

# **Alternate Paths of Salvation?**

## **Dual Covenant Theology and Second Chance Philosophy**

Pat Adamson

**Dual Covenant Theology** is a teaching which professes eternal salvation through two Covenant paths. The first path centers around the everlasting Covenant given to Avraham (Genesis 17:13) and participated in today by Jews who keep the Law of Moses. The other path for those who are not Jewish (or converted to Judaism) is through Jesus and Christianity. Without going into too much detail, most of us see some tremendous problems with this type of theology. Clearly, Apostolic teaching in the B'rit Chadashah does not allow for anything other than Messiah Yeshua – there is no alternate path in which to find salvation, redemption, and forgiveness. Consider the following Scripture:

*“For the Messiah Himself died for sins, **once and for all**, a righteous person on behalf of unrighteous people, so that he might bring you to G-d.”* 1 Peter 3:18 (CJB)

John 3:16 says that, “G-d so loved **the world** that he gave His one and only Son [Yeshua].” If there was any other way apart from Yeshua’s sacrificial death and resurrection in which a person could enter into G-d’s eternal Kingdom, then Yeshua would not have had to die for the sins of the world. The Son (Yeshua) was not “given” as some kind of an exclusive saving path for gentiles, while the Jewish people are “covenanted into the Kingdom” through Avraham and Moshe whether or not they receive Yeshua. In John 14:6 when Yeshua said, “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through Me*” He wasn’t suggesting this statement was only for the goyim, the non-Jews of the world, while the Jewish people can simply defer to the prior covenants through Avraham and Moshe. This type of thinking negates Yeshua’s once and for all sacrifice on behalf of the world.

A “Dual Covenant” for eternal salvation is false teaching – it is false theology.

A covenant for the Jews and a separate covenant for non-Jews is simply not supported in Scripture. The Besorah Tovah (the Good News) of His resurrection; His defeating death; His opening the gates of heaven; etc, applies to nothing less than all of humanity. Ephesians 2:12-13 clearly states that non-Jews who were separated from the covenants of promise are now, through the blood of Yeshua, brought near and included in G-d’s family and His salvific plan for the world.

*“For the Messiah Himself died for sins, **once and for all**, a righteous person on behalf of unrighteous people, so that He might bring you to G-d. He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit;”*  
1 Peter 3:18 (CJB)

This statement is for everyone; it is a promise to the world regardless of national, social, economic, or racial status! In reference to the passage above, some have suggested another path of salvation can be derived from verses 19 and 20. For ease of reference I will provide the entire passage:

*(18) "For the Messiah Himself died for sins, once and for all, a righteous Person on behalf of unrighteous people, so that He might bring you to G-d. He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit; (19) and in this form He went and made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits, (20) to those who were disobedient long ago, in the days of Noach, when G-d waited patiently during the building of the ark, in which a few people - to be specific, eight - were delivered by means of water." 1 Peter 3:18-20 (CJB)*

There is an opinion asserted from some Bible students that this passage should be understood thusly:

1. The Messiah died for our sins.
2. In the days of Noach prior to Yeshua's incarnation, He proclaimed to the disobedient (imprisoned spirits) the way of righteousness through G-d.
3. Therefore after one passes away, Yeshua will offer this same declaration as a "second chance" to people, yes, even to the "disobedient" that failed or neglected to accept Him in life.

**Second Chance Philosophy:** Similar to Dual Covenant theology, this "second chance philosophy" amounts more to wishful thinking than it does to sound Biblical exegesis.

A critically ill lawyer was found frantically leafing through the Bible in his hospital room. When asked the reason, he replied, "Looking for loopholes."

It often seems that instead of taking the Bible seriously, people are intent on looking for second chances, "loopholes." Let's take a closer look at 1 Peter 3:18-21:

**1 Peter 3:18 (CJB)** *"For the Messiah Himself died for sins, once and for all, a righteous Person on behalf of unrighteous people, so that He might bring you to G-d. He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit;*

v.18 – "Once for all" – Messiah Yeshua (ben Yosef) purposefully submitted to the will of HaShem. He, the spotless Lamb of G-d, willingly faced a torturous death on the Roman execution stake. His sacrifice is efficacious (effective) once for all time because He was truly sinless in His humanity. It is the blood of His perfect humanity that washes clean every unrighteous person that receives Him.

And just as He was brought to life by the Spirit of G-d, because He lives and has conquered death, so too, a genuine relationship with Him will one day raise any and all repentant sinners to everlasting life. He is “The Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

**1 Peter 3:19** (CJB) *“and in this form He went and made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits, . . .”*

All Bible commentators preface their comments with an admission that this is a “difficult Bible passage.” Verse 19 is where the “second chance philosophy” can entangle a person’s thinking. As a matter of fact, this Scripture is the basis for the doctrine of “purgatory” in the Catholic Church. But what is this really referring to? Who are the “imprisoned spirits” referred to in this verse? Are we to assume that Yeshua went into the grave to make this proclamation to the disobedient spirits?

To begin, I believe it is important here to reemphasize the eternal identity of Yeshua. He pre-existed all creation (Colossians 1:15-17). So the proclamation in 1 Peter 3:19 was made through the Spirit of G-d or perhaps it was the pre-incarnate Yeshua Himself. Whoever it was, or in whatever fashion the proclamation was delivered, what is clear is the representation and authority of Yeshua. Now, who or what are the “spirits” at the receiving end of the proclamation? Verse 20 indicates that the imprisoned spirits are . . .

*“ . . . those who were disobedient long ago, in the days of Noach, when G-d waited patiently during the building of the ark, in which a few people – to be specific, eight – were delivered by means of water.”*

**1 Peter 3:20** (CJB)

So, these “spirits” were of the antediluvian (prior to the flood) sort. We must remember that HaShem destroyed . . . He DESTROYED the world with a cataclysmic flood. Humankind had so corrupted itself that G-d took out His divine Etch-O-Sketch and wiped out humankind to start anew. The only humans to survive the flood were Noah and 7 others in his family. What we can know from this is that G-d made a covenant with Noah and promised that *“all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood; neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth”* (Genesis 9:8-11). So this cataclysmic judgment from G-d was something the world had never witnessed before; it was a deluge, the likes of which humanity would never see again. We also know that leading up to this judgment Noah preached a message of repentance to the entire known world at that time. Adonai says,

*“My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”*

Genesis 6:3 (NASB)

Noach was a preacher of righteousness. According to the verse above, he was given 120 years to teach repentance and salvation from the wrath of the Almighty. The Ruach (Spirit) of Yeshua was speaking these things through His man, Noach. It is this Spirit of G-d that was speaking to the “imprisoned spirits” on earth – NOT disembodied spirits, but rather, humankind. The Greek word used here for spirits is “pneuma” which has to do with air, but figuratively this word is also used to indicate the human rational soul – a living person – a living spirit (pneuma). This is substantiated by Hebrews 12:9; 12:23; Numbers 16:22 and 27:16 (Ruach) which refer to the spirits of living people.

Just as Noach and his family were brought safely through the flood waters, in a symbolic sense, we are also brought to safety as we immerse ourselves in the waters of mikveh (baptism).

Finishing up 1 Peter 3, verse 21 reads:

*“This also prefigures what delivers us now, the water of immersion, which is not the removal of dirt from the body, but one’s pledge to keep a good conscience toward G-d, through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah.” 1 Peter 3:21 (CJB)*

Finally, the living spirit in all mankind – in every person, will either accept or reject the message of repentance from the eternal Spirit of G-d. Like Noach, we can be used by HaShem to bring the Good News of new life and redemption through Yeshua.

In the Scriptures there is no “Dual Covenant” option and there is no “second chance philosophy” that can stand up to Biblical authority. As we go forward in this life, there are many “Noach’s” preaching and teaching the Good News. In the not-too-distant-future, a time is coming in which the world will face another cataclysmic judgment for its rejection of G-d; its moral depravity; and its worship of false deities. Today, instead of a large boat, the vehicle of salvation is Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the world!

Baruch HaShem!