it like this: God did not save us so we can have a get-out-of-hell-free card. But He saved us because He desires *communion*. He saved us because *He wants a family*.

And what do families do? What did we do this past week when we had Thanksgiving? We *communed with one another*. Amen.

A lot of the religious world, they want to know that they're saved, but then they don't really want much of anything more of the Word of God, nor do they want a godly life. They just want to keep living their life the way they want to live it.

Remember: Paul said that *we are saved – yes by faith – unto good works*. Amen.
[Ephesians 2:8-10]

Now that's not my message this morning but as we look at *Salvation*, I have to say: it has to be *genuine*. Praise the Lord.

So here it says: *blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection*.
[Revelation 20:6]

That *resurrection* is the resurrection of the righteous dead. And the way it's worded here, when we see: *the first resurrection*, our thought may be that it's just *one event*. Well, in the biggest sense, *it is one event*. But it's not just *in one moment in time* that the bodies of the Saints arise.

We know that God, many times, perfects things in *threes*. And when we look at *the first resurrection*, we see that again: there are *three distinct stages* of the first resurrection. And even within the stages themselves, God has – we can say – *a chronology, or an order* that He uses to bring forth the Saints according to His purpose.

Notice here in the middle of verse 6 it says:

Revelation 20:6
on such the second death hath no power,

Praise the Lord.

So again, we see the other side of what *identifies the first resurrection*. It is *those who have received eternal life*. Their soul will never die.

The *second death* is the death of the soul. [Revelation 20:12-15] That's the death of the mind which is really what makes you who you are.

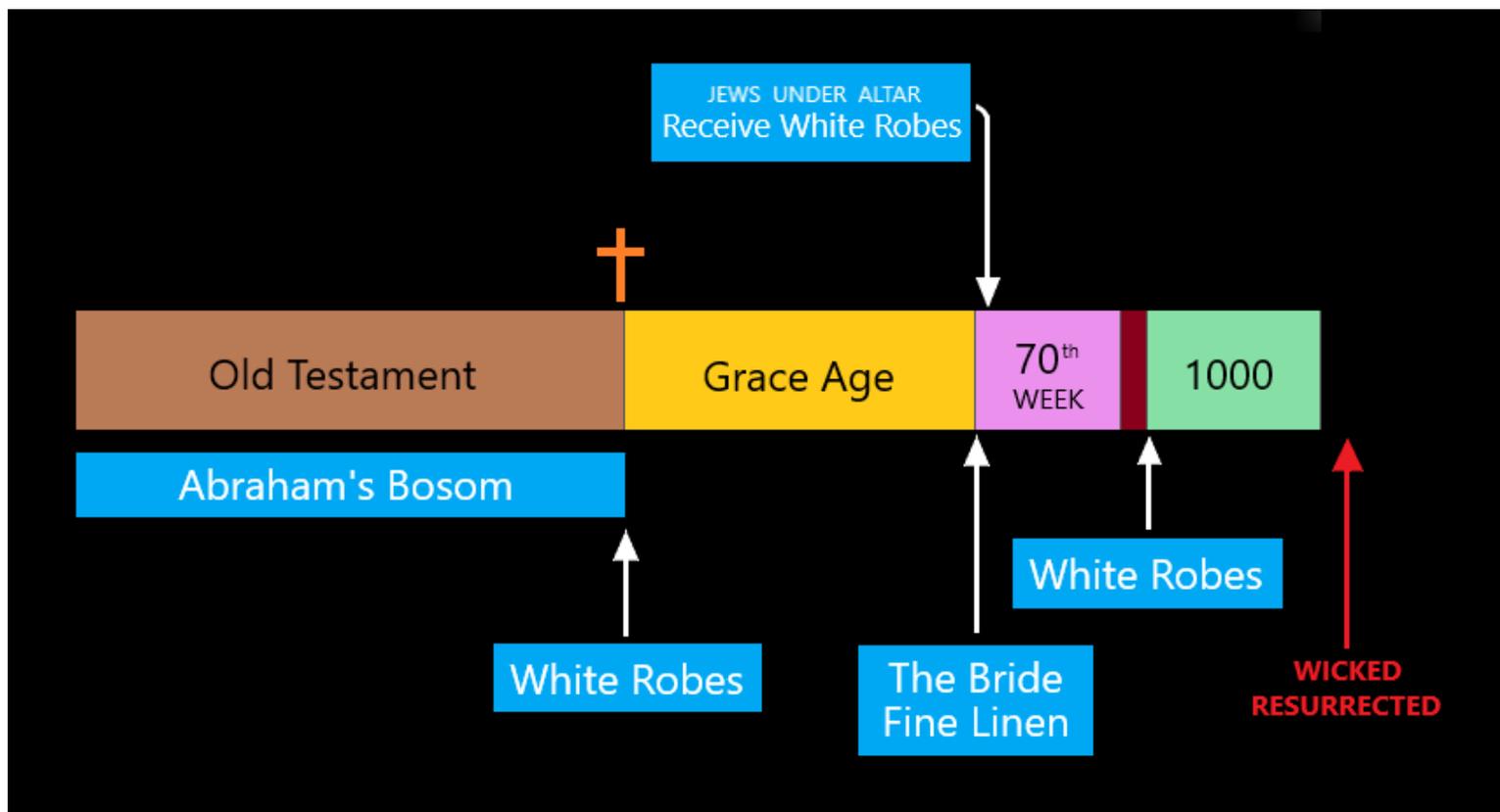
Praise the Lord.

When the body dies, the body is put in the ground but the spirit and the soul continue on. And we know that there is – if I can call it this – *a spiritual body*. [1Corinthians 15:44]

If somebody dies in the Lord, we know that they go to what we call *heaven*. Their soul waits there for the day that they will come back and receive their *resurrected body*.
[1Corinthians 15:52]

But if a person dies *without knowing the Lord*, if they are *not saved* – and I’m really speaking here about *Gentiles* – then we know that their spirit and soul also continues on and is taken by the angels into *hell*. And there is no escape from that.

