

© Copyright 2006 Richard Wayne Garganta All RIGHTS RESERVED

In order to offer this in PDF format, the only program I had to convert it does NOT conserve the links. To follow links go to the copy found at <http://RichardWayneGarganta.com>. The links in this document DO NOT work and I apologize for any inconvenience.

This document, originally written in the 1800's by J.W. Hanson and now in public domain, has been rewritten by Richard Wayne Garganta to add material and make the language and material better understood. Anyone wishing to read Hanson's original work can find it in the E-Book "[Hanson's Four Works](#)" Recognition and thanks go out to J.W. Hanson for the quotes in this document that are too numerous to mention.

Go to Understanding Universal Salvation [Part One](#), [Part Three](#) or [Universal Salvation University](#)

Understanding Universal Salvation - Part Two But What About...?

Universal Reconciliation, the restitution of all and universal salvation are all synonymous.

Always make sure you have the latest version - last edited on 12-21-2006

See - [Oh my God! Is this Universalism or are you a Universalist?](#)

Because this is a lengthy and intense study - consider taking it one section at a time over a few months.

Universal Salvation is the doctrine that states the sacrifice of Christ was adequate to destroy ALL the works of sin and evil in whatever form. Everyone will be saved eventually. All judgments and punishments of God are remedial, corrective, cleansing and purgative and only last long enough to accomplish that end. This document will help you understand the Bible on the subjects of threats, punishments and other pertinent issues. If this teaching is studied with an open mind it is my belief that, even if one chooses not to accept it, they will have to admit that this teaching certainly has a strong scriptural and historical basis and, for those reasons, should not be considered heretical. -
Richard Wayne Garganta

INDEX OF TOPICS

[BIBLE THREATS EXPLAINED](#)
[ENDLESS PUNISHMENT OF NON-CHRISTIAN, NON-JEWISH ORIGIN](#)
[ADAM'S PUNISHMENT](#)
[TESTIMONY OF VARIOUS SCHOLARS](#)
[OLD TESTAMENT PUNISHMENTS](#)
[THE STRAIT GATE](#)
[THE BAD CAST AWAY](#)
[YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH](#)
[IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM](#)
[THE SIN UNTO DEATH](#)
[THE HYPOCRITE'S HOPE](#)
[AGREE WITH THINE ADVERSARY](#)
[THE WICKED DRIVEN AWAY](#)
[IT IS FEARFUL TO FALL INTO HANDS OF LIVING GOD](#)
[GOD LAUGHS AT MAN'S CALAMITY](#)
[YE SHALL NOT FIND ME](#)
[NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD](#)
[THE BARREN FIG TREE](#)
[GOD ANGRY EVERY DAY](#)
[THE BLASPHEMY OF THE HOLY GHOST](#)
[THE WRATH OF GOD](#)
[THE WRATH TO COME](#)
[THE SPIRITS IN PRISON](#)
["I PRAY NOT FOR THE WORLD"](#)
[THE RIGHTEOUS SCARCELY SAVED](#)
[WRESTING THE SCRIPTURES TO DESTRUCTION](#)
[NO MURDERER HATH ETERNAL LIFE](#)
[LET HIM BE ACCURSED](#)
[THE SECOND DEATH AND LAKE OF FIRE](#)
[GOD AS "LIQUID FIRE" IN SCRIPTURE](#)
[THE FIRST RESURRECTION](#)
[LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL](#)
[ATTAIN UNTO THE RESURRECTION](#)
[SHALL NOT SEE LIFE](#)
["AS THE TREE FALLS SO IT LIES"](#)
[THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST](#)
[THE HARVEST PAST AND WE NOT SAVED](#)
["OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE"](#)
[HE IS A "REFINER'S FIRE"](#)
[GOD'S JUDGMENTS LIKE FIRE](#)
[UNQUENCHABLE FIRE](#)
[FURNACE OF FIRE](#)
[ETERNAL FIRE](#)
["WHEAT AND CHAFF," "AXE," ETC.](#)

[FIRE AND BRIMSTONE](#)
[JUDGMENT](#)
[JUDGMENT TO COME](#)
[THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST](#)
[THE DAY OF JUDGMENT](#)
[CHRIST, THE JUDGE OF THE WORLD](#)
[AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT](#)
[GNASHING OF TEETH](#)
[DAMNATION, ETC.](#)
[EATING AND DRINKING DAMNATION](#)
[THE UNBELIEVER DAMNED](#)
[THAT THEY ALL MIGHT BE DAMNED](#)
[THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION](#)
[THE CASE OF JUDAS](#)
[JUDAS THE SON OF PERDITION, ETC.](#)
[THE GOSPEL HID](#)
[THE LOST SOUL](#)
["ONE OF YOU IS A DEVIL"](#)
[BETTER NEVER BEEN BORN](#)
[HIS OWN PLACE](#)
[WAS JUDAS A SUICIDE?](#)
[ETERNAL, ETC.](#)
[LEXICOGRAPHY](#)
[CLASSIC USAGE](#)
[THE OLD TESTAMENT](#)
[THE END OF AIONIAN THINGS](#)
[EVERLASTING CONTEMPT](#)
[DUST OF THE EARTH](#)
[EVERLASTING BURNINGS](#)
[JEWISH GREEK USAGE](#)
[ETERNAL PUNISHMENT TERMS JESUS NEVER USED](#)
[THE NEW TESTAMENT](#)
[THE NOUN](#)
[BIBLICAL TORMENTS AND PUNISHMENTS](#)
[THE ADJECTIVE](#)
[*** THE GREAT PROOF TEXT FOR ETERNAL BURNINGS ***](#)
[THE LAST DAYS](#)
[AN OBJECTION ANSWERED](#)
[WORDS DENOTING ENDLESSNESS OF GOD'S LIFE](#)
[ETERNAL JUDGMENT](#)
[EVERLASTING CHAIN](#)
[EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION](#)
[PRESENCE OF THE LORD](#)
[BANISHED FROM GOD'S PRESENCE](#)
[SMOKE OF TORMENT FOR EVER AND EVER](#)
[THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS](#)

[THE EMPEROR JUSTINIAN](#)
[UNAVOIDABLE CONCLUSION](#)
[HELL](#)
[SHEOL AND HADEES](#)
[ONLY FIVE OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS ARE CLAIMED](#)
[SHEOL--HADEES RENDERED HELL](#)
[THE LOWEST HELL IS ON EARTH](#)
[IMPORTANT FACTS](#)
[THE OLD TESTAMENT REPUDIATES THE HEATHEN DOCTRINE](#)
["ORTHODOX" AND HEATHEN VIEWS IDENTICAL](#)
[CONVINCING TESTIMONIES](#)
[JEWISH AND PAGAN OPINIONS](#)
[HELL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT--HADEES](#)
[MEANING OF HADEES](#)
[OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS](#)
[HEATHEN CORRUPTIONS](#)
[THRUST DOWN TO HADEES](#)
[THE GATES OF HADEES](#)
[HADEES IS ON EARTH](#)
[HADEES DESTROYED](#)
[THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS](#)
[TARTARUS](#)
[THE BOOK OF ENOCH](#)
[WHAT DID PETER MEAN?](#)
[GEHENNA](#)
[OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS](#)
[JEWISH VIEWS OF GEHENNA](#)
[IMPORTANT FACTS](#)
[DANGER OF HELL-FIRE](#)
[CAST INTO HELL-FIRE](#)
[DESTROY SOUL AND BODY IN HELL](#)
[THE DAMNATION OF HELL](#)
[SET ON FIRE OF HELL](#)
[CONCLUSION](#)

Preface

When one who has been reared in Standard Theology begins an honest study of the doctrine of Universal Salvation, it frequently happens that many texts heard quoted for years operate as stumbling blocks. We believe that no text of Scripture properly understood in any manner diminishes the grand central truth of the Gospel. This grand central truth is that God triumphs over all opposition and converts them to himself. The threatening verses of the Bible are perfectly harmonious with the Promises of Scripture.

In fact, the threatening verses are given in order that the promises of Universal Reconciliation may be fulfilled.

The following statement will, at first, shock you. Please reserve judgment until you have had a chance to read this document. After extensive research, I agree with Canon Farrar who stated:

"If the decision be made to turn *solely on the literal* meaning of the scriptures, I have no hesitation whatever in declaring my strong conviction that the Universal Salvation and annihilation theories have far more evidence for them than the standard theology of eternal burnings. It seems to me that if many passages of Scripture be taken *quite literally* universal restoration is unequivocally taught and *endless torments are nowhere clearly taught*. The passages which appear to teach that doctrine being either obviously figurative or historically misunderstood."

If these pages shall assist any mind to remove obstacles that prevent it from beholding God as the Savior of the world then its purpose will be fulfilled.

BIBLE THREATS EXPLAINED

When considering the threats of the Bible, remember that they should always be interpreted and understood as being in harmony with all the great principles in Scripture, with the revealed character of God and with his promises to man. They must be so explained as to harmonize with the whole that contains them. For example, we read that "God is Love" and that he is a "Father." At the same time we are told that he will cast the wicked into everlasting fire and punish them throughout all eternity. On principle we must not

(1) deny that God is Love and a merciful Father, nor

(2) believe that the Bible contradicts itself

The threats must harmonize with the promises. There can be no contradiction. No penalty in the Bible would prove God not a father or destitute of love towards each and all of his children.

The judgments of God should be feared because they are just, not because they are unjust!

We must shed the light of infinite, boundless, unending love on all threatened penalties and interpret them in perfect accord with God's divine character. Does the love of God make impossible the reality of endless torment? Jewish tradition taught the 2 main qualities of God were Justice and Mercy. Does never ending torment in the fires of what is taught as 'Hell' equate to absolute Justice and Mercy? This is what this document answers.

Let's put it another way. If I wrote a statement today that said, "Richard is always using the net." and sent it in a time machine back to New Testament times - it would be assumed by all that read it that Richard was a fisherman and always using a fishing net

since the internet would be unfathomable to them. It must be understood what meaning was intended BY THE ORIGINAL SPEAKERS AND TO THE ORIGINAL HEARERS to properly understand scripture.

A good portion of standard, orthodox theology begins to fall apart when examined in the light of the meanings of words as spoken and heard in Bible times. Words like hell and forever, to name a few, do NOT mean today what they meant in Bible times.

For example, the word 'suffer' meant 'to allow, to let' in Bible times. Today it means to experience some sort of agony. Another example is to get an exhaustive Strong's King James concordance and look for the word 'forever.' You won't find it. You have to look under 'for' or 'ever'. Our word 'forever' today is not the same as the Bible words 'for' and 'ever' - which in the Bible means literally 'for an age' - a period of time whose length is determined by the subject. Don't worry if you don't understand now, we will be explaining these things in great detail.

We MUST get back to the original meaning and CONTEXT as much as possible and this document will help you do that. "Let us contend [i.e. wrestle, fight] for the faith that was once delivered to the saints." [Jude 1:3] Let us begin!

DOCTRINES OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT ARE OF VARIOUS NON-CHRISTIAN AND NON-JEWISH ORIGINS. IT COMES FROM OLD WORLD MYTHOLOGY - PARTICULARLY FROM GREECE AND BABYLONIA.

We should also bear another fact in mind. Some of the endless punishment doctrines were integrated into Jewish thought during various captivities. When the doctrine of endless punishment began to be taught in the Christian Church, it was not derived from the Scriptures. Some of it came from the uncivilized, non-Jewish converts to Christianity and from other pagan sources. Pagan converts accepted Christ but brought with them into their new church that doctrine which had for centuries been taught in non-Christian, non-Jewish lands. These doctrines neither Moses nor Christ accepted. And having received the idea from their traditions, it was natural that the early Christians should transfer it to the Bible and seek to find it there. That non-Christian, non-Jewish sources invented this doctrine is undeniable. Much of the Christian understanding of Hell has more to do with Old World mythology than anything from the Bible. I realize we are making highly controversial statements now, but let's start with a little history:

- Says the famous Philosopher Cicero "It was on this account that the ancients invented those infernal punishments of the dead, to keep the wicked under some awe in this life, who without them, would have no dread of death itself."
- Says Polbius, the Greek historian: "The multitude is ever fickle and capricious, full of lawless passions and irrational and violent resentments. There is no way left to keep them in order but by the terrors of future punishment and all the pompous circumstances that attend such fiction! On this account the ancients acted, in my opinion, with great judgment and insight when they contrived to bring those notions of the gods and a horrible future state into the popular belief."
- Strabo, the Greek geographer and philosopher, says: "it is impossible to govern women and the gross body of the people and to keep them pious, holy and

virtuous by the precepts of philosophy. This can only be done by the fear of the gods which is raised and supported by ancient fictions." And again he says: "The apparatus of the ancient mythologies was an engine which the legislators employed as a means to strike terror into the childish imagination of the multitude."

This horrible non-Christian, non-Jewish dogma sought entrance into the Christian church in vain for the first three centuries after Christ. Although here and there a "polluted" Christian announced it, it did not become an accredited Christian doctrine till after more than five centuries. [Dr. Edward Beecher](#) candidly confesses that as late as three hundred years after Christ, the doctrine had hardly obtained a foothold. One can hardly believe today that there was a time, centuries actually in Christendom, when the doctrine of endless torments wasn't preached. Yet, these are the facts.

[Dr. Edward Beecher](#) says: "What was the state of facts regarding the leading theological schools of the Christian world in the age of Origen and some centuries after? It was, in brief, this:

"There were at least six original theological schools in the church at large. Of these six schools one, and only one, was decidedly and earnestly in favor of the doctrine of future eternal punishment. One was in favor of the annihilation of the wicked. Two were in favor of the doctrine of universal restoration on the principles of Origen and two in favor of universal restoration on the principles of Theodore of Mopsuestia."

To conclude, there were four times as many Universal Salvation theological schools where clergymen were educated as there were schools in which endless punishment was taught, even as late as A. D. 300. But from that time onward as darkness increased the non-Christian, non-Jewish ideas were more and more transferred to the Bible till it entirely obscured the truth. It was not until the light of the Reformation began to dawn that this error began to be removed from the Scriptures so the meaning of the inspired authors could be understood. For further study read [History Of Opinions On The Scriptural Doctrine Of Retribution by Edward Beecher](#).

ADAM'S PUNISHMENT.

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that thou eat of it, you shall surely die." Gen. 2:16,17.

Wouldn't this be the perfect opportunity to bring up the subject of eternal punishments if this was what God intended? Yet, eternal torments are nowhere mentioned. Why did the very discussion of the introduction of sin into mankind not include ANY mention of eternal burnings? Adam and Eve were the "first root cause" of all sin and resulting suffering in all mankind - yet are not told of eternal burnings. Why?

Adam and Eve were told: "In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die," or as a literal translation would read, "Dying you shall die."

What death did Adam and Eve die in that day? This threatened death was not (1) immediate death of the body like we define death today.

Gen 3:22,23: "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. He might stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden..."

As is clear from the Genesis account, if man had partaken of the Tree Of Life, man would have experienced eternal life. Yet the death threatened was to be "in the day he sinned." His body did not die in that day - at least not a complete death. We believe that the PROCESS of spiritual death which would result in physical death started on that day. So in that sense Adam did die "in that day" meaning the process began. Remember, prior to sinning, Adam had free access to the Tree of Life. Had he not sinned he would have lived forever.

(2) It was not eternal death, flames and torment. While he certainly suffered a judgment, he didn't go to endless hell and torment "in the day" of his transgression.

The death was a moral, spiritual death that continued to corrupt until physical death occurred. It was a "blockade" from eternal, incorruptible life. Yet, recovery was possible and was prophesied by God Himself! It is universally accepted that the following verse of scripture is a prophecy about the Christ of God who would destroy all the works of evil. *It is important to notice in Gen. 3:22-23 that God made clear it was unacceptable that man should live forever in a state of sin.*

Gen 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

Paul describes this moral, spiritual death mentioned above - "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph. 4:18. "You has he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2:1

Jesus describes it in the parable of the prodigal son: "It was appropriate that we should make merry and be glad. Your brother was dead and is alive again. He was lost [Greek 'destroyed'] and is found." Luke 15:32

Moses describes it: "See, I have set before you this day life and good and death and evil. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose life so both you and your seed may live." Deut. 30:15-19

Adam died this kind of death "in the day" he sinned. This is apparent from the description of his fate after his transgression."

"And unto Adam he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you saying, 'You shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground because of you. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and

thistles shall it bring forth to you. You shall eat the herb of the field and in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread until you return to the ground. Out of the ground you were taken; you are dust. And you will return to dust." Gen. 3:17-19

Did you notice that, in Genesis, neither Adam or Eve received any threat of eternal burnings? Why? If the reader will carefully consult the accounts of the sin and punishment of Cain, the people before and after the Great Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the transgressors whose sins are recorded for four thousand years of Old Testament history he will find no hint that any but a limited, temporal punishment was received.

Understand that limited, temporal punishment had to do with this earthly life. It had nothing to do with the after life. This is agreed by all scholars. God said the punishment was A, B and C UNTIL you return to the ground. "The wages of sin is death..." Romans 6:23

A contradiction is created in Genesis if scripture is not rightly divided and spiritually discerned. God made clear with Adam that it was unacceptable that Man was to live forever in a state of sin. Yet it is commonly taught that sinners will live forever in a state of sin burning in hell. Will the sinners have partaken of the Tree Of Life prior to being thrown in hell? How do those sinners in hell get eternal life which only God can give? In the Garden of Eden, why was the Christ talked about as destroying the problem of sin but a hell of eternal flames and torment is not mentioned?

Some argue that the state of sin isn't forever, but the punishment for the sin is. Since only God and His Christ can remove sin, this school teaches God removes the sin but the punishment remains. Since the only removal of sin is by the sacrifice of Christ and forgiveness - this school teaches God eternally punishes those he has forgiven. Or do they teach God removes all sin from a person without repentance or forgiveness? It is amazing how many have not thought these views through.

Let's continue with our study so all the issues of rewards, punishments and the justice and mercy of God can become clearer.

TESTIMONY OF VARIOUS SCHOLARS.

- Warburton: In the Jewish Republic, both the rewards and punishments promised by heaven were temporal only. Temporal means 'dealing with this earthly life'. The rewards were things like health, long life, peace, plenty, dominion, etc. The punishments were things like diseases, premature death, war, famine, want, subjections, captivity, etc. In no one place of the Mosaic Institutes is there the least mention or intelligible hint of the rewards and punishments of another life. *Div Leg. vol. 3.*
- Jahn: We have no authority to say that any other motives were held out to the ancient Hebrews to pursue the good and avoid the evil than those which were derived from the rewards and punishments of this life. *Archaeology, p.398.*
- Milman: The lawgiver (Moses) maintains a profound silence on that fundamental article of rewards and punishments in another life. He only spoke of temporal

- chastisements and temporal blessings. On the violation of the Law there would be blighted harvests, famine, pestilence, defeat, captivity. On obedience to the Law there would be abundance, health, fruitfulness, victory, independence. Apostasy led to adversity and repentance and reformation to prosperity! *Hist. Jews, vol. 1.*
- Dr. Campbell: "It is plain in the Old Testament that the most profound silence is observed regarding the state of the deceased as to whether they are joyful or sorrowful, happy or miserable." Let's look closer at the threatening verses and punishments in the Old Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT PUNISHMENTS

"It shall come to pass, if you will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God and observe to do all His commandments and statutes which I command you this day, then all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you:

Cursed shall you be in the city and

cursed shall you be in the field.

Cursed shall be your basket and your store.

Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, the fruit of your land, the increase of your herds and the flocks of your sheep.

Cursed shall you be when you come in and

cursed shall you be when you go out.

The Lord shall send upon you cursing, vexation and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do.

The Lord shall smite you with wasting disease, fever, inflammation, discomfort and mildew..

In the morning you shall say: If only it were night! At night you shall say: If only it were morning!" Deut. 28:15-29, 67.

If eternal burnings was the solid doctrine and 'ultimate curse' that so many make it out to be, why was it never mentioned in these curses? All the punishments mentioned were temporal. Temporal means 'related to this side of life'. Paul tells us that under the Law:

Heb 2:2, "For if the message given through angels [the Law spoken by them to Moses] was authentic and proved sure and every violation and disobedience received an appropriate (just and adequate) penalty..."

Now for four thousand years every wicked act received "a just and adequate penalty." Would God have an endless, burning hell and keep it a secret from the world for four thousand years? Would he keep sinners for four thousand years from an endless hell and later use it as a perpetual prison for other sinners no worse? No! The silence of God for forty centuries raises some serious questions. Before proceeding to consider the chief supports of the doctrine of endless torment, we will give brief expositions of several passages that are usually quoted in its defense. Take it slow, I know some of this is shocking. Pray for the ability to view scripture as it is written WITHOUT preconceptions from doctrinal glasses.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE STRAIT GATE?

"The Strait Gate" and the "Few saved" are thought by many to indicate the final salvation of only a portion of the human race. Many Christians believe the overwhelming majority will burn perpetually in the fires of hell.

The question was asked by some one (Luke 13:23 and Matt. 7:13,14): "Lord, are there few that be saved? and he answered: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up and has shut the door and you begin to stand without and to knock saying Lord open unto us, then he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not. Then shall you begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in your presence and you have taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I don't know you. Depart from me you workers of iniquity! There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out."

I once had an art teacher who always had this saying posted across the classroom:

"See what you look at and look at what you see."

That saying is certainly applicable here. There is some obvious symbolic language used in this verse and every careful reader will see that the language is entirely confined to the present. "Lord, *are* there few that *be* 'saved'?" The literal rendering is: Are those *being saved* few? or are there few that are now being saved? The question relates entirely to the number accepting Christianity at that time. The key to understanding scripture is CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT. Much of what Jesus had to say dealt with the coming fall of Jerusalem and the entire Jewish system in 70 AD and the expansion of the Kingdom to include the Gentiles. Jesus himself shows that the application was confined to those to whom he was speaking.

"Lord" (they say) "we have eaten and drunk in your presence and you have taught in our streets." and "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out."

It is amazing how often we can read scripture and not see what is in plain sight. The words apply entirely to those who had heard him speak in their streets, namely the Jews. The Jew's advantages were about to be taken away and given to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were to enter the kingdom by faith with faithful Abraham while the Jews were thrust out. The weeping and gnashing of teeth represents their rage which was aggravated by their dislike of the Gentiles.

Mat 8:12 - "but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Bible commentator Gill sheds some light on the Jewish term "outer darkness" - "The allusion in the text is to the customs of the ancients at their feasts and entertainments which were commonly held in the evening. The hall or dining room in which they sat was brightly illuminated with lamps and torches. Outside in the streets was complete darkness. It was common to hear nothing but the cries of the poor for something to be given to them. One would hear persons that were turned out as unworthy guests. There was the gnashing of their teeth resulting from the cold winter nights or due to indignation at their being left out."

The fall of Jerusalem in 70AD and how the many statements and prophecies of Jesus and other New Testament writers relate to it is a lost teaching in this day and age. It is the cause of much doctrinal error and eschatological [end time doctrine] errors. The history of the fall of Jerusalem proves beyond doubt that those that rejected Christ, those that took the "wide gate" of conformity to the status quo, suffered horribly.

This same subject is discussed in Matt. 7:13, 14. "Enter in at the strait gate! Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. There will be many that go that way. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life. Only a few will find it."

The language teaches that only a few walked in the narrow way marked out by Christ during that time. The many chose the broader way of wrong. If we relate these passages to the after life, we cannot escape the conclusion that heaven will only contain a few souls and the overwhelming majority will be perpetually burned. This conclusion would negate countless scriptures and make the devil more successful than Jesus the Christ. These passages have no reference to the future world whatsoever. They speak of the few who, in our Savior's day, went right while the overwhelming majority went wrong. While at first this may sound like I am putting a spin on this scripture - wait until you get the whole picture!

Students of scripture - learn this well! The Greek word for destruction used here and many other verses is a state that one can be saved from.

It important to understand that the word for 'destruction' [Greek 'apoleia'] in Matthew means destruction, waste or ruin. Believers in eternal burnings READ INTO words like this the meaning of hell fire and brimstone. Here are some other uses of the word:

Mat 26:7-8 and Mark 14:14, "a woman approached Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive fragrant oil. She poured it on His head as He was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw it, they were indignant. "Why this waste [destruction]?" they asked." Acts 8:18-24, "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money saying, "Give this authority to me as well so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish [be destroyed] with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you

are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity. But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

As the example in Acts 8 makes clear, repentance is possible from a state of 'destruction.' Several other uses of this word show that a person can be delivered from, or repent of, a state of 'destruction'.

Acts 25:16, "To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to *die* [destruction], before the accused confronts the accusers face to face and be allowed to answer for himself concerning the alleged crime."

Clearly Acts 25 makes clear again that one can be in a state of 'destruction' and yet be delivered from it since a trial could result in a man's freedom. The language in Luke has a more special application to the Jews than that in Matthew. The verse in Matthew could be applied to every age since Christ. It is as true now as at the time Jesus spoke. The path of godliness is followed by a comparative few. The way of evil is broad and much traveled. People can be on the path to destruction and repent. Clearly, the word 'destruction' here doesn't mean eternal burnings.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BAD BEING CAST AWAY?

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea. It gathered every kind. When it was full they drew to shore, sat down and gathered the good into vessels while casting the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world [Greek 'age']. The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matt. 13:47-50.

Understanding of original and apocalyptic language is critical here. The "furnace of fire", "gnashing of teeth" and "end of the world" (*Greek word "aion" meaning 'age'*) will be fully explained in subsequent parts of this course. Be sure to study all 3 parts.

The material universe which we call the world (*Greek word "kosmos"*) is never spoken of as ending. It is always the Greek word "aion" meaning 'age' that is spoken of as ending. The field is the world [*Greek "kosmos"*] in v. 38, but "the end of the world [Greek 'age']" when the harvest comes in v. 39 is "*aion*". The age ends, but not the world.

Again, understanding comes from CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT. Christ was again referring to the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the elimination of the entire Jewish system in 70 AD - the end of the age. The kingdom of heaven is Christ's rule among men. It is a net which catches good and bad. Did you ever see a hypocrite? Of course! It may have been in church or it may have been in the mirror. Gotcha! Anyhow, at the end of the Jewish age when severe judgments were to come, the angels or messengers to execute God's judgments would separate Christians from others. The bad were to suffer in the furnace of fire which was the burning city of Jerusalem. The evil were also to perish in Gehenna. Gehenna in many Bibles is wrongly interpreted 'hell'.

Gehenna was the garbage dump, the incinerator outside Jerusalem where the "fire was never quenched and the worm didn't die." This was because garbage and the bodies of criminals were thrown there to be burned. This is exactly what happened during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. All of this is covered elsewhere in this document.

Dr. Clark says: "It is very remarkable that not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. There were many there when Cestius Gallus invaded the city. Had he persevered in the siege he would have completely conquered. But he, unexpectedly and unaccountably, halted the siege and the Christians took the opportunity to escape." These verses reference the remarkable trials the early Christians were about to pass through when Jerusalem was destroyed and Christianity was established on the ruins of Judaism. The "furnace of fire" and "wailing and gnashing of teeth" were when the awful calamities of those fearful days were visited upon the people of Judea. These expressions will be more fully explained later. This prophecy is more fully described in Matt. 24.

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH?

"I tell you this - except you repent you shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3, 5.

Many readers of the Bible suppose that the word perish always relates to the immortal soul and that the presence of the word "perish" always means to suffer torment without end. This passage has been quoted blindly, ignorantly and countless times to denote the final loss of the soul in eternal fires of hell. Watch how correct CONTEXT and understanding of original language opens up the real meaning of these verses. It is only necessary to consult the immediate context to perceive that Jesus was referring to nothing like eternal burnings. He asks:

"Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, no. But except you repent, you shall all likewise perish."

That is, *perish in a manner similar to their death*. "Except you repent you shall all perish as they died." The 'you' in this verse is the people Jesus was talking to. How did the people referred to perish? There were "some who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices and of a certain eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed."

"Do you think they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, no. But except you repent you shall all likewise perish."

That is, *be slain as they were*. No better explanation for these words can be given than in the language of "orthodox" commentators. Says Dr. Clarke: "you shall all likewise perish meaning in a similar way, in the same manner. This prediction of our lord was literally fulfilled. Blood was mingled with sacrifices and people were killed by falling stones. Again we are talking of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. When the city was taken by the Romans, multitudes of the priests and people *were in the process of worship and sacrifice*

when they were slain. Their blood was violently mingled with the blood of the sacrifices and multitudes were buried under the ruins of the walls, houses and temple." The fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and how the many statements and prophecies of Jesus and other New Testament writers relate to it is a lost teaching in this day and age. It is the cause of much doctrinal error and eschatological [end time doctrine] errors.

Dr. Barnes observes: "You shall all be destroyed in a *similar manner*. This was fulfilled to the letter. Many of the Jews were slain in the temple while many were offering sacrifices. Thousands perished in a way very similar to the Galileans." Whitby says: "I tell you, no. But except you repent, you shall all likewise perish meaning for the same cause, and many of you after the same manner."

Last, but certainly not least, the word 'perish' in Luke 13: 3, 5 is '*appollumi*' and is defined in many dictionaries as "to destroy utterly." If you think this makes a case for eternal burnings or eternal separation from God, you need to know the exact same word 'appollumi' is translated 'lost' in these verses: Mat. 10:6, Mat. 15:24, Mat. 18:11, Luke 15:4, Luke 15:6, Luke 15:9, Luke 15:24, Luke 15:32, Luke 19:10, John 17:12 twice, John 18:9. Go ahead, look them up, don't be lazy! You will find these verses refer to the prodigal son and sinners in general and ALWAYS in the context that which was lost was not eternally lost. Jesus certainly was well spoken, yet, this is the word Jesus used for the word 'perish.' The word 'perish' or 'lost' does NOT equate to eternal burnings or separation from God at all. Give this some serious thought.

BUT WHAT ABOUT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM AGAIN TO REPENTANCE?

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance because they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." Heb 6:4-6.

Any reader of the New Testament ought to see that this language is not to be understood as literal, when he remembers that Peter himself "fell away," and was "renewed again unto repentance" although I am aware some make the argument that he hadn't yet partaken of the Holy Spirit. Paul taught in Corinthians about a man in the church that was renewed unto repentance and spoke of delivering people over to satan for the destruction of the flesh that their spirit would be saved on the Lord's Day. What Paul says is that it is difficult, not impossible, to renew those who have once tasted the heavenly gift. Read how the same Greek word for impossible "adunatos" is used in Matthew 19:26, Mark 10:27 and Luke 18:27. In Acts 14:8, Romans 8:3, and Romans 15:1 it is interpreted as "weak", "could not do" and "impotent." Using a strict literal method without proper CONTEXT has resulted in much ridiculous religious dogmatism regarding this verse.

The word 'impossible' here has the same force as in Matt. 19:26, where it is said to be impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. In reply to the apostles' question, "who, then, can be saved?" Jesus said: "With men it is impossible, but with God everything is possible." This can be restated as, "With men it is hard but everything is easy with God."

Calmet says: "Paul by no means intended to exclude sincere repentance for forgiveness of sin which we commit after being saved." Rosenmuller, a celebrated German theologian says: "The Greek word for impossible '*Adunatos*' in this place does not mean absolutely impossible. It means nearly impossible but not absolutely impossible."

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SIN UNTO DEATH?

1 John 5:16-17 "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death."

This scripture really has nothing to do with eternal punishments but temporal punishments - meaning "punishments relating to this life." "The sin unto death" has often been supposed to be the "unpardonable sin" as though any sin could be unpardonable by a God whose mercy is without limit and without end. The "unpardonable sin" will be discussed later. The apostle was probably alluding to the various offences under the Jewish law, some of which were unto death or capital offences, while others were considered less serious. He may have been saying once a person is in the hands of death penalty authorities it is too late. The less serious sins were to be interceded for but the sins that resulted in death were to be regarded as beyond intercession. Or John could have been referring to sins committed out of immaturity, ignorance or other lesser offenses in contrast to those that somehow bring about grave consequences or the death of a person.

Why would certain sins put someone beyond intercession? One answer could be that the wages of sin is death. A person sinning a sin that results in grave consequences or death is suffering the judgment of sin. One is to intercede when a person has a chance of change in this life. But if a person's action is resulting in an unchangeable situation like their death, then the realities of that person's choice must be accepted. Jesus was probably referring to this "sin unto death" in this example:

John 8:21-24, "Then Jesus said again to the Jews, "I go away. You will seek Me but will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself will He? Is this why He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins. Unless you believe that I am the Christ, you will die in your sins."

The Jews rejection of the Messiah would reach a point that it would result in their death. Unbelief in the Christ did end up resulting in the death of countless Jews, particularly during the fall of Jerusalem. These scriptures are not teaching us to give up on people. They are teaching that sometimes a person will choose the hard way and we should pray and respond accordingly. Paul would release, cast out and/or discipline people so they could experience the detrimental effects of their willful sin in their lives. However, the purpose was ALWAYS for the ultimate restoration of that individual. Never forget that!

Jesus tells these Jews they will die in their sin and elsewhere we read that all Israel will be saved! Rom. 11:26. By the time you finish this course, this will no longer be a contradiction.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE HYPOCRITE'S HOPE PERISHING?

"And the hypocrite's hope shall perish." Job 8:13 Why this passage was ever quoted in support of endless punishment is beyond reason. There is nothing in it to indicate that it has the remotest reference to anything beyond this life. Its meaning is that the wicked shall be disappointed; that they will not realize what they desire. It is exactly equivalent to Proverbs 10:28: "The expectation of the wicked shall perish." This is another example of how a mindset of eternal burnings reads this mindset into scriptures that are not speaking of eternal burnings at all.

BUT WHAT ABOUT AGREEING WITH YOUR ADVERSARY SCRIPTURES?

"Agree with your adversary quickly before you get to court. Otherwise the adversary will deliver you to the judge and the judge will deliver you to the officer who will cast you into prison. I mean it when I say unto you, you won't come out of there until you have paid the complete penalty." Matt. 5:25, 26.

Once again, eternal fires of hell are READ INTO a verse that isn't speaking of it. Jesus is teaching it is better to resolve all conflicts quickly and directly. Jesus is also teaching us not to have unresolved issues with others. Debtors prisons were common in Bible times.

Let's assume, as is sometimes claimed, that God symbolizes the adversary and the prison symbolizes eternal punishment after death. If that is true then limited, corrective punishment is certainly taught by this scripture. Why? Because the scripture says you're only in prison until "the uttermost farthing" is paid.

The analogy doesn't fit. But this scripture is not speaking of eternal burnings. The language has a local reference to the times of the disciples and relates entirely to legal and interpersonal relationship problems and how to deal with them. A modern version with the surrounding scripture CONTEXT makes this clear:

Mat 5:23-26 "This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and

make things right. Then and only then come back and work things out with God. Or say you're out on the street and an old enemy accosts you. Don't lose a minute. Make the first move; make things right with him. After all, if you leave the first move to him, knowing his track record, you're likely to end up in court, maybe even jail. If that happens, you won't get out without a stiff fine.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WICKED BEING DRIVEN AWAY?

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous has hope in his death."-- Proverbs 14:32.

This verse could be used to teach Universal Salvation. It could be read this way, "Wicked Bob is driven away by his wickedness, but the righteous have hope in Bob's death." There are various interpretations on this verse. An Aramaic version says, "The wicked is overthrown through his wickedness; but he who is confident that he is without sin is a righteous man."

Solomon couldn't have been referring to post mortem burnings in this verse. Old Testament Jews weren't taught it during this period. Many Christians are not aware of this - but now you are!

What is most likely meant is that when the wicked is driven away to death in his wickedness, the righteous has hope in his death.

BUT WHAT ABOUT IT BEING A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD?

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10:31

The Bible has many expressions like, "To fall into the hands of God" and "the hand of the Lord was heavy" and "the hand of the Lord was against someone." This denotes the judgments of God falling on the sinful. God has a merciful purpose in His judgments, but they are often fearful to experience. We are always in God's hands, but we are said to "fall into" his hands when we suffer the consequences of sinfulness. It is a fearful thing to suffer the consequences of our sin, even though a corrective purpose is behind the judgment. An amputation is a fearful process to undergo, though it may save life and restore health. All judgments of God correct and set right. God's judgments are not the result of a God who finally "loses it" and discards people forever because he has lost his patience.

To define the character and nature of God by human flaws and weaknesses is a very common but serious error.

BUT WHAT ABOUT GOD LAUGHING AT MAN'S CALAMITY?

"I have called and you refused. I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded it. You have ignored all my counsel and refused correction. I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear comes." Prov. 1:24-26.

Proverbs 1 contains interpretative language to show there are serious consequences and judgments when one refuses to follow the right path.

Since Christ was paying the price for the entire world's rejection and refusal of the right path, was God the Father laughing and mocking when Christ was suffering?

These passages in Proverbs 1 could make this absurd argument if one takes these verses in a strict literal sense. Many take their character flaws and project them onto God to justify their self centered, prideful judgments, opinions and biases. Proverbs 1, taken in proper context, makes clear there are severe consequences for rejection of what is true and right. It does not make the case for a God who sneers, mocks and laughs at fallen men.

BUT WHAT ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO FIND GOD?

"You shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am you can not come." John 7:34. "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and you shall seek me, and die in your sins; you cannot go where I go." John 8:21. "Ye shall not see me until you shall say, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." Matt. 23:39

The CONTEXT in all the above verses is Jesus speaking to unrepentant Jews. These verses are usually misquoted to say something like this: "If you die in your sins, where God and Christ are you never can come." But Jesus said just the same thing to his disciples in John 13:33, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, where I go, you cannot come; so now I say to you."

He also said to his disciple Peter: "You can't follow me now, but you shall follow me afterward." Clearly in all these cases he meant that he could not be followed at that time; he did not mean they should be excluded from his presence forever as the statement to Peter and the word "until" in Matt. 23:39 makes clear.

Notice also that in Matt. 23:39 Jesus prophesizes that the unrepentant Jews WOULD see him AFTER they accepted Him. Meditate on that.

BUT WHAT ABOUT NOT INHERITING THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revilers, blasphemers, insulters, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."--Gal. 5:19-21.

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is

an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."--Eph. 5:5.
"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God."--1 Cor. 6:9,10.

All Christians teach that this language is not to be interpreted literally. Surprised? Isn't it taught that all can enter the Kingdom, even if guilty of the above sins, through repentance, faith and acceptance of the Christ? The popular rendering of these passages is that those who commit these sins in this life will never find heaven unless they repent before they die. However, that idea is not expressed or implied. That meaning is read INTO the verse due to widely accepted, but incorrect, theological upbringing.

The kingdom of God is a condition of purity, and whoever is guilty of these sins shuts himself out from the Kingdom. No Christian group teaches this doctrine more earnestly than do proponents of Universal Salvation. EVERYONE must be purged from all impurity to enter the Kingdom of God and, as you will learn, the fires of God are always purgative and corrective. Malachi 3:2, "On the day the Lord comes, he will be like a furnace that purifies silver or like strong soap in a washbasin. No one will be able to stand up to him." Notice He PURIFIES and CLEANSSES using a type of fire or burning to accomplish it.

This is why those that teach Universal Salvation view "hell fire and brimstone" as a PURGATIVE, CLEANSING process.

Also note: the actual rendering of "refiners or purifying fire and strong or fullers soap" in Malachi 3:2 could be FIRE AND BRIMSTONE and is so stated in some versions. See notes on message titled "Fire and God" in the [Notes Section](#).

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BARREN FIG TREE?

"Cut it down why waste valuable ground?" Luke 13:7 This language is parallel to that in Matt. 3:10: "and now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree; therefore every tree which doesn't bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire."

This actually is a prophetic metaphor referring to the nation of Israel and it's coming destruction in 70 AD but holds true for an individual life as well. The nation or the individual that does not serve God perishes. This means the nation or people pass through a process of decay, destruction and death as the penalty of sinfulness. The afterlife is not discussed here. The use of fire in the metaphor is prophetic since Jerusalem and thousands of Jews were burnt in the fires of judgment during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. We will be discussing the Bible's use of fire elsewhere in this document and a message is outlined in the [Notes Section](#) under the title, "Fire and God."

For now, we will state that fire is the ultimate purifier. It is commonly viewed as a destroyer but in reality it changes the form of what it burns and separates its elements.

The separated elements can then be used in other matter. An example is 1Co 3:13-15:

"every man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of every man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. "

BUT WHAT ABOUT GOD BEING ANGRY EVERY DAY?

"God is angry with the wicked every day."--Psalm 7:11.

This verse is an excellent study in how true meanings of Scripture can become lost in translation and confusion. Learn and understand this section well.

Solomon said in Ecc. 7:9: "Anger rests in the bosom of fools." Then God cannot be "angry every day," all the time. What is the meaning of these words?

Dr. Adam Clarke, the well known scholar and commentator, has examined the text with learning and candor, and he gives us the result of his investigation in the statement. He states that a mistranslation of the language puts a false meaning on the words. He gives these as authorities:

- The *Vulgate*:--"God is a judge, righteous, strong and patient. Will he be angry every day?"
- The *Septuagint*:--"God is a righteous judge, strong and long-suffering; not bringing forth his anger every day."
- The *Arabic version* is the same as the Septuagint.
- The *Genevan* version, printed in 1615:--"God judgeth the righteous, and him that contemneth God, every day;" marginal note: "he doth continually call the wicked to repentance by some signs of his judgments."

Dr. Clarke says: "I have judged it of consequence to trace this verse through all the ancient versions in order to be able to ascertain what is the *true reading*. Does the evidence amount to a positive affirmation, 'God is angry every day' or to a negation, 'He is *not* angry every day?' The mass of evidence supports that it is a negation. The Chaldee [the Aramaic language that was the original language of some parts of the Bible] first corrupted the text by making the addition, '*with the wicked*.' Our translators followed suit and put the words into *italics showing the words* as not being in the Hebrew text. [You will need a good complete Concordance to verify this because fewer Bibles today italicize the words that are not in Greek or Hebrew.] Several of the versions have rendered it in this way: 'God judges the righteous, and is *not* angry every day.'

The true sense may be restored in this manner; *el* with the vowel '*tseré*' signifies God; *el*, the same letters with the point '*pathach*', signifies *not*. Several of the versions read in this way: 'God judges the righteous, and is not angry every day.' The meaning being that He is not always chiding, nor is he daily punishing, despite the daily wickedness of man.

The ideas of *patience* and *long-suffering* are intended which several of the versions introduce." This would also put this verse in alignment with several others - [Micah 7:18; Psa. 103:8, 9; 30:5) which say that "*God doesn't retain his anger forever.*"

There are two kinds of anger spoken of in Scripture. One is right and is exhibited by God and the good, and the other is wrong and is an animal characteristic of which God is incapable. "Unrighteous" anger is a disposition to avoid and be on guard against. Righteous anger's legitimate use is to remove obstacles and correct. Employed by the good, righteous anger never harms. Unrighteous anger, used by those with evil intent, always works evil.

The "right" anger is referred to in the passage we are considering. "Right anger is exercised by God who is said to "hate all the workers of iniquity." And why does He exhibit his anger? To change and/or end the state of sin! Men who are suffering the penalties of sin see only the "rod of discipline." They don't realize the love that is being demonstrated. The correction doesn't "feel" like love to the wayward. Men in a state of being corrected usually say with Saul that God hates them. But it is Infinite Love that wields the rod because God loves the sinner! God will destroy what alienates man from his best friend and God will ruin what interferes with the best interests of man.

David says; "God shall make the wicked as a fiery oven in the time of His anger, the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." Psa. 21:9.

The prophet declares: "The Lord reserves wrath for his enemies."--Nahum 1:2,3.

Paul affirms; "The wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience." "The power and wrath of God is upon all them that forsake him." Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6.

Jesus says: "The wrath of God abides on him that doesn't believe the Son." John 3:36.

Yet when CONTEXT is added, Jesus also says: "God is kind to the unthankful and evil." Luke 6:35. "He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5:48.

Now these statements appear contradictory until CONTEXT is understood. What God is determined to destroy in the sinner is that which makes him a sinner. Christ said He came to utterly destroy evil - the works of the devil. He said he came to save the world, not to destroy men. God proceeds towards the wayward as a good parent must, to eradicate the evil by punishment. An angry mother--a true mother--punishes her wayward child just as God punishes the wicked, because she loves them. The child may call the punishment anger but it will not harm a hair of the child's head. The punishment resulting from Love is indeed the highest love; it is for the child's welfare and, sometimes, cannot shrink from inflicting pain. But it is temporary and intended to purge.

This is evident when we remember that men are told to be like God. Yet, God says that men must not let the sun go down upon their wrath. We must love our enemies that we may be children of the highest. If God were angry every day, and we were to be like him as some assert, we could be cross, petulant, wrathful, vindictive and hateful all the time. This would be contrary to Proverbs 15:18 and 16:32. But we can only be like God as we "put off anger" (Col. 3:8) and "put away all wrath, anger and malice." (Eph. 4:31) "A fool's wrath is quickly and openly known, but a prudent man ignores an insult." (Prov. 12:16) "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding." (Prov. 14:29)

Does God tell us to be and act in a way that he doesn't? The Bible uses parental discipline to describe God's handling of men several times. Should a human parent punish forever? Should a human parent burn their children forever - or at all for that matter?

"God is not angry with the wicked every day," is the correct reading of this passage. This is what is true of Him who is Love and who is unchangeable. He never was, never is, and never will be angry with any human being in any other sense than that His righteous indignation burns towards those traits that cause His children to sin. And God's anger will continue to burn until it destroys those traits and transforms his enemies into friends. God's purifying, purgative and corrective anger will destroy the antagonism of his enemies. He will always be kind to the unthankful and evil. He "is not angry with the wicked every day."

BUT WHAT ABOUT BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST?

The passages that relate to this subject are in:

Matt. 12:31, 32: "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaks against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor the world to come."

Mark 3:28-30: "all sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost never has forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. He said this because they said, he has an unclean spirit."

Luke 12:10: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."

What is this sin? Opinions vary. In CONTEXT, Jesus only spoke about it to those that were first hand witnesses to his miracles. Why would such a serious sin not be mentioned anywhere else in Scripture? The sin consisted of ascribing the power by which Jesus wrought his wonderful works to Satan. He was accused of being aided by Beelzebub, of having an unclean spirit, and of working his miracles by the power of an evil spirit. From this it follows that very few persons are exposed to the doom threatened here because very few have ever committed this sin.

Again, sometimes we don't see what is in plain sight. If we use the strict literal interpretation, we must conclude that all other sinners, of every character and kind, will be saved! Why?

Because just as positively as the Scripture declares that these blasphemers shall never be forgiven, it declares that all others literally and absolutely shall be forgiven.

"Verily I say unto you *all sins and blasphemies shall* be forgiven unto the sons of men..."

The sin against the Holy Ghost is the only sin that shall not be pardoned. All other sinners, thieves, liars, murderers, all except that very small number that accused Jesus of receiving diabolical help, shall be forgiven. It doesn't say might be forgiven or can be forgiven but shall be forgiven. Doesn't this hint that this scripture may not be meant to be taken literally? If the "shall" and "shall not" are to be understood literally, then the number of the damned is entirely limited to the very few who actually saw Christ's miracles and ascribed them to Beelzebub. No one since and no one hereafter can be damned because all other sin, but that, *shall* be forgiven. This saves all mankind except those few persons who said, "he [Christ] has an unclean spirit." This reduces hell to a mere mote in the universe and excludes all now living, or who shall live, from any exposure to it. Let's examine the text further:

Dr. Newcome says: "It is a common figure of speech in the oriental languages to say of two things that one shall be and the other shall not be. The real meaning is that one shall happen sooner or more easily than the other." Campbell also says this is "a noted Hebraism", a term of speech common among the Jews to teach that one event is more likely to occur than another. It doesn't mean that either shall or shall not occur. Grotius and Bishop Newton agree. An example is when Jesus says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." He does not mean that heaven and earth shall actually pass away, but they will sooner fail than his words. It is a strong method of asserting that his words shall be fulfilled. This is common in the Bible. Here are some examples that show a strict literal interpretation is not always intended:

Prov. 8:10: "Receive my instruction and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold." Does this mean Christians are NEVER to receive silver or gold?

Matt. 6:19, 20: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust does corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust does corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Does this mean Christians are not to save, invest or have any financial worth?

Luke 14:12,13: "Then said he also to him that bade him, When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbors. They will reciprocate and in some way pay you back. But when you make a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Does this mean Christians are never to invite family and friends for dinner?

John 6:27: "Labor not for the meat that perishes. Labor for that meat which endures unto everlasting life which the Son of man shall give unto you; for Him has God the father sealed." Does this mean Christians should not work for food?

The plain meaning of the "unpardonable" sin is that all other sins are more easily forgiven than this. The words "never," "neither in this world [age] nor the world [age] to come" do not change the sense. They only strengthen and intensify the Savior's meaning that this is the worst of all sins. Also read [section 9](#). It is my belief that Christ was saying that so long as you are attributing the miraculous, saving, pulling power of the Holy Spirit to something satanic - it is impossible for you to be saved because you are discarding the only thing that can save you. "No man can come to the Father unless the Father draws him."

This next section requires deep study and until the study on [Aion - Aionios](#) is understood some of this may not be clear to you. Study of the word "Aion" and "Aionios" comes in [part three](#) of this study.

The popular impression that 'the world to come' here means the life after death is an error. Dr. Clarke observes: "Though I follow the common translation I am fully satisfied the meaning of the words is, 'neither in this Jewish dispensation nor in that which is to come.' "*Olam ha-bo*", meaning 'the world to come', is a constant phrase for the times of the Messiah in the Jewish writers." Wakefield, Rosenmuller and Hammond also give the same opinion. And it should be added that the word "never" is not in the original Greek. So the text means, "not under either dispensation, or age (*aion*--mistranslated "world") will this inexcusable sin be less than the greatest of transgressions."

Bishop Pearce declares: "This is a strong way of expressing how difficult a thing it was for such a sinner to obtain pardon. The Greek word "*aion*" seems to signify *age* here, as it often does in the New Testament (see Matt. 13:40; 24 3; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:5, 21). If this be so then 'this age' means the Jewish one, and 'the age to come' (see Hebrews 6:5 and Eph. 2:7) means that under the Christian dispensation. Biblically speaking, the end of the 'world' [Greek "*aion*" meaning age] took place during the time of the apostles. '*Now once in the end of the world [age] hath he [Christ] appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*' Heb. 9:26. 'Now all these things happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends of the world* [Greek "*aion*" meaning age] are come.' 1 Cor. 10:11."

Gilpin observes, "Nobody can suppose, considering the whole tenor of Christianity, that there can be any sin which, on repentance, may not be forgiven. This, therefore, seems only a strong way of expressing the difficulty of such repentance, and the impossibility of forgiveness without it. Such an expression occurs in Matt. 19:24: 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter heaven;' that is, it is very difficult. That the Pharisees were not beyond the reach of forgiveness, on their repentance, seems to be plain from verse 41, where the repentance of Nineveh is held out to them for an example."

Clarke says: "Any penitent may find mercy through Christ Jesus; for through him any kind of sin may be forgiven to man, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which I have proved no man can now commit."--*Clarke on 1 John 5:16*. And again: "No man who believes the divine mission of Jesus Christ can commit this sin."

These are all "Orthodox" commentators. Their opinions were certainly not formed by prejudice in favor of Universal Salvation. They agree with what seems the meaning of the Savior, that this sin is of all others most inexcusable. But that any sin is literally unpardonable by a God and Father of infinite love and mercy, is nowhere expressed or implied in the Bible. Mark's language "hath never forgiveness" should read "has not forgiveness to the age," but is liable to aionian judgment; that is, to an indefinite penalty. See the word '*aionios*' explained in subsequent pages of this book.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WRATH OF GOD?

Paul speaks (Col. 3:6) of "the wrath of God on the children of disobedience." We have shown that wrath is a reprehensible passion. It can only be applied to God in a figurative sense to denote his disapproval of sin. Wrath is used to describe the consequences of human misconduct, the judgments of God on wickedness, but always in a figurative sense. He who is the same always and whose nature is love cannot literally be angry or wrathful.

Man, hurting from God's chastisements or beholding the results of his judgments, characterizes as wrath and hatred what is really actions motivated by God's love.

God doesn't have wrath as men experience wrath. There can be no such thing as hatred in him who is perfect love. Prof. Stuart, in his comments on Romans, observes: "It is impossible to unite with the idea of complete perfection the idea of anger in the sense in which we cherish that passion. With us it is a source of misery, as well as sin. Neither misery or sin are, in any way, a part of God. God's anger can only be that feeling or affection in him which moves Him to look on sin with disapproval and to punish it when connected with a lack of repentance. We must not, even in imagination, connect this in the remotest manner with *revenge*; which is only and always a *malignant* passion.

Dr. Clarke thinks that the word "wrath" in the new Testament ought to be "punishment." "Taken in this sense, we may consider the phrase as a Hebraism meaning a *punishment* of God, the most heavy and awful of punishments such as sin deserves and divine justice mandates." So this verse could be read, "And this wrath or punishment abides on the unbeliever. It endures as long as his unbelief and disobedience remain."

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WRATH TO COME?

"O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Matthew 3:7

John the Baptist addresses this language to the Scribes and Pharisees. By "wrath to come" he meant the approaching desolation of the Hebrew nation in 70 AD. Bishop Pearce says, "the punishment to come in the destruction of the Jewish state" Kenrick says, "the impending punishment in the destruction of the Jewish state" Dr. Clarke says "the desolation which was about to fall on the Jewish nation."

The facts regarding the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and how much of Jesus' statements and prophecies and other New Testament writer's statements related to it is something that is a lost teaching in this day and age and is the cause of much doctrinal error and eschatological [end time doctrine] errors. However, the same words may be applied to the consequences of any sinful career, whether of an individual or a nation.

This is yet another one of those verses where people wrongly read into the words the doctrine of eternal torments when nothing of the sort was intended by the speakers.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SPIRITS IN PRISON?

"By which also Christ went and preached unto the spirits in prison. In times past they were disobedient. The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only eight souls were saved from the water." 1 Peter 3:19- 20.

This is a very controversial verse and subject to wide and varied interpretations. I had a lot of notes and different interpretations and opinions regarding this verse which, in my opinion, only added to the confusion. Suffice it to say this verse gives credence to the fact that grace extends beyond the grave. This is evidenced by Christ's preaching and the terms, "in times past they WERE disobedient."

BUT WHAT ABOUT WHEN JESUS SAID "I PRAY NOT FOR THE WORLD?"

"I pray for them. I pray not for the world but for them which You have given me because they are Yours." John 17:9.

CONTEXT will help with this verse. Jesus was offering a special prayer for his disciples. He frequently employs this form of expression. He uses the negative in order to give the greater emphasis to the positive as when he says in reference to forgiveness: "Not seven times, but seventy times seven;" or, "Lay not up treasures upon earth, but lay up treasures in heaven." He does not forbid us to forgive seven times, nor to lay up treasures on earth.

He precedes his command to forgive seventy times seven, and to lay up heavenly treasures, by a negative in order to give the greater force to what follows.

He offers a special prayer for his disciples but in verse 21 he extends the prayer to others and prays for Universal Salvation:

John 17:21 May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us so the world may believe You sent Me. On the cross He prayed for his murderers (Luke 23:34); and he also prayed for all men when (John 10) he prophesies for all the sheep for whom he had laid down his life. Also notice this: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

Notice Jesus prophesies there will be ONE FOLD and one shepherd, not 2 folds and 2 shepherds. He says that some people weren't part of the fold then but would, at some point in the future, be in the fold and hear his voice. We also have other admonitions regarding "all men":

1 Titus 2:1, "I exhort you, first of all, to have supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks to be made on behalf of all men."

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE RIGHTEOUS SCARCELY SAVED?

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. If it first begins with us, what shall the end be of them that don't obey the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?" 1 Peter 4:18.

This is yet another example referring to the 'end of the age' in 70 AD.

Dr. Macknight's view says it all: "Indeed the time is come that the punishment to be inflicted on the Jews as a nation for their crimes, from the first to last, must begin at you Jewish Christians who have become the house of God. And if it begins first with us who are so dear to God, what will the end be of those Jews who don't obey the gospel of God? If the righteous Jews who believe in Christ will be saved with difficulty when God punishes the Jewish nation, where will the ungodly and sinful part of the nation show themselves saved from the divine vengeance? That the apostle is not speaking here of the difficulty of the salvation of the righteous at the day of judgment will be evident to anyone who considers 2 Peter 1:11.

2 Peter 1:10-11 Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. For in this way entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to you.

What he speaks of is the difficulty of the preservation of the Christians at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. They were preserved as Christ promised (Matt. 24:13). But the ungodly and wicked Jews were saved neither in Judea, nor anywhere else."

Dr. Adam Clarke: "Judgment must begin at the house of God. Our Lord had predicted that, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, his followers would have to endure various calamities. (See Matt. 24:9,21,22; Mark 13:12,13; John 16:2, etc.) Here his true disciples are called the house or family of God. And if it first begin with us, Jews who have repented and believe on the Son of God, what shall be the end of them, the Jews who continue impenitent and obey not the gospel of God? The verse in question was based upon the text which Peter immediately quotes.

Verse 18, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved..."

If it shall be with extreme difficulty that the Christians shall escape from Jerusalem, when the Roman armies shall come against it with the full commission to destroy it, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? Where shall the proud Pharisaic boaster in his outside holiness, and the transgressor of the law of God show themselves as having escaped the divine vengeance? The Christians, though with difficulty, did escape, every man; but not one of the Jews escaped, whether found in Jerusalem or elsewhere. I have, on several occasions, shown that when Cestius Gallus came against Jerusalem, many Christians were shut up in it. He strangely stopped the siege and the Christians immediately departed to Pella, in Coelosyria, into the dominions of King Agrippa who was an ally of the Romans. There they were in safety. It appears from the ecclesiastical historians that they had only a short time to leave the city before the Romans returned under the command of Titus. These troops never left the place till they had destroyed the temple, razed the city to the ground, slain upwards of a million of the remaining Jews and put an end to their society and ecclesiastical state."

This salvation relates exclusively to deliverance from the approaching terrors of those times and not to any sufferings after death.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WRESTING THE SCRIPTURES TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION?

"As also Paul, in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things some of which are hard to understand. As a result, some which are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other scriptures, unto their own destruction." 2 Peter 3:16. Let's read a modern day translation - 2 Peter 3:16, "He speaks about these things in all his letters, in which there are some matters that are hard to understand. The untaught and unstable twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures."

First and foremost see [this section](#) where it is made crystal clear that the word 'destruction' [Greek 'apoleia'] was not referring to eternal torments. When these words were written the land of Judea was full of confusion and many ominous signs indicated its approaching desolation. This was spoken of as identical with the "coming of the Lord."

Jesus had said: "And when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Luke 21:20. Now Peter wrote this epistle to keep the church in remembrance of the prophecies of the coming event. He refers to those who asked, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (v.4) and added (v.42) "Watch! You don't know what hour your Lord will come." He gives, in similar imagery to that employed by Jesus, the signs of the coming: "The heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat." Jesus had said: "The stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Matthew 24:29. See also 2 Peter 3:10. He exhorts (v.11) "seeing you know these things beforehand, beware so you are not also led away with the error of the wicked and fall from your own steadfastness."

Clearly there were some at that time that misunderstood and perverted the words of Jesus and Peter and were destroyed in the coming calamities, "before that generation passed." Had they understood and obeyed the Scriptures, they would have escaped.

BUT WHAT ABOUT NO MURDERER HAVING ETERNAL LIFE?

"Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15.

This language shows that there are millions of people considered murderers by God who never destroyed life! Every one who hates his brother has already committed murder spiritually speaking. If no murderer can ever reach heaven, then millions will be lost forever because everyone has hated at some point. Many, in denial, choose not to call their feelings hate to try to make it look like "justified anger." God is not fooled by our word manipulations. Consider the Greek for the word "hate" in this verse. It means "*implying active ill will in words and conduct, a tendency to persecute.*"

Notice this verse does not say that a murderer who does not repent before he dies doesn't have eternal life, but "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" meaning no one who hates his brother has eternal life at the time the hate is operating.

The Scriptures include all transgressors when they say: "God will by no means clear the guilty."--Exodus 34:7. "He that does wrong *shall receive* for the wrong done; there is no respect of persons." Col. 3:25. "Count on this: The wicked won't get off scot-free, and God's loyal people will triumph." Prov. 11:21. "God says there is no peace to the wicked."--Isa. 57:21.

The murderer who dies unpunished will receive what he deserves - one way or the other. Here or hereafter it will always be true that no murderer, whether he hate his brother or destroy his brother's life, has eternal life abiding in him. Infinite grace can convert and save the murderer just like any other sinner. Paul, whose past included the taking of many innocent lives, says:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you are washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

People can experience repentance by Grace. As long as you continue in error and darkness you don't have eternal life. After the miracle of God creating you anew - you possess eternal life. Eternal life is God's life. Operate from evil and eternal life isn't abiding - living in and through you. Operate in the Holy Spirit and eternal life is abiding - living in and through you. This will always be true. No murderer or other sinner, no

one whose heart is controlled by evil, possesses eternal life. When God's life comes in, evil MUST go out.

BUT WHAT ABOUT "LET HIM BE ACCURSED?"

The word '*anathema*', improperly rendered "accursed" in Gal. 1:8, has no such meaning. Its real significance is: "Let him go," "Ignore (or disregard) him." It really means "to separate." The apostle uses it here as he applies it to himself (Rom. 9:3) "I could wish myself separated from Christ." This is the view of all good critics and any good Greek dictionary.

Hammond: "And if any attempt to do that, though it were I myself, or even an angel from heaven, I proclaim unto you mine opinion and apostolic sentence, that you are to disclaim and renounce all communion with him, to look on him as an excommunicated person, under the second degree of excommunication, that none is to have any commerce with in sacred matters. And that he may take more heed to what I say, I repeat it again: Whosoever teaches you any new doctrine, contrary to what I at first preached unto you, let him be cast out of the church by you."

Wakefield: "But, if even we, or an angel from heaven, should preach the gospel differently from what we did preach it unto you, let him be rejected. As we told you before, so now I tell you again, if any one preach a different gospel to you from what ye received from us, let him be rejected."--*Trans. in loc.*

Clarke: "Perhaps this is not designed as an imprecation, but as a simple direction; for the word here may be understood as implying that such a person should have no countenance in his bad work, but let him, as *Theodoret* expresses it, *be separated* from the communion of the church. This, however, would also imply that, unless the person repented, the divine judgments would soon follow."--*Com. in loc.*

Nothing like what is implied in the common use of the English word "anathema" is meant by the Christian use of the Greek word. The Catholic church has employed it to mean accursed, or damned, in the Evangelical meaning of those words, which is as foreign to the spirit of Christ and Christianity as it is to curse and damn in common profanity.

All acts of discipline and correction in scripture were for one reason and one reason only - to awaken and restore a wayward soul to repentance. NEVER allow yourself to fall into the trap of thinking contrary to this spiritual truth or you have fallen into the hate trap [*meaning "implying active ill will in words and conduct, a tendency to persecute"*] discussed earlier.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SECOND DEATH AND LAKE OF FIRE?

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God"; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in those books, according to their works. And the sea

gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."--Rev. 20:12-14. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the; abominable, and murderer, and whoremonger, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."--Rev. 21:8

Note that the Greek word 'part' indicates location or portion, not a span of time. Popularly "hell" and the "lake of fire and brimstone" are the same thing; but it is seen, as we read the description in Revelation, that they are entirely different. In chap. 20, verses 13 and 14, it is said that "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *This [the lake of fire] is the second death.*" For reasons which will become clear I want to point out this scripture before we proceed:

Malachi 3:2-3 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness."

GILL on fuller's soap: "fuller's soap; or "fuller's herb", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, and Jarchi and R. Johah interprets it: interprets it of an herb which fullers use: and in the Mishna this is one of the seven things used to take out spots, namely, "borith", the word here used; and which Maimonides says is a plant known by the name of "algasul" and "gazul" in the Arabic language: it signifies something by which filth is washed away; and so Bartenora says it is a plant which purifies and cleanses; and Jerom relates that this herb grows in Palestine, in moist and green places, and has the same virtue as nitre to take away filth; agreeably to which some other versions render it "fuller's weed", "soap weed" or brimstone (sulfur).

The Syriac version is "as sulfur [which is brimstone] that makes white;" and fullers with the Romans was used with chalk to take out spots; and so Pliny speaks of a kind of sulfur which fullers make use of. A metaphor signifying the same thing as before, the removing of spotted doctrines or spotted persons, the one by the preaching of the Gospel, the other by awful judgments, as spots in garments are removed by the fuller's herb or soap."

Now notice very carefully that a valid interpretation of Malachi 3: 2-3 is that the Christ would be as FIRE AND BRIMSTONE at his coming - cleansing and purifying. It is also helpful to know that the way the purity of precious metals was tested in Biblical times was to strike the metal against a special rock. The response of the precious metal against the rock determined purity. This special rock that was used for testing and striking was called a "torment." This paragraph alone should be enough for you to see that those that speak of hell as purgative and corrective are not as heretical as you first thought. The meaning of the original language should be getting clearer.

GOD AS "LIQUID FIRE" IN SCRIPTURE

Revelation is loaded with Old Testament apocalyptic language. The lake of fire is only found in Revelation so we have no other New Testament references to help us interpret the symbol. We have Deut. 4:24, 9:23 and Heb. 12:29 saying God is a consuming fire. But the Old Testament has Malachi 3:2-3 and the following which proves from scripture the river, lake and stream of fire and brimstone was none other than God and his Christ! Look at these other references to fire and "liquid" fire referring to God:

Dan 7:9, 10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

Isa 30:27-33 Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire. And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel. And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

Food for thought: Since it is already established that hell is not the lake of fire, Revelation 20 teaches that death and hell are emptied and then thrown into the lake of fire. When I refer to Christ as the lake of fire, some call me crazy. But, who was it that was to bear and destroy the world's sin? Was not death and hell [the Greek word means grave] a product and result of sin? Also, there is no scripture that states those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life will be in the lake of fire forever...NONE. Are your wheels turning? Good, now let's get back to the second death; the subject of this section.

There are MANY opinions on these verses regarding the second death. Four common opinions are:

1. Some suppose it refers to those who, having once been dead in trespasses and sins, have become quickened into newness of life, and then have returned to their wicked ways. Jude describes those who were "twice dead, plucked up by the roots." Such are all who have once been good, and who have fallen into evil ways.
2. Others apply it to the apostasy of the Christian church.
3. Others to the second destruction or death of the Jewish religious system which

occurred soon after Revelation was written.

4. Others refer it to endless torments after death - punishment throughout eternity.

Is view 4 correct? A man's death in trespasses and sins is Biblically considered the first death. The dissolution of the body is the second death...or is it? Is the death to sin and self, our "crucifixion with Christ that we experience when getting saved the second or third death? Would endless torments be the third death or the fourth death? The Bible is a big book and can be hard to understand at times and one has to study the Bible for considerable time to begin to understand the symbolism in the book of Revelation.

One Possible View:

The careful reader of the book of Revelation will see that this second death is a temporal destruction - meaning the destruction on this side of life - to befall the Jewish nation soon after the book was written. The Apocalypse was written just before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. It had once before been laid waste. The Jewish nation had lost its national life, and now it was to pass through a similar experience, undergo a second death, which it did when Titus (A.D.70) overwhelmed the people, and inflicted national death on the Jews. The first death lasted seventy years, the captivity in Babylon; the second has lasted now eighteen centuries, and justifies the term everlasting, as you will discover further in this course. The first death is described by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. 37:12-14:

"Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves. And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, says the Lord."

The second death was when the Jews were again extinguished as a nation. The revelator declares it was to be very soon.

"And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly."--Rev. 22:12, 20.

Jesus thus announces the same event: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."--Matt. 24:30. John says: "Behold, he cometh with clouds;" Jesus says: "The Son of man cometh in the clouds of heaven;" John: "And all the kindred of the earth shall wail because of him;" Jesus: "And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." In Rev. 21:8, the same idea is taught. "The fearful, unbelieving," etc., are to be burned in "the lake of fire, and this is the second death." The lake of fire denotes the fearful judgments of those days during which the Jews experienced their second death.

Another View

The bottom line: Death, hell, the grave and ALL the fruits, roots, results and products of sin are destroyed by Christ! So why is the eternal co-existence with God of sin, death and evil taught?

These quotes are taken from the [Savior Of The World Series by J. Preston Eby](#):

"Whatever we hold as the nature of the death state, may we let this truth sink deep into our hearts: DEATH IS TO BE ABOLISHED. The ringing declaration, "The LAST enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26) overthrows the whole structure of accepted, but unproved, theology which shuts up the mass of the human race in "eternal death." When the "last" enemy is abolished it is self-evident that none remains. Those wretched religionists who demand the endlessness of death, who argue for eternal torment in the lake of fire, the second death, do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. The lake of fire MUST end because death and hell are cast into it, which is the second death, and in the end THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH.

There is a strange and wonderful statement found in Rev. 2:11. "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches; He that overcomes shall not be HURT of the second death." I would draw your attention to the fact that it does not say that the over comer experiences nothing of the second death, that he does not pass through it, or that its work is not wrought in his life; but the thought is that he will not be "hurt" by it. Also see Rev. 20: 5,6.

Let me repeat - all men shall die to sin. Some lovingly submit to God's dealings that the dreadful death of the carnal mind in their members may be "mortified" or put to death, while others must be subdued and broken under the severe heat of judgmental fire. The former pass through the death to self - but are not "hurt" by it. In dying by a living and active faith to everything of the flesh, and living by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, a perfect work is wrought in which everything that is in any way opposed to God is brought to death. These become what God seeks in order to satisfy His heart. "

And yet another view

Lastly, consider this: the Bible teaches that there are only 2 men in all creation - Adam and Christ who is the second Adam. In Adam all died [first death] and in Christ all are made alive. [2 Cor. 5:14, 1 Cor. 15:22] But all that are made alive in Christ experience a SECOND DEATH to self and sin. We are crucified with Christ and are to consider ourselves DEAD and alive unto God. But the death in Christ is what makes alive for He is the spirit which makes alive! [1 Cor. 15:45] The Bible clearly teaches that all creation will end up in Christ - so all creation will experience the second death. Some will find the second death more painful than others. [Rev. 2:11 and 20: 5,6] Various other sections will deal with these issues, so let's move on.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FIRST RESURRECTION?

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power. Rev. 20:5, 6.

It is impossible to discuss this without getting into extensive discussion of end time doctrine [eschatology] which is not the purpose of this document. I will not get into definitive opinions here on end times doctrine. I quote Hanson in part:

"Some say the first resurrection was when the morally dead of our Savior's time heard and obeyed his call: "Awake thou that sleep, and *arise from the dead.*"--Eph. 5:14. They lived and reigned with Christ. This spiritual living was the first resurrection. It was here in this world. Those who experienced it were not exposed to the second death; it had no power over them.

Eusebius, the historian, says not a Christian was slain during those fearful times [around 70AD when Jerusalem was falling]. They lived and reigned with Christ.

It may be said that they also are applicable to us. We are dead in trespasses and sins. If we awake to righteousness, we rise out of this moral death, and this is our first resurrection. But if we continue indifferent and sinful, we are experiencing the second death, a condition that will continue until he who led captivity captive shall destroy our destroyers, and "the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed," and the final resurrection shall come, beyond which there shall be "no more death, neither shall there be any more pain."

I say Christ is the "first resurrection." If you are in Christ you are part of the first resurrection and the second death "has no power over you" because you are already in Christ.

BUT WHAT ABOUT LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL?

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Rev. 22:11.

Unless one wants to believe in dualism - the eternal coexistence of good and evil which was considered heresy by the first century church, one needs to examine this verse carefully. One explanation of this verse is from the Preterist view: This language is often understood to teach that those who are unjust, or filthy, or righteous, or holy, at the death of the body, will remain unalterably fixed in that condition forever. But a careful reading of the context shows that John has no such reference. He declares that the time of its application was "at hand;" saying, "Behold, I come quickly."

The whole book was written, according to its author, to "show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass."

The approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and overthrow of the Jewish state are the topics prophetically described throughout the book. The second overthrow of the Jewish nation was at hand. This event was to signalize the establishment of the Christian religion, and therefore it assumed immense importance. When the great event took place, those who had not previously become converted were fixed in their wicked ways, were filthy still; while those who had embraced Christianity were righteous still. The death of those spoken of is not referred to; the condition described is in this life.

BUT WHAT ABOUT ATTAINING UNTO THE RESURRECTION?

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."--Phil. 3:11.

All men are to attain unto the literal resurrection. Christ taught a resurrection of the just and the unjust. It does not depend upon human effort. What resurrection can man accomplish by his efforts?" The context shows. Paul is exalting the Gospel when he says:

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death: if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Evidently he refers here to a rising into that moral condition that Jesus occupied. He frequently employs this idea.

"Knowing this, that the old man is *crucified* with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."--Rom. 6:6.

The resurrection to be attained follows the crucifixion of "the old man." Seeing he had not yet reached that condition, Paul says: "Not as though I had already attained, neither were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." He has the same idea when he says: "How shall we *that are dead to sin* live any longer therein?" Again he says that we should "walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together, in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

The resurrection which Paul strove to attain unto, and for which we should all strive continually, is from sin to holiness, from the death in trespasses and sin to the life in Christ. The Greek word '*ana-stasis*' signifies "resurrection." The element '*stasis*' may be traced back to the old Sanscrit root '*sta*', "to stand," or, "to stand up." The element '*ana*' is intensive, and in this case has the sense of "again." The word '*ana-stasis*' signifies literally *a standing up again*, or the "resurrection." It is standing up a second time, after having fallen down in death.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE THAT SHALL NOT SEE LIFE?

"He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that doesn't believe the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36

Some read into this passage more than it actually says.

This is a simple statement of the effects of belief and unbelief, regardless of the duration of the consequences.

As long as one believes, God's life abides with him. The Greek word translated everlasting is 'aionian' which means 'age lasting'. The unbeliever is deprived of this life. When you're in the light, you see; when you are in darkness you don't see. "He that believeth *has* everlasting life," though by unbelief he may forfeit it, and regain it again by believing again. Such passages as these illustrate the New Testament use of the term:

Eph 4:18 "being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart" "You has he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins."--Eph. 2:1. The believer has "passed from death unto life."--John 5:24. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."-- 1 John 3:14. "To be carnally minded is *death*, but to be spiritually minded is *life* and peace."--Rom. 8:6.

The question of the duration of the life or the "wrath" is not raised in this passage. It remains, in either case, as long as the condition remains that causes the life or the wrath. People in favor with God can fall out of favor and lose 'the life of God - everlasting life' and those that don't have it now can repent and receive the gift of 'the life of God - everlasting life.' The terms 'life everlasting', 'everlasting life' and 'eternal life' will be discussed in more length later.

BUT WHAT ABOUT "AS THE TREE FALLS SO IT LIE?"

"If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall be."--Eccl. 11:3.

It has no reference whatever to death, or the afterlife. The book of Ecclesiastes is a compilation of the sayings of someone who looks back at the end of a wasted life, spent in the gratification of ambition and sensuous appetite. He presents a lesson for those who are setting out upon the voyage which he is ending. In the eleventh chapter he counsels men to prepare for misfortunes before they come. This verse may be paraphrased: "It never rains but it pours; and when the wind has blown over the trees you have planted with such care, that is the end of them; there is no putting them up again."

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST?

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with

the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."-- 1. Thess. 4:15-16.

This verse also would require considerable discussion on end time doctrine [Eschatology] which is not the purpose of this document. Since the standard rapture interpretation of this verse is so commonly known, I will give the following comment from Hanson's original document that takes the Preterist view of this verse. The Preterist view is that some or all of New Testament prophecy was fulfilled in and around 70 AD during the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish system.

"Christ's second coming was not a literal, visible, but a spiritual coming. All the other language is to be interpreted in harmony with his coming. There was no shout, no literal trump, nor did the literal dead literally rise at his coming, which occurred during the generation which was on earth when he lived. "The dead in Christ were first;" that is, those who had died Christians rose to the first position in the estimate of mankind. The imagery all points to that second coming which occurred while some of those lived to whom the words of the epistle were addressed."

Having problems with "End Times Mania"? Start to get a grip by studying various views. See this study on [Prophetic Symbols](#) or the free book in RTF format called [The Parousia by J. Stewart Russell](#). RTF documents can be read by most all popular word processors. Also try the large PDF book titled, [Before Jerusalem Fell](#).

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE HARVEST BEING PAST AND WE ARE NOT SAVED?

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."--Jer. 8:20.

This is the text of many a revival sermon, the word "saved" being wrested from its true meaning, and forced to relate to deliverance from an endless hell. Remember, CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT. The prophet applies it to deliverance from those national calamities to which the Jewish nation were at the time subjected by Nebuchadnezzar. They were besieged, without preparation, on the verge of winter after harvest, and were not saved from their enemies.

Dr. Clarke says: "*The harvest is past*. The siege of Jerusalem lasted two years: for Nebuchadnezzar came against it in the ninth year of Zedekiah, and the city was taken in the eleventh. (See 2 Kings 25:1-3.) This seems to have been a proverb: 'We expected deliverance the first year--none came; we hoped for it the second year--we were disappointed; we are not saved--no deliverance is come.'"

BUT WHAT ABOUT "OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE?"

He "is a consuming fire" always and everywhere. But this fact does not render God forbidding and repulsive, when we understand it. "God is Love" therefore is the consuming, unquenchable fire of infinite and divine love. He cannot be anything else

than love to his children, and what the fire of human love is in the heart of a human parent, the fire of God's love is in him, only multiplied by infinity. God's love has but one purpose, and that is to cherish its object, and to destroy all that would harm that object. God is a consuming fire towards his children--but it is the fire of love and not of hate. It is not because God hates us, but because he loves us, that he will burn towards us with all the disciplinary processes needed, until he has burned away that sin in us which is contrary to his nature and hurtful to us.

The word 'consuming' in this verse is the same Hebrew word for 'eat or digest' and is so used well over 500 times in the Old Testament. Why would God choose this word in relation to His fire? Also see [this section](#)

Digestion is a process of burning, but a burning that CHANGES what is burned into a part of the body. God is "consuming" us into himself. Meditate on this!

BUT WHAT ABOUT HE IS A "REFINER'S FIRE"?

Mal 3:2-3 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness."

This further clarifies what is meant by terms like "consuming fire" and the 'fire of God' and 'fiery judgments', etc.. God burns to purify. The words refiner, fuller's soap, smelter and purifier all mean to cleanse, purge and purify. Imagine if the melting metal could feel. How might it misunderstand the cleansing, purging and purifying process? The unrelenting fire would burn beneath the metal until the dirty, impure ore became like liquid light. It would then circulate as coins, sparkle on fingers of happy wearers and shine on the dress, scepters and coronets of kings and queens. And all because the severe and purifying fire of the refiner has tried it. As the consuming fire of God is refining, this verse makes clear that it only destroys the worthless impurities of sin. It leaves the spiritual gold, the immortal soul, unscathed and pure when its blessed work is finished. It is also helpful to know the Biblical origin of the word 'torment.'

The way the purity of precious metals was tested in Biblical times was to strike the metal against a special rock. The response of the precious metal against the rock determined purity. This special rock that was used for testing and striking was called a "torment."

Christ is the rock against which we shall all be 'tormented' that is tested for purity. To the pure it shall feel like a reception - to the impure it shall feel like 'torment.' Also see [this section](#)

BUT WHAT ABOUT GOD'S JUDGMENTS BEING LIKE FIRE?

Because fire is sometimes the author of apparent calamity, its beneficial character is lost sight of. Fire is the very essence of life and matter itself. All of matter is a constant flux

- a "fire" of positive and negative interaction. Your body digests - burns - food to sustain life. In fact, the Hebrew word for 'fire' is 'to digest'. Countless life processes are a form of combustion in one form or another. It doesn't annihilate - it CHANGES. It decomposes substances by releasing elements from existing relations. All the elements remain intact and undiminished. Every particle in a substance burned exists to be taken up again in new forms. Earth, water and air are all forms of matter -- they are made up of millions and millions of atoms collected together. Fire isn't matter at all. It's a visible, tangible side effect of matter changing form.

If we burn a stick of wood, and carefully preserve the smoke and the ashes, we shall find that they weigh a little more than the wood weighed--just as much more as the oxygen weighed that combined with the flame in the process of combustion. The ultimate particles are all preserved, undisturbed and unchanged from its original form and size. They are released by fire that they may go out into the great laboratory of nature to be again used for something new. Science declares that the ultimate particles of which all substances are composed are like microscopic bricks. They never lose form or identity. However if the particles are let loose from any combination by fire or otherwise, they are ready to be taken up in other forms.

Apparent destruction is a mere incident in the biography of fire--a preliminary process. Fire is one of the great purifiers of nature.

When, therefore, we read in the Scripture that God's processes of dealing with his children resemble fire, or that He is a fire, we must remember these characteristics and interpret the analogy in the light of scientific facts. If fire never destroys an atom of the material universe and if fire is only a process by which God is reconstructing his universe, why should men imagine that God's moral fires are other than purgative, corrective and beneficial in the moral world? The Prophets of old had a good grasp of the meaning of fire. Christ said he was making ALL new! [Note the word 'things' is NOT in the Greek]

"Psa 66:10-12 "For You have tried us, O God; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins. You made men ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water, Yet You brought us out into a place of abundance.

Silver is tried that its impurities may be purged away. The hotter the furnace, the more certain is the precious ore to be purified. Again:

"Who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap [brimstone]. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."--Mal. 3:2-3.

God's consuming fire refines, purifies, and purges away the dross of sin and some are saved...by fire!

"Every man's work shall be made manifest for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work survives on the foundation of the Christ, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." 1 Cor. 3:13-15.

The love of God demands purity and can do no less than destroy all that is opposed to purity. "Everlasting fire," the "furnace of fire," "consuming fire," "unquenchable fire," and all the forms in which fire figures in the Bible in God's dealings with men, shows the severe, kindly and disciplinary character of God's judgments. There is always a good purpose in all God's dealings with men. Divine love is seeking and securing, sometimes by severe processes as spiritual fire, the welfare of those towards whom the flame burns.

When those that teach Universal Salvation say, "God is Love," and others reply, "Yes, *but* he is also a consuming fire," our reply should be, "No, he is Love AND a consuming fire." The two terms are not contradictory but synonymous. Nothing precious will perish or permanently suffer from the consuming fire of God. Sin, error and evil will perish; but the soul will come forth from the fire purified as silver is purified. They will reflect God's image in a way they never could until purified.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE UNQUENCHABLE FIRE?

"He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."--Matt. 3:12 "And if your hand offends you, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where the worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched."--Mark 9:43,44.

Many suppose that the words "unquenchable fire" mean a fire of endless duration. But it is a fire that cannot be quenched until its purpose is accomplished.

Gill on Matt. 3:12: "He will burn with unquenchable fire", of divine wrath and vengeance: an allusion to a custom among the Jews, who, when they purified the increase of their unclean fields, gathered it together in an "area" or floor, in the midst of them, and then sifted it with sieves; one sort with two sieves, another with three, that they might thoroughly purge it, and burnt the chaff and stalks"

Says Dr. Paige: "When a house is destroyed by fire, the fire, strictly speaking, is unquenchable, because no effort that is made could extinguish it; but no one would allege that it would never expire of itself."

Dr. Hammond, a very judicious commentator, says: "They put fire to the chaff at the windward side, that creeps on and never gives over, till it hath consumed all the chaff, and so is a kind of *unquenchable fire* - Greek '*asbeston pur*', here, a fire never quenched, till it has done its work."--Com. on Matt. 3:12.

The Old Testament shows the application of the figure of fire burning chaff: Job says, the wicked are "as chaff that the storm carries away," 35:5, 21:18. See also Psalms. Isaiah 5:24. 17:13. 29:5. 33:14. 41:15. The Jewish nation, which was about to be destroyed, was represented by chaff, reserved for destruction, as it was in Matt. 3:10, by the tree which was to be hewn down and cast into the fire. The fire by which the Jews were destroyed was the fire of divine judgment: and as it did its work effectually, so it was *unquenchable*. It is for this reason that the punishment and destruction of the Jews are described in the Old Testament as being effected by unquenchable fire.

See Isaiah 66:23-24. "And it shall come to pass from *one new moon to another*, and from *one Sabbath to another*, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." The *unquenchable* fire here spoken of is in this world, as is evident from the phrase "new moon" and "Sabbath." Again, Jer. 17:27. "But if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." Fire kindled in the gates of Jerusalem, which devoured the palaces of Jerusalem, is said to be unquenchable. Ezek. 20:45 "Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field; and say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the Lord:--Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree, the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein. And all flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it; it shall not be quenched."

Here the *forests* are devoured in an *unquenchable* fire. The meaning is, not that the fire was endless, but that it was not quenched,--it continued to burn--until all the material was destroyed. So the judgments of God on the Jews were effectually done--the nation was completely devastated and destroyed. They were like chaff of the Summer threshing floor in the consuming fire of God's judgment.

The phrase *unquenchable fire*, is found in six places in the New Testament. Matt. 3:12. Luke 3:17. Mark 9:43,44,45 and 46. In all of these passages the phrase should be quenchless fire. The Greek word '*asbestos*', unquenchable, inextinguishable, is the original term in all the passages, verses 44 and 46 in Mark having the verb form, '*sbennutai*'. What does it mean? That the fire was never to expire, literally, or that nothing could extinguish it till it accomplished its purpose? The usage of the word will determine. How did Greek authors at the time of Christ employ it?

- Josephus says, [Jewish War, B. ii, ch. xvii:6.] speaking of a fire that used to burn in the temple--though at the time he wrote [A.D.80] it had gone out, and the temple was destroyed--"Every one was accustomed to bring wood for the altar, that fuel might never be needed for the fire, for it continued always unquenchable."

- Strabo, [A.D. 70} described the "unquenchable lamp" that used to burn in the Parthenon, though it has long since ceased to burn. [Lib. ix: p. 606.]
- Plutarch, {A.D. 110} in Numa, [p. 262] speaks of places in Delphi and Athens, "where there is a fire unquenchable," (*asbeston*) though in the same breath he describes it as having ceased to burn.
- Eusebius, [A.D.]325, Eccl. Hist. Lib. vi, chap. 41] in his account of the martyrdom of Cronon and Julian, at Alexandria, says they were "consumed in unquenchable fire, *asbesto puri*," though it burned only long enough to destroy their bodies.

In the Scriptures an unquenchable fire is one that cannot be extinguished until it has fulfilled its purpose.

Lev. vi: 12-13, "And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out."

Now this fire was long ago extinguished, and yet it was "never to go out." So we read in Isa. 34:9-10,

"And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever."

This language is all figurative; the unquenchable fire has long since expired. These passages and extracts suffice to exhibit the Biblical and common usage of this term. In all cases it denotes fire of temporal duration. Of course our Savior used the words in the same sense in which they had always been employed.

God's judgments are denoted by fire in frequent passages: "For there is a *fire* gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon; it has consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon." Num. 21:28. David represents the judgments of God upon the wicked in this life: "A fire goes before him and burns up his enemies round about." Psalms 97:3. God is spoken of as a "consuming fire." because he brought judgments upon the disobedient and sinful. In the prophecy of Isaiah, the destruction of Babylon is spoken of under the same figure: "Behold they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them: they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame." Isaiah 47:14. "He is a God that judges in the earth." Psalms 57:11. Paul uses nearly the same language that Moses employed when addressing the children of Israel, Deut. 4:24. "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."

Stuart says: "In the valley of Hinnom (gehenna mistranslated as 'hell' in many Bibles,) perpetual fire was kept up, in order to consume the trash which was deposited there; and, as the same trash would breed worms, hence came the expression--where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." Dr. Parkhurst adds "Our Lord seems to allude to

the worms which continually preyed on the dead carcasses that were cast out into the valley of Hinnom, (gehenna mistranslated as 'hell' in many Bibles), and to the perpetual fire, kept up to consume them." The idea of endless duration was not in the minds of the authors of these terms. They used the language to denote either literal fire that should burn until its object was accomplished, or as an emblem of divine judgments, thorough but limited.

Canon Farrar, in "Eternal Hope," "Consequences of Sin," says: "The expression 'quenchless fire,'--for the phrase 'that *never shall be quenched*,' is a simple *mistranslation*--is taken from Is. 66:24, and is purely a *figure of speech*, as it is there, or as it is in Homer's Iliad, 16:123."

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FURNACE OF FIRE?

The phrase "furnace of fire," occurs in these passages in the old Testament and it would be error to assume the furnace of fire and the lake of fire are referring to the same thing:

Deut. 4:20: "But the Lord has taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron *furnace*, even out of Egypt."

1 Kings 8:51: "For they be your people, and your inheritance which you brought forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the *furnace* of iron."

Jer. 9:4: "Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron *furnace*."

Isa. 31:9: "Says the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his *furnace* in Jerusalem."

Isa. 17:10. "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the *furnace* of affliction."

Ezek. 22:18-21: "Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the *furnace*; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore says the Lord God: Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the *furnace*, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it, so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you."

The Savior had this usage in his mind, and conveyed the same thought, namely, the approaching woes on his country and race in the only places where we find the same language in the New Testament.

Matt. 13:41-42: "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Verse 50: "And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

It is nowhere said that God has a furnace in eternity, in which to burn souls. His furnace was in Jerusalem, Isa. 31:9. At the end of that age, (aion) Jesus said: "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels (messengers), and they shall gather out of his kingdom all

things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

This was all fulfilled to the letter when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD.

BUT WHAT ABOUT ETERNAL FIRE?

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Jude 7. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 2 Peter 2:6

How clear can it be that "eternal fire" doesn't mean eternal in the literal sense?

The cities referred to by Jude are a perpetual example, not a perpetual fire.

The integration of Jude 7 with 2 Peter 2:6 makes this clear. Their fire has long since expired, but their example still remains, it is one perpetually before the world. The fire is eternal by example only because it was extinguished long ago.

Since any rational person can see how the phrase 'eternal fire' is used here, couldn't it also be used in the same way referring to phrases related to eternal punishments? Couldn't phrases related to eternal punishment also mean eternal example instead of literal eternal fire?

You will get the answers to this and many other questions as you continue in this study. By the phrase *eternal fire*, according to Rosenmuller we may understand a destructive fire, such as laid waste and annihilated the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, or we may understand by it a fire perpetually smoking. Philo, the Jew, who wrote in the time of our Savior, says, *de vita Mosis, Lib. II. p. 662 A*, that even then there were memorials to be seen in Syria of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; ruins, ashes, brimstone, smoke and lurid flames which were still emitted, indicative of abiding fire. With this agrees the Book of Wisdom, 10:7, which says: "Of whose wickedness even in this day the waste land that smokes is a testimony."

Dr. Shaw (see Clarke's Com. on Genesis 19: 24), says that "the appearance of smoke and fire of which he speaks, and to which Philo and the author of Wisdom allude, is undoubtedly to be explained by the well known existence of bituminous matter in the bed of the lake Asphaltites, which now occupies the site of those cities. These considerations are sufficient to justify the language of Jude, without resorting to the idea that he had reference to the future world."

Similar language is found in Matt. 18:8. "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or

maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." Similar is the use of the phrases.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE "WHEAT AND CHAFF," "AXE," ETC?

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which doesn't bring forth good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire....Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."--Matthew 3:10-12. "Every tree that doesn't bring forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."--Matthew 7:19. Also Luke 3: 9-17.

John here announces a calamity about to come on the Jewish people - the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish system in 70 AD. The trees were the Jewish people, the axe the cause of their overthrow. See the Old Testament usage of these terms in Isa. 40:24; Jer. 10:2-3; 21:6-8. We need only quote the latter passage to illustrate the Old Testament usage.

"For thus saith the Lord unto the king's house of Judah: Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited. And I will prepare destroyers against thee, everyone with his weapons; and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire. And many nations shall pass by the city, and they shall say every man to his neighbor. Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city?"

- Orthodox commentators of all churches apply this language to this world. "We risk little in referring this to the Roman power and armies, which, as an axe, most vehemently cut away the very existence of the Jewish polity and state."--*Calmet*.
- "By the axe being now laid to the root of the tree, may fitly be understood, first, the certainty of their desolation; and second, the nearness, in that the instrument of their destruction was already prepared, and brought close to them; the Romans that should ruin their city and nation, being already masters and rulers over them."--*Lightfoot*.
- "It was customary with the prophets to represent the kingdoms, nations and individuals whose ruin they predicted, under the notion of forests and trees, doomed to be cut down. See Jer. 46:22, 23; Ezek. 31:3-11, 12. John the Baptist employs the same metaphor. The Jewish nation is the tree, and the Romans the axe, which, by the just judgment of God, was speedily to cut it down."--*Dr. A. Clarke*.
- "In this whole verse (the 12th,) the destruction of the Jewish state is expressed in the terms of husbandmen; and by the wheat being gathered into the garner, seems meant, that the believers in Jesus should not be involved in that calamity."--*Bishop Pearce*.
- "The Romans are here termed God's fan, as in verse 10, they are called his axe, and in chapter 22. 7, they are termed his troops or armies. His floor--doesn't this mean the land of Judea, which is known in scripture as the threshing floor of the lord? God says he will now, by the winnowing fan, (the Romans,) thoroughly

cleanse his floor. The wheat - those who believe in the Lord Jesus - he will gather into his garner, meaning either take to heaven or put in a place of safety. This was done to the Christians by sending them to Pella, in Coelosyria, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem. But He will burn up the chaff - the disobedient and rebellious Jews who would not come unto Christ that they might have life.'--*Dr. Adam Clarke.*

BUT WHAT ABOUT FIRE AND BRIMSTONE?

Fire and Brimstone, only mentioned in Revelation in the New Testament, though it is frequently found in the Old, is most often used as an emblem of earthly calamities.

Job 18:15: "Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation."

Ps. 11:6: "upon the wicked he shall reign snares, *fire and brimstone*, and an horrible tempest: and this shall be the portion of their cup."

Isa. 34:9-10: "and the streams thereof (Idumea) shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever."

One view - the Preterist view says that John, in the book of Revelation, says the beast and false prophet were cast *alive* into the lake, (Rev. 19:20), and that they were tormented *day* and *night*, showing that the calamities referred to are in this world. The "Lake" belongs with the "pale horse," "the beast" and other imagery in this remarkable composition; undoubtedly it has reference to the destruction soon to befall the Jewish nation, of which Revelation seems to be a prophecy.

The distinguished author Chas. Kingsley, writes: ("Letters") "Fire and Worms, whether physical or spiritual, must in all logical fairness be supposed to do what fire and worms do, viz: destroy decayed and dead matter, and set free its elements to enter into new organisms; that as they are beneficent and purifying agents in this life, they must be supposed such in the future life, and that the conception of fire as an engine of torture, is an unnatural use of that agent and not to be attributed to God without blasphemy, unless you suppose that the suffering (like all which he inflicts) is intended to teach man something which he cannot learn elsewhere.*

"Finally, you may call upon them to rejoice that there is a fire of God the Father whose name is love, burning forever unquenchable to destroy out of every man's heart, and out of the hearts of all nations, and off the physical and moral world, all which offends and makes a lie. That into that fire the Lord will surely cast all shams, lies, hypocrisies, tyrannies, legalism, arrogance, false doctrines, yes and the men who love them too much to give them up, that the smoke of their torment [Greek 'basanismos'] may ascend perpetually for a warning and a beacon to all nations.

The torture spoken of is the torture which makes men confess the truth, for that is the real meaning of the Greek 'basanismos'. It means the touchstone by which gold was tested.

The touchstone was called a 'torment.' Inherent in the word is testing and trial; in other words a judgment. It should be added that if endless fire were taught, something more durable than "chaff" would be named as fuel."

The word BURN means combustion, or to consume. To consume does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation in the absolute sense. When fire consumes a log in your fireplace it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely changes their form. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example: a tree might be cut down, sawed into fire wood, and burned. When the wood is burning the heat causes the chemicals of which the wood is composed to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree is no longer identified as the form of a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply CHANGED into a DIFFERENT FORM and exists in its new form within the atmosphere as water, carbon dioxide, etc. Thus, to burn, means to CHANGE. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes "goes up in smoke," to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a fire, before long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go up in steam. To burn means to CHANGE, and the change is always UPWARD in its motion.

FIRE is the heat and light that you feel and see when something burns. It takes heat to start a fire, but once the fire is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, fire is really HEAT and LIGHT.

The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word 'brimstone' or sulfur defines the character of the fire. The Greek word THEION translated 'brimstone' is exactly the same word THEION which means 'divine.'

Sulfur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's Iliad (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from THEION is THEIOO, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon, 1897 Edition).

To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a 'lake of fire and brimstone' would mean a 'lake of divine purification.' The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the 'standard theology' explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is incorrectly associated with it.

Referring to Christ, Malachi 3:2 says "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap." What exactly is a 'fuller'?

From Easton's Bible Dictionary: The word "full" is from the Anglo-Saxon fullian, meaning "to whiten." To 'full' or be a 'fuller' is to press or scour cloth in a mill. This art is one of great antiquity. Mention is made of "fuller's soap" (Malachi 3:2), and of "the fuller's field" (2 Kings 18:17). At his transfiguration our Lord's raiment is said to have been white "so as no fuller on earth could white them" (Mark 9:3). En-rogel (q.v.), meaning literally "foot-fountain," has been interpreted as the "fuller's fountain," because there the fullers trod the cloth with their feet.

From International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: The fuller was usually the dyer, since, before the woven cloth could be properly dyed, it must be freed from the oily and gummy substances naturally found on the raw fiber. Many different substances were in ancient times used for cleansing.

We have shown earlier that sulfur or brimstone is another way of saying 'fullers soap' since sulfur was commonly used in Bible times. In fact, this would be more true to the original meaning and is the actual word used in some translations. So Malachi says Christ is like fire and brimstone. Mat 25:41 says, "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Have you learned enough to relate these 2 verses? Also review [this section](#).

BUT WHAT ABOUT JUDGMENT?

As with all doctrinal views, there are always variations within the various views. Universal Salvation is no exception. Some teach all judgments occur in this life with death being the ultimate judgment and others teach various judgments after death. I am sure there are other variations on this issue. A lot of the issues have to do with the differences between the punishment or sentence verses the consequences of sin. In most cases the punishment or sentence for a murder is a life sentence; the consequences of murder are much more involved.

The PUNISHMENT or sentence for the murder doesn't involve the toll and damage to the families involved on both sides or the toll and damage to the victim, society and the perpetrator. The CONSEQUENCES for the murder involve all that and more.

One can justifiably argue that judgment involves both punishment and consequences. However, many times in scripture when judgment is mentioned it is referring to the punishment or sentence for sin, not necessarily the consequences of sin. One view might be that the consequences of sin are to be handled by men with the help of God and the punishment for sin is to be handled by God, sometimes with the help of men. We are focusing here more on judgment being defined as the punishment or sentence FOR sin.

The popular idea of God's judgment is several variations on this theme: At some time in the future spiritual world, there will be a *post-mortem* literal throne and judge and all the necessities of a legal tribunal. Human beings will be sent either to endless happiness or eternal, literal burning. Their fate will be determined by the condition they were in

during the last few moments of life. So that one whose life was good, but who fell into evil ways during the last few moments in life, will receive eternal burnings. Another, who was wicked for seventy years, but turned to God at the last moment, will escape all punishment and will receive heaven for only moments of obedience. The happy one will look from Abraham's bosom into the lake of fire and see the evil people. The evil ones will gaze from endless fire and torment into heaven and see the saved. Is this, or the various variations on this judgment theme, the true doctrine of the judgment of God? Note: Before proceeding, you might want to read the program notes for one of Richard Wayne Garganta's messages titled, "Judgment brings Salvation" on the [Program Notes Page](#). There are others that teach people are predestined for heaven or hell.

JUDGMENT IS A JOYFUL OCCASION!

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the lord; for he comes to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."--Psalm 98:4-9. It is not a scene to cause horror, but delight. There are MANY scriptures that speak of rejoicing because of the judgments of God.

JUDGMENT IS, AT LEAST IN PART, IN THIS WORLD.

"Verily he is a God that judges in the earth."--Psalm 58.11. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he has set judgment in the earth."--Isa. 42: 4. "For *judgment* I am come into this world."--John 9:39. "for the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son."--John 5:22. "Verily he is a God that judges in the earth." "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner."--Prov. 11:31. "Now is the judgment of this world."--John 12:31. "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come."--Rev. 14:7.

1 Pet. 4:17: "For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God." Says Dr. Clarke on this passage: "*Judgment must begin at the house of God.*--Our Lord had predicted that, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, his followers would have to endure various calamities. See Matt. 24:9-12,22. Mark 13:12-13. John 16:2. Here his true disciples are called the house or family of God. That the converted Jews suffered much from their brethren, the zealots or factions into which the Jews were at that time divided, needs little proof. Some interpreters think that this was in conformity to the purpose of God mentioned in Matt.23:35, "That on you may come all the righteous blood shed from the foundation of the world."

Macknight's testimony is the same: "That the Jewish Christians were to be involved in the same punishment; and that it was proper to begin *at them* as a part of the devoted Jewish nation, notwithstanding they were become the house of God; because the justice of God would, thereby, be more illustriously displayed. But, probably, the word, *krima*,

which we translate *judgment*, may mean no more than affliction and distress. It was a Jewish maxim that, when God was about to pour down some common and general judgment, He began with afflicting his *own people* in order to correct and amend them that they might be prepared for the overflowing scourge."

JUDGMENT IS FOR EVERY ACT AND THOUGHT.

"But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account of in the day of judgment."--Matt. 12:36. "For all these things, God will bring you into judgment."--Ecc. 11:19. "God will bring every work into judgment, every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."--Ecc. 12:14.

Now if every act, word, and thought, whether good or evil, is judged and punished or rewarded, it is plain enough that judgment is, at least in part, conduct based. Clearly these verses are making clear that the judgments of God are based on God's omniscience - full knowledge of all things.

God's judgments will be fully integrated with the reality of one's life resulting in absolute, infallible, JUST justice. There will be no bias, error or prejudice in God's judgments and no valid appeals will be necessary or possible.

Another view on these verses speaks of the ongoing nature of God's judgments: The Biblical language of a throne and a day of judgment are figurative descriptions of the unfailing decisions of the great judge who "every morning doth bring his judgment to light,"--Zeph. 3:5; and who never fails to bring upon each one just what they need to move the soul forward using whatever means are necessary. God's judgments "are more to be desired than fine gold, and are sweeter to the taste than honey and the honey-comb," of all who perceive their beneficial purpose.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE JUDGMENT TO COME?

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go your way for now. When I have a convenient season, I will call you."--Acts 24:25.

Felix was a Roman pagan--a believer in a future judgment whose punishments were after death. His wickedness, and the iniquity of the pagans around Paul, illustrate the negative influence of a belief in a far-off and uncertain judgment and a disbelief in a near, immediate and certain retribution. Paul preached to Felix, not a remote, but an impending judgment. The Greek '*kai tou krimatos, tou mellontes esethai*', rendered "judgment to come," ought to be translated "the judgment about to be." The passage reads literally, "And as he was discoursing concerning justice, self-government, and that judgment about to come, Felix, being terrified, answered, Go your way for now. When I have a convenient season, I will call you."

Parkhurst says, "*mello* signifies, with an infinitive following, to be about to do a thing, *futurussum*. (Matt. 2:13; 16:27). Both the verb and participle are in the New Testament joined with the infinitive future, as *esethai*. So likewise in the purest Greek writers."

Dr. Campbell says: "*Mellon* often means not *future*, but *near*. There is just such a difference between '*estai*', and '*mellei esesthai*', in Greek, as there is between *it will be*, and *it is about to be* in English. This holds particularly in threats and warnings."

Now Felix was a corrupt man; he was living in open adultery with Drusilla, and was a sample of the wickedness of his times, and as Paul announced the sure results of his wickedness, and of that of his contemporaries, the fearful picture aroused the conscience of the wicked ruler, and he was alarmed. Within ten years, Nero, the Emperor, was killed, and Felix, his favorite, went under in the general downfall, and the awful times that followed vindicated the prophecy of the apostle, and justified the fears of the guilty and conscience-smitten king. The apostle proclaimed to the procurator of Judea the legitimate judgment *about to come*, and that did come within a decade on him and those who like him were sinners against God and man and their own souls. While this puts this verse in CONTEXT, there are many other aspects to this issue that are discussed elsewhere in this document.

Too many Christians take scripture out of CONTEXT and use it to fit a doctrinal position. A doctrinal position should fit with the CONTEXT of a scripture.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST?

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."--Rom. 14:10. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the [things done] in [his] body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad."--2 Cor. 5:10.

As I mentioned under the section [Judgment](#), there are various views even within the Universal Salvation camp on some issues.

I believe in a final works based judgment for everyone where rewards are given...or not. I have no problem with this verse referring to that judgment.

But here is an alternate view that requires consideration: "A erroneous translation destroys the apostle's meaning in the second passage quoted above. "Done, things" and "his" are not in the original, but are words supplied by the translators. The passage reads, "That every one may receive the *in body*." The literal reading is, "We must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive through the body according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad." That is, Jesus came into this world for the purpose of judgment; his tribunal is now set up. We are all before it and, while in the body, we are receiving the consequences of our conduct."

Words inserted by translators are sometimes needed for clarity but at times reflects the doctrinal bias of the translators. For a variety of reasons, I don't have a problem with the inserted words in the text despite the view above.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT?

"Verily I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."--Matt. 10:15.

"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin woe unto thee, Bethsaida for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."--Matt. 11:23-24.

"and whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart hence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."--Mark 6:11.

"But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin woe unto thee, Bethsaida for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you."--Luke 10:10-14.

Of course these cities were not to go into the eternal world, to be judged. Their day of judgment had passed, and as cities they were conspicuous examples of the consequences of wickedness. Dr. Clarke Observes: "The day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah was the time in which the Lord destroyed them by fire and brimstone, out of heaven."

Hammond interprets the verses this way:--"I assure you, the punishment or destruction that will light upon that city will be such, that the destruction of Sodom shall appear to have been more tolerable than that."

Wakefield:--"*In the day of vengeance, punishment or trial.* This is undoubtedly the genuine sense of the phrase, which has not the least reference to the day of general judgment. All that our Savior intends to say is when the temporal calamities of that place come upon it, they will be even worse than those of Sodom and Gomorrah. See this phrase employed in precisely the same meaning by the Septuagint [used by Jesus] in Prov. 6:34."

Again, CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT. These cities did suffer a fate worse than Sodom and Gomorrah in many ways in the fall of 70 AD. Sodom's fate was quick

whereas these cities suffered long and hard with prolonged war, turmoil, chaos and starvation.

BUT WHAT ABOUT CHRIST BEING THE JUDGE OF THE WORLD?

"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."--Acts 17:31.

"For judgment I am come into this world."--John 9:39. "The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son."--John 5:22. "And has given him authority to execute judgment also."--verse 27. "Now is the judgment of this world."--John 12:31.

"In that *day* there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."--Zech. 13:1. "In that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one."--Zech. 14:9. Again: "Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute *judgment* and justice in the earth."--Jer. 23:5. "The day is at hand."--Rom. 13:12. "Now is the day of salvation."--2 Cor. 6:2. "Abraham rejoiced to see my *day*, and he saw it, and was glad."--John 8:56.

Macknight says: "In the Hebrew language, *to judge*, signifies to *rule*, or *govern*." Note how many of Israel's rulers were also judges. Jesus came to rule or govern the world, and he shall continue his work till he has called all unto himself, and God is all in all. (I Cor. 15:24.) Then the Gospel day ends, and Jesus surrenders his office as judge to his Father. Christ's day of judgment began when he was on earth, and will continue till his object is accomplished, in the reformation of all. None of these scriptures negate Universal Salvation as Richard Wayne Garganta's message on "[Judgment brings Salvation](#)" makes clear.

Jesus Brings Judgment Resulting In Salvation! Judgments correct and set things straight!

(Psalm 2) 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" Notice judgment and salvation mentioned together.

(John 12) "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw [Greek - catch in a net or drag] all men to Myself." Notice judgment and salvation mentioned together.

(John 9:39) Jesus then said, "I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind." Notice judgment and salvation mentioned together.

(Mat 12:18) "BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL-PLEASED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES. Notice judgment and salvation mentioned together.

(John 5) "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given

all judgment to the Son, Notice judgment and salvation mentioned together.
(John 3:17) "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." Notice judgment and salvation mentioned together.
(Jam 2:13) For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. (Rom 12:21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Notice judgment and salvation mentioned together.

God's judgments are for correction, salvation and for a good end, not because he lost his patience. This idea that God finally "loses it" and burns people alive is an invention of men. This thinking gives men an excuse to be impatient and to give up on people.

BUT WHAT ABOUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT?

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."--Hebrews 9:27-28.

People love quoting, "It is appointed unto men once to die." But what of Lazarus and others Jesus raised from the dead? Clearly, they died more than once. This alone mandates a closer look at this verse.

While I have already stated I have no problem with the teaching that there is a life assessment after death, I believe the following research interesting for further study:

Hebrews was written to Jews and many Christians have problems understanding it. While people understand the High Priest was a Christ type, they generally don't integrate the sacrificial death with the High Priest. This text is usually misstated in this shape. "it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment." But the reader of the context will perceive that Paul was not speaking of the physical death of mankind, but of the sacrificial death of the high priest. Paul was contrasting the death of Christ with the ceremonial death of the Aaronic priesthood. The language of the original shows this more clearly than does the language of our version. In the Greek, the definite article '*tois*', (the or those) precedes the word translated men, (*'anthropois*'), and thus it reads, "it is appointed unto the (or those) men once to die." What men? The context shows:

"For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands, the antitypes of the true ones; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God in our behalf; not that he should offer himself often, even as the High Priest enters into the holy place every year with blood of others: for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once for all in a completion of the ages has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And *as* it is appointed unto those men (that is the high priests) once to die, but after this, judgment: *so* Christ once offered to bear the sins of the many; and unto them that look for him shall appear the second time without a sin-offering unto salvation.--Heb. 9:24-28. This is a literal translation.

Exodus 28:29-30 "Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breast piece of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD

continually. You shall put in the breast piece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually."

The plain statement is: As the high priests, the Christ types, died a figurative death, annually, (see above), so Christ was offered once for all in the sinner's behalf. The ordinary reference to the dying of all men leaves the "as" and "so" without meaning or application.

But when we see that the apostle was showing the superiority of the mission of Christ over the annual sacrifices of the Jewish high priest the meaning becomes plain. He employed "the men" as types of the superior sacrifice of Christ.

The reader cannot fail to see that it is not mankind, but certain men, "the men" who all the way through this chapter and the next are compared to Christ, who are said once to die. These men are the priests, or the successors of the high priests under the law. They died figuratively, once a year on the great day of atonement in the offering of sacrifices.

Ex. 30:1-10--"And you shall make an altar to burn incense upon; and you shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you. And Aaron shall burn sweet incense on it every morning; when he dresses the lamps he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. You shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall you pour drink offering on it. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is most holy unto the Lord."

Having performed this rite, having died by proxy, the high priest entered the holy of holies, and pronounced the sentence of absolution from the mercy seat. Ex. 25:22: Numbers 7:89.

"And there will I meet with you, and will commune with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment unto the children of Israel. And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim; and he spoke unto him."

The priests represent Christ, and their death illustrates and prefigures the death of Christ; but man's death, and an after death judgment bears no relation to the death of Christ. The common use of this text is but little less than an outrage on the sense of the apostle. No one can carefully read this and the following chapter, and fail to see that the language is exclusively applicable to the Jewish high priests and the death of Christ, and has no reference to an after death judgment.

Judgment begins with each soul on its arrival at the period of accountability. It continues as a soft, and sometimes severe, disciplinary process until it converts and saves. Every knee will bow and every tongue shall confess [Greek - be in complete agreement] that Jesus the Christ is Lord to the glory [recognition and honor] of the Father!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE GNASHING OF TEETH?

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.--Luke 13:28.

Forensic Archaeologists have uncovered proof that, due to the stress of that time, nightly tooth grinding was common. That was a joke - I couldn't resist, I wanted to make sure you were paying attention. The "Kingdom of God" is the reign of Christ, a spiritual realm of truth and goodness and consequent happiness. It was "at hand" when Christianity was first announced.--Matt. 3:2. It is "not of this world,"--John 18:36. It came to the people when Jesus spoke--Matt. 12: 28, and men pressed into it, --Luke 16:16. It was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles,--Matt. 21:43, and Jesus declared:

"And many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the "children of the kingdom, the Jews, shall be cast out into darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."--Matt. 8:11.

This was when the Savior's prophecy was fulfilled.--Luke 13:34-35.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and stones them that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her offspring under her wings, and ye would not yield? Behold your house is left unto you desolate." But this was not to be final! Jesus then tells unrepentant Jews, "Verily I say unto you, you shall not see me until the time shall come when you shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." Meditate on this!

Dr. Whitby gives the correct view when he says; "To lie down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven means to *become the sons of Abraham through faith*, (Gal. 3;7,) and the blessings of faithful Abraham coming on them, that they may receive the promise of the spirit, (verse 14) through faith in Christ to be the seed of Abraham and heirs, according to the promise, (verse 29) via the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:3) renewed to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and confirmed to Jacob (Gen 28:14) and to be, according to Isaac, the children of promise." (Gal. 4:28)

The gnashing of teeth denotes the vexation and wrath of the spiritually proud Jews when they should find themselves outside the kingdom, while the Gentiles they had so despised were within. The Rich Man and Lazarus pictures the two classes, and exhibits the wide contrast, in that parable.

BUT WHAT ABOUT BEING DAMNED AND DAMNATION, ETC?

Damnation, damned, etc., in the New Testament are precisely equivalent to condemnation or condemned. The words damned and damnation with their generally accepted meaning, would never occur if the Greek words were correctly translated. What is the meaning of the word damnation? It is not a condition of suffering in an endless hell. The bible defines it as meaning condemn, judge, punish, etc.

When Scripture says, Rom 5:18, "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;"
when Christ says, "And this *is* condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil;" John 3:18,
"He that believeth not *is* condemned *already*; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God;" John 9:39,
"For judgment I am come into this world," and in John 12:31, "Now is the judgment of this world:"
and when Revelation says: Rev. 14:6-7, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come;"
the meanings are all precisely the same.

Dr. Campbell says that damned "is not a correct interpretation of the Greek word. The term 'damned' with us relates solely to the eternal doom of those in the lake of fire. This cannot be affirmed, in truth, of the Greek 'katakrino', which corresponds exactly to the English word condemn." That is the real meaning.

BUT WHAT ABOUT EATING AND DRINKING DAMNATION TO YOURSELF?

"For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."-- 1 Cor. 11:29.

The word translated "damnation" is improperly translated. The Greek '*Krima*' denotes punishment, resulting in improvement, according to verse 32: "But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

The best rendering of '*krima*' is judgment, by which word it is usually represented in English.

Matt. 7:2, "For with what judgment you judge," etc. Luke 23:40, it is rendered condemnation: "Thou art in the same condemnation." Luke 24:20, it is rendered condemned: "Deliver him to be condemned to death." Jesus applied the word to himself, in John 9:39, "For judgment I am come into this world."

If we substitute damnation for these words, we shall see how improperly it is said, he "eats damnation, etc." Verse 30 explains '*krima*': "For this cause many are weak and

sickly among you, and many sleep." Those who had made the Lord's Supper an occasion of gluttony, had eaten and drunken condemnation.

Whitby:--"*Damnation*: the word imports temporal judgments meaning judgments related to this side of life; as when St. Peter says, the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. (1 Peter 4:17)

One view that is rarely mentioned regarding this verse is that the Lord's body referred to was the body of Christ - the church. New Testament teaching that we are the 'body' of Christ is irrefutable. The whole CONTEXT in discussion is Paul rebuking the church for making the Communion meal a drunken bash by some and neglecting others that didn't have food. [verses 21, 22] Paul may have been saying, "You are being inconsiderate and are mistreating the body of Christ - the church. This is resulting in judgments [condemnation, negative results] from self-absorbed and self-abusive behaviors and lack of spiritual growth and nurturing from the Church - the body of Christ."

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE UNBELIEVER BEING DAMNED?

"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not, shall be damned." Mark 16:16.

If we say that "damned" means eternal burnings, we shut out of salvation all infants, retarded, insane, and those that never get to properly hear the gospel. Why? Because they do not believe. We also consign the overwhelming majority of mankind to eternal burnings. Why? According to the scriptural criteria given, there are hardly any believers on earth today because we are told in the next verse that all believers may be known by their being able to heal the sick, and take poison without injury:

"and these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. "

Again, the Greek word rendered 'damned' denotes someone judged or condemned. Bishop Horne thus translates it: "He that believes not shall be condemned, or accountable for his sins."

The same word occurs and has the same meaning in several places. In Matt. 20:18, it is applied to Christ; "They shall condemn him to death. Again in Matt. 27:3, "Then Judas, who had betrayed him, (Jesus) when he saw that he was condemned. repented himself," etc. John 8:10, Jesus said to the guilty woman, "Has no man condemned you? Then neither do I condemn you." "They all condemned him (Christ) to be guilty of death." Mark 14:64.

Learn well that this word does NOT mean damnation as popularly defined. The text had a primary application to the apostolic age, though by accommodation it may be employed

today to state the great fact that believers are saved from the penalties of unbelief, while unbelievers are condemned to the penalties of unbelief. John 3:18-19, "He that believes not, is condemned (or damned) already, and [pay attention] this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." In other words, loving darkness is accompanied by a state of condemnation. The language has not the remotest reference to the idea of eternal burnings.

All men have been unbelievers at one point. So if damnation means eternal burnings then all men must experience it. However, we all know unbelief can be followed by faith resulting in salvation.

Cannon Farrar says, (preface to "Eternal Hope"): The verb "to damn and its cognates does not once occur in the Old Testament. No word conveying any such meaning occurs in the Greek of the New Testament. The words so rendered mean "to judge," "judgment" and "condemnation. If the word "damnation" has come to mean *more* than these words do--as to all but the most educated readers is notoriously the case--then the word is a grievous mistranslation. It entirely and terribly perverts and obscures the real meaning of our Lord's utterances. If the word "damnation" were used as the rendering of the very same words in multitudes of other passages (where our translators have rightly translated them) it would make those passages both impossible and grotesque."

In his sermon, "Hell--what it is not," he says: "The verb 'to damn' in the Greek Testament is neither more nor less than the verb 'to condemn'. In the vast majority of instances the same translators have rightly translated the words using 'judgment' and 'condemnation.'" And in Excursus II, in 'Eternal Hope,' he says: "In the New Testament the words "*krino, krisis* and *krima*" occur some one hundred and ninety times, the words "*katakrino, katakrisis, katakrima*" twenty-four times.

There are only fifteen places out of more than two hundred in which our translation has deviated from the proper renderings of 'judge' and 'condemn' into 'damn', damnation or similar."

He makes these corrections: "Damnable heresies," in 2 Peter 2:1, should be "destructive heresies." 2 Thess. 2:12, "might be damned" should be "may be judged." "Greater damnation in Matt. 23:14, Mark 12:40, Luke 20:47, should be "severer judgment." Matt 23:33, "damnation of hell" should be "judgment of *Gehenna*." Mark 3:29, "Eternal damnation" should be "*aeonian* sin". You will learn about this word in part three. Mark 16:16, "He that believes not shall be damned," ought to be "disbelieving shall be condemned." John 5:29, "Resurrection of damnation" should be "resurrection of judgment," etc.

Chas. Kingsley says, ("Letters"): "The unbeliever experiences the condemnation which unbelief imparts." This is the plain and total meaning of the passage.

A person refusing to see they are headed towards a brick wall are condemned to suffer the penalty, but that doesn't mean they are doomed to eternal burnings.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT THEY ALL MIGHT BE DAMNED?

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who didn't believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."-- 1 Thess. 2:11-12.

AGAIN, The word "damned" here should be "judged". In 1 Tim. 5:12, "Having damnation because they have cast off their first faith," and in Rom. 3:8, of slanderers, "whose damnation is just" the present tense is used, showing that the damnation is already experienced. Their unbelief results in a judgment.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION?

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto to resurrection of *damnation*."--John 5:28-29.

What sort of a resurrection was Jesus talking about? Sinners are considered dead in scripture. While there certainly could be a dual reference here, let's examine the CONTEXT closely. He had just cured the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and declared that he had derived his power from God.

"For as the Father raises up the dead and quickens them, even so the son quickens whom he will," and he then continues to talk of a moral quickening or spiritual resurrection, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

That is, the resurrection he was referring to had taken place with some who were then living on earth. And he then adds: verses 25-27

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in himself; so has he given to the Son to have life in himself; and has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man."

The "Damnation" in v: 29, is the same Greek word that is translated "condemnation" in the 24th, and "judgment" in the 27th. Jesus was quoting and fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 12:2:

"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

Biblical 'dust' can be literal or symbolic. See section - [Dust of the earth](#).

Note the similarities in Eph. 2:1, "and you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sin." It was predominately a moral awakening that occurred in those believing the Christ that is referred to. Those who were quickened into a perception of the truth and disregarded the heavenly message experienced a resurrection from their death in trespasses and sins. But their resurrection was to condemnation - which some call the "second death". Paul describes it:

Rom 7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

Says Dr. George Campbell, in his "Notes" on the Four Gospels, vol. ii. p. 113: "The Greek word '*anastasin*', or rather the phrase '*anastasis tou nekron*' is the common term by which the resurrection is denominated in the New Testament. Yet, this is neither the only nor the basic meaning of the word '*anastasis*'. It can mean being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state after an interruption. The verb '*anastemi*' is similar and both words are used in this context by the writers of the New Testament and the Septuagint. Therefore, being true to the meaning of the word, rising from a seat is properly termed '*anastasis*', and so is waking out of sleep, or promotion from an inferior condition."

This is the sense in which the prophet speaks: "Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves; and shall put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, says the Lord."-- Ezek. 37:12-14.

But beyond the final resurrection there is no condemnation. All are then "made alive in Christ," (1 Cor. 15.) and are "equal to the angels, and are the children of "God," (Luke 20:36, Mark 12:25)

Rom 14:9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

The best consensus is that the language in John 5:27-29 had its fulfillment in this world, in our Savior's day, in the moral awakening caused by the Christ of God. Learn this well - John 11:25 - Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

The problems with taking the verse too literally is it makes all men saved, and at the same time all men damned forever! Apply it to all who have reached accountability, and it will be seen that as all have "done good" all will be in Heaven. And as all have "done evil" - for "no man lives and doesn't sin"- all must be in eternal flames. It says nothing of those who, having done evil, repent. The damnation is for all who have done evil! But if we

give the word its proper meaning we find no difficulty. Each evil act can receive its proper condemnation and then be followed by salvation.

Lightfoot observes: "These words might also be applied to a spiritual resurrection as in Ezek, 37:12.

"and they shall come forth, they that do good after they hear his voice and receive to the resurrection of life; and they that do evil after they hear his voice and reject unto the resurrection of judgment."

The word damnation wherever used has precisely the same meaning as condemnation or judgment with no reference whatever to the duration of the condition designated.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CASE OF JUDAS?

These passages relate to the sin of Judas and its consequences:

Acts 1:16-18. "Men and brethren, this scripture needed to be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke concerning Judas. He was the guide for them that took Jesus. He was numbered with us, and has obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and, falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

Matt. 26:24. "Woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Mark 14:21. "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; good were it for that man if he had never been born."

John 17:12. "Those that you gave me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

Acts 1:25. "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

John 6:70. "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

Matt. 27:3-5. "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented and brought the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? You see to it; and he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed. He then went and hanged himself."

Many would say that if any person should be taught in the Bible as going to eternal flames, Judas should be explicitly mentioned. Is it? None of the terminology referring to him teach any such doctrine. As we come to understand their meaning, we see that while they characterize his wickedness and describe his punishment, they confine it to this world. Besides, the Bible declares,

"the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke concerning Judas, " that it was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" that Jesus was delivered up and "by wicked hands crucified and slain." Acts 2:23.

Many teach that God creates people predestined to evil and then judges them for it. They teach that accepting the sovereignty of God is to not question any injustice committed by God because we are the clay and he is the potter.

To believe that Judas was consigned to eternal flames for doing what must be done in consequence of God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge and considering the undeniable repentance Judas exhibited is to accuse the Almighty of an act that would blast his name with infamy.

Learn this well - if you hear ANY Christian speak with certainty regarding who is or is not in "hell" - you are dealing with immaturity and religious arrogance.

Do the terms used of Judas allow us to regard him as outside the ability to obtain mercy, or beyond God's power to restore and save? For instance, he is said to be lost and to be...

JUDAS THE SON OF PERDITION, ETC.

"Those that you gave me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition."-- John 17:12.

"Kept" and "lost" are used here to contrast each other. The eleven were "kept," by remaining true, and Judas was "lost" out of the apostleship. He was lost as all men were, for Christ came to "save that which was lost." The exact same word for 'lost' in this verse is used in these popular scriptures:

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
Luke 15:24 For this my [prodigal] son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

The language has no reference to his final condition, but to his state at that time.

Commit this to memory - the biblical state of being 'lost' or 'destroyed' does NOT mean one can't be saved from it!

Judas is called "the son of perdition," John 17:12; the apostle speaks of those "who draw back unto perdition," Heb. 10:39; and of "the perdition of ungodly men," 2 Pet. 3:7; and the book of Revelation 17:8-11 declares that certain ones are destined to perdition. What is the meaning of this word 'perdition', (*Greek apoleia*)? It is the same word found in the following passages:

Matt. 7:13, "broad is the way that leads to 'destruction';" Acts 8:20, "Your money will perish with you;" 2 Pet. 2:1, "shall bring in damnable heresies; v.2, "follow their

pernicious ways;" v.3, "their *damnation* slumbers not;" Matt. 26:8, "to what purpose this *waste* of the ointment? Acts 25:16, "it is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to *die*."

It is found twenty times in the New Testament, and is translated destruction, waste, perdition, die, damnable and pernicious. Its meaning is never endless torment; but it denotes loss, waste, ruin, etc.; and the word comes from the same root word 'lost' mentioned above.

In Heb. 10:39: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul;" The meaning, while not minus the possibility of a dual reference, is that the disciples would not experience the destruction about to overtake the wicked people in 70 AD. This is the view given by many orthodox commentators.

Wakefield: "But we are not they who withdraw unto destruction, but who faithfully persevere to the deliverance of our lives."

Clarke.--"We are not cowards who slink away and, not withstanding, meet *destruction*; but we are faithful, and have our souls saved alive. The Greek words '*peripoiesis psuche*' signify the *preservation of life*. See Ephesians. He intimates that, notwithstanding the persecution was hot, yet they managed to escape with their lives."

Lightfoot "Christ's pouring down his vengeance in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish system is called his 'coming in his glory' and his 'coming in judgment.' The destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish system and nation is characterized in Scripture as the destruction of the whole world. There are several passages that speak of the nearness of that destruction. While you may not agree with all his conclusions, an excellent study on these passages is "[The Parousia](#)" by J. Stewart Russell available on this site at no cost.

Such passages include 1 Cor. 10:11, 'Upon whom the ends of the world are come;' 1 Pet. 4:7, 'The end of all things is at hand'; Heb. 10:37, 'Yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.--James 5:9.

As "son of thunder" in the New Testament meant an eloquent man, and "son of peace," a peaceable man, so "son of perdition" denotes one abandoned to wickedness. Judas was lost - a son of perdition because of his great wickedness. He lost the apostleship but nothing indicates that his loss was final, especially given his repentance. The best critics of several churches give this view.

Whitby:--"And none of them is lost; i.e., either by temporal death (chapter 18:9) or by falling off from me, but the son of perdition, i.e., Judas, worthy of perdition. So a son of death is worthy of it, (2 Sam. 41:5) and the Greek '*ethnos apoleias*' is a nation fit to be destroyed. (Eccl. 16:9; Matt. 23:15) Rosenmuller--"No one is ignorant that Judas is here the intended betrayer of Christ, and who had fallen off from him. '*Apoleia*', (perdition) as the preceding words teach seems to indicate a defection from Jesus the teacher. Also in 2 Thess. 2:3, the phrase '*ho uhios amartias*', (the son of transgression) is used concerning a noted impostor who persuaded many to a defection from the Christian religion."

There is nothing in the use of the word perdition to intimate that it means more than significant loss. In fact, the more he was lost the more certain he is to experience the saving power of Christ.

Christ came to "seek and save that which was lost, Matt. 18:11, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," 10:6. The prodigal son, the piece of silver, and the hundredth sheep were all lost, but all these were found. Their being lost was the sole reason why they were sought after and saved from their lost condition. We have "all gone astray like lost sheep," but the lost shall be found and "there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

As mentioned above, the Greek word '*apollumi*' is the word usually rendered *lost* and *lose* and it is also translated *destroy*, *perish*, and *marred*."

Lord, save us, we '*perish*'," Matt. 8:25; "Go, rather to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel," Matt. 10:6; "Whosoever will save his life shall *lose* it," Mark 8:35; "I have found my sheep, which was *lost*," Luke 15:6; "There shall not a hair of your head *perish*," Luke 21:18, are instances of the use of the word. As applied to the soul it means a condition of sinfulness. Matt. 10:6, "The lost sheep of the house of Israel;" 18:11, "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost."

But nothing is more clearly taught than Jesus, who came to seek and save the lost, will continue his work until he finds them. There is no final loss in the New Testament.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE GOSPEL BEING HID?

"But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that *are* lost."-- 2 Cor. 4:3.

The present tense is used. Those who are lost in trespasses and sin are blind to the Gospel; it is hid from their sight. That is all that can be made out of this verse. It mentions those who "are lost," not shall be finally and eternally lost. 1 Cor 2:14, "But the natural man does not welcome what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to know it since it is evaluated spiritually." Rom 8:20, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope."

Meditate on the fact Scripture teaches man is UNABLE to perceive the things of God and were subjected by God UNWILLINGLY. So, why is it commonly taught that God never goes against your free will? Jesus said you CAN'T come to the Father unless he draws you. The Greek for 'draw' is "to catch as in a net, to drag." Jesus used the same word when he said, "I will draw all men unto me."

Government officials now admit they know enough about human psychology and behavior to win anybody over WITHOUT the use of torture if given enough time. Isn't it sad that it is commonly believed God isn't able to win all men over at all?

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MAN WHO LOSES HIS OWN SOUL?

"For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"-- Matt. 16:26.

The word soul here should be life. It is *the Greek word 'psuche'* which, though controversially translated soul at times, is the word rendered life twice in the preceding verses. Dr. Clarke says: "'Lose his own soul, or lose his life.' On what authority many have translated the word '*psuche*' in the twenty-fifth verse as 'life' and in this verse as 'soul', I know not. I am certain it means life in both places."

But it is not the mere animal life that is referred to; it is the faculty of enjoying life. The selfish man who chiefly seeks to save his life loses it. He who unselfishly is willing to sacrifice his life, gains it. It doesn't profit one at all to gain the world if he loses his life or degrades the quality of his life in the process.

It is true that one may lose his soul in the process of seeking gain. The text could have a double reference. The soul is often lost, but not beyond recovery. Like the lost silver, the lost sheep, and the lost prodigal son, Christ will seek the lost until he finds them. He will then BRING THEM BACK as the scripture says. Christ will lose NONE!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE VERSE THAT SAYS "ONE OF YOU IS A DEVIL?"

Jesus told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" Judas was a devil as Peter was Satan because of their conduct at the time. Their final condition and character was not referred to. What was referred to was their state at that time based on their conduct at that time.

BUT WHAT ABOUT IT IS BETTER NEVER TO HAVE BEEN BORN?

"The son of man goes as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Matt. 26:24. Mark 14:21. Luke 22:22.

This is an example where knowing the idioms and figures of speech used in Bible times helps with the CONTEXT.

It is said that this language cannot be true of Judas if he is ever to be redeemed, no matter how much he may have suffered previously. The answer to this is that this was a proverbial expression among the Jews, and was not employed literally.

Job says: "Let the day perish wherein I was born." Job 3:3. Solomon said: "If a man live many years and his soul be not filled with good; and also that he hath no burial; I say that an untimely birth is better than he."-- Eccles. 6:3.

The commentator, Kenrick, says: "'It had been good for him, if he had never been born,' is a *proverbial* phrase, and not to be understood literally; for it is not consistent with our ideas of the divine goodness to make the existence of any being a curse to him, or to cause him to suffer more than he enjoys happiness. Rather than do this, God would not

have created him at all. But as it is usual to say of men who are to endure some grievous punishment or dreadful calamity that it would have been better for them never to have been born, Christ, foreseeing what Judas would bring upon himself by delivering up his Master into the hands of his enemies applies this language to him."

Dr. Clarke quotes the common use of the saying. In Shemoth Rabba, sect. 40 fol. 135, 1,2, it is said, "Whosoever knows the law, and does not do it, it had been better for him had he never come into the world. In Vayikra Rabba, sec. 26, fol. 179, 4, and Midrash Coheleth, fol. 91, 4, it is thus expressed: 'It were better for him had he never been created; and it would have been better for him had he been strangled in the womb and never have seen the light of this world.'

BUT WHAT ABOUT GOING TO HIS OWN PLACE?

Act 1:25 That he [the new Apostle] may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

"His own place" does not mean hell. While the scripture may be making reference to someone going back to their life after leaving a position or similar [i.e. going back home], some of the best scholars believe it is not Judas, but Matthias who is referred to, and the "place" is the apostleship "from which Judas by transgression fell." It is one of those verses that can be interpreted either way.

Dr. Clarke says of Judas: "The utmost that can be said of the case of Judas is this: he committed a heinous act of sin and ingratitude. But he repented and did what he could to undo his wicked act. He had committed the sin unto death, i.e., a sin that involves the death of the body. But who can say, (if mercy was offered to Christ's murderers, and the gospel was first to be preached at Jerusalem, that these very murderers might have the first offer of salvation through him whom they had pierced), that the same mercy could not be extended to the wretched Judas? I contend that the chief priest, etc., who instigated Judas to deliver up his Master and who crucified him as a malefactor while having evidence of his innocence were worse than Judas himself. If mercy was extended to those leaders responsible for Jesus' death, then the penitent traitor Judas did not die out of the reach of mercy either. And I contend further, that there is no positive evidence of the final damnation of Judas in the sacred text."

BUT WHAT ABOUT JUDAS AS A SUICIDE?

The common view of the death of Judas is that he committed suicide after his great crime, and so went to eternal flames. But questions remain about his death. In one place we read that he "departed and went and hanged himself," and in another, "falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."--Acts 1:18. The phrase "hanged himself" can properly be read "was suffocated." Some questions remain. But if he took his own life, he did not commit a deed deserving endless torment.

Eph 5:29 says, "no man ever hated his own flesh," so no one ever took his own life in a sound mind.

The case of a suicide is not hopeless. It is remarkable evidence against the idea of the final damnation of Judas that Jesus appeared to place him on a throne with the other apostles, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, after his betrayal. Jesus said to Peter:

"Verily I say unto you that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" Matt. 19:28.

The "Book of Reference" thus sums up his case:

1. Judas was actually one of the twelve apostles, and chosen as such, by Christ himself.
2. That for a long time, at least, he was as true to his trust and acted his part in as good faith as did any other apostle.
3. That the part he took in the betrayal of Christ was the part for which God had raised him up, and that which was predetermined by the counsel of Heaven.
4. He was a sinner, yet that no man ever left the world manifesting greater sorrow for sin, more compunction of heart, deeper contrition, or more regret for offenses than did Judas.
5. That there is no shade of evidence that Judas will be eternally burning.
6. That, in common with all transgressors, he suffered in this world the just punishment of his crimes.
7. That the last account of him is he had gone the way of all the earth meaning he was dead: and if any one can give a further or better account of him, we will kindly receive it.

We are now entering a part of the study where you will either choose to remain ignorant or truly understand what was "once delivered to the saints."

WHAT ABOUT THE WORDS 'ETERNAL' 'EVERLASTING' AND 'FOREVER'

In order to learn just what this important word signifies when connected with the penalties of sin, it will be instructive to inquire into its history. We shall ascertain that the original word it is derived from denotes indefinite, and not endless duration. It never has the force of endless, except when it is applied to a subject that is intrinsically endless, and then acquires an added force from its subject. The Hebrew word 'olam' and the Greek 'aion', and their derivatives are the original Scripture terms that are rendered 'everlasting' in the English Bible. We can best ascertain the meaning of the translated words by consulting the history of the original Greek term. This is a very important study in understanding Universal Salvation and you will focus on this in [part three](#). If this next section is confusing, don't be concerned because it will be studied more clearly later in [part three](#).

DEFINITIONS / LEXICOGRAPHY OF WORDS DENOTING ENDLESS

Indefinite duration is the real meaning of the word. Indefinite doesn't mean eternal.

- The oldest lexicographer is Hesychius, (A. D. 400) and he defines it thus: "The life of man, the time of life."
- Theodoret, at the same time gives this definition; "Aion is not an existing thing, but an interval denoting time. It can sometimes be infinite when spoken of God. It is sometimes proportioned to the duration of the creation and sometimes to the life of man."
- John of Damascus (S. D. 750) says, "1, The life of every man is called 'aion'....3, The whole duration or life of this world is called 'aion'. 4. The life after the resurrection is called 'the aion to come.'"
- Phavorinus (sixteenth century) shows that theologians had corrupted the word. He says: "Aion, time, also life, also habit, or way of life. Aion is also the eternal and endless as it seems to the Theologian." Theologians had succeeded in using the word in the sense of endless, and Phavorinus was forced to recognize their usage of it and his phraseology shows conclusively enough that he attributed to theologians the authorship of that use of the word.
- Schleusner: "Any space of time whether longer or shorter, past, present or future, to be determined by the persons or things spoken of, and the scope of the subjects; the life or age of man. Aionios, a definite and a long period of time, that is, a long enduring, but still definite period of time."
- Grove: Aion "Eternity; an age, life, duration, continuance of time; a revolution of ages; a dispensation of Providence, this world or life, the world or life to come; aionios, eternity, immortal, perpetual, forever, past, ancient."
- Macknight: (Scotch Presbyterian) "These words being ambiguous, are always to be understood according to the nature and circumstances to which they are applied. They who understand these words in a limited sense, when applied to punishment, put no forced interpretation upon them."
- Alex. Campbell: "Its radical idea is indefinite duration."
- T. Southwood Smith: "Sometimes it signifies the term of human life; at other times an age, or dispensation of Providence. Its most common signification is that of age or dispensation."
- Scarlett: "That aionion does not mean endless or eternal, may appear from considering that no adjective can have a greater force than the noun from which it is derived. If aion means age (which none either will or can deny) then aionion must mean age-lasting, or duration through the age or ages to which the thing spoken of relates."
- Donnegan: "Time, space of time, life-time and life, the ordinary period of man's life; the age of man; man's estate; a long period; eternity; the spinal marrow. Aionios, of long duration, lasting, eternal, permanent."
- Dr. Taylor, who wrote the Hebrew Bible three times with his own hand, said of 'Olam', (Greek 'Aion') it signifies a duration which is concealed, as being of an unknown or great length. "It signifies eternity, not from the proper force of the word, but when the sense of the place or the nature of the subject requires it, as God and his attributes."

The definitions of other lexicographers and critics are all similar. We name: Schrevelius, Schweighauser, Valpey, Haley, Lutz, Wright, Benson, Gilpin, Clarke, Wakefield,

Boothroyd, Simpson, Lindsey, Mardon, Acton, Locke, Hammond, Rost, Pickering, Hincks, Ewing, Pearce, Whitby, Le Clerc, Beausobre, Doddridge, Paulus, Kenrick, Lenfant, Olshausen, etc.

[Dr. Edward Beecher](#) remarks, "It commonly means merely continuity of action. All attempts to set forth eternity as the original and primary sense of aion are at war with the facts of the Greek language for five centuries. During that time it denoted life and its derivative senses, and the sense eternity was unknown."

"Pertaining to the world to come," is the sense given to "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," by Prof Tayler Lewis, who adds: "The preacher in contending with the Restorationist, would commit an error, and it may be suffer a failure in his argument, should he lay the whole stress of it on the etymological or historical significance of the words aion, aionios and attempt to prove that of themselves they necessarily carry the meaning of endless duration. 'These shall go away into the restraint, imprisonment of the world to come,' is all we can etymologically or exegetically make of the word in this passage."--His. Fut. ret.

Undoubtedly the definition given by [Schleusner](#) is the accurate one: "Duration determined by the subject to which it is applied." Thus it only expresses the idea of endlessness when connected with what is endless, i.e. God. The word great is a illustrative word. Great applied to a tree, or mountain, or man, denotes different degrees, all finite. But when referring to God, it has the sense of infinite. Infinity does not reside in the word great, but it has that meaning when applied to God. It does not impart it to God, it derives it from him.

So of 'aionion';

- applied to Jonah's residence in the fish, it means seventy hours;
- to the punishments of a merciful God, as long as is necessary to vindicate his law and reform his children;
- to God himself, eternity.
- What great is to size, 'aionios' is to duration.
- Human beings live from a few hours to a century;
- nations from a century to thousands of years;
- and worlds from a few to many millions of years,
- and God is eternal.

So that when we see the word applied to a human life, it denotes somewhere from a few days to a hundred years; when it is applied to a nation, it denotes anywhere from a century to maybe ten thousand years and when to God it means endless.

In other words it denotes indefinite duration, deriving it's duration from the subject it is modifying.

Dr. Beecher well observes: "The word 'olam', as affirmed by Taylor and Fuerst in their Hebrew Concordance means an indefinite period, age past or future and not an absolute

eternity. 'When applied to God, the idea of eternity is derived from him, and not from the word.' This is the deduction as we study the lexicography of the word. It expresses the indefinite duration according to the subject with which it is connected.* *See [part three "Aion-Aionios," by J. W. Hanson, D.D.](#), for an exhaustive treatise on the lexicography, etymology, classic usage and of the usage of the Old and New Testaments, and of the Christian Fathers.

CLASSIC USAGE

Words change meaning over time. It helps in understanding the usage and meaning of words to study how the word was used in the literature of the time periods in question.

Before the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek (200-300 B. C., according to Prideaux, or during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 384-347 B. C., say other authorities) this word was in common use by the Greeks. Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Pindar, Sophocles, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Empedocles, Euripedes, Philoctetes, and Plato all use the word, but never once does one of them give it the sense of eternity. Homer says"

- (Priam to Hector) "Thyself shall be deprived of pleasant aionios," (life).
- Andromache over dead Hector, "Husband, thou hast perished from aionos," (life or time).
- Hesiod: "To him (the married man) during aionos (life) evil is constantly striving, etc."
- Aeschylus: "This life, (aion) seems long, etc." "Jupiter, king of the never-ceasing world" (aionos apaustau).
- Pindar: "A long life produces the four virtues." (Ela de kai tessares aretas ho makros aion.)
- Sophocles: "Endeavor to remain the same in mind as long as you live."
- Aristotle: "The entire heaven is one and eternal (aidios) having neither beginning nor end of an entire aion."

The adjective is never found until Plato. He uses aion eight times, aionios five, diaionios once, and makraion twice. Of course if he regarded aion as meaning eternity, he would not prefix the word meaning long to add duration to it. Plato uses the adjective to denote indefinite duration, not eternity. Referring to certain souls in Hades, he describes them as in aionion intoxication. But that he does not use the word in the sense of endless is evident from the Phaedon where he says, "it is a very ancient opinion that souls quitting this world repair to the infernal regions and return after that to live in this world."

After the aionion intoxication is over, they return to earth, which demonstrates that the word was not used by him as meaning endless. Again, he speaks of that which is indestructible, (anolethron) and not aionion. He places the two words in contrast, whereas, had he intended to use aionion as meaning endless, he would have said indestructible and aionion.

Aristotle uses the word in the same sense. He says of the earth, "All these things seem to be done for her good, in order to maintain safety during her aionos, duration, or life. And still more to the purpose is this quotation concerning God's existence: "Life and 'an aion continuous and eternal, 'zoe kai aion sunekes kai aidios'. Here the word 'aidios', (eternal) is employed to qualify aion and impart to it what it had not of itself, the sense of eternal. Aristotle could be guilty of no such language as "an eternal eternity." Had the word 'aion' contained the idea of eternity in his time or in his mind, he would not have added aidios.

Ezra S. Goodwin, in the Christian Examiner, sums up an exhaustive examination of the word in the Greek classics in this way, "Those lexicographers who assign eternity as one of the meanings of aion must appeal for proofs to either theological, Hebrew or Rabbinical Greek, or some species of Geek subsequent to the age of the Septuagint or subsequent to the age of the apostles. I do not know of an instance in which any lexicographer has produced the usage of ancient classical Greek that can prove that 'aion' means eternity. Ancient classical Greek rejects it altogether.

So when the seventy translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek [the Septuagint], and rendered the Hebrew 'olam', (or 'gnolam') into 'aion' and its derivatives, they must have understood that aion meant indefinite duration, for that was its uniform usage in the Greek at that time. When Jesus quoted from the Old Testament he quoted from the Septuagint, and when he used the word 'aionion', he used it with the exact meaning it had in Greek literature, to denote indefinite duration. Let's examine the issue further.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The noun is found 394 times, and the adjective 110 times in the Old Testament. We will give instances of its use that you may see that limited duration is the meaning.

Gen. 6:4, "Mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Gen. 9:12; God's covenant with Noah was "for perpetual generations."

Gen. 9:16; The rainbow is the token of "the everlasting covenant" between God and "all flesh that is upon earth."

Gen. 13:15; God gave the land to Abram and his seed 'forever'. Dr. T. Clowes says of this passage that it signifies the duration of human life, and he adds, "let no one be surprised that we use the word Olam (Aion) in this limited sense. This is one of the most usual significations of the Hebrew olam and the Greek aion."

In Isa. 58:12, it is rendered "old" and "foundations." "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations."

In Jer. 18:15-16, ancient and perpetual. "They have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up; to make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing." Such instances may be cited to an indefinite extent.

Ex. 15:18. "for ever and ever, and further."

Ex. 12:17, "Ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever."

Numb. 10:8, "For an ordinance forever, throughout your generations." "Your generations" is here idiomatically given as the precise equivalent of "forever."

This next paragraph is proof positive that forever as defined today is NOT the 'for ever' of the Bible! Face it or run from the truth to protect your doctrine!

Does forever mean forever as it is defined today? Clearly not. Remember, you can't find 'forever' in a Strong's King James Concordance, you have to look for 'for' or 'ever.' Canaan was given as an "everlasting possession;" (Gen. 17:8, 58:4; Lev. 24:8-9) but was it? The hills are everlasting (Hab. 3:6) but were they? The priesthood of Aaron (Ex. 40:15; Numb. 25:13; Lev. 16:34) was to exist forever, and continue through everlasting duration. The priesthood ended. Solomon's temple was to last forever, (1 Chron. 17:12) though it has long since ceased to be. Slaves were to remain in bondage forever (Lev. 25:46) though every fiftieth year all Hebrew servants were to be set at liberty. (Lev. 25:10) Jonah suffered an imprisonment behind the everlasting bars of earth, (Jon. 2:6) everlasting here lasted 3 days and nights. The smoke of Idumea was to ascend forever, (Isa 34:10) though it no longer rises. To the Jews God says (Jer. 32:40) "and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten;" and yet, after the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, Israel will be restored. Rom. 11:25-26.

Need more? Here's more!

Not only in all these and multitudes of other cases does the word mean limited duration, but it is also used in the plural, thus debarring it from the sense of endless as there can be but one eternity.

In Dan. 12:3, the literal reading, if we allow the word to mean eternity is, "to eternities and farther."

Micah 4:5, "We will walk in the name of the Lord our God to eternity, and beyond,"
Ps. 119:44, "So shall I keep thy law continually, forever and ever." This is the strongest combination of the aionian phraseology: 'eis ton aiona kai eis ton aiona tou aionos', and yet it is David's promise of fidelity as long as he lives among them that "reproach" him, in "the house of his pilgrimage."

This is the general usage:

Eccl. 1:10, "Is there anything whereof it may be said, see, this is new! it hath been already of old time, which was before us."

Ps. 25:6, "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been even of old."

Ps. 99:52, "I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself."

Isa. 46:9, "Remember the former things of old."

Isa. 64:4, "since the beginning of the world."

Jer. 28:8, "The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence."

Jer. 2:20, "For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands."

Prov. 8:23, "I (wisdom) was set up from everlasting from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Here 'aionos' and "before the world was," are in opposition.

Ps. 73:12, "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world."

Deut. 32:7, "Remember the days of old."

Isa 1:9, "Generations of old."

Micah 7:14, "Days of old."--Same in Malachi 2:4. Ps. xlviii:14, "For this God is our God, for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." This plural form denotes "even unto death." Christ's kingdom is prophesied as destined to endure "forever," "without end," etc. Dan. 2:44; Isa. 59:21; Ps. 110:4; Isa. 9:7; Ps. 89:29.

Now if anything is taught in the Bible, it is that Christ's kingdom shall end. In 1 Corin. 15, it is expressly and explicitly declared that Jesus shall surrender the kingdom to God the Father. Hence, when we read in such passages as Dan. 2:44 that Christ's kingdom shall stand forever, we must understand that the forever denotes the reign of Messiah, bounded by "the end," when God shall be "all in all."

Servants were declared to be bound forever yet all servants were emancipated every fifty years. Thus in Deut. 15:16-17, we read, "And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loves you and your house, because he is well with thee, then thou shalt take an awl and thrust it through his ear unto the door and he shall be thy servant forever."

No one can read the Old Testament carefully and fail to see that the word has a great range of meaning, bearing some such relation to duration as the word great does to size.

We say God is infinite when we call him the great God--not because great means infinite, but because God is infinite. The 'aionion' God is of eternal duration, but the 'aionion' smoke of Idumea has expired, and the 'aionion' hills will one day crumble, and all merely 'aionion' things will cease to be.

Prof. Tayler Lewis says, "Where the context demands it, as "I live forever," spoken of God, it means endless duration. The subject to which it is applied is what "forces" the meaning, not any etymological necessity in the word itself."

THE END OF AIONIAN THINGS.

- The Jews no longer hold their previous position;
- Aaron and his sons have ceased from their priesthood;
- the mosaic system is superseded by Christianity;
- the Jews no longer possess Canaan as originally stated;
- David and his house have lost the throne of Israel;
- the Jewish temple and system is destroyed;
- the servants who were to be bondmen forever, are all free from their masters;
- Gehazi is cured of his leprosy;
- the stones are removed from Jordan, and the smoke of Idumea no longer rises;
- the righteous did not possess the land promised them forever;
- some of the hills and mountains have fallen, and time will one day gnaw them into dust;
- the fire has expired from the Jewish altar;

- Jonah has escaped his imprisonment;

READ CAREFULLY! All these and numerous other "eternal, everlasting things" - things that were to last forever according to the word 'aion' or 'aionion'- have already ended!

Now, if these hundreds of instances denote limited duration why should the few times in which punishments are spoken of using 'aion' or 'aionios' have any other meaning? Even if endless duration were the meaning of the words 'aion' and 'aionian', all intelligent readers of the Bible can see that the word is used to denote limited duration in the passages cited above. Surely in the very few times in which it is connected with punishment it must have a similar meaning.

BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERLASTING CONTEMPT?

The principal passage in the Old Testament containing the word 'everlasting' connected with suffering is Dan. 12:2:

"and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

CONTEXT FRIENDS, CONTEXT! When was this to take place? "At that time." What time? Verse 31, chap. 11 speaks of the coming of "the abomination that makes desolate." Jesus says, Matt. 24:15-16, Luke 21:20-21,

"When you (the disciples) shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains. And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into."

Daniel says this was to be (12:7) "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people." And he says, "At that time there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time."

Jesus says, "for then shall be great tribulations, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." And when that was Jesus tells us, "this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." The events announced in Daniel are the same as those in Matt. 24 and occurred in the generation that crucified Jesus.

The Dust Of The Earth

The phrase "sleep in the dust of the earth" is employed figuratively to indicate sloth and spiritual lethargy as in Ps. 44:25; Isa. 25:12, 26:5; 1 Tim. 5:6; Rev. 3:1;

- "For our soul is bowed down to the dust;"

- "And the high fort of your walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust;"
- "For he brings down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he lays it low; he lays it low even to the ground; he brings it even to the dust;"
- "But she that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives;"
- "I know thy works; that you have a name, that you live and are dead."
- Cruden says that "dust" signifies "a most low and miserable condition."
- "God raised up the poor out of the dust." (1 Sam. 2:8)
- "Thy nobles shall dwell in the dust." (Nahum 3:18) *meaning they shall be reduced to a mean condition.*"

It was a prophecy of the moral awakening that came at the time of the advent of Jesus and was then fulfilled. When we come to Matt. 24 and 25 we shall see the exact nature of this judgment. Walter Balfour describes it, "They," (those who obeyed the call of Jesus) "heard the voice of the Son of God and lived." See John 5:21-25-28-29 and Eph. 5:14. The rest kept on till the wrath of God came on them to the uttermost in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. They all, at last, awoke; but it was to shame and everlasting contempt by being dispersed among all nations. They are scorned by many to this day. Jeremiah in chapter 23:39-40 predicted this very punishment, and calls it an "everlasting reproach and a perpetual shame." Isaiah uses similar language:

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion: put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem." etc. Isa 52:1-2.

The language of Daniel was fulfilled when "among the chief rulers also many believed on him but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogues. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." John 12:42-43. Those who accepted him enjoyed the eternal life of the gospel, but those who rejected him had shame and contempt. This language is exactly parallel to Matt. 24 and 25.

BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERLASTING BURNINGS?

In Isa. 33:14, we read, "Who among you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Here again, CONTEXT is the key to understanding. This language refers entirely to events in this life. The prophet had said (Isa. 31:9) that the Lord's "fire is in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem," and he adds:

"And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a *devouring fire*, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones."

When he asks who shall dwell amid these "everlasting burnings" he refers to those fires which he had spoken of as about to consume the land. Ezekiel describes them in 20:47.

"Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein."

Jeremiah agrees with the other prophets, 17:27:

"But if ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath day and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a *fire* in the gates thereof, and it shall *devour the* palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

The "everlasting burnings" denote the temporal judgments [judgments related to this side of life] about to come upon the Jewish people.

Out of more than five hundred occurrences of the word in the Old Testament more than four hundred denote limited duration.

So the great preponderance of the Old Testament usage fully agrees with the Greek classics. Let's assume, for arguments sake, that endless punishment awaits untold millions of the human race and it is denoted by this word. Does it make sense to you that only David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Malachi COMBINED use the word to define punishment less than a dozen times? And why would Job, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Solomon, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Hahum, Habbakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai and Zachariah never use it in that way?

This silence would be close to gross criminal negligence if our assumption was true. These holy men should and would have made every book crystal clear on this teaching of eternal burnings without timidity. The fact that the word is so seldom used, and by so few applied to punishment, and never in the Old Testament to punishment beyond death, demonstrates that it cannot mean endless. The best critics of all creeds agree that endless punishment is not taught in the Old Testament, and if so, of course the world everlasting cannot mean endless in the Old Testament, when applied to punishment.

- Says Milman" "The lawgiver (Moses) maintains a profound silence on that fundamental article, if not of political, at least of religious legislation--rewards and punishments in another life."
- Warburton: "In no one place of the Mosaic institutes is there the least mention of the rewards and punishments of another life."
- Paley, Jahn, Whately are to the same purport, and H. W. Beecher says, "if we only had the Old Testament we could not tell if there were any future punishment."

Three questions here press the mind with irresistible force, and they can only receive one answer.

1. Had God intended endless punishment, would the Old Testament have failed to reveal it?
2. If God does not announce it in the Old Testament, is it supposable that he has revealed it elsewhere?
3. Would he for thousands of years conceal so awful a destiny from millions whom he had created and exposed to it?

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE JEWISH GREEK USAGE?

Josephus and Philo, Jewish Greeks, who wrote between the Old and New Testaments, ALWAYS use the word with the meaning of temporal duration.

Josephus applies the word to the imprisonment to which John the tyrant was condemned by the Romans; to the reputation of Herod; to the everlasting memorial erected in rebuilding the temple, already destroyed, when he wrote; to the everlasting worship in the temple, which in the same sentence he says was destroyed; and he styles the time between the promulgation of the law and his writing a long 'aion' - age. To accuse him of attaching any other meaning than that of indefinite duration to the word, is to accuse him of making himself look stupid. But when he writes to describe endless duration he employs other, and less equivocal terms.

Terms of eternal punishment Jesus NEVER used in Scripture.

Alluding to the Pharisees, he says: "They believe that the wicked are detained in an everlasting prison (*'eirgmon aidion'*) subject to eternal punishment" (*'aidios timoria'*) and the Essenes (another, Jewish sect) "Allotted to bad souls a dark, tempestuous place, full of never-ceasing punishment (*'timoria adialeipton'*) where they suffer a deathless punishment, (*'athanaton timorian'*). Jesus' language was *'aionion kolasin'*, age-lasting correction. They described unending ruin. Jesus described discipline which resulted in reformation. See remarks under [Tartarus](#).

It should be noted that Jesus never used these terms and warned of the teachings of the Pharisees.

Philo, who was contemporary with Christ, generally used *'aidion'* to denote endless, and always used *'daionion'* to describe temporary duration. Thus the Jews of our Savior's time avoided using the word *'aionion'* to denote endless duration. It is applied all through the Bible to temporary affairs.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT?

The different forms of the word occur in the New Testament one hundred and ninety-nine times, the noun one hundred and twenty-eight, and the adjective seventy-one times.

In our common translation the noun is rendered seventy-two times ever, twice eternal, thirty-nine times world, seven times never, three times evermore, twice worlds, twice

ages, once course, once world without end, and twice it is passed over without any word affixed as a translation of it. The adjective is rendered once ever, forty-two times eternal, three times world, twenty-five times everlasting, and once former ages.

Of course the word must mean in the New Testament what it does in all Greek books and among Greek-speaking people. Temporal, indefinite duration is its meaning in the Classics, the Old Testament, and the Jewish Greek. The New Testament meaning is the same.

Fasten your seatbelts!

THE NOUN

- It is applied to the kingdom of Christ. Luke 1:33, "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob *forever*; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." See also 1:55; Heb. 6:20; 7:17-21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 1:11, 3:18; Rev. 1:6; 11:15. But the kingdom of Christ is to be surrendered to the Father, therefore endless duration is not taught in these passages. See 1 Cor. 15.
- It is applied to the Jewish age more than thirty times: 1 Cor. 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the *age* are come." Consult also Matt., 12:32; 13:22, 39, 40, 49; 24:3; 27:20; Mark 4:19; Luke 1:70; 16:8; 20:34; John 9:32; Acts 3:32; 15:18; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:6,7,8; 3:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:21; 2:2; 3:9; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:12; Heb. 9:26. But the Jewish age ended with the setting up of the kingdom of Christ. Then the word does not denote endless duration here.
- It is used in the plural in Eph. 3:21; "the *age* of the *ages*," '*tou aionas ton aionon*'. Heb. 1:2; 11:3, "By whom he made the *ages*." "The ages were framed by the word of God." There can be but one eternity. To say "By whom he made the eternities" would be to talk nonsense. Endless duration is not indicated in these texts.
- The word clearly teaches finite duration in such passages as Rom. 16:35; 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:9; Philemon 15; Titus 1:2. Read Rom. 16:25: "Since the *world* [*age*] began." 2 Cor. 4:17: "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Here "and" is a word supplied by the translators, and the literal is "an excessively exceeding 'aionian' weight." But endless cannot be exceeded. Therefore aionion does not here mean eternal.

Let us give several passages in which all will agree that the word cannot have the sense of endless. We print the word denoting duration as underlined;

- Matt. 12:22: "The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, the cares of that age or "time."
- Verses, 39, 40, 49, "The harvest is the end of the world" i.e. age, Jewish age, the "end" taught in Matt. 24, which some who heard Jesus speak were to live to see, and did see.

- Luke 1:33, "And he (Jesus) shall reign over the house of Jacob *for ever*, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." The meaning is, he shall reign for ages. That long, indefinite duration is meant here, but limited, is evident from 1 Cor. 15:28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." His reign is forever, i.e. to the ages, but it is to cease.
- Luke 1:55, "as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed *for ever*, (to an age, aionos).
- Luke 1:70. "As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began, or "from an age." "Of old," would be the correct construction.
- Luke 16:8, "For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." That is, the people of that time were more prudent in the management of their affairs than were the Christians of that day in their plans.
- John 9:32, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." From the age, that is from the beginning of our knowledge and history.
- Rom. 16:25, "Since the world began," clearly shows a duration less than eternity, inasmuch as the mystery that had been secret since the world began was then revealed. The mystery was 'aionian' but did not last eternally. It was "now made manifest" "to all nations."
- Phil. 4:20. "Now unto God and our Father be glory *for ever and ever*,": for the ages of the ages. "For the eternities of the eternities," is an absurd expression, but ages of ages is a proper sentence. Eternity may be meant here, but if the word aion expressed the idea, such a reduplication would be weak and improper.
- 1 Tim. 6:16, "Charge them that are rich in this world," (age or time).
- 1 Tim. 1:17, "Now to the King eternal (of the ages) be glory for the ages of the ages." What is this but an ascription of the ages to the God of the ages? Eternity can only be meant here as ages piled on ages imply long, and possibly endless duration. "*All the ages are God's; him let the ages glorify*," is the full meaning of the words. Translate the words eternity, and you get nonsense. "Now to the God of the eternities be glory for the eternities of the eternities."
- Heb. 1:8. "The age of the age" Eph. 2:7, "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace." Here at least two 'aions' are in the future. Certainly one of them must end before the other begins.
- Eph. 3:21, "The generations of the ages of the ages." 2 Tim. iv:1 8, "The ages of the ages." The same form of expression is in Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11; Rev. 1:6, 4:9, 5:13, 7:12, 14:11, 15:7, 20:10. When we read that the smoke of their torment ascends for ages of ages, we get the idea of long, indefinite, but limited duration, for as one age is limited, any number, however great, must be limited.

BIBLICAL TORMENTS AND PUNISHMENTS

Note: in Bible times a 'torment' was a stone that was used to test precious metals. One would TEST the purity by striking the metal against the torment. Various meanings of 'torment' is to test, judge, punish or chastise.

Malachi 3:2-3 "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appears? He is like a refiner's fire and fullers' soap [brimstone]. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

The moment we say the smoke of their torment goes up for eternities of eternities, we transform sacred rhetoric into jargon. There is but one eternity therefore as we read of more than one '*aion*', it follows that '*aion*' cannot mean eternity. Again, 1 Cor. 10:11, "Our admonition, on whom *the* ends of the aions have come." That is, the close of the Mosaic and the beginning of the Gospel age. How absurd to say "ends of the eternities!" Here the apostle had passed more than one, and entered consequently, upon at least a third *aion*.

Heb. 9:26, "Now at an end of the *ages*." Matt. 13:39, 40, 24:3. "The conclusion of the *age*." Eternity has no end. And to say ends of eternity is to talk nonsense.

2 Tim. 1:9, "Before the world began, i.e. before the '*aionian*' times began. There was no beginning to eternity, therefore the adjective '*aionion*' here has no such meaning as eternal. The fact that *aion* is said to end and begin, is a demonstration that it does not mean eternity.

Translate the word eternity, and how absurd the Scriptural phraseology becomes! We represent the Bible as saying, "To whom be the glory *during* the eternities even to the eternities." Gal. 1:5, "Now all these things happened unto them, for examples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom *the ends* of the eternities are come." 1 Cor. 10:11. "That in the eternities coming he might show the exceeding riches of his grace." Eph. 2:7. "The mystery which hath been hid *from the* eternities *and from the* generations." Col. 1:26. "But now once in the end of the *eternities*, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9:26. "The harvest is *the end of eternity*." Matt. 13:39. "So shall it be in *the end of eternity*." Matt. 13:40, "Tell us when shall these things be, and what the sign of thy coming, and of the *end of the eternity*." Matt. 24:3. But substitute "age" or "ages" and the sense of the Record is preserved!

THE ADJECTIVE

The adjective occurs seventy-two times in the New Testament. Of these fifty-seven are used in relation to the happiness of the righteous; three in relation to God or his glory; four are of a miscellaneous nature; and seven relate to the subject of punishment. The word in all its forms describes punishment fourteen times in thirteen passages in the entire New Testament, and these were uttered on ten occasions. *The Noun*. Matt. 13:32, Mark 3:29, 2 Pet. 2:17, Jude 13, Rev. 14:11, 19:23, 20:10. *The Adjective*, Matt. 17:8, 25:41, 46, Mark 3:29, 2 Thess. 1:9, Heb. 6:2, Jude 7.

If the punishments of God are endless how can we explain the employment of this word so few times in the entire New Testament by a word whose meaning everywhere else is limited duration? If the word denotes limited duration, the punishments threatened in the New Testament are a corrective, cleansing and purgative process that follows transgression. But if it mean endless, how can we account for the fact that neither Luke

nor John records one instance of its use by the Savior, and Matthew but four, and Mark but two, and that Paul employs it but twice in his ministry, while John and James in their epistles never allude to it? Let us consider all the passages in the New Testament in which the word is connected with punishment.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE TOUGHEST TEXT; THE GREAT PROOF TEXT?

Matt. 25:46 is the great proof text of the doctrine of endless punishment: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal."

1. Let's start with the CONTEXT. Those that are punished are those who have not been good to the poor; those rewarded are those that have been good to the poor. If this passage teaches the doctrine of endless punishment, then the Bible teaches a works based Salvation.

2. God's punishments are remedial, corrective and purgative. All God's punishments are those of a Father, and must therefore be adapted to the improvement of his children.

Heb. 12:5-11 "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by him: for whom the lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chastens not: Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but *he for our profit* that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, *afterward it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*"

Prov. 3:11-12, "My son despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loves he corrects; even as a father the son of whom he delights."

Lam. 3:31-33. "For the Lord will not cast off forever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." See also Job 5:17; Lev, 26; Psalms 119:67,71,75; Jer. 2:19.

3. The word translated punishment means discipline, improvement. The word is '*kolasin*'. It is thus defined:

Greenfield, "Chastisement, punishment."

Hedericus, "The trimming of the luxuriant branches of a tree or vine to improve it and make it fruitful."

Donnegan, "The act of clipping or pruning--restriction, restraint, reproof, check, chastisement." See Grotius, Liddell, and others.

Says Max Muller, "Do we want to know what was uppermost in the minds of those who formed the word punishment, the Latin '*poena*' or '*punio*', to punish, the root '*pu*' in Sanskrit, which means to cleanse, to purify, tells us that the Latin derivation was

originally formed, not to express mere striking or torture, but cleansing, correcting, delivering from the stain of sin." That it had this meaning in Greek usage we cite Plato: "For the natural or accidental evils of others, no one gets angry, or admonishes, or teaches or punishes (*kolazei*) them, but we pity those afflicted with such misfortunes. * * For if, O Socrates, you will consider what is the design of punishing (*kolazein*) the wicked, this of itself will show you that men think virtue something that may be acquired; for no one punishes (*kolazlei*) the wicked, looking to the past only, simply for the wrong he has done,--that is, *no one does this thing who does not act* like a wild beast, desiring revenge, only without thought--hence he who seeks to punish (*kolazein*) with reason, does not punish for the sake of the past wrong deed, * * but for the sake of the future, that neither the man himself who is punished may do wrong again, nor any other who has seen him chastised. And he who entertains this thought, must believe that virtue may be taught, and *he punishes (kolazei) from the purpose of deterring from wickedness.*"

4. Again, let's go back to the CONTEXT. The prevailing view amongst serious Bible scholars is that the events here described in the "Great Proof Text" in question took place in this world within thirty years of the time when Jesus spoke. They are now past. Study carefully and slowly. In Matt. 24:3, the disciples asked our Lord when the then existing age would end. The word (*aion*) is unfortunately translated world. Had he meant world he would have employed *kosmos*, the Greek word for world. After describing the particulars, he announced that they would all be fulfilled, and the *aion* would end in that generation, before some of his hearers should die. If he was correct, the end came then. And this is demonstrated by a careful study of the entire discourse, running through Matt. 24 and 25. The disciples asked Jesus how they should know his coming and the *end* of the *age*. They did not inquire concerning the end of the actual world, as it is incorrectly translated, but *age*. This question Jesus answered by describing the signs so that they, his questioners, the disciples themselves, might perceive the approach of the end of the Jewish dispensation, (*aion*). He speaks fifteen times in the discourse of his speedy coming, (Matt. 24:3, 27, 30, 37, 39, 42, 46, 48, 50, and 25:6, 10, 13, 19, 27, 31). He addresses those who shall be alive at his coming. Matt. 24:6. "You shall hear of wars, etc." 20, "Pray that your flight be not in the winter," 33, 34. "So likewise *you* when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*"

This whole account is describing the end of the Jewish '*aion*', age or system and was signified by the destruction of Jerusalem and the establishment of the new '*aion*' world, or age to come. This coming age was the Christian dispensation. Now on the authority of Jesus himself, the '*aion*' then existing ended within a generation, namely about 70 AD which was the destruction and fall of Jerusalem and the Jewish system. Those who were sent away into '*aionian*' punishment, or the punishment of that '*aion - age*', were sent into a condition corresponding in duration to the meaning of the word '*aion*' - age lasting. Remember, the Greek for the word punishment is '*kólasis*' which conveys the notion of punishment for the correction and bettering of the offender. A punishment cannot be endless, when defined by an adjective that means an age or period of time and not eternity. Here is the similar text in John 5:29, "And they shall come out--those who have

practiced doing good [will come out] to the resurrection of [new] life, and those who have done evil will be raised for judgment [raised to meet their sentence]."

5. This text is actually related to Daniel 12:2, "And many of those who sleep in the [dust of the earth](#) shall awake: some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt and abhorrence." The Hebrew for everlasting is 'olam' which is the equivalent of the Greek 'aion.'

Given the following:

(1) the fulfillment of the text in the life of the people that were hearing Jesus prophesy and

(2) the meaning of *aionion*,

(3) the meaning of *kolasis*, and

(4) the nature of divine punishments

all demonstrate that the penalty threatened in Matt. 25:46 is a limited one. Keep in mind that this does not mean that it isn't long; it just isn't eternal. Prof. Tayler Lewis, translates Matt. 25:46: "These shall go away into the punishment (the restraint, imprisonment) of the world [age] to come, and those others into the life of the world [age] to come." And he says "that is all that we can etymologically or exegetically make of the word in this passage."

Withhold judgment on the following or gloss over it if this teaching is new or too much to handle now. Many Christians are unfamiliar with what is called the Preterist view of Biblical prophecy. A great place to begin study of it is [The Parousia](#) and [Prophetic and Apocalyptic Symbols](#).

Did Christ come the second time as he had said he would before the death of some of his hearers? He did spiritually, by the power of his grace and truth. On this subject here is what the most prominent orthodox commentators say:

Archbishop Newcome: "The coming of Christ to destroy the Jews was a coming in judgment and was to be understood accordingly. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is emphatically the coming of Christ. The spirit of the prophecy speaks particularly of this, because the city and temple were then destroyed, and the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews subverted. The Jews also suffered very great calamities under Adrian; but not so great as those under Vespasian; and the desolation under Adrian is not so particularly foretold. But I think that any signal interposition in behalf of his church, or in the destruction of his enemies, may be called a coming of Christ." Scripture is filled with such metaphors and apocalyptic language.

Dr. Campbell remarks on the expression, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: We have no reason to think that a particular phenomenon in the sky is here suggested. The striking evidences which would be given of the divine presence, and avenging justice, are a justification of the terms." However, as recorded history has proved, there were MANY signs in the sky.

Kenrick observes: "The great power and glory of Christ were as conspicuously displayed at the destruction of Jerusalem, and other circumstances which accompanied that event, as if they had seen him coming upon the clouds of heaven to punish his enemies. When the prophet Isaiah represents God as about to punish the Egyptians, he speaks of him as riding upon a swift cloud for that purpose. (Isa. 19:1) In that case there was no visible appearance of Jehovah upon a cloud; but it was language which the prophet adopted in order to express the evident hand of God in the calamities of Egypt. The same thing may be said of the language of Christ upon the present occasion." It was said Christ would return 'in similar fashion' meaning IN THE CLOUDS - biblical symbolism for JUDGMENT.

Dr. Hammond interprets Christ's coming, to be a "coming in the exercise of his kingly office to work vengeance on his enemies, and discriminate the faithful believers from them." Again he says: "The only objection against this interpretation is that this destruction being wrought by the Roman army, and those as much enemies of Christianity as any, and the very same people that had joined with the Jews to put Christ to death, it doth thereupon appear strange that either of those armies which are called abominable, should be called *God's armies*, or that Christ should be said to come, when in truth it was Vespasian and Titus that thus came against the people. To this I answer, that it is ordinary with God, in the Old Testament, to call those Babylonian, Assyrian heathen armies *his*, which did his work in punishing the Jews, when they rebelled against Him. Christ is fitly said to come, when his ministers do come, that is, when either heathen men, or Satan himself, who are executioners of God's will, when they think not of it, are permitted by Him to work destruction on his enemies."

Dr. Whitby says: "These words, *this age or generation shall not pass away*, afford a full demonstration that all which Christ had mentioned hitherto, was to be accomplished, not at the time of the conversion of the Jews, or at the final day of judgment, but in that very age, or whilst some of that generation of men lived; for the phrase never bears any other sense in the New Testament, than the men of this age."

Matt. 13:40-50: "The harvest at the end of the world," should be "end of this age." Dr. Wakefield comments: "The harvest is the conclusion of this age, and the reapers are the messengers; as therefore the weeds are picked out and burned up with a fire, so shall it also be in the conclusion of this age." Dr. A. Clarke renders end of the world (vs. 19, 43) "end of the age--Jewish polity." So also Dr. Macknight. Dr. Campbell translates it the "conclusion of the state." Bishop Pearce says, on verse 40: "End of this world; rather end of this age, viz: that of the Jewish dispensation.": And Dr. Hammond translates it, "conclusion of this age."

The end of the material world is never taught in the Bible. We have no Scriptural evidence that the earth will ever be destroyed. The word rendered world in all passages that speak of the end, is '*aion*', which means age, and not '*kosmos*', which denotes world. The phrase only occurs seven times in the whole Bible and only in three books, all in the New Testament.

In Matt. 13:36-42, "the field is the world (*kosmos*) but "the harvest is the end of the age," (*aión*, improperly rendered world) that is, the end of the Jewish dispensation. But one passage needs to be consulted to learn when that event was to occur. Jesus told his disciples when they asked (Matt. 24:3) "What shall be the sign of the end of the world [age]," (Matt. 24:34) "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." It had almost arrived, a little later when Paul said (Heb. 9:26) "But now once in the *end of the world* [age] hath he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The end of the world in all cases means the end of the age, that is the Jewish dispensation.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LAST DAYS?

The terms "last days," "end of the world," etc. found in connection with judgment are made very clear to the careful reader of the Bible. The words "last day," "last days," etc., refer to the closing of the Mosaic dispensation and not, as is often supposed, to the closing of all human affairs on earth. Peter demonstrates this by applying the words of Joel to what was then transpiring, Acts 2:16-- 20,

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the *last days*, says God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before *that great and notable day* of the Lord come."

James quoted the prophets saying the period of the Book of Acts was the period prophesied regarding the rebuilding of the temple of David:

Act 15:13-17 "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does all these things."

Remember the temple of David was the Ark [presence] of the Lord WITHOUT the temple!

Paul testifies to the same idea, Heb. 1:1-2, "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, *hath in these last days* spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds," 1 Peter 1:20. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." See, also, 1 John 2:18, "Little children, *it is the last time.*" Peter says, 1 Peter 4:7, "But *the end of all things is at hand.*" The "last days" always refer to the end of Judaism and the establishment of Christianity, and not to the closing of human affairs on earth.

AN COMMON OBJECTION ANSWERED.

Objectors sometimes say, "Then eternal life is not endless, for the same Greek adjective qualifies life and punishment as in this verse:

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal."

This does not follow, for the word is used in different senses in the same sentence as in Hab. 3:6.

"And the everlasting mountains were scattered, his ways are everlasting."

Recall the Hebrew equivalent of 'aion' is 'olam.' Suppose we apply this popular argument here. The mountains and God must be of equal duration, for the same word is applied to both. Both are temporal or both are endless. But the mountains are expressly stated to be temporal. Notice the verse says they "were scattered." Therefore God is not eternal if this argument is used. Or God is eternal and therefore the mountains must also be. But they cannot be, for they were scattered. This argument does not hold water. The *aionion* mountains are all to be destroyed.

Hence the word everlasting may denote both limited and unlimited duration in the same passage. It is important to remember that the different meanings are to be determined by the subject.

WHAT EXACTLY IS 'ETERNAL LIFE?'

The phrase "everlasting" or "eternal life" does not usually denote endless existence in its truest sense. It means God's life, the life of the gospel, spiritual life or the Christian life, regardless of its duration. Eternal life could possibly be described as "walking in the spirit" verses "walking in the flesh", "walking in the light" verses "walking in darkness", walking in the truth verses "walking in a lie", walking in God/Christ consciousness" verses "walking in sin consciousness." In more than fifty of the seventy-two times that the adjective occurs in the New Testament, it describes life.

What is eternal life? Let the Scriptures answer.

John 3:36, "He that believes on the Son *has* everlasting life."

John 5:24, "He that believes on Him that sent me *has* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life."

John 6:47, "He that believes on me *has* everlasting life." Also in verse 54.

John 17:3, "This is life eternal - *to know and keep on knowing you*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Eternal life is God's life in you. Its duration depends on the possessor's faithfulness. "*Aionion*" [*eternal*] life can be abandoned as one falls out of favor with God. 'Eternal' life as defined in the New Testament consists of knowing, loving and serving God

regardless of the duration of the service. Remember - 'aion' and 'aionion' have the meaning of an indefinite period of time. When you're believing, knowing and growing in your knowledge and walk with God and His Christ you have 'aionion' life - eternal life. But the best of us can fall. We then operate out of our temporal, earthly life commonly called 'the flesh.'

Fortunately, due to God's wonderful Grace, the fall isn't forever.

Since 'eternal' life is of an indefinite length, the usage of the adjective in the New Testament is in agreement with giving the word the sense of limited duration.

Clemence in his work on "Future Punishment" observes, correctly, that aion and aionion are "words that shine with reflected light," i.e., says Canon Farrar, "that their meaning depends entirely on the words with which they are joined, so that it is quite false to say that *aionios* joined with *life* [Greek *zoe*] must mean the same as *aionios* joined with punishment [Greek *kolasis*]. The word means endless in neither clause." Clemence continues: "If good should come to an end, that would come to an end which Christ died to bring in; but if evil comes to an end, that comes to an end which he died to destroy. So that the two stand by no means on the same footing."

BUT WHAT ABOUT WORDS DENOTING ENDLESSNESS OF GOD'S LIFE?

Learn this well. The endless life, God's life, that we commonly call 'eternal life' is described by words that are never applied to anything of limited duration. The life only God can give is imperishable, incorruptible, undefiled, can't fade and immortal.

Read carefully:

Heb. 7:15-16, "And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there arises another priest who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an *endless* (*akatalutos*, imperishable) life."

1 Pet. 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance *incorruptible*, (*aphtharton*) and undefiled, and that *doesn't fade* (*amaranton*) away."

1 Pet. 5:4, "and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that *doesn't fade* (*amarantinos*) away."

1 Tim. 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, *immortal* (*aphtharto*), invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen."

Rom. 1:23, 'And changed the glory of the *incorruptible* God into an image made like to corruptible man."

1 Cor. 9:25, "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an *incorruptible*."

1 Cor. 15:51-54, "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, (*aphthartoi*) and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on *incorruption*, (*aphtharsian*) and this mortal must put on

immortality (athanasian). So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, (*aphtharsian*) and this mortal shall have put on *immortality, (athanasian)* then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Rom. 2:7, "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and *immortality (aphtharsian)* eternal life."

1 Cor. 15:42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in *incorruption (aphtharsian)*." See also verse 50.

2 Tim. 1:10, "Has brought life and *immortality (aphtharsian)* to light, through the gospel."

1 Tim. 6:16, "Who only has *immortality (athanasian)*. Go ahead - SHOUT for joy if you want to!

These are the words applied to God's life and the soul's perpetual happiness. They are words that, in the Bible, are never applied to punishment or anything perishable. They would have been affixed to punishment had the Bible intended to teach endless punishment. This shows the error of those who declare that the indefinite word '*aionion*' is the strongest one in the Bible meaning "endlessness of life beyond the grave." And remember [this section](#).

BUT WHAT ABOUT ETERNAL JUDGMENT?

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.."-Hebrews 6:1-2.

We have said so much about the word eternal [Greek *aionios*] that it would get redundant and repetitious to explain it further. One should notice that the '*aionios*' judgments are one of the things we are to "leave behind" to go on to maturity, which is translated '*perfection*'. To quote from [Understanding Universal Salvation Part One - Does Scripture Teach Universal Salvation?](#):

The judgments of God occur:

As direct results and consequences of our decisions on earth

In circumstances Divine Providence puts in our path while on earth

Through the process of death and dying, spiritually and/or physically and

In judgments after death

all of which are designed to prosper the soul and result in a final restoration and Salvation. Any well rounded, integrated, studious approach to Scripture, if untainted by religiosity and institutionalized doctrine, can lead you to only one conclusion - Universal Salvation. The whole purpose of this scripture is to teach us to get to the point where our Christian lives are not perpetually focused on the basics of salvation. We are to get beyond dead works that result in judgments and necessitate repentance and a constant re-commitment to the Christian walk.

Some feel the judgments referred to have more to do with the judgments in this life and the historical judgments given in Scripture for our example. To quote Hanson: "The word eternal is used here in the sense of ancient, and alludes to the calamities that had come upon wrong-doers. The comments of Bishop Pearce are clear and accurate: "I think that the words are to be understood in a very different manner. *The Greek 'krima' translated judgment* here seems to me to mean temporal judgments; judgments on this side of life.

The word used in 1 Pet. 4:17 'the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God' clearly refers to temporal judgments if placed in proper prophetic context. Also compare verses 16, 18, 19.

Again in 1 Cor. 11:29, 'He that eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' What this judgment was appears by the next verse: 'For this cause many are weakly and sick among you, and many sleep.' Clearly, temporal judgments are meant here as well. The word '*aionios*', which we have rendered *eternal*, I take to respect not the time to come, but the time past, and to signify *ancient*, or *past long ago*. Thus the destruction, fire, punishment and judgments of God that are called eternal or everlasting, are limited. They are ordained by a Father for the correction and discipline and welfare of his children and for restoration to righteousness." - End Quote

BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERLASTING CHAINS?

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6

The word here rendered everlasting is not '*aionios*', indefinite duration, but '*aidios*', whose intrinsic meaning is endless. It is found in one other place in the New Testament, Rom. 1:20, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his *eternal* power and Godhead."

Read carefully. This word among the Greeks had the sense of eternal and should be understood as having that meaning wherever found, unless by express limitation it is clear the meaning is different. Had '*aidios*' occurred where '*aionios*' does, there would be no escape from the conclusion that the New Testament teaches endless burnings. It is very important as seen in the Section "[Words Denoting Endlessness](#)" above and here with the Greek word '*aidios*' that there were words that could have been used to remove all doubts regarding eternal burnings and they were NOT used. Words denoting an indefinite period of time were used instead. Given the numbers of times the words were used, this could NOT have been a translation oversight.

However, the word '*aidios*' used in this verse is used in the exact sense of '*aionios*' as is seen in the succeeding verse: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *aionian* fire." That is to say, the "*aidios* chains" in verse 6 are "*even* as" lasting as the "*aionian* fire" in verse 7. Which word modifies the other?

1 The construction of the language shows that the latter word limits the former. The *aidios* chains are even as the *aionion* fire. Here are examples:

"I have been infinitely troubled, I have been vexed for an hour."
"He is an endless talker, he can talk five yours on a stretch."

Now while "infinitely" and "endless" usually convey the sense of unlimited, they are here limited by what follows, as *aidios*, eternal, is limited by *aionios*, indefinitely long.

2 That this is the correct interpretation of the text is evident from still another limitation of the word.

"The angels...he has reserved in everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day."

Had Jude said that the angels are held in '*aidios*' chains and stopped there, not limiting the word, it might be claimed that he taught their eternal imprisonment. But when Jude limits the duration by '*aionios*' and then expressly states that the imprisonment is only *UNTIL* a certain day, it follows that the imprisonment will end.

So the word '*aidios*' in this passage doesn't mean eternal even though we have a word used that intrinsically signifies eternal duration. This word was used by the Greeks to convey the idea of eternity. It was also attached to punishment by the Greek Jews of our Savior's times to describe endless punishment, in which they were believers.

Remember this! This word *aidios* was in universal use among the Greek Jews of our Savior's day to convey the idea of eternal duration. It was also used by them to teach endless punishment. But *Jesus never allowed himself to use it in connection with punishment*, nor did any of his disciples except Jude who used it once. Even then, Jude carefully and expressly limited its meaning.

What more proof do you need to show that Jesus carefully avoided the phraseology by which his contemporaries described the doctrine of endless punishment? He never adopted the language of his day on this subject and cautioned disciples against the religious teaching of the day.

Their language was '*aidios timoria*', endless torment. Jesus' language was '*aionion kolasin*', age-lasting correction. They described unending ruin. Jesus described discipline which resulted in reformation. See remarks under [Tartarus](#).

BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION?

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

Let's examine CONTEXT. Who was troubling the Christians of the Thessalonica Church? We are told in Acts 17:5-8, that their persecutors were the Jews.

"But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And they *troubled* the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things." Also, 1 Thess. 2:14-15: "For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen....Who have killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us."

When were they persecuted? In a few years from the time Jesus said:

"For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."--Matt. 16:27-28.

We have already discussed the word everlasting at length. Again in this verse, the all important destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish system in 70 AD is referred to. The fact that this important event is rarely discussed in modern day Christendom is a horrendous oversight that causes all sorts of doctrinal errors.

BUT WHAT ABOUT BEING BANISHED FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD?

How were they banished from the "presence of the Lord?" "The presence of the Lord" is a term in the Bible denoting God's approval.

"Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and lived in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden." Gen. 4:16.

"Jonah rose up to flee into Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa." Jonah 1:3

"My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." Exodus 33:14.

In the former years when the Jews were captive in Babylon, they were cast out of the presence of the Lord. 2 Kings 24:20.

"Therefore, I will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you, and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence; and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall not be forgotten."--Jer. 23:39-40

A similar doom was visited upon them when they were again overwhelmed, before the death of some who were then living. (Matt. 16:2-28. Matt. 24) Was this everlasting destruction without end and final? Paul expressly says not.

"For if the casting away of them (the Jews) be the reconciling of the world, (the Gentiles) what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead." Rom. 11:15.

"Blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved." Rom. 11:25-26.

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. 11:32

The Commentator Gill, says: "*And to you who are troubled rest with us;*" This is another branch of the justice of God who gives a rest to those who are afflicted and persecuted for righteousness sake. This is at times a rest or a relaxing from persecutions for a while. This happened for the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria after the death of Stephen. (Acts 9:31) The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD also brought a cessation of persecutions for Christians for a while. A day of vengeance to the unbelieving Jews were times of refreshing to the saints, who were now delivered from their persecutors."

Thus the word everlasting connected with destruction denoted limited duration, for it is followed by restoration. The word destruction sometimes denotes annihilation:

Matt. 5:17, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill;"

1 John 3:8, "Might destroy the works of the devil;"

Hos. 13:14, "O grave, I will be thy destruction;"

1 Cor. 5:5, "Deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," that is, the mortification or subjection of the fleshly propensities, etc.

Sometimes it indicates tribulation as Ps. 90:3. "You turn man to destruction;"

Hos. 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;" and 13:9, "O Israel, you have destroyed yourself; but in me is your help.'

BANISHED FROM GOD'S PRESENCE

The following extract from Balfour's Second Inquiry presents this subject correctly:

"By the *presence of God*, or *presence of the Lord*, in scripture, is sometimes meant his being everywhere present. Thus, David says, Ps. 139:8, 'If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell (*sheol*), behold, thou art there,' etc. Admitting for argument's sake, that hell is a place of endless punishment, how could the wicked be out of God's presence even in hell? Yet, in 2 Thess. 1:9, the Jews are said to be punished with everlasting destruction from the *presence of the Lord*. Again; I find the phrase *presence of the Lord*, refers to heaven, or the dwelling-place of the Most High. Christ is said to have gone 'into heaven now to appear *in the presence of God* for us.' Heb. 9:24. And it is said, Luke 1:19, 'I am Gabriel, that stand *in the presence of God*.' But how could the wicked be punished with everlasting destruction from God's presence in this sense? For surely no one will say that they were in heaven, and like Gabriel stood in the presence of God.

"But there are still some passages which deserve our particular notice, because they clearly decide what is the meaning of the phrase, '*presence of the Lord*'. The first is, 2 Kings 13:24,

'And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not *destroy* them, neither *cast them from his presence as yet*.'

This was spoken of the Jews. Notice that God speaks of *destroying them* and *casting them from his presence*. But he says that *at that time* He would not do to this people. In this next passage we find that he did. 2 Kings 24:20,

'Because of the Lord's anger, it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that He finally banished them from His presence. Then, Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.'

God's presence was enjoyed by the Jews in Judea, and in their temple service. To be cast out of God's presence was to be banished from Judea and sent into captivity. This included being barred from all the privileges which the Jews enjoyed in their land and temple worship. This was the same as *destroying them*. Remember, *they could not continue the system of sacrifices and holidays unless they were in Jerusalem*. They were thus 'destroyed' or cast out of God's presence for seventy years in their captivity at Babylon. But they were brought back from this captivity, and again enjoyed God's presence in their own land.

At the time Paul wrote the words in Thessalonians, the time was drawing near when they were to be again cast out of God's presence and dispersed among all nations. Paul adopts the very language of the passages above, which were used in speaking of their former captivity, to describe the judgments of God which awaited them. They were to be cast out of their land, their city and temple. All of this would be destroyed, and they destroyed with an 'everlasting' destruction from the presence of the Lord. The Jews remain today in a similar situation of being '*destroyed from the presence of the Lord*.' Control of Jerusalem is uncertain, they can't sacrifice and the temple remains non-existent.

How then, can any man affirm that Paul meant, by this phrase, either annihilation or endless misery? If the Scriptures are allowed to interpret themselves, Paul was only describing the temporal destruction and banishment of the Jews using the very language by which the prophets had described their former punishments. It is added by the apostle, 'and from the glory of his power;' or, as some render it, 'his glorious power.' Should this be understood of Jehovah, the God of Israel, it is certain his glorious power was displayed among the Jews. Should it be understood of Christ, it agrees with what is said of him; for at the destruction of Jerusalem he is said to have come in the glory of his Father; and he was then seen coming with power and great glory. Matt. 16:27, and 24:30."

Of course it is impossible to go out of the presence of God. Even in hell, God is there. Ps. 139:7-13. The term is used figuratively. To act in accordance with God's commands, and enjoy communion with him, is to be in his presence. To be out of his presence is to act contrary to God's laws.

Those who persecuted the early Christians, their countrymen, (Acts 17:1-7) were driven away from the place they loved best of all, where God's honor and glory dwelt and were manifested. *But they will be restored, for "when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, all Israel shall be saved," so that his "everlasting destruction" is not without end.*

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SMOKE OF TORMENT FOR EVER AND EVER?

"And the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name."--Rev. 14:11.

While this document has tried to avoid discussion of end time matters as much as possible it is impossible to get away from it in this passage. Here is one view:

This chapter and the two preceding chapters are speaking of the church in this world and its enemies. The pagan power is the "red dragon," and the Roman Empire is "the beast." The Lamb is Christ. The 144,000 denotes the Jewish converts, etc. The wrath of God on the worshippers of the beast and his image indicates the judgment of God on those who rejected Christ. "Fire and brimstone" and smoking torment is the imagery that John uses to describe such calamities as befell the wicked people of those times. All the scenery is on earth, as the careful reader will see. One strong clue is the mention of day or night since in Heaven there is no night.

This torment was to continue "forever and ever," not literally without end, but as the smoke of Idumea in Isa. 34:10, went up "forever and ever," though it has long ceased. It is also said that the worshippers of the beast would be forever and ever. However, this language can be applied to length of days as in Ps. 21:4, to the duration of a book in Isa. 30:8, to the sojourn of the Jews in Canaan in Jer. 7:7; 25:5, etc. All these have ceased.

It MUST be remembered that the New Testament, particularly Revelation, uses OLD TESTAMENT APOCALYPTIC LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS. See study on [Prophetic Symbols](#)

The language refers to scenes and events occurring in this world. The smoke and fire and torment are all of temporary duration.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS?

That the words "Eternal," etc., did not denote endless duration at the time of Christ is demonstrated by the usage of the Christian fathers. Justin Martyr and Ireneus believed in punishment that ended in annihilation. Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and others were Universalists, and yet they *all employed the Greek words 'aion-aionios', to denote their ideas of the duration of future punishment.* This proves that from A.D. 115 to A.D. 400, these words meant limited duration when applied to punishment. (See [Beecher's History of Future Retribution](#)) *The fact that Origen and others taught an 'aionion' punishment after death, and salvation beyond it demonstrates that at that time the word did NOT mean endless, but indefinite or limited duration.*

THE EMPEROR JUSTINIAN

And still later the Emperor Justinian (A.D. 540) in calling the celebrated local council which assembled in 544, addressed his edict to Menno, Patriarch of Constantinople, and elaborately argued against the doctrines he had determined should be condemned. He does not say, in defining the Catholic doctrine at that time "We believe in *aionian* punishment, for that was just what the Universalist Origen himself taught. Nor does he say, "The word *aionion* has been misunderstood, it denotes endless duration," as he would have said had there been such a disagreement. But, writing in Greek he says, "The holy church of Christ teaches an endless *aionios* (*ateleutetos aionios*) life to the righteous, and endless (*ateleutetos*) punishment to the wicked." *Aionios* was not enough in his judgment to denote endless duration. and he employed *ateleutetos* to describe endless duration. This demonstrates that even as late as A.D. 540 *aionios* meant limited duration, and required an added word to impart to it the force of endless duration.

These and other testimonies ([See Hanson's "Aion-Aionios,"](#)) prove that these words did not mean endless duration among the early Christians for about six centuries after Christ. To say that any one who contradicts these men is correct, and that they did not know the meaning of the word is like saying that an Australian, twelve hundred years hence, will be able to give a more accurate definition of English words in common use today than we ourselves. These ancients could not be mistaken. The fact that they required qualifying words to give '*aionion*' the sense of endless duration and that they used it to describe punishment when they believed in the annihilation of the wicked, or in their restoration subsequent to *aionion* punishment, demonstrates beyond doubt that the word didn't mean endless at that time.

UNAVOIDABLE CONCLUSION

From these and other considerations it is evident that there is nothing in the use of the words Everlasting, Eternal, Forever, etc., to teach endless punishment. All forms of the word mean limited duration. This is the meaning of the noun *aion*, and of course its reduplications and derivatives can mean no more.

BUT WHAT ABOUT HELL?

Here is a classic example of how the beliefs of the translators affected the translations of Scripture handed down to us. The one word that stands in thousands of minds as the synonym of endless torment is the word 'Hell'. The popular belief is that, in the Bible, a place or condition of endless torment and flames is denoted by this word. Does the Bible teach the ideas commonly held among Christians concerning Hell? Does the Hell of the Bible denote a place of torment or a condition of suffering without end that begins at death? What is the hell of the Bible?

Let's trace the words translated Hell from the beginning to the end of the Bible. Let's learn by their connections exactly what the Word teaches on this important subject. It is our belief that the Bible hell is not the heathen, nor the "orthodox" hell. Hell is doomed to pass away when its purpose shall have been accomplished and its purpose is the reformation of those for whose welfare a good God ordained it.

This information in this section is key, so please study carefully and prayerfully. The Microsoft Encarta Dictionary states the following: "The origin of the word 'hell' goes back to an ancient form meaning 'to hide or conceal' and is, in fact, related to the second part of the word 'conceal'."

The English word Hell grew into its present meaning. Horne Tooke says that hell, heel, hill, hole, whole, hall, hull, hole, halt and hold are all from the same root.

"Originally, 'hell' simply meant a place covered over."

The word was first applied to the grave by our German and English ancestors. As superstition evolved to regard the grave as an entrance to a world of torment, hell, in the long run, became the word used to denote a realm of fiery torment.

In the Bible four words are translated Hell: the Hebrew word 'Sheol', in the original Old Testament; its equivalent, the Greek word 'Hades', in the Septuagint; and in the New Testament, 'Hades', 'Gehenna' and 'Tartarus'.

SHEOL AND HADES

The Hebrew Old Testament, some three hundred years before the Christian era, was translated into Greek. Of the sixty-four instances where Sheol occurs in the Hebrew it is rendered Hades in the Greek sixty times. This proves the words 'sheol' and 'hades' are the same.

Neither 'sheol' or 'hades' is ever used in the Bible to signify punishment after death.

In fact, the word 'Hell' should never have been used as the rendering of 'Sheol' or Hades because neither word denotes *post-mortem* torment. According to the Old Testament the words 'Sheol-Hades' primarily signify only the place or state of the dead. In every instance in the Old Testament the word grave should be substituted for the term hell, either in a literal or figurative sense. The word, being a proper name, should always have been left un-translated. Had it been carried into the Greek Septuagint and thereafter into the English un-translated as 'Sheol', a world of misconception would have been avoided. When it was rendered Hades, heathen mythology was integrated. When it was rendered Hell, the medieval monstrosities of a Christianity corrupted by heathen mythology was integrated. 'Sheol' meant primarily and literally the grave or death. 'Sheol' secondarily and figuratively meant the political, social, moral or spiritual consequences of wickedness in the present world. This was the precise force of the term 'Sheol' wherever found.

Sheol occurs exactly sixty-four times, and is translated hell thirty-two times, pit three times, and grave twenty-nine times. Dr. George Campbell, a celebrated critic, says that Sheol signifies the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery."

ONLY FIVE OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS ARE CLAIMED

Professor Stuart only dares to claim *five* out of the sixty-four passages as affording any proof that the word means a place of punishment after death. "These," he says, "*may* designate the future world of woe," though he adds: "I concede that to interpret all the texts which exhibit *Sheol* as having reference merely to the *grave* is possible. Therefore it is possible to interpret " them "as designating a death violent and premature and inflicted by the hand of Heaven." An examination shows that these five passages agree with the rest in meaning consequences of temporal duration, meaning consequences relating to this side of life.

Ps. 9:17 "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

The wicked here are "the *nations* that forget God" as the Holmes Christian Standard Bible states, "The wicked will return to Sheol--all the nations that forget God." They will be turned into *Sheol* [death], returned to dust and die as nations for their wickedness. Dr. Allen of Bowdoin College says of this text: "The punishment expressed in this passage is cutting off from life, destroying from the earth by special judgment, and removing to the invisible state of the dead. The Hebrew term translated hell in the text does not seem to mean, with any certainty, anything more than the state of the dead in their deep abode." Professor Stuart: "It means a violent and premature death inflicted by the hand of heaven."

Modern day Christians have, due to incorrect teaching, learned to read into texts like these the meaning of eternal torment when the original language meant nothing of the kind.

Job 21:13: "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave."

It would seem that no one could claim this text as a threat of after-death punishment. It is a mere declaration of sudden death. This is especially evident when we remember that the Old Testament Hebrews, according to all authorities, did NOT believe in punishment after death.

The Hebrews believing in punishment after death didn't show up in any significant way until the period between the Old and New Testaments around the Maccabees Era. It is believed by many Scholars that the Hebrew beliefs were changed following long periods of exile in heathen nations. Jewish history gives countless examples of this prior to the Maccabees Era. Non-Jewish nations held a plethora of beliefs in after-death punishments.

Prov. 5:5: "Her feet go down to the grave; her steps take hold on hell."

This language making death and *Sheol* parallel announces that the strange woman walks in paths of swift and inevitable sorrow and death. And so does Prov. 9:18: "But he knows not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." *Sheol* is here

used as a figure or emblem of the horrible condition and fate of those who follow the ways of sin. They are dead while they live. They are already in *Sheol* or moral death.

In discussing this next verse, try to put your views regarding corporal punishment on hold so we can stay on point. As with so many verses in the Bible, if you're cynical you can twist this verse to make it look like the Bible condones child abuse when it does not.

Prov. 23:13-14: "Withhold not correction from the child; for if you beat him with the rod he shall not die. You shall beat him with the rod and shall deliver his soul from hell."

Sheol is here used either as the *grave* to denote the death that rebellious children experience early or it may mean that moral condition of the soul which *Sheol*, the realm of death, signifies. But in neither case is it supposed to mean a place or condition of after-death punishment because, as all scholars agree, Solomon was not a believer in after death punishments. That the Hebrew Sheol never designates a place of punishment in a future state of existence, we have the testimony of the most learned of scholars, even among the so-called orthodox - meaning those that did believe in eternal torment. We quote the declarations of a few:

- Rev. Dr. Whitby: "Sheol throughout the Old testament signifies, not a place of punishment for the souls of bad men only, but the grave, or place of death."
- Dr. Chapman: "Sheol, in itself considered, has no connection with future punishment."
- Dr. Allen: "The term *Sheol* itself does not seem to mean anything more than the state of the dead in their dark abode."
- Edward Leigh who, says Horne's "Introduction," was one of the most learned men of his time, and his work a valuable help to the understanding of the original language of the Scriptures," observes that "all learned Hebrew scholars know the Hebrews have no proper word for hell."
- Prof. Stuart: "There can be no reasonable doubt that *Sheol* means the *underworld*, the *grave* or *sepulchre*, the *world of the dead*. It is very clear that there are many passages where no other meaning can reasonably be assigned to it. Accordingly, our English translators have rendered the word Sheol grave, in thirty instances out of the whole sixty-four instances in which it occurs."
- Dr. Thayer in his "Theology of Universalism" quotes as follows: "Dr. Whitby says that Hell 'throughout the Old Testament signifies the grave, or the place of death.'"
- Archbishop Whately: "As for a future state of retribution in another world, Moses said nothing to the Israelites about that."
- Paley declares that the Mosaic dispensation "dealt in temporal rewards and punishments. The blessings consisted altogether of worldly benefits, and the curses of worldly punishments."
- Prof. Mayer says that "the rewards promised the righteous, and the punishments threatened the wicked, are such only as are awarded in the present state of being."

To the same important fact testify Prof. Wines, Bush, Arnauld, and other distinguished theologians. All Hebrew scholars agree that the Hebrews had no word proper for hell as a place of punishment. If we consult the passages in which the word is rendered *grave*, and substitute the original word Sheol it will be seen that the meaning is far better preserved:

Gen. 37:34-35: "and Jacob rent his clothes, and put sack-cloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him: but he refused to be comforted: and he said, For I will go down into the *grave* (Sheol--Hades) unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him." It was not into the literal grave but into the realm of the dead where Jacob supposed his son to have gone; this is where he wished to go.

Gen. 42:38 and 44:31 assert the same: "And he said, my son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: and if mischief befall him by the way in which you go, then shall you bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the *grave*." "It shall come to pass, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and your servants shall bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to the *grave*." The literal *grave* may be meant here, but had Sheol remained un-translated, any reader would have understood the sense intended. The remaining passages where the word is rendered grave are 1 Sam. 2:6-13; 1 Kings 2:6-9; Job 7:9, 14:13; Numb. 16:33; Job 17: 13-14; 21:13; 33:21-22; Ps. 6:5; 30:3; 88:3; Prov 1:12; Ps. 20:3, 140:7; Ecc. 9:10; Isa 38:19; Ps. 31:17, 89:48; Prov. 30:16; Isa. 14:11, 38:18.

Of the latter passage

"For the *grave* cannot praise you, death cannot celebrate you; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth,"

Prof. Stuart says, "I regard the simple meaning of this controversial verse (and of others like it, e.g. Ps. 6:5; 30:9; 88:11; 115:7; Comp. 118:17) as being this, 'The dead can no more give thanks to God nor celebrate his praise among the living on earth, etc.'" And he properly observes: "The inconsistent way in which they have rendered the word 'Sheol' gives credence to the argument against their interpretation of it. Why the word should have been rendered grave and pit in the foregoing passages and hell in the rest cannot be explained. Why it is not the grave or hell or better still Sheol or Hades in all cases no one can explain. The only explanation seems to be the bias and beliefs of the translators."

SHEOL--HADES RENDERED HELL

The first time the word is found translated Hell in the Bible is in Deut. 32:22-26:

"For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest Hell (Sheol-Hadees) and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischief upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction; I

will also send the teeth of beasts upon them with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without and terror within shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs. I said I would scatter them into corners; I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men."

The verse above teaches that the lowest hell is on earth and its torments consist in such pains as are only possible in this life: "hunger," "the teeth of beasts," "the poison of serpents," "the sword," etc. Not only are real offenders to suffer them but even "sucklings" [babies] are to be involved in the calamity. If endless torment is meant by the word then infant damnation is certain because the verse says into this hell "the suckling and the man of gray hairs" go side by side.

The scattering and destruction of the Israelites in this world is the meaning of "fire in the lowest hell," in this text. Any reader can see this by carefully consulting the chapter containing this first instance of the use of the word. Similar to this are the teachings wherever the word occurs in the Old Testament:

"For thou will not leave my soul in Hell nor suffer My holy one to see corruption." Ps. 16:10. Here "corruption" is placed parallel with Sheol, or death.

"Though they dig into Hell, thence shall my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down." Amos 9:2.

"If I ascend up into heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Hell, behold, you are there. Ps. 139:8.

"It is high as heaven; what can you do? deeper than Hell; what can you know." Job 9:8.

IMPORTANT FACTS

Please keep in mind that the issues of the grave, the place of departed spirits, the hell of eternal flames and the lake of fire are all mixed up in many minds. The Bible teaches death, hell and the grave are all destroyed in the lake of fire. So keep in mind we are discussing the issue of hell and the words translated hell. The lake of fire is a separate issue and will be discussed later.

The following are only a few of the reasons why Sheol-Hadees in the Old Testament denotes a condition of temporal punishment or a state of death unrelated to the goodness or badness of the person:

- *Hell is in this world. The Lowest Hell is on earth.* Deut. 32:22,24,25. "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest Hell (Sheol--Hadees) and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." See Jonah 2:2; Rev. 6:8.
- Therefore *David*, after having been in Hell, *was delivered from it.* Ps. 30:3; 2 Sam. 20:5,6. "O Lord, you have brought up my soul from the grave; you have kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit. When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of Hell

- (Sheol--Hadees) compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me," so that there is escape from Hell. Ps. 18:5,6; 116:3; 86:12,13; Rev. 20:13; Ps. 17:5, 30:3.
- *Jonah was in the fish only seventy hours, and declared he was in hell forever.* He escaped from Hell. Jon. 2:2, 6: "Out of the belly of Hell (Sheol--Hadees) cried I, and you heard my voice, earth with her bars was about me *forever*." Even an eternal Hell lasted but three days.
 - *It is a place where God is* and, therefore, must be an instrumentality of mercy. Ps. 139:8: "If I make my bed in Hell (Sheol--Hadees) behold you are there."
 - *Men, having gone into it, are redeemed* from it. 1 Sam. 2:6: "The Lord kills and makes alive; he brings down to the grave (Sheol--Hadees) and brings up."

Nowhere in the Old Testament *does the word Sheol, or its Greek equivalent Hades, ever denote a place or condition of suffering after death.* It either means literal death or temporal [earthly] calamity. This is clear as we consult the usage.

- *Jacob wished to go there.* Gen.38:35: "I will go down into the grave (Sheol--Hadees) unto my son mourning."
- *If the word means a place of endless punishment then David wished eternal burnings on people.* Ps. 55:15: "Let death seize them and let them go down quick into Sheol--Hadees."
- *Job desired to go there and saw it as a safe place;* Job 14:13: "Oh that You would hide me in Sheol, That You would conceal me until Your wrath returns to You, That You would set a limit for me and remember me! "
- *Hezekiah expected to go there.* Isa. 38:10: "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of Sheol--Hadees."
- *Korah, Dathan and Abiram* (Numbers 16:30-33) not only went there, "but their houses, and goods, and all that they owned," "and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up and their houses and all the men that appertained unto Korah and all their goods. They and all that pertained to them went down alive into Sheol--Hadees and the earth closed upon them and they perished from among the congregation."
- *It is in the dust.* Job 17:19: "They shall go down to the bars of Sheol--Hadees when our rest together is in the dust."
- *It has a mouth and* is in fact the grave. See Ps. 141:7: "Our bones are scattered at Sheol's--Hadees' mouth as when one cuts and cleaves wood upon the earth."
- *The overthrow of the King of Babylon is called Hell.* Isa. 14:9-15, 22-23: "Hell (Sheol--Hadees) from beneath is moved for you to meet you at your coming. It stirs up the dead for you, even all the chief ones of the earth. It has raised up from the thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto you, are you also weak as we? Are you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to the grave and the noise of your viols; the worm is spread under you, and the worms cover you. For I will rise up against them says the Lord of hosts and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant and son and nephew says the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern and pools of water. I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, says the Lord of hosts." All this imagery

demonstrates temporal calamity, a national overthrow as the meaning of the word Hell.

- *The captivity of the Jews is called Hell.* Isa. 5:13-14: "Therefore my people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge and their honorable men are famished and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore Sheol--Hades has enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure and their glory and their multitude and their pomp and he that rejoices shall descend into it." Note: The words, "hell has enlarged herself" are routinely taken out of the context of this verse to mean that hell has expanded to accommodate the majority of the population that will be going there.
- *Temporal overthrow is called Hell.* Ps. 49:14: "Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol-Hades (the place of the dead); death shall be their shepherd. And the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their form and beauty shall be consumed because Sheol-Hades shall be their dwelling." Ezek. 32:26-27: "And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised which are gone down to Sheol--Hades with their weapons of war. They have laid their swords under their heads." Notice men are in 'hell' with their swords under their heads. This cannot mean a state of conscious suffering.
- *All men are to go there.* No one can escape the Bible Hell, (Sheol--Hades) Ps. 89:48, "What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol-Hades?"
- *There is no kind of work there.* Eccl. 9:10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol-Hades where you are going."
- *Christ's soul was in Hell* (Sheol-Hades) Acts 2:27-28, "For You will not abandon my soul leaving it helpless in Hades (the state of departed spirits), nor let Your Holy One know decay or see destruction [of the body after death]."
- *No one in the Bible ever speaks of Hell* (Sheol--Hades) as a place of punishment after death.
- *The inhabitants of Hell* (Sheol--Hades) *are eaten of worms, vanish and are consumed away.* Job. 7:9-24. Ps. 49:14.
- *Hell* (Sheol--Hades) *is a place of rest.* See Job 14:13
- *It is a realm of unconsciousness.* Ps. 6:5. Is 38:18. Eccl. 9:10.
- All men will be delivered from this Hell (Sheol-Hades). Hos. 13:14 and 1 Cor. 15:21, "For since [it was] through a man that death [came into the world, it is] also through a Man that the resurrection of the dead [has come]."
- This Hell (Sheol--Hades) is to be destroyed. Hos 13:14: "Oh grave I will be thy destruction." 1 Cor. 15:55: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Rev. 20:13-14: "And death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them and death and Hell were cast into the lake of fire."

THE OLD TESTAMENT REPUDIATES THE HEATHEN DOCTRINE

At the time these declarations were made and universally accepted by the Hebrews, the surrounding nations all held entirely different doctrines. Egypt, Greece and Rome taught

that, after death, there is a fate in store for the wicked that exactly resembles the eternal torment and flames taught by so-called "orthodox" Christians.

The entire Old Testament is silent on the subject of eternal torment and flames.

It teaches nothing of the sort as the many passages we have quoted, which are the only texts containing the word Hell, show. And yet "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22) who believed in a world of torment after death. If Moses knew all about this Egyptian doctrine and did not teach it to his followers what does that tell you?

Dr. Strong says that not only Moses but "every Israelite who came out of Egypt must have been fully acquainted with the universally recognized doctrine of future rewards and punishments." And yet Moses is utterly silent on the subject. Dr. Thayer remarks: "Is it possible to imagine a more conclusive proof against the divine origin of the doctrine? If Moses had believed it to be of God, if he had believed in endless torments as the doom of the wicked after death and had received this as a revelation from heaven, could he have passed over it in silence?"

In addition to the passages already quoted, the word Sheol--Hades is rendered Hell in the following texts: Job. 11:7-8; Ps. 139:8; 18:5; 86:13; 116:3; Prov. 15:11; 23:14; 27:20; Isa. 28:15-18; 57:9; Ezek. 31:16-17; Jon 2:2; Amos 9:2; Hab. 2:5.

We believe we have recorded every passage in which the word occurs. Suppose the original word remained un-interpreted and we read Sheol or Hadees in all the passages instead of *Hell*. Would *any* unbiased reader regard it as conveying the idea of a place or state of endless torment and burnings after death like the English word Hell does?

Such a doctrine was never held by the ancient Jews until after the Babylonian captivity where they acquired it from the heathen. All scholars agree that Moses never taught it and that it is not contained in the Old Testament. Not one of the many passages containing the only word rendered *Hell* in the entire Old Testament teaches any such thought as is commonly supposed to be contained in the word 'hell' as it is defined today.

In fact, one painful fact any serious student of scripture must face is this:

"ORTHODOX" AND HEATHEN VIEWS REGARDING ETERNAL BURNINGS ARE IDENTICAL

Do popular Christian descriptions resemble anything in the Old Testament? Don't they exactly copy the heathen description? Where did these ideas come from? They are not found in the Old Testament, yet the world was full of them when Christ came. Read the drastic difference in views from some "orthodox" teachers:

- Jeremy Taylor of the English Church says: "The bodies of the damned shall be crowded together in hell, like grapes in a wine-press, which press one another till

- they burst; every distinct sense and organ shall be assailed with its own appropriate and most exquisite sufferings."
- Calvin describes it: "Forever harassed with a dreadful tempest, they shall feel themselves torn asunder by an angry God, and transfixed and penetrated by mortal stings, terrified by the thunderbolts of God, and broken by the weight of his hand, so that to sink into any gulf would be more tolerable than to stand for a moment in these terrors."
 - Jonathan Edwards said: "The world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire, in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed, which will always be in tempest, in which they shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day or night, vast waves and billows of fire continually rolling over their heads, of which they shall forever be full of a quick sense within and without; their heads, their eyes, their tongues, their hands, their feet, their loins, and their vitals, shall forever be full of a glowing, melting fire, fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements; and, also, they shall eternally be full of the most quick and lively sense to feel the torments; not for one minute, not for one day, not for one age, not for two ages, not for a hundred ages, nor for ten thousand millions of ages, one after another, but forever and ever, without any end at all, and never to be delivered.'
 - And Spurgeon uses this language even in our own days: "When you die, your soul will be tormented alone: that will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou will have twin hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth thy body will lie, asbestos-like, forever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the devil shall forever play his diabolical tune of *Hell's* unutterable Lament."

These horrible ideas were not obtained from the Old Testament and yet they were fully believed by many Jews and most Pagans when Christ came. Where did these views come from? We will now begin to shift to see what Christ and the New Testament has to say on this issue. What does the New Testament teach concerning *Hell*? As Jesus pointed out MANY times, the Jews at the time of Christ had abandoned many proper Old Testament teachings. They had made void the word of God by their traditions causing Jesus to warn his disciples of the leaven [teachings and doctrine] of the religious leaders.

Mat 16:6, And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." How did the Jews come to change their views?

CONVINCING TESTIMONIES

Whitby on Acts 2:27, says: "That Sheol throughout the Old Testament and Hades in the Septuagint signify, not the place of punishment or of the souls of bad men only, but the grave only. It signifies the place of death. This appears first from the root of Sheol which signifies to ask, to crave and require. Second because it is the place to which the good as well as the bad go." We repeat that during all the generations of Jews that were entertaining the ideas taught in the sixty-four passages, the surrounding heathen believed

in a future, endless torment. Their literature is full of it. Says Good in his "Book of Nature":

"It was believed in most countries that Hell, Hades or invisible world is divided into two very distinct and opposite regions by a broad and impassable gulf. One is a seat of happiness, a paradise, and the other a seat of misery, a Gehenna, or Tartarus. It was believed that there was a supreme magistrate and an impartial tribunal belonging to the infernal shades before which the ghosts must appear and be sentenced to one or the other region according to the deeds done in the body. Egypt is said to have been the originator of this tradition and can be found in the earliest records of Egyptian history."

It should be observed that Gehenna was not used before Christ or until 150 years after Christ's death to denote a place of future punishment.

Dr. Anthon says, "As regards the analogy between the term Hades and our English word Hell, it may be remarked that the latter, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded to the former. Recall, in the beginning hell denoted only what was secret or concealed and this is the way it is found in all the Teutonic dialects."

The heathen sages admit that they invented this doctrine.

- Strabo (born 63 BC or 64 BC, died ca. 24 AD), a Greek historian, geographer and philosopher says: "The multitude are restrained from vice by the punishments the gods are said to inflict upon offenders, and by those terrors and threatenings which certain dreadful words and monstrous forms imprint upon their minds. . . . For it is impossible to govern the crowd of women, and all the common rabble, by philosophical reasoning and lead them to piety, holiness and virtue--but this must be done by superstition, or the fear of the gods, by means of fables and wonders; for the thunder, the torches (of the furies) the dragons, etc., are all fables as is also all the ancient theology." Geo. B. 1.
- Seneca (3 B.C.-65 A.D.) says: "Those things which make the infernal regions terrible, the darkness, the prison, the river of flaming fire, the judgment-seat, etc., are all a fable, with which the poets amuse themselves and by them agitate us with vain terrors."

Dr. Thayer in his "[Origin and History](#)" says, "The process is easily understood. About three hundred and thirty years before Christ, Alexander the Great had subjected to his rule the whole of Western Asia including Judea and also the Kingdom of Egypt. Soon after he founded Alexandria, it speedily became a great commercial metropolis and drew a large multitude of Jews who were always eager to improve the opportunities of traffic and trade. A few years later, Ptolemy Soter took Jerusalem and carried off one hundred thousand of them into Egypt. Here, of course, they were in daily contact with the Egyptians and Greeks and gradually began to adopt their philosophical and religious opinions or to modify their own in harmony with them."

We must either reject these imported ideas as heathen inventions or we must admit that the heathen, centuries before Christ, discovered that of which Moses had no idea. In other words, either uninspired men announced the future fate of sinners centuries before inspired men knew anything of it or the heathen and "evangelical" descriptions of Hell are false.

JEWISH AND PAGAN OPINIONS

At the time of Christ's advent many Jews and most Pagans held Hades to be a place of torment after death that would endure forever. "The prevalent and distinguishing opinion was that the soul survived the body. It was believed that vicious souls would suffer everlasting imprisonment in Hades and that the souls of the virtuous would both be happy there and, in process of time, obtain the privilege of transmigrating into other bodies." (Campbell's Four Gospels, Diss. 6, Pt. 2§19.)

Of the Pharisees Josephus says: "They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them and that, under the earth, there will be rewards and punishments according as they lived virtuously or viciously in this life. The latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison but that the former shall have power to revive and live again." (Antiquities, B. 18, Ch. 1, §3. Whiston's Tr.)

HELL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT--HADES

The word Hades occurs eleven times in the New Testament and is translated Hell ten times and grave once. The word is from '*a not*', and '*eidō*', to see, and means concealed, invisible. It has exactly the same meaning as Sheol. Sheol literally means the grave or death and figuratively destruction, downfall, calamity, or punishment in this world. It has no intimation whatever of torment or punishment beyond the grave. This is the meaning in every passage of the Old Testament containing the word Sheol or Hades whether translated Hell, grave or pit. And this is the meaning of Hades in the New Testament.

Says the "Emphatic Diaglot"; "To translate Hades by the word Hell as it is done ten times out of eleven in the New Testament is *very improper* unless it has the Saxon meaning of '*helan*', to cover, attached to it. The primitive signification of Hell, only denoting what was secret or concealed, perfectly corresponds with the Greek term Hades and its equivalent Sheol. However, the theological definition given to it today *by no means expresses its proper meaning.*"

MEANING OF HADES

The Greek Septuagint, which our Lord used when he read or quoted from the Old Testament gives Hades as the exact equivalent of the Hebrew Sheol. When the Savior or his apostles used the word they meant the same as is meant in the Old Testament. When Hades is used in the New Testament we must understand it just as we do Sheol or Hades in the Old Testament.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS

Dr. Campbell well says: * * "In my judgment, *it ought never in Scripture to be rendered Hell, at least in the sense the word is now universally understood by Christians. In the Old Testament the corresponding word is Sheol. Sheol signifies the state of the dead in general without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons or their happiness or misery. In translating that word, the seventy [Septuagint] have almost invariably used Hades. * * It is very plain that neither in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament nor in the New does the word Hades convey the meaning which the present English word Hell does in common Christian usage*"---Diss. 6., pp. 180-1.

HEATHEN CORRUPTIONS

It must not be forgotten that contact with the heathen at the time of our Savior had corrupted the opinions of the Jews from the simplicity of Moses. By receiving the traditions and fables of paganism they had made void the word of God. They had accepted Hades as the best Greek word to convey the idea of Sheol, but without investing it at first with the heathen notions of the classic Hades as they afterwards did. What these ideas were, the classic authors inform us.

Gibbon says, (Milman's Gibbon, Ch. xxi): "The Jews had acquired at Babylon a great number of Oriental notions and their theological opinions had undergone great changes by this interaction. We find in Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom of Solomon and the later prophets notions unknown to the Jews before the Babylonian captivity. These notions were derived from the Orientals. God, represented under the image of light, and the principle of evil under that of darkness; the history of good and bad angels; paradise and Hell, etc., are doctrines of which *the origin, or at least the positive determination, can only be traced to Oriental philosophy.*" Let us consult all the texts in which the heathen word Hades is employed.

THRUST DOWN TO HADES

Matt. 11:23, and Luke 10:15: "And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell." And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven shall be thrust down to Hell." Of course a *city* never went to a place of torment after death. The word is used here just as in Isa. 14, where Babylon is said to be brought down to Sheol or Hadees. This meant debasement or overthrow, a prediction later fulfilled to the letter. Dr. Clarke's interpretation is correct: "The word here means a state of the utmost woe, ruin, and desolation to which these impenitent cities should be reduced. In the wars between the Romans and the Jews, these cities were totally destroyed."

Hades is the kingdom of death and not a place of torment after death. This is evident from the language of Acts 2:27: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." Verse 31: "His soul was not left in Hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" meaning his spirit did not remain in the state of the dead until his body decayed. No one supposes that Jesus went to a realm of torment when he

died. Jacob wished to go down to Hades to his son mourning. Jesus went to Hades which was the underworld or grave. The Apostle's creed conveys the same idea when it speaks of Jesus as descending into Hell. He died but his soul was not left in the realms of death.

If eternal torment in flames was the punishment for sin, Jesus certainly should have suffered these supposed eternal flames and torments of hell since he was paying the price for the sins of all mankind. The wages of sin was temporal punishments and death, BOTH of which Jesus experienced to the fullest.

THE GATES OF HADES

Matt. 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." The word is used here as an emblem of destruction. "The gates of Hades" means the powers of destruction. It is the Savior's way of saying that his church cannot be destroyed.

HADES ON EARTH?

Rev. 6:8: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. Power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword and with hunger and with death and with the beasts of the earth." All the details of this description demonstrate how Hades can be utilized to show complete and utter destruction. Also, the destruction depicted here clearly is on earth.

The word also occurs in Rev. 1:18 "I am he that lives and was dead, Yet look, I am alive for evermore, Amen. I have the keys of Hell and of death." To understand this passage literally with the popular view of Hell, would be to represent Jesus as the hell's gate-keeper. The idea expressed here is that Jesus defies death and the grave, evil, destruction and all that is denoted either literally or figuratively by Hades, the under-world. Its gates open to him.

Canon Farrar in Excursus II, "Eternal Hope," observes: "Hell has entirely changed its old harmless sense of the dim under-world of the deceased. It has become a place of torment by material fire into which all impenitent souls pass forever after death. It conveys meanings which are not to be found in any word of the New or Old testament for which it is presented as an equivalent. In our Lord's language Capernaum was to be thrust down, not 'to Hell', but to the silence and desolation of the grave (Hades). The promise that 'the gates of Hades' should not prevail against the church is perhaps a distinct implication of her triumph even beyond death in the souls of men for whom he died."

HADES DESTROYED

1 Cor. 15:55: "O death, where is thy sting? O *grave*, where is thy victory?" This is parallel to Hos. 14:14, where the destruction of Hades is prophesied. Whatever Hades means, it is not to endure forever. It is destined to be destroyed therefore it cannot be

endless torment. That its inhabitants are to be delivered from its dominion is seen from Rev. 20:13,

"And Death and Hell delivered up the dead that were in them."

This harmonizes with the declaration of David that he had been delivered from it already. (Ps. 30:3. 2 Sam. 22:5,6) It does not retain its victims always and therefore, whatever it may mean, it does not denote endless imprisonment. Hence the next verse reads,

"And death and Hell were cast into the lake of fire."

Can a more striking description of utter destruction be given than this? A good Bible student would quickly object saying, "But Revelation 20 also talks about those not being written in the Book Of Life being thrown into the Lake of Fire. Yes, and look at the differences mentioned regarding those thrown into the lake of fire:

Rev 20:10, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Rev 20:15, "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

The discussion of 'forever and ever' in Rev. 20:10 above is covered extensively elsewhere in this document. I have an open challenge to any Bible student to come up with ANY scripture that says how long the people in Rev. 20:15 above are kept in the lake of fire. There is an old expression that's appropriate here - ASSUME NOTHING!

See the section on [Fire and Brimstone](#) and related sections where it is shown that the lake of fire could very well be nothing more than the purging, cleansing and corrective Christ of God - the heir of everybody and everything!

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

The only remaining occurrence of the word Hades is in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus:

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in Hell (Hades) he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." Luke 16:22, 23.

If this is a literal history of the after-death experiences of two persons, then the good are carried about in Abraham's bosom; and the wicked are actually roasted in fire and cry for water to cool their parched tongues. If these are figurative, then Abraham, Lazarus, the rich man, the gulf and every part of the account are features of a picture, an allegory, as

much as the fire and Abraham's bosom. In this story they are so near together they can converse across the gulf which is not wide but deep. It was this opinion that caused Jonathan Edwards to teach that the sight of the agonies of the damned enhances the joys of the blest! The only reason for the joy of any child of God regarding God's judgments of others is in the fact that they know the judgments of God bring correction, purging, cleansing and salvation to the judged! To teach the saints of God will experience joy watching people in unspeakable torment burning in actual flames throughout eternity is religious insanity. See the notes on Richard's message "[Judgment bring Salvation.](#)"

1 The story is not fact, but a parable. This is denied by some Christians who mention that our Savior says: "*There was a certain rich man.*" True, but many of his parables begin in the same way, "A certain rich man had two sons," etc. In Judges 9 we read:

"The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, 'you reign over us'."

This language is positive and yet describes something that never could have occurred. All fables, parables, and other fictitious accounts which are related to illustrate important truths have this positive form to give force and life-likeness to the lessons they teach.

Dr. Whitby says: "That this is only a parable and not a real history of what was actually done, is evident from the circumstances of it. The rich man lifting up his eyes in Hell and seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, his discourse with Abraham, his complaint of being tormented in flames, and his desire that Lazarus might be sent to cool his tongue are clearly parabolic. If these are parabolic, why should the rest be accounted history?" Lightfoot and Hammond make the same general comments.

Here is indubitable proof that this is a parable. The Jews have a book, written during the Babylonian Captivity entitled 'Gemara Babylonicum' containing doctrines entertained by Pagans concerning the future state. These doctrines were not recognized by the followers of Moses. This story is founded on heathen views. They were not obtained from the Bible, for the Old Testament contains nothing resembling them. They were among those traditions which our Savior condemned when he told the Scribes and Pharisees, "Ye make the word of God of none effect through your traditions," and when he said to his disciples, "Beware of the leaven, or doctrine, of the Pharisees."

Our Savior seized the imagery of this story, not to indorse its truth, but just as we now relate any other fable. He related it as found in the Gemara, not for the story's sake, but to convey a moral to his hearers. The Scribes and Pharisees to whom he addressed this and the five preceding stories felt, as we shall see, the force of its application to them.

Says Dr. Geo. Campbell: "The Jews did not adopt the pagan fables on this subject nor did they express themselves entirely in the same manner; but the general grain of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide. The Greek Hades they found well adapted to express the Hebrew Sheol. This they *came to conceive* as including different sorts of habitations

for 'ghosts' of different characters." Now as nothing resembling these ideas is found in the Old Testament, where did the Jews obtain it, if not from Greek mythology?

The commentator Macknight says: "It must be acknowledged that our Lord's descriptions are not drawn from the writings of the Old Testament, but have a remarkable affinity to the descriptions which the Grecian poets have given. They represent the abodes of the blest as lying contiguous to the region of the damned, and separated only by a great impassable gulf in such sort that the ghosts could talk to one another from the opposite banks. If from these resemblances it is thought the parable is formed on the Grecian mythology, *it will not at all follow that our Lord approved of what the common people thought or spoke concerning these matters* agreeably to the notions of Greeks. In parables, provided the doctrines taught are strictly true, the terms in which they are taught may be such as are most familiar to the people. The images made use of are such as the hearers are best acquainted with." In parables, the truth taught is paramount, the imagery used in the parable is incidental to the truth taught.

But if it were a literal history, nothing could be gained for the doctrine of endless torment. It would oblige us to believe in literal fire after death without a word to show that such fire would never go out. It would have us believe the righteous go to Abraham's bosom instead of heaven.

We have heard it claimed that the punishment of the rich man must be endless because there was a gulf *fixed* so that those who desired to could not cross it. But were this a literal account it wouldn't necessitate that the gulf would last eternally. Aren't we assured that the time is coming when "*every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low?*" Isa. 40:4. When every valley is exalted what becomes of the great gulf? And there is not a word said of the duration of the sufferings of the rich man. If the account be a history, it can't go against the promise of "*...the restitution of everybody and everything spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began...*" [Acts 3:21] There is not a word intimating that the rich man's torment was never to cease. So the doctrine of endless misery is not taught here. The most that can be claimed is that the consequences of sin extend into the future life. This is a doctrine that we believe just as strongly as any one but we do not believe the consequences will be endless. Nor do we believe that the doctrine is taught in this parable or in the Bible use of the word Hell.

Charles Kingsley, the celebrated English author, says in his "Letters":

"You may quote the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (which was the emancipation from the Tartarus theory) as the one instance in which our Lord professedly opens the secrets of the next world. He represents the rich man as still Abraham's child and under a moral training of which you see the fruit. He is gradually weaned from the selfish desire of indulgence for himself to love and care for his brethren. This is a divine step forward in his life which proves him not to be hopelessly lost. The impossibility of Lazarus getting to him, or vice versa, expresses plainly the great truth that each being is where he ought to be at that time. Interchange of place (*i.e.*, of spiritual state) is impossible. But it says nothing against the rich man rising out of his torment when he has learnt the lesson

of it and going where he ought to go." So that on the theory that this is a literal account, it affords no evidence of endless torment.

But allowing for a moment that this is intended to represent a scene in the spirit world, what a representation we have! The rich man is dwelling in a world of fire in the company of lost spirits. He is hardened by the depravity that must possess the residents of that world and yet is yearning with compassion for those on earth. He is not totally depraved or harboring evil thoughts and is instead benevolent and humane. Instead of being loyal to the wicked world in which he dwells, as any one bad enough to go there should be, he actually tries to prevent migration there from earth. Now compare Lazarus who is entirely indifferent to everybody but himself. The rich man seems to have more mercy and compassion than does Lazarus!

But what does the parable teach? It teaches that the Jewish nation, and especially the Scribes and Pharisees, were about to die as a power, as a church and as a controlling influence in the world. It teaches the common people and the Gentiles were to be exalted in the new order of things.

The details of the parable show this: "There was a certain rich man clothed in purple and fine linen." In these first words, by describing their very costume, the Savior fixed the attention of his hearers on the Jewish priesthood. They were, emphatically, the rich men of that nation. His description of the beggar was equally graphic. He lay at the gate of the rich only asking to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the table. Thus dependent were the common people and the Gentiles on the scribes and Pharisees. We remember how Christ once rebuked them for shutting up the kingdom of heaven against these. They lay at the gates of the Jewish hierarchy. Remember, the Gentiles were literally restricted to the outer court of the temple. Hence in Rev. 11:12 we read; "But the court, which is without the temple leave out and measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles." They could only walk the outer court or lie at the gate. The brief, graphic description given by our Savior showed his hearers that he was describing those two classes: the Jewish priesthood and nation on the one hand, and the common Jews and Gentiles on the other.

The rich man died and was buried. This class died officially, nationally, and its power departed. The kingdom of God was taken from them and conferred on others. The beggar died. The Gentiles, publicans and sinners, were translated into the kingdom of God's dear son where is neither Jew nor Greek and all are one in Christ Jesus. This is the meaning of "Abraham's bosom." They accepted the true faith and so became one with faithful Abraham. Abraham is called the father of the faithful and the beggar is represented to have gone to Abraham's bosom. This denotes the fact, which is now history, that the common people and Gentiles accepted Christianity and have since continued enjoying the blessings of the Christian faith.

What is meant by the torment of the rich man? The misery of those proud men soon after their land was captured and their city and temple possessed by barbarians, and they scattered like chaff before the wind--a condition that has remained in various degrees

since. All efforts to bless them with Christianity have proved relatively ineffective. At this very moment there is a great gulf fixed so that there is 'no passing to and fro'. And, for the most part the Jews do not desire the gospel. Nor did the rich man ask to enter Abraham's bosom with Lazarus. He only wished Lazarus to alleviate his sufferings by dipping his finger in water and cooling his tongue. For the most part, it is so with the Jews today. They do not desire the gospel; they only ask those among whom they were forced to sojourn to tolerate them and soften the hardships that accompanied their wanderings. Once they were exalted to heaven. Now the gulf that exists between them and the Gentiles shall not be abolished till the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in and "then all Israel shall be saved." End quote.

Lightfoot says: "The main scope and design of it seems this: to hint the destruction of the unbelieving Jews who, though they had Moses and the prophets, did not believe them and would not believe though one (even Jesus) arose from the dead."

Our quotations are not from teachers of Universal Salvation, but from those who accepted the doctrine of eternal punishment who were forced to confess that this parable has no reference to that subject. The rich man [the Jews] were and are in the same Hell in which David was when he said: "The pains of Hell (Hadees) got hold on me, I found trouble and sorrow," and "thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Hell." Not in endless woe in the future world, but in misery and suffering in this world.

But this is not a final condition. Wherever we locate it, it must end. Paul asks the Romans,

"Have they (the Jews) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid! but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness is in part happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, for this is my covenant with them when I shall take away their sins." 11:11, 25, 27.

In brief terms then we may say that this is a fictitious story or parable describing the fate in this world of the Jewish and Gentile people of our Savior's times. It has not the slightest reference to the world after death, nor to the fate of mankind in that world.

Let the reader observe that the rich man, being in Hades, was in a place of temporary detention only. Whether this be a literal story or a parable, his confinement is not to be an endless one. This is demonstrated in a two-fold manner:

1. Death and Hades will deliver up their occupants. Rev. 20:13.
2. Hades is to be destroyed. I Cor. 15:55; Rev. 20:14.

Therefore Hades is of temporary duration. The Rich Man was not in a place of endless torment. As Prof. Stuart remarks: "Whatever the state of either the righteous or the

wicked may be while in Hades, that state will certainly cease and be exchanged for another at the general resurrection."

Therefore, the New Testament usage agrees exactly with the Old Testament. Primarily and literally Hades is death, the grave and figuratively it is destruction. It is to end. The last time it is referred to (Rev. 20:14) as well as in other instances (Hosea 13:14; I Cor. 15:55) its destruction is positively announced.

So that the instances (sixty-four) in the Old Testament and (eleven) in the New, all seventy-five in the Bible, perfectly agree in representing the word Hell as derived from the Hebrew Sheol and the Greek Hades and as being of temporary duration.

TARTARUS

This word occurs once in the Bible: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell (Tartarus) and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter 2:4. The word in the Greek is 'Tartarus', or rather it is a verb from that noun. "Cast down to Hell" should be '*tartarused (tartarosas)*'.

Greek mythology held *Tartarus*, says Anthon in his Classical Dictionary, to be "the fabled place of punishment in the lower world." "According to the ideas of the Homeric and Hesiodic ages, it would seem that the world or universe was a hollow globe divided into two equal portions by the flat disk of the earth. The external shell of this globe is called by the poets brazen and iron, probably to express its solidity. The superior hemisphere was called Heaven and the inferior one *Tartarus*. Here the poet of the Odyssey also places Erebus as the realm of Pluto and Proserpina and the final dwelling place of all the race of men. It was a place which the poet of the Iliad describes as lying within the bosom of the earth. At a later period the change of religions gradually affected Erebus, the place of the reward of the good. *Tartarus* was raised up to form the prison in which the wicked suffered the punishment due to their crimes."

Now it is not to be supposed that Peter indorses and teaches paganism. If he did, then we must accept all the absurdities that went with pagan mythology. And if this is an item of Christian faith, why is it never referred to in the Old or New Testament? Why have we no descriptions of it such as abound in classic literature?

THE BOOK OF ENOCH

Peter alludes to the subject just as though it were well-known and understood by his correspondents. "If the angels that sinned." What angels? "Were cast down to *Tartarus*." Where is the story related? Not in the Bible, but in a book well-known at the time called the Book of Enoch. It was written some time before the Christian Era, and is often quoted by the Christian fathers. It embodies a tradition to which Josephus alludes, (Ant. i:3) of certain angels who had fallen. (Dr. T.J.Sawyer, in *Univ. Quart*) From this apocryphal book Peter quoted the verse referring to Tartarus. Dr. Sawyer says:

"Not only the moderns are forced to this opinion, but it seems to have been universally adopted by the ancients. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Hilary," says Professor Stuart, "all of whom refer to the book of Enoch and quote from it never say that any Christians of their day denied or doubted that a quotation was made by Peter from the Book of Enoch. Most of these writers do call in question the canonical rank or authority of the book of Enoch; but the apologies which they make for the quotation of it in Peter show that the quotation itself was generally conceded among them." There are some individuals who still doubt whether Peter quoted the Book of Enoch; but while as Professor Stuart suggests, this doubt is incapable of being confirmed by any satisfactory proof. It avails nothing to deny the quotation; for it is evident if Peter did not quote the Book of Enoch he did quote a tradition of no better authority." This Book of Enoch is full of absurd legends, which no sensible man can accept.

THEN WHAT DID PETER MEAN?

Why did Peter quote from the book of Enoch? Just as men now quote from classic literature. This is not sanctioning the truth of the quotation but is done to illustrate and enforce a proposition. Nothing is more common than for writers to quote fables "As the tortoise said to the hare," in Aesop; "As the sun said to the wind," etc. We have the same practice illustrated in the Bible. Joshua, after a poetical quotation adorning his narrative, says: "Is not this written in the Book of Jasher?" (Josh. 10:113) and Jeremiah (48:45) says: "A fire shall come forth out of Heshbon" quoting from an ancient poet, says Dr. Adam Clarke. Peter alludes to this ancient legend to illustrate the certainty of retribution. He was not meaning to sanction the prevalent fables of the time concerning fallen angels and the heathen view of Tartarus.

Here are our options:

1. The pagan doctrine is true. The heathens were 'inspired' by ascertaining the 'fact' of tartarus before the authors of the Bible learned it. Remember, the fable of tartarus was accepted centuries before Christ and is not taught in the Old Testament.
2. Peter quotes it as Jesus refers to Mammon. Mammon is a Chaldee, Syriac, and Punic word like 'Plutus' for the money-god or devil. The terms are used rhetorically to convey an idea. Peter used tartarus to illustrate the fact of certain retribution. Today, one might use a popular movie as an example to convey a spiritual truth. It would be understood that one wasn't teaching the movie was necessarily 'gospel' or doctrinally sound.

If the fable of tartarus is true, how can any one account for the fact that it is never referred to in the Bible before or after this? Besides, these angels are not to be detained eternally in Tartarus. They are to be released. The language is, "delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved *unto* judgment." They only remain in Tartarus "unto judgment." Their imprisonment is therefore a limited one showing that the language gives no proof of endless punishment even if it were a literal description.

But no one can fail to see that the apostle employs the legend of the Book of Enoch to illustrate and enforce his doctrine of retribution. It is as though he had said: "If, as is believed by some, God spared not the angels that sinned, do not let us mortal men who

sin expect to escape." Deny this and there is no escape from the doctrine of Tartarus as taught by pagan mythology. Additionally, this doctrine would have to be accepted on the testimony of a single verse of Scripture ignoring the scriptural mandate that everything should be established on the testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses. [Matthew 18:16] Whatever may be the intent of the words, they do not teach endless torment for *the chains referred to last only 'unto the judgment'*.

GEHENNA

While nearly all "orthodox" authorities concede that sheol and Hades do not denote a place of torment in the future world, most of those who accept the doctrine of endless torment claim that Gehenna does convey that meaning. This is the last ditch effort of those who are struggling to establish the doctrine of the endless supremacy of sin.

But no such meaning resides in this word, nor is there a scintilla of evidence that it ever was imagined to carry such an idea until many years after Christ. An examination of the Bible use of the term will show us that the popular view of eternal burnings and torments is obtained by injecting the word with pagan superstition. Its origin and the first references to it in the Old Testament are correctly stated by eminent critics and scholars.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS

Says Campbell: "The word Gehenna is derived, as all agree, from the Hebrew words *ge hinnom*; which in diverse forms; *e.g.*, the Chaldee '*Gehennom*', the Arabic '*Gahannam*', the Greek '*Gehenna*'. *The valley of Hinnom* is a part of the valley which bound Jerusalem on the south. Josh. 15:8; 18:6. Here in ancient times under some of the idolatrous kings the worship of Moloch, the horrid idol-god of the Ammonites, was practiced. To this idol children were offered in sacrifice. 2 Kings 23:10; Ezek. 23:37,19; 2 Chron. 28:3; Lev. 18:21; 30:2. It is held that the head of the idol was like that of an ox while the rest of the body resembled that of a man. It was hollow within and, being heated by fire, children were laid in its arms and were literally roasted alive. The worship of Moloch is everywhere denounced in the Scriptures. The place itself came to be called '*Tophet*', *i.e.*, *abomination, detestation* (from '*toph*' - *to vomit with loathing*)." Jer. 8:32; 19:6; 2 Kings 23:10; Ezek. 23:36, 39.

"*Gehenna*, originally a Hebrew word, which signifies *the valley of Hinnom*, is composed of the common noun '*Gee*' meaning valley and the proper name '*Hinnom*' referring to the owner of this valley. The valley of the sons of Hinnom was a delightful vale planted with trees and watered by fountains. It was located near Jerusalem on the southeast by the brook Kidron. Here the Jews placed that brazen image of Moloch, which had the face of a calf, and extended its hands as those of a man. It is said on the authority of the ancient Rabbins that, to this image, the idolatrous Jews not only sacrificed doves, pigeons, lambs, rams, calves and bulls, but even to offer their children. 1 Kings 9:7; 2 Kings 15:3, 4. In the prophecy of Jeremiah 7:31, this valley is called *Tophet*. The administrators in these horrid rites beat drums lest the cries and shrieks of the infants who were burned should be heard by the assembly. These practices were abolished by Josiah and the Jews brought

back to the pure worship of God. 2 Kings 23:10. After this they held the place in such abomination that they cast into it all kinds of filth together with the carcasses of beasts and the unburied bodies of criminals who had been executed. Continual fires were necessary in order to consume these lest the putrefaction should infect the air; and there were always worms feeding on the remaining relics. Hence it came to be said that any severe punishment or especially a shameful kind of death was denominated *Gehenna*." Schleusner. It is important to note that at the time of Christ, this was the purpose and exact description of the valley of Hinnom which is translated Gehenna or Hell. It was the city dump and incinerator.

As we trace the history of the locality as it occurs in the Old Testament, we learn that it should never have been translated as 'Hell'. It is a proper name of a well-known locality and ought to have remain un-translated as Gehenna like the French Bible, Newcome's and Wakefield's translation, the Improved Version, Emphatic Diaglott, etc. Babylon might have been translated Hell with as much propriety as Gehenna.

It is fully described in numerous passages in the Old Testament, and is exactly located on earth:

"And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem, and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward." Joshua 15:8.

"And he (Joshua) defiled *Tophet*, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch." 2 Kings 23:10.

"Moreover, he (Ahaