

Brief on The Old Testament elect's sins were covered but not remitted¹

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Their sins were forgiven and covered but not remitted

The sins of the elect during the Old Testament era were forgiven and covered but they were not remitted. It is sanctifying grace (which can also be called remitting grace) that was made available by Christ's sacrificial death that remits sins. Therefore, the sins of the Old Testament elect were not remitted until after Jesus Christ's sacrificial death. Hence during the Old Testament era forgiveness of sin was separate from remittance of sin, whereas in the New Covenant era they are the same.

The Bible teaches that sins are remitted only by Christ's sacrificial death:

“Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows... But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.” (Isa. 53:4-5)

Jesus said that his blood “shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.” (Mt. 26:26-28)

“In whom [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins.” (Col. 1:14)

Hence not until Jesus' sacrificial death could sins be remitted for those who were guilty of original sin and voluntary sins. This was the primary purpose of Jesus' birth:

“She [the Blessed Virgin Mary] shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.” (Mt. 1:21)

St. John the Baptist teaches that it is Christ who takes away (remits) the sin of the world:

“Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who taketh away the sin of the world.” (Jn. 1:29)

In the Canticle of Zachary, St. John the Baptist's father speaks of John's mission and says that God's chosen people, the Israelites, did not yet have their sins remitted and that it would be John who would teach them what must happen and what they must do to have their sins remitted:

“And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways: To give knowledge of salvation to his people unto the remission of their sins.” (Lk. 1:76-77)

¹ RJMI's Briefs are Long Commentaries contained in the end of *The Catholic Bible*, revised by RJMI.

The Old Testament elect, then, needed the Messiah and Redeemer Jesus Christ to come and die in order for their sins to be remitted. During the Old Testament era, faith in the true God and the Old Testament rituals forgave and covered sins but did not remit them. King David speaks of how his forgiven sins are covered and hence not imputed to him:

“To David himself, understanding. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” (Ps. 31:1-2)²

Because the Old Testament elect’s sins were forgiven and covered but not remitted, they could not enter heaven when they died but had to wait in the Limbo of the Fathers, also known as Abraham’s Bosom, which was a prison that was located in the highest level of hell:

“Because Christ also died once for our sins... In which also coming, he preached to those spirits who were in prison...” (1 Pt. 3:18-20)

Catholic commentary on 1 Pt. 3:19: “The true and common interpretation of this place is that the soul of Christ, after the separation from the body and before the resurrection, descended to a place in the interior parts of the earth, called hell in the Apostles’ Creed (sometimes called Abraham’s bosom, sometimes *Limbus Patrum*, a place where were detained all the souls of the patriarchs, prophets, and just men, as it were in prison), and preached to these spirits in this prison.”

Although the Limbo of the Fathers was in hell, it was not in the part of hell where the damned go. Hence Abraham’s Bosom was a place of peace and joy. It was a place where the sin debt was covered but not yet remitted, a place where the Devil had no active right over the elect but had a passive right over them, and a place where the elect were in the way of salvation but not yet redeemed and saved. The elect were detained in the Limbo of the Fathers because they still carried the debt of sin that needed to be remitted. There they anxiously waited for the ultimate sacrifice, the one that was prefigured from the time of Adam by the killing and shedding the blood of the most perfect animals offered as sacrifices to the true God. This ultimate sacrifice is the spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ, whose sacrificial death would remit their sins and thus redeem them, break their bondage to the Devil, release them from the prison of hell, and open the gates of heaven to them so that they could “passover” from hell to heaven by the precious blood of the spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ.

The Devil had a passive right but not an active right over the Old Testament elect who were in the Limbo of the Fathers because their sins were not remitted although they were forgiven and covered. If Christ had not fulfilled his promise by remitting their sins by his sacrificial death, then the Devil would have had an active right over the Old Testament elect and would have brought them to gehenna, the hell of the damned. St. Paul says that “if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins.” (1 Cor. 15:17)³

For example, a man named Bob goes into debt to a banker. Bob, then, finds himself in a position in which he can never pay the banker. The banker, then, turns Bob over to the debt collector, who has the active right from the banker to punish Bob. Bob is then in everlasting debt to the banker and is under the power of the debt collector. Bob is a slave to the banker and the

² This is not to be confused with Martin Luther’s heresy that during the New Covenant era sins are not truly remitted but only covered. It is a dogma that during the New Covenant era forgiven sins are not covered but are truly remitted.

³ The sin debt is paid to God not Satan because the offense was against God. The reason Satan has power and rights over sinful men is because men offended God and followed Satan instead of God, and thus God gave Satan the power and right over men to control and torment them. Satan has power and rights over sinful men in the same way a prison warden has power and rights over his prisoners. The warden does not have the ultimate power and right but the ruler of the State does. It is the ruler of the State who put the prisoners in prison, and it is he who can free the prisoners, not the warden of the prison. Hence God, not Satan, is the one who delivers sinners to Satan, and it is God who can free them from Satan. Therefore, it is God, not Satan, who must be petitioned, appeased, and satisfied for the sins committed against him. And this is the role that only the Messiah can fulfill who comes to offer himself as a sacrifice to God, not to Satan, to appease God’s wrath and to satisfy God’s justice and hence pay the sin debt for men and make it possible for their sins to be forgiven and remitted.

debt collector. A rich patron, then, promises the banker that he will pay Bob's debt in full in ten years as long as the banker leaves Bob alone and does not hold Bob accountable. Now Bob's debt is covered by the rich patron's promise, and thus the banker does not call in the debt and hence does not send the debt collector after Bob. But Bob's debt will not be remitted until the rich patron pays it in ten years. Therefore, the banker has a passive claim over Bob but not an active claim, and the debt-collector has a passive right to punish Bob but not an active right. However, the banker's passive claim will become active if the rich patron does not fulfill his promise by paying the debt in ten years. Bob's debt will then become active and the banker will call in the debt and hold Bob accountable by sending in the debt collector to punish Bob. And thus the debt-collector will have an active right to punish Bob. In this example, the debt is sin, the banker is God, the debt collector is the Devil, and the rich patron is Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ is the rich patron, the promise he made to the Old Testament elect to pay their sin debt was guaranteed and took place in the fullness of time when Jesus died on the holy cross.

The just men during the Old Testament era were partially justified

Abel and Noe were just and perfect men who lived during the Old Testament era:

“By faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice exceeding that of Cain, by which he obtained a testimony that he was just...” (Heb. 11:4)

“Noe found grace before the Lord. Noe was a just and perfect man in his generation.” (Gen. 6:8-9)

Although a just and perfect man during the Old Testament era was perfect and just in all his ways, he was only partially justified. He was not completely justified until Christ “*was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification.*” (Rom. 4:25)⁴

God promised that the covered sins of the Old Testament elect would be remitted when the Messiah, the Redeemer, comes and thus the elect would then be completely justified. Hence when they lived, the promise was unfulfilled but was destined to be fulfilled when Christ would die on the cross and remit their sins. St. Paul tells the Jews that Jesus Christ fulfilled this promise:

“And we declare unto you, that the promise which was made to our fathers, this same God hath fulfilled to our children, raising up Jesus, as in the second psalm also is written: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” (Acts 13:32-33)

Hence St. Paul tells the Jews that none of the Old Testament elect received the promise of the remission of their sins and hence could not be completely justified until Christ fulfilled the promise by dying on the cross:

“Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not. All these died [Old Testament elect] according to faith, not having received the promises but beholding them afar off and saluting them and confessing that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth. ...And all these, being approved by the testimony of faith, received not the promise: God providing some better thing for us, that they should not be perfected [completely justified] without us.” (Heb. 11:1, 13, 39-40)

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: That he might redeem those who were under the law: that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. 4:4-5)

⁴ In some of my previous works I held the opinion that the Old Testament elect were justified in vow but not in reality. However, the better opinion is that they were partially justified. This fits with the Holy Spirit dwelling in their souls, as the Holy Spirit would not dwell in their souls if they were only justified in vow but would dwell in their souls if they were partially justified in the part that is justified and thus holy and not the part where their sins are covered.

Not until Christ died were the Old Testament elect who were under the Old Law redeemed and made perfect (meaning perfectly justified, completely justified). Hence St. Paul teaches that the Old Testament animal sacrifices did not take away their sins and thus did not remit them:

“For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things; by the selfsame sacrifices which they offer continually every year, can never make the comers there unto perfect... For it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away. ... We are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once. And every priest [Old Testament priest] indeed standeth daily ministering, and often offering the same sacrifices [animal sacrifices], which can never take away sins.” (Heb. 10:1-4,10,11)

St. Paul teaches that the former sins of the Old Testament elect are remitted by the “redemption that is in Christ Jesus” and thus by his sacrifice and blood and not by the sacrifice and blood of oxen and goats:

“For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to the shewing of his justice for the remission of former sins.” (Rom. 3:23-25)

Even though the animal sacrifices did not remit sins (take them away), they did forgive and cover them. During the time of the Levitical priesthood, God prescribed very specific sacrifices that had to be offered up by the Levitical priests for their sins and the sins of the faithful, accompanied by a confession from the penitents. Upon confession and the offering of the prescribed sacrifices, penitents’ sins were forgiven:

“If any one shall sin... he shall offer for his offence a ram without blemish... delivering it to the priest, who shall pray for him, offering the ram, and it shall be forgiven him.” (Lev. 5:15-16)

Clearly, then, we see the separation of forgiveness of sin and remittance of sin during the Old Testament era. The animal sacrifices forgave sin—“*it shall be forgiven him*”—but did not remit sin because “*it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away*.” (Heb. 10:4)

“For the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death [the sin debt by remitting sins]. For what the [old] law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin hath condemned sin [the sin debt] in the flesh [by remitting sins].” (Rom. 8:2-3)

“For if the former [the Old Covenant] had been faultless, there should not indeed a place have been sought for a second [the New Covenant].” (Heb. 8:7)

Catholic commentary on Heb. 8:7: **For if that first had been faultless:** If it had not been imperfect and all those sacrifices and ceremonies sufficient for the justification, salvation, and redemption of mankind, there would have been no need of a second.”

Catholic commentary on Heb. 7:4-7: “For if the former law and sacrifices offered by the priests of Aaron had been sufficient for man’s [complete] justification and salvation, there would have been no necessity of a new priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech... But the new law and sacrifice of Christ is according to the power of an indissoluble and never ending life, conferring sanctifying grace and thus the remission of sins, by which men are completely justified and are thus saved.”

If Old Testament penitents worthily confessed their sins, the Old Testament sacraments (the sacrifices and rituals) forgave their sins and bestowed upon them a special grace, a covering grace, to cover their sins but did not confer on them sanctifying or remitting grace and thus their sins were not remitted.⁵ It was only after Christ died on the cross that the former covered transgressions of the Old Testament elect were remitted by which they were made completely clean, completely justified:

“Neither by the blood of goats or of calves but by his own blood, he [Jesus Christ] entered once into the sanctuary having obtained everlasting redemption. For if the blood of goats and oxen and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled sanctify such as are defiled to the cleansing of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Spirit, offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? He is the mediator of the New Testament: that by means of his death for the redemption of those transgressions which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of everlasting inheritance.” (Heb. 9:12-15)

Catholic Commentary on Heb. 9:12: “This is another difference and preeminence of Christ above the priests of the law of Moses, that they could only offer the blood of beasts; but Christ entered into heaven by the effusion of his own precious blood in his sufferings, and on the cross, by this having found an everlasting redemption for mankind, having satisfied for the sins of all men in the sight of God, which the former priests, with all their sacrifice, could not do. ... Ver. 13-14. *For if the blood of goats...* Another main difference between the sacrifices in the old, and that of Christ in the new law. Those imperfect sacrifices could only make the priests and the people **reputed clean** [not completely clean], so that they were no longer to be treated as transgressors and liable to punishments prescribed and inflicted by the law: but the sacrifice of Christ has made us completely clean, and sanctified them even in the sight of God.”

Again we see the difference between the forgiveness of sins and the remission of sins during the Old Testament era. The animal sacrifices forgave sins but did not make men totally clean but only reputedly clean (partially clean). The Prophet Jeremias and St. Paul teach that the Old Testament elect’s forgiven sins would be forgotten by God (that is, remitted) only when the New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant:

“Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda... This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will give my law in their bowels, and I will write it in their heart: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And...I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34)

“And this is the testament which I will make unto them after those days, saith the Lord. I will give my laws in their hearts, and on their minds will I write them: And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.” (Heb. 10:16-17)

Hence the sins of the Old Testament elect were remembered until Christ died on the cross and the New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant. Only then would their sins be remitted and thus be remembered no more. The Old Covenant ended and the New Covenant began when Jesus died on the cross. At the very instant that Christ died, the veil in the Temple was rent in two signifying the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New Covenant:

⁵ Without faith in the true God and worthy confession of sins, which includes sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment, the Old Testament sacrifices and rituals availed nothing. They would not forgive and cover sins, just as the New Testament sacraments of baptism and confession bear no fruit and thus do not remit the sins of those who receive them unworthily; that is without faith or without proper intentions or dispositions.

“And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit. And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom...” (Mt. 27:50-51)

After Christ ascended into heaven, the apostles preached that forgiveness of sins now comes through Christ with the additional benefit that worthy men would also be completely justified, which the law of Moses could not do:

“Be it known therefore to you, men, brethren, that through him [Jesus] remission of sins is preached to you; and from all the things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:38)

St. Peter tells faithful Jews that their sins will not be remitted until they get baptized

Faithful Jews who accepted Christ had to be baptized by water for their sins to be remitted. On Pentecost Day St. Peter preached to devout Jews and told them that they needed to repent and be baptized unto the remission of their sins:

“Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men... Ye men of Israel, hear these words... Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:5, 22, 38)

If these devout (just) Jews had already gotten their sins remitted by faithful obedience to the Old Covenant, then St. Peter spoke falsely when he told them to “be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.” Their baptism would have been only an initiation rite that gave them the indelible mark and made them members of the Catholic Church without remitting their sins.

St. Paul's sins were not remitted when he was a Pharisee

When St. Paul was a Pharisee and called Saul, he conversed in the law (the Old Covenant) without blame:

“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other thinketh he may have confidence in the flesh, I more, being circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to the law, a Pharisee: According to zeal, persecuting the church of God; according to the justice that is in the law, conversing without blame.” (Phil. 3:4-6)

Yet only when St. Paul was baptized into the Catholic Church were his covered sins remitted:

“And one Ananias, a man according to the law, having testimony of all the Jews who dwelt there, coming to me, and standing by me, said to me: Brother Saul... Rise up, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, invoking his name.” (Acts 22: 12, 16)

The Holy Spirit dwelt in the justified part of the souls of the Old Testament elect

The Holy Spirit gives his grace and other gifts not only to righteous believers but also to unbelievers and unrighteous believers to enable them to see and believe the truth, to do good, and to convert or repent. However, the Holy Spirit dwells only in the souls of righteous believers because he dwells in clean vessels only:

The just man Job says, “As I was in the days of my youth, when God [the Holy Spirit] was secretly in my tabernacle...” (Job 29:4)

King David says, “Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord: or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor. He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Savior.” (Ps. 23:3-5)

“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto sanctification. Therefore, ...God...hath given his holy Spirit in us.” (1 Thes. 4:7-8)

“Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16)

“But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom. 8:9)

Hence the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the souls of unbelievers or in believers who are guilty of deadly sin.

The question, then, is, How could the Holy Spirit have dwelt in the souls of just men during the Old Testament era while their original sin and mortal sins were only covered but not remitted? Would not the Holy Spirit be dwelling in unclean vessels because the souls of the Old Testament elect were only partially justified? No, because the Holy Spirit dwelt in the justified part of their souls not in the unjustified part, the part that contained their covered sins. The holy and just man Job says,

“Thou hast sealed up my offences as it were in a bag, but hast cured my iniquity.”
(Job 14:17)

For example, radioactive waste (sin), which kills humans, is discovered in a house (soul). Let us say that in this case the radioactive waste cannot be destroyed or removed from the house. However, the waste (sins) could be totally contained (covered) in a vessel within the house. Once the radioactive waste is totally contained in a vessel in the house, the dwelling areas of the house outside the vessel are totally clean. Therefore, within the house (soul) there are two parts: one that is clean, and one (inside the vessel within the house) that is unclean. One can say that the house is reputed clean or partially clean because men can live in it without any danger to their life. However, the house is not totally clean because it still has radioactive waste in it within the vessel in the house. Of course the man living in the house will always have on his conscience the fact that this unclean vessel that contains radioactive waste is in his house, and hence he will anxiously wait for the day when it can be totally destroyed or removed from his house.

Likewise, during the Old Testament era the Holy Spirit dwelt in the clean, non-contaminated part of a just man’s soul. But the Holy Spirit did not dwell within the part of his soul that contained his covered original sin and any covered mortal sins that he may have committed.