I’ll just use this chart:



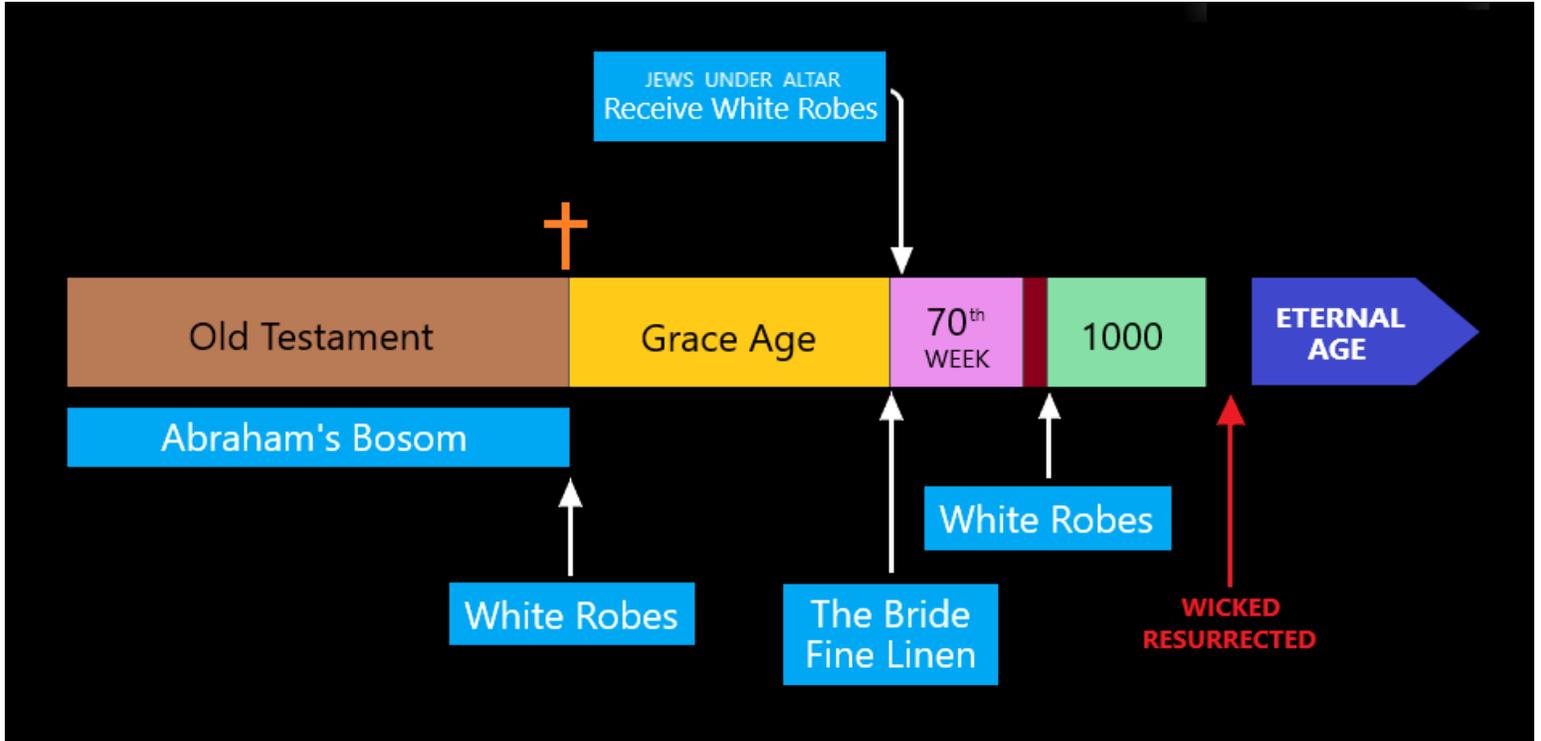
There is no escape from hell until *after the Millennium* and even *after the little season*. [Revelation 20:3]

Then *all of the wicked* will be resurrected but *not for Salvation*. Can we understand that? The wicked will be resurrected so they can *stand in judgement* and *receive their punishment*. [Revelation 20:12-13]

We could continue reading – it’s in this same chapter, I’m not going to read it right now – they are going to be *resurrected* but they will not be thrown back into hell. Actually, *hell itself* along with *the wicked* will be thrown into what is called *the lake of fire*. [Revelation 20:14]

The *lake of fire* and *hell* are *not* the same thing. The *lake of fire* is somewhere *outside of this planet* because this planet is going to be cleaned up of *death and hell*.

We wouldn't be going into the Eternal Age if *hell and people in torment* were still in the center of the earth. But the earth is going to be *fully redeemed*.



When we cross into that Eternal Age, I have to say: *the entire planet* is going to be *redeemed*.

You and I know that God did not create this planet with *hell* in it. But *when the angels fell*, God had a *place where* – we could say – *they would be cast*. [2Peter 2:4] Praise the Lord. And that's also where He would send *the wicked* because He already knew what would happen.

I want to focus this morning on the First Resurrection. I know that we looked at this in May but we have to look at it again because there are things being preached today where people are just using – we can say – *their intellectual reasoning* to try to explain certain things instead of letting the Bible speak.

And where the Bible *doesn't speak*, we can't just use our own intellectual understanding to come up with something that then contradicts the Word. But we have to *wait on the Lord*, and when *He opens the picture*, then we can speak. Praise the Lord.

I have to say: the true ministry is going to *stand for truth*. And when error is being preached, they are going to *call it out*. They are going to *shine the light on it*. They will *not be quiet*. Praise the Lord. That's what Paul did.

I wasn't thinking of reading this scripture this morning but we're actually talking about the resurrection, so let's go to First Corinthians chapter 15.

Here in the first eleven verses, Paul makes the case of *the resurrection of the dead*. But now in verse 12, he says this:

1 Corinthians 15:12

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Amen?

What did Paul mean when he said: *how say some*? Was he just talking of a brother here or a sister there who had an idea that was in error? I have to say: he was not. But he was talking about *certain ones who had* – we can say – *a certain confidence of the people*. They put themselves forth as *ministers*.

And this is not the only place where Paul addresses this. There are other places where he even mentions *names*. I've not done that yet. But I'll say this: if the Lord leads me to do it, I'll do it.

We have to go according to – I mean – *it's the leadership of the Lord*. We have to understand: the Lord is going to lead in a way that *the true Church* is going to see the picture right.

And I'm not just talking about myself but *all of the true ministry*. They are going to *stand for the truth* and when error is being preached, they will *shine the light on it*.

So if we go back just to do a quick review of the *first resurrection*, I have this little chart here:

The First Resurrection

First Phase:

Old Testament Saints - Matt 27:52

Second Phase:

Bride Saints - 1Thess 4:16

Third Phase: Rev 20:4

The Great Multitude - Rev 7B

"Tribulation" Saints - Rev 15

5th Seal Jews - Rev 6:11

As we said, the first resurrection came in *three phases*. The first phase was the Old Testament Saints.

Before we read about those Old Testament Saints which we know *from the time of Abraham on*, that included the Jews, *the spiritual Jews* – I know we've been reading this of late but there is an important key here – so we're going to read about the 5th Seal first and then we'll come back to the Old Testament Saint.

In Revelation 6 verse 9:

Revelation 6:9

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Notice when we read verse 9, it does not mention anything about Jesus Christ. It simply says: *they were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

What is our testimony? It's the way we live our life. Amen.

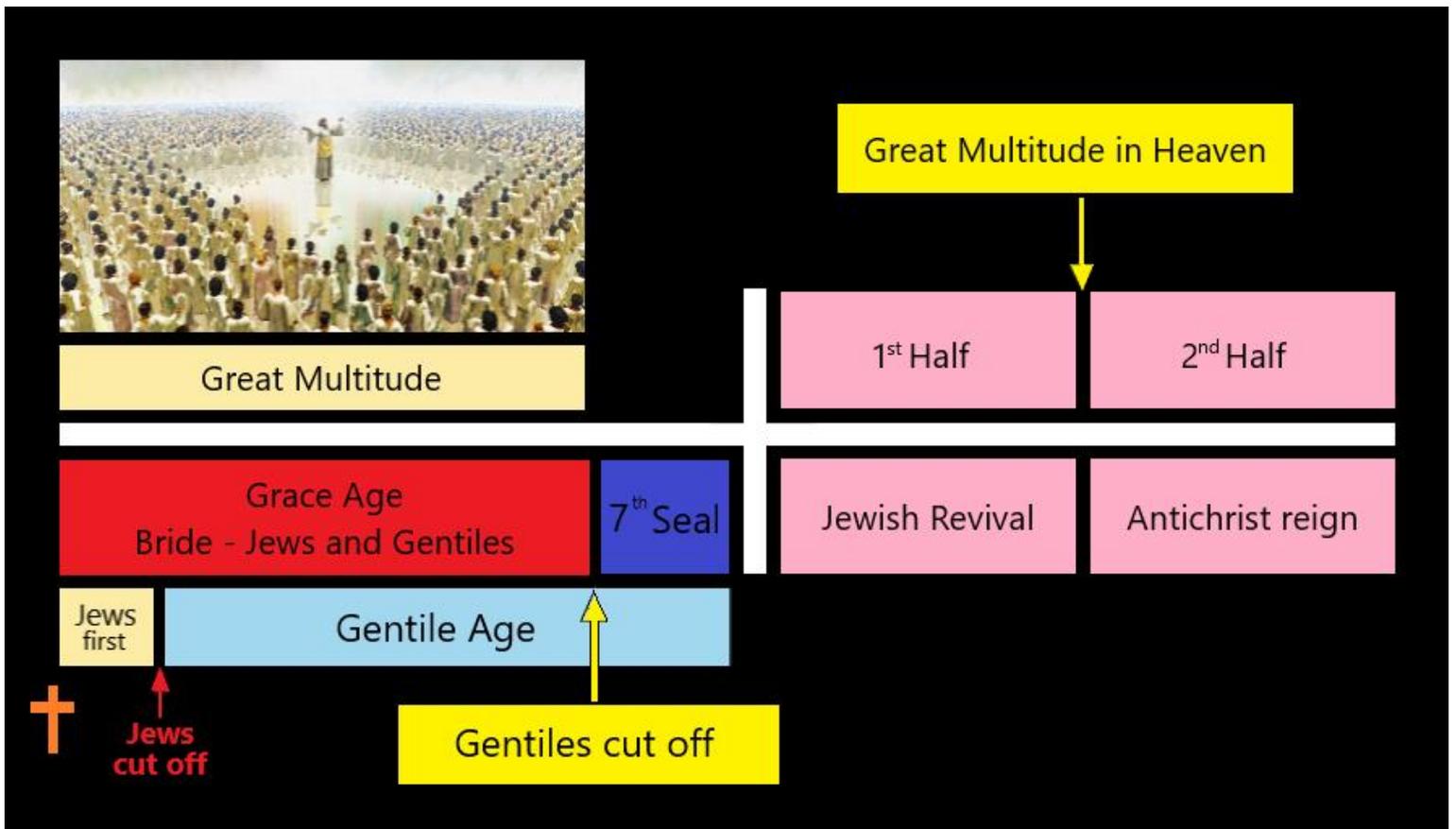
We know that the Jews, first of all, *to them* came the Word of God. The Jews who have not yet received the Gospel *because they were blinded* [Romans 11:7] still have *the Law and the Prophets*.

There are Jews *today* and there have been Jews *throughout the Grace Age* who *love the Law and the Prophets*.

Do you know that a lot of religious Jews today don't really care much about the Prophets? Oh, they love that they have the Books of Moses but they don't care much about the Prophets because many of them spoke when they were not in the land, which is interesting because Moses was never in the land. Right? Nonetheless, they have their reasons why they take what Moses wrote but only very lightly do they take the other prophets.

But there has been an element *down through time* that has loved the Law and the Prophets. In other words: what we call *the Old Testament*.

Let's look at this:



We know that the Gospel *came to the Jews first* after the crucifixion of Christ. [Romans 1:16] The Gospel came to the Jews but then *they were cut-off*. [Romans 11]

And *throughout this Gentile Age*, there have been Jews who have walked *according to the light that they did have*, which is: *the Old Testament*. They lived their lives *accordingly*. They *put forth the effort*.

What do we read in the Ten Commandments? *Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not covet. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not bear false witness.* [Exodus 20]
We could continue on and on.

These Jews did their best to *live according to the Law*. That's *the testimony that they held*. [Revelation 6:9]

And when they died, they died without – I'm not going to say that they had never heard the Gospel – but the point is: *it never had an effect on them*.

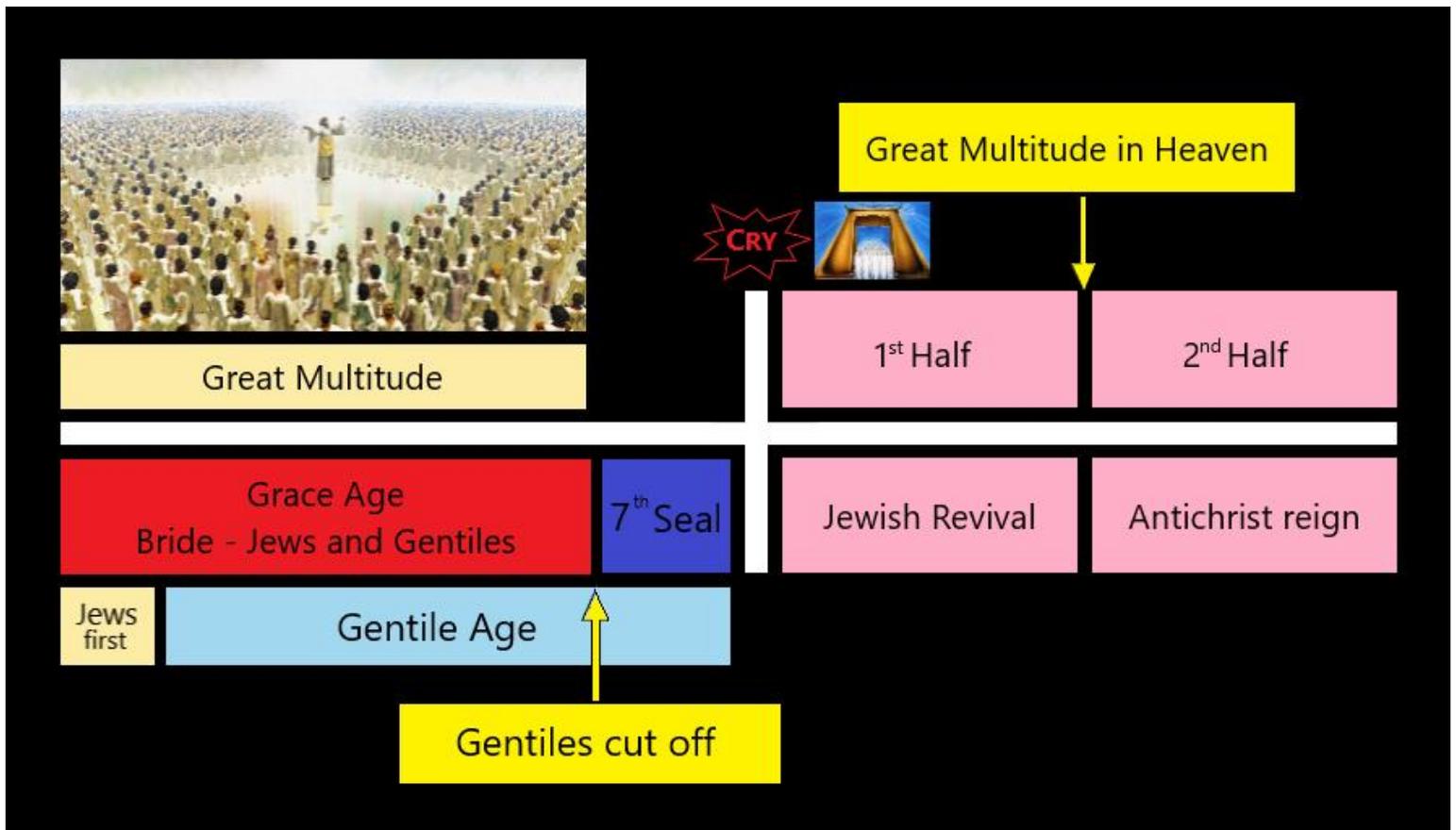
For the most part, even what they might've heard would've been in the background because *they were Jews*, they lived *in Jewish communities*, and their lives had *not been touched by the Gospel*. They died *without* knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.

But they are not – I'll say it like this – if they had lived the best that they knew how, *to glorify God and to live for Him*, they are *not* sent to hell. They are sent to a holding place or a waiting place. That's the place we read about here: *under the altar*. [Revelation 6:9]

Now if we keep reading:

Revelation 6:10

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?



That cry [Revelation 6:10] comes out *at the end of the Gentile Age*. That's when that cry comes out. And then they're told – well, let's read verse 11.

Revelation 6:11

And white robes were given unto every one of them;

Now we could continue to read the verse but I want our attention on the *white robe*. Did they have *white robes* – here's my question – did they have *white robes* when they *entered* that realm called *under the altar*? [Revelation 6:9] They did *not*, right? They were *given white robes there*.

If we look at the chart, they will receive their *white robes* in the *first half of the Week*.

Somebody may say: how do we know that? Well, there are many avenues we could go down – I'm not ministering on that this morning, we've touched on it before – but I'll just say in the simplest sense: it's because *the Gentile Age will have come to an end*, so *the blinding of the Jews will also have come to an end*. [Romans 11:25] And God will be going back to *working with the Jews*.

Now we could look at this and say: what good is a *white robe*? Well, it's *not* a natural white robe, but that's *representing something that they receive*. Praise the Lord. It has a *spiritual application*. It's *not* a literal robe that they put on.

When you and I come to the Lord and we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, we put on a *white robe*. This suit coat I'm wearing is not white, right? Amen. But this is *spiritually speaking*. Praise the Lord.

Let's go to Revelation 7.

Revelation 6:11 is the first place where we see *white robes* mentioned. It doesn't give any explanation *there*, but when we go to Revelation 7 and we read about *the great multitude* [Revelation 7:9] – which is *another group of people* – we see *white robes* mentioned again.

If we go to Revelation 7:14, actually let's read verse 13 first. This is *the great multitude*.

Revelation 7:13

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Revelation 7:14

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.

So John *did not know* who these people were.

Revelation 7:14

And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Praise the Lord.

It's *the blood of the Lamb* – you and I know that's *Jesus Christ* – it's *the blood of the Lamb* that makes the robes *white*. Amen.

Well, it's *the blood of the Lamb* that gives you and me *Salvation: Eternal Life*. Praise the Lord.

So when we see the *white robes*, it means: *they were given eternal life*. [Revelation 6:11]

But again, what made the robes *white*? It was: *the blood of the Lamb*. So *these Jews*, if we go back to verse 11:

Revelation 6:11

And white robes were given unto every one of them;

Praise the Lord.

It wasn't just: well, *white robes were given*. But it says: they were *given to each one*. [Revelation 6:11]

We know Salvation is *personal*. It's *individual*. We're not saved because our Dad and Mom go to church. And our children are not saved because we go to church. We would love for it to be that way but it's not.

As we like to say: God does *not* have grandchildren. He has *children*. We are all *brothers* and *sisters*. And our *elder brother* is *the Lord Jesus Christ*. [Romans 8:29] Praise the Lord.

So when we read verse 11 and we see that they have *white robes*, we have to understand: *the Gospel has been presented to them*. Where? *In heaven: they're already dead*.

They're not in – now that's another thing we have to understand – we may think: oh everybody is together in heaven. But *heaven has different regions*. We see some of that as John wrote. And Paul said: *he was caught up to the third heaven*. [2Corinthians 12:2]

Well, if there's a *third heaven*, there's also a *first heaven* and a *second heaven*.

We actually have that on this chart:

These Jews [Revelation 6:9] are preserved until the time when *Jesus Christ will reveal himself to them, and they will accept his sacrifice.*

The religious world can't see that at all because for the most part, they can't see *predestination*. And really, by *not seeing predestination*, they cannot see the greatness of the mind of God.

Their question would be: well what if one of them doesn't accept the Gospel? We have to understand: they can't see how we still have *free will*, and yet *God knows*. I have to say: that's one of the simplest things if we'll just let the Lord show us.

I'll just give a simple example. Let's say we know somebody, we'll say his name is John. And we *know* John: if there's any important event, John is *always late*.

So there's a big celebration on Saturday at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. You and I are there at 3:45, and somebody mentions that John hasn't arrived yet. And what does everybody say? *Oh John, he's going to be late*. Right? We *know* John. *John's going to be late*.

Are we forcing John to be late? No, he has *his own free will*. Amen. But we already know: *John's going to be late*, because we *know* John. And guess what? John shows up late. We didn't force John to be late.

Now you and I could be wrong. Somebody could've talked with John and they could've told him: if you're late to this event, we're going to have problems. You and I might not know anything about that. And John could've done his best and actually been there a little bit early. Everybody would've said: wow, John's on time!

Like I said: you and I could be wrong. But *God isn't wrong*. God knows the heart and He knows *who will* and *who won't*. Praise the Lord.

So there's nobody there [under the altar] [Revelation 6:9] who's going to say: I'm still holding on to the Law and the Prophets. I can't believe this message I'm hearing. But actually, *every one will see it*. Praise the Lord.

That brings us to John 14:6, and this is the key to what we're looking at.

Here Jesus is speaking with Thomas.

John 14:6
Jesus saith unto him, I am the way,

We might say: *what way?*

We remember in the very beginning when man sinned, *the way to the tree of life was cut off*, and there were *cherubims and a flaming sword that turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life*. [Genesis 3:24]

In other words: *man could not obtain eternal life*. It didn't matter if he tried to live righteously, if he meditated, if he went on a forty-day fast, if he went up to the top of a mountain to meditate day and night and fast, *man has not been able to break through and obtain eternal life*.

But now Jesus says:

John 14:6
I am the way.

Praise the Lord.

So God opened up the way, and the way is *Jesus Christ*.

John 14:6
the truth,

We have to remember: how did man end up *on the wrong side* in the beginning? There was *a lie* told. Amen. *Thou shall not surely die*. [Genesis 3:4] And it wasn't just the lie being told – that on its own would not have done anything – but the problem was: *Eve believed the lie*. That was the problem. So the only way to get back is to *believe the truth*.

He said:

John 14:6
I am the way, the truth, and the life:

Praise the Lord.

Again, that's *not* the natural life, that's *Eternal Life*. *Jesus Christ is the way to Eternal Life*.

Then he says it openly. He says here:

John 14:6
no man

Of course that includes *woman*, and there's nothing else.

John 14:6
cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Praise the Lord.

We have to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen. That is *the only way*.

But we also have to understand: when we look at certain ones down through time, certain ones received the Gospel message *after they died*.

If we go back to this slide:

The First Resurrection

First Phase:
Old Testament Saints - Matt 27:52

Second Phase:
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Third Phase: Rev 20:4
The Great Multitude - Rev 7B
"Tribulation" Saints - Rev 15
5th Seal Jews - Rev 6:11

We see the *first phase* of the first resurrection in Matthew 27:52. Let's read that.

We'll start in verse 50. This is, of course, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 27:50

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Matthew 27:51

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

Matthew 27:52

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

The way this is written, it sounds like this happened immediately after he was crucified.

But when we read the next verse:

Matthew 27:53

And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Matthew wrote this as he was a witness. There were Saints whom *he knew* and *others knew* who were now *appearing to them*. When? *After* the resurrection of Jesus Christ, *not* before. And don't think it was the first day either.

First of all, Jesus Christ had to be *glorified* that he was *triumphant over the grave*. Praise the Lord. All of this is *because of him*. He said: *I lay down my life, and I take it back*. [John 10:18] Amen.

So Jesus Christ rose *first*. [1Corinthians 15:20]

Again, that *doesn't mean* five minutes before the others. I believe it was a period of *days*. There were *a few days* during which people could see: *Jesus Christ has risen from the grave*. [John 20:26] Praise the Lord. That was *first*.

Once people saw that or heard about it from witnesses, and that settled in their heart: *he is risen*, then they began to see *others whom they knew*. I don't know exactly as far as names – probably the only ones we can name – maybe they saw *Anna* [Luke 2:36] maybe they saw *Simeon*. [Luke 2:25] We know they had died, right?

Some people also believe that Joseph had died. In fact, I would say: it's pretty well established that Joseph was already dead – I'm talking about *Joseph* as in *Joseph and Mary* – he was already dead when Jesus went to the cross. So they saw *Joseph*.

And they didn't see them old, wrinkled, and having trouble walking. But they saw them: *twenty years old, perfect, with perfect bodies*.

It says: *the bodies arose*. [Matthew 27:52]

Now did they see Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah? No, they *didn't* see *them*. How would they have recognized them? If Isaiah was to walk in here this morning, none of us would say: oh, that's the prophet Isaiah. Right?

So Matthew wrote as he saw and heard: *many bodies of the saints which slept arose*. But God has shown us – and we even see how through Paul it was made clear – that it was *all of the Old Testament Saints*. But there was no need for *all of them to appear to people* to establish the resurrection.

There were many who arose who did not need to show themselves to anyone, but they still arose. Praise the Lord.

Now let's go to Luke 23.

We know there were two thieves who were crucified together with Jesus.

Verse 39:

Luke 23:39

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

Luke 23:40

But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Does not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

Luke 23:41

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

Luke 23:42

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

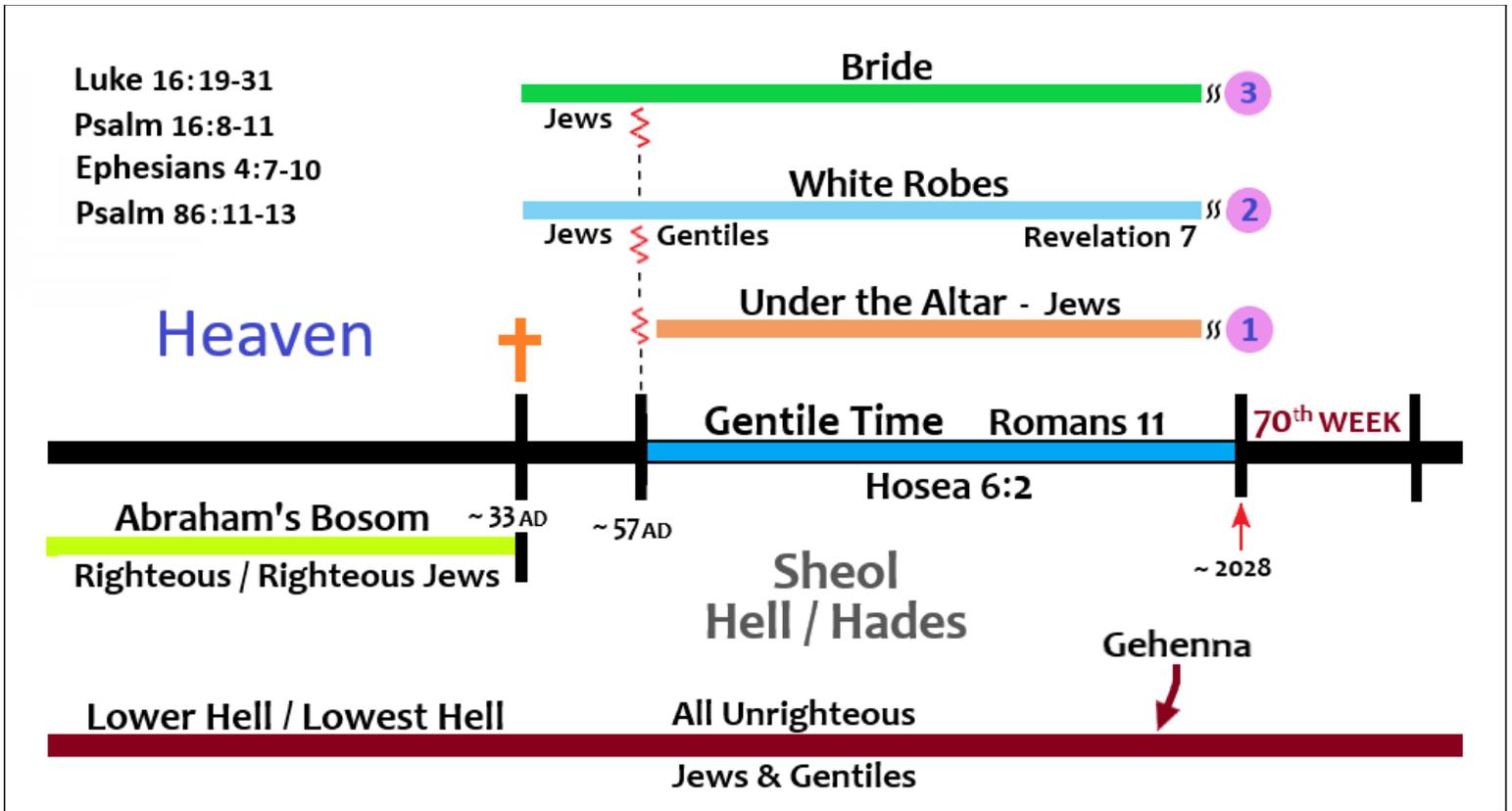
You know, that man had *faith*. Amen. He *knew* this was not the end, even though the natural eye would say: this is over. But he said: *remember me when you come into thy kingdom*.

Luke 23:43

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Praise the Lord.

Now all three died on those crosses. Amen. But Jesus and – I don't know how to say this – *the good thief* went into *Abraham's bosom*. [Luke 16:22]



Abraham's bosom [Luke 16:22] was a place *under the ground*, it was *in the earth*. It was in the place that we call *hell* but it was *not torment*.

The *place of torment* [Luke 16:23] at that time was called *lower hell* or *the lowest hell* [Psalm 86:13] or *Gehenna*. That's where the *bad thief* went.

But when we go to the book of Ephesians, let's go to chapter 4 and verse 8.

Ephesians 4:8
Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high,

Who ascended up on high? It was *Jesus Christ*. Amen.

It says:

Ephesians 4:8
he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Now this is Paul speaking. He says:

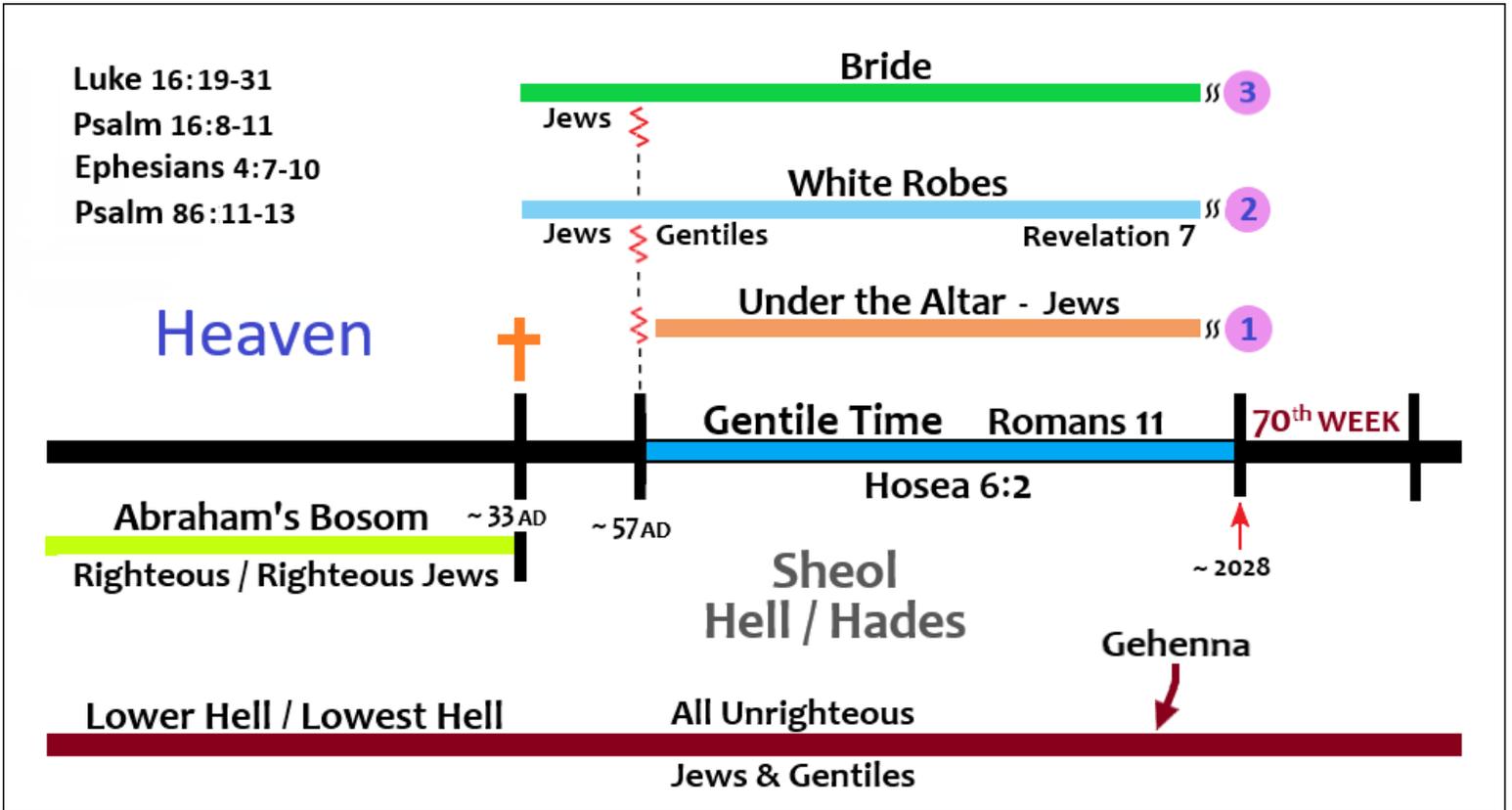
Ephesians 4:9
(Now he that ascended,

Again, that's *Christ*.

Ephesians 4:9
what is it

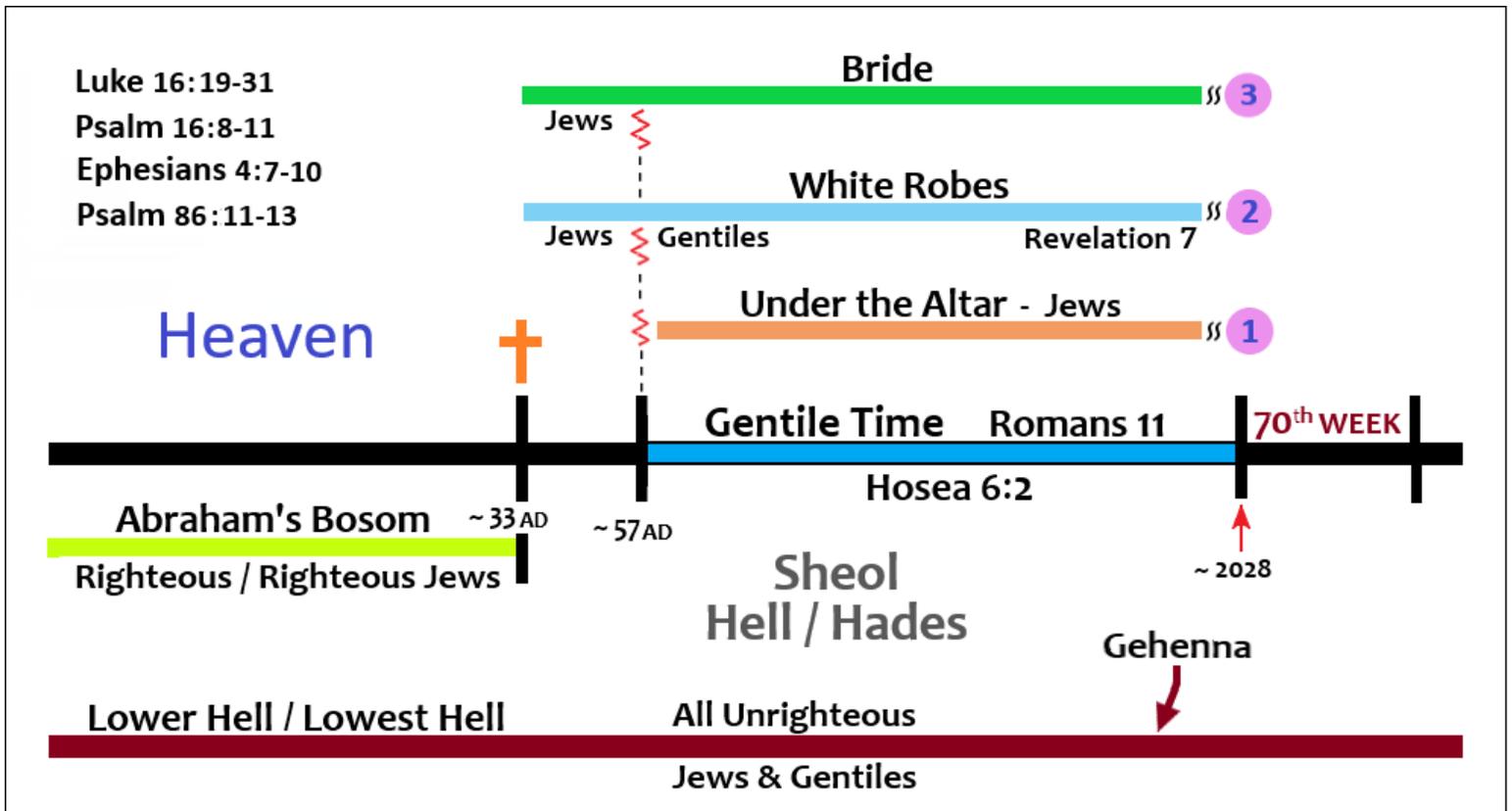
Or I will say: *who is it?*

Ephesians 4:9
but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?



So Jesus Christ actually went to *Abraham's Bosom* [Luke 16:22] and he also went down to *the lowest hell*. [Psalm 86:13]

Not that he was tormented – *he was not* – but he went to preach to those who were *in the lowest hell*. [1Peter 3:19] He didn't preach to them for their Salvation but to tell them that *God is a just God* and that they were being held there *for a just reason*.



I'm going to stop there as far as that because Paul makes it clear that at the crucifixion, first of all, *Jesus descended*, and we know that he also descended *to the lowest hell*. [Ephesians 4:9]

Then *he resurrected*, and he was *taken up into heaven forty days after the crucifixion*. [Acts 1:3]

We know that [good] thief had been taken to Abraham's bosom. [Luke 23:43]

So who was there in *Abraham's bosom*? [Luke 16:22] *Every righteous soul*. And I don't say *saved* because they were *not yet saved*.

But from *Abel* – who was *slain by Cain* [Genesis 4:8] – all the way to *the thief on the cross* [Luke 23:43] we have those *whose heart was right before God*, and they went into *Abraham's bosom*.

We have to understand: when Jesus Christ went there, *he had a purpose*.

The first part was to say: *Abel, when you slew that lamb* [Genesis 4:4] *you had a hope*. *That symbolized something*. *It symbolized that a lamb would be slain so that your sin would be covered*.

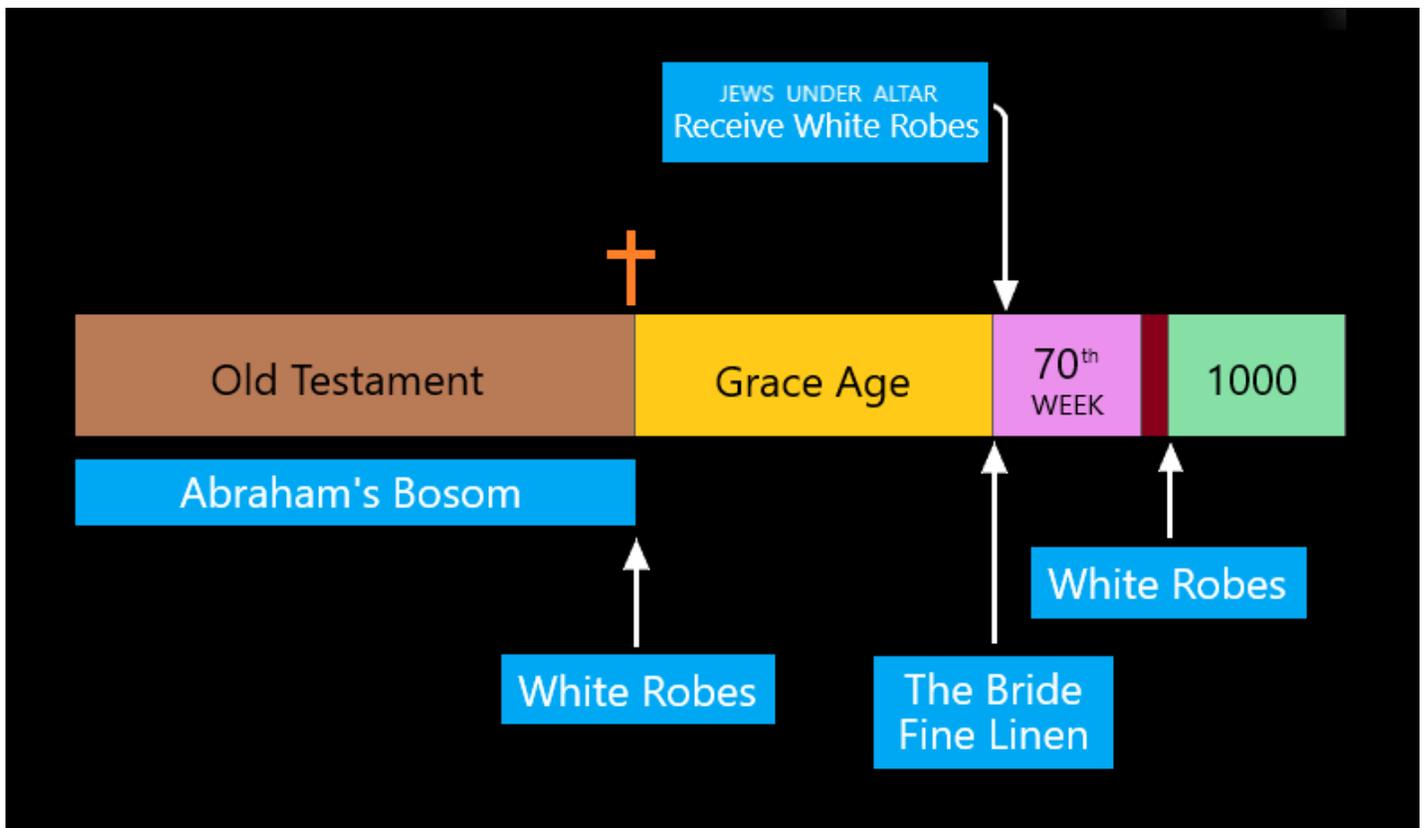
Then Jesus could go right down to Moses: *you received the ordinances*. And I'm skipping a lot from Abel to Moses, but *Jesus Christ preached the perfect sermon*.

He even could've had *the thief on the cross* to testify. Jesus had told him: *you will be with me*. [Luke 23:43] Amen? That thief could've testified: I was a witness to the cruel death that he suffered. It was even worse than what I suffered. I was crucified with him but I was crucified against my will, he was crucified willingly. He could've even told them how they had beaten and tortured Jesus before his crucifixion.

So that thief could be a witness to say: he is *the ultimate sacrifice*. He gave it all, when really, he did not deserve any of it.

Then they could all see *how that aligned with the knowledge that they had of the Word of God*. And *every single one* [in Abraham's bosom] *could accept him*.

And even though it's not written here [Ephesians 4:9] the way it is in Revelation [Revelation 6:11] *every one of those who were in Abraham's bosom received white robes*, as we have it here:



That's when they became Christians. Nobody could become a Christian until *after Jesus Christ died on the cross*.

When the thief on the cross said: *remember me* [Luke 23:42] he did not know the plan of salvation yet. But *when he heard that message in Abraham's Bosom* then he could also apply the blood of Jesus Christ to himself. Praise the Lord.

He had to be one of those who were resurrected because *it's all by the Lord Jesus Christ*. Praise the Lord. There is no entrance outside of him.

Now I see time is going.

We've talked about those who are in *the great multitude* [Revelation 7:9]

When we look at the Colosseum, how Christians were martyred, some of them *were Bride Saints*. But at the same time, there were some who had been sitting in the arena as spectators. They had gone there to be entertained: oh, we're going to see people die. Well, it's a sad thing that it was considered entertainment, nonetheless, that's why they were there.

But then, the Holy Ghost would come on some of them and they realized that their life was worthless. They could see: those people down there are able to die *singing*. They were *singing* when they let the lions out. And they would say: I want to die like that! They would go down and *give their life*.

Now, here's the question: we've already talked about the fact that they had Salvation but what reward do they have? They don't have a reward. They have *Salvation* but that's not really a reward, that's *the free gift of God*. So they *don't* have a reward.

If somebody gives their life – well I shouldn't necessarily say it like that – if somebody dies just after they've received the Lord, they don't have a reward because they have *no works to be rewarded for*. Amen.

Yet I will say this: not one of them is complaining: why does the Bride receive a reward and I don't have a reward? When we read about them, they are glorifying God, that He is Just and True and Righteous. Amen. They are praising the Lord.

There is more I want to say about this, Lord willing, but we'll go ahead and close for this morning.