The just man during the Old Testament era had on his conscience the fact that there was an unclean vessel inside his soul that contained original sin and mortal sins, and hence he anxiously waited for the day when this vessel and the sins in it would be totally destroyed or removed from his soul. Let us listen to just men from the Old Testament era petitioning God for this to happen, for Christ to come and redeem them and totally destroy and obliterate their forgiven and covered sins:

“Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. Let thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication. If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it. For with thee there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of thy law, I have waited for thee, O Lord. My soul hath relied on his word: My soul hath hoped in the Lord. From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord. Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with him plentiful redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. (Ps. 129:1-8) The Lord will

redeem the souls of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall offend. (Ps. 33:23) For our soul is humbled down to the dust: our belly cleaveth to the earth. Arise, O Lord, help us and redeem us for thy name's sake. (Ps. 43:25-26) No brother can redeem, nor shall man redeem: he shall not give to God his ransom, Nor the price of the redemption of his soul: and shall labour forever... But God will redeem my soul from the hand of hell, when he shall receive me. (Ps. 48:8-9, 16)”

If during the Old Testament era a just man fell into mortal sin, the Holy Spirit would leave his soul and no longer dwell within his soul until he worthily confessed his sin and offered up the prescribed sacrifice so that the mortal sin would then be covered in the part of his soul in which forgiven sins were sealed and contained. The Holy Spirit would then return to his soul and dwell in it. This is similar to the New Covenant era. As soon as a Catholic who is in a state of grace commits a mortal sin, the Holy Spirit leaves his soul until he worthily confesses his mortal sin. The only difference is that in the New Covenant era the sin is not only forgiven but also remitted. It is obliterated. It is totally destroyed. It does not exist in any part of the soul. This is what Christ promised—the special coming of the Holy Spirit into the souls of men during the New Covenant era to remit their sins, without which men cannot enter heaven and gain everlasting life. Speaking of this special coming of the Holy Spirit, St. John the Baptist says that Jesus “*shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*” (Lk. 3:16)

This is how Jesus dwelt in the Apostles
when they received his Body and Blood at the Last Supper

The way the Holy Spirit dwelt in the clean part of the souls of the Old Testament elect is the same way the Holy Spirit dwelt in the clean part of the souls of the Apostles, except Judas Iscariot who was guilty of mortal sin, when they received the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper. The Holy Spirit and Christ dwelt in the clean part of their souls:

“Jesus saith to him: He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean [the apostles], but not all [Judas Iscariot]. For he knew who he was that would betray him; therefore he said: You are not all clean.” (Jn. 13:10-11)

Even though the Apostles were baptized previous to the Last Supper and thus received the indelible mark, they had not yet become members of the Catholic Church or had their sins remitted until Christ died on the cross and in so doing created the Catholic Church and remitted their sins. Hence when the Apostles received the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, their sins had been forgiven but not remitted and thus were covered and sealed up in the part of the soul in which the Holy Spirit and Christ did not dwell.⁶

In their resurrected bodies, the Old Testament elect were baptized, confirmed, and fed the Holy Eucharist

The Bible teaches that after Jesus rose from the dead, the Old Testament elect came out of their tombs in their resurrected bodies and appeared to many:

“And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost... And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection came into the holy city and appeared to many.” (Mt. 27:50, 52-53)

This was prophesied in the Old Testament:

⁶ See RJMI book *Baptism Controversy Revision: Pre-Crucifixion Baptism in Jesus' Name*.

“That their memory might be blessed, and their bones spring up out of their place, and their name continue forever, the glory of the holy men remaining unto their children.” (Eccus. 46:14-15)

The Roman Governor Pontius Pilate sent a report to Tiberius Caesar of the events that took place regarding Jesus Christ. In the letter he reports the many miracles of Jesus; that Jews delivered Jesus up to be tried and killed; that he allowed Jesus to be crucified to prevent an insurrection by the Jews; the worldwide supernatural darkness that occurred when Jesus was crucified; and the resurrection of the Old Testament elect in their bodies on Sunday night at 9:00 pm (the third hour of night) which was accompanied by a supernatural light from the sun, angels appearing in the heavens, the shaking of mountains and hills, a great chasm revealing hell and Abraham’s Bosom, Christ-denying Jews falling into the hell of the damned, and the destruction of all the synagogues in Jerusalem that opposed Jesus except the one that did not. The authenticity of Pilate’s letter to Tiberius Caesar reporting the events about Jesus is attested to in several imprimatured books:

Pontius Pilate, *The Report of Pilate the Procurator Concerning Our Lord Jesus Christ, sent to Tiberius Caesar in Rome*, Second Greek Form: “To the most mighty, venerable, awful, most divine, the august,—Pilatus Pontius, the governor of the East: ...On the first of the week, about the third hour of the night, the sun was seen such as it had never at any time shone, and all the heaven was lighted up. And as lightnings come on in winter, so majestic men of indescribable splendour of dress and of glory appeared in the air, and an innumerable multitude of angels crying out, and saying: Glory in the highest to God, and on earth peace among men of goodwill: come up out of Hades, ye who have been kept in slavery in the underground regions of Hades. And at their voice all the mountains and hills were shaken, and the rocks were burst asunder; and great chasms were made in the earth, so that also what was in the abyss appeared. And there were seen in that terror dead men raised up, as the Jews that saw them said: We have seen Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs, that died two thousand five hundred years ago; and we have seen Noah manifestly in the body. And all the multitude walked about, and sang praises to God with a loud voice, saying: The Lord our God that has risen from the dead has brought to life all the dead, and has plundered Hades, and put him to death. All that night therefore, my lord, O king, the light ceased not. And many of the Jews died, and were engulfed and swallowed up in the chasms in that night, so that not even their bodies appeared. Those, I say, of the Jews suffered that had spoken against Jesus. And one synagogue was left in Jerusalem, since all those synagogues that had been against Jesus were engulfed. From that fear, then, being in perplexity, and seized with much trembling, at that same hour I ordered what had been done by them all to be written; and I have reported it to thy mightiness.”⁷

One may ask, “Why did the bodies of the Old Testament elect need to be resurrected and united to their souls?” The answer is, so that their covered sins could be remitted and their bodies prepared to be glorified when they are resurrected again before the General Judgment.

The Old Testament elects’ covered sins were remitted after Christ rose from the dead, freed them from the Limbo of the Fathers, placed them upon the face of the earth, resurrected their bodies from the grave, and had them baptized. They also received the sacrament of confirmation and received the Holy Eucharist. And their bodies returned to the grave some time before Jesus took their souls with him when he ascended into heaven.

Christ did not spend all of the forty days after his ascension in the presence of the Apostles and disciples. Many days he was absent from them. Between his first and second manifestation to the Apostles, six days had passed. Where was Christ and what was he doing when he was absent

⁷ For proof of the authenticity of this letter and the full text and a commentary, see RJMI article *Pilate’s Report to Tiberius Exalts Christ*.

from the Apostles? Certainly a portion of his time was spent with the Old Testament elect who were dwelling upon the face of the earth. Christ was preaching to them and supervising their baptisms, confirmations, and receptions of the Holy Eucharist.

Certainly, Christ would not have deprived the Old Testament elect of these great sacraments that they longed for, paved the road for, and suffered and died for. Could it be that the very Christ they prepared the world for, the very Christ that was prefigured by the many animal sacrifices, the very Christ they lived and died for in anxious anticipation of his coming to redeem them, would have deprived them of the direct benefits of his sacrificial death, which are the sacrament of baptism which remitted their sins, the sacrament of confirmation which confirmed them in the Christian faith, and the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist which made it possible for their bodies to be glorified and have everlasting life when their bodies are resurrected before the General Judgment. No, Christ did not deprive them of these things! What they faithfully waited and prepared for in figure was given to them in reality. King David alludes to the fact that one day he would receive the chalice of salvation, the Holy Eucharist:

“I will take the chalice of salvation; and I will call upon the name of the Lord.” (Ps. 115:13)

Hence God would not deprive the Old Testament elect of eating the ultimate sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, of Christ’s most precious Body, Blood, and Divinity, that they prefigured in all of the animal sacrifices and looked forward to with so much love and anticipation. Hence when *“Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you”* (Jn. 6:54), he literally meant all men. That is why it is a dogma of the Catholic Church that infants must be given the Holy Eucharist after they are baptized and confirmed.⁸

During the Old Testament era, there were figures of the sacrament of baptism that hinted at the reality of what was to come. The sacrament of baptism was prefigured in the water that saved Noe and his family from the perverse generation, in the water of the Red Sea that saved Moses and the Israelites, in the water that came from the rock that quenched the thirst of the Israelites, and in the rite of circumcision. How could it be that all the just men who lived when baptism was prefigured would not receive it when it came in reality? Therefore, the Old Testament elect were baptized by water some time during the forty days after our Lord rose from the dead and before he ascended into heaven and took them with him. Thus when our Lord said, *“Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (Jn. 3:5), he literally meant all men, himself and his Blessed and Immaculate Mother Mary also.

It is unthinkable for the faithful to believe that there are and will be some holy men (such as Abraham, Moses, St. Joseph, and the Good St. Anne) in heaven and the earthly paradise to come that were not baptized, confirmed, and fed the Holy Eucharist?

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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⁸ See RJMI book *Some Dogmas and Heresies Regarding Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist: Catholic Infants Must Receive the Holy Eucharist*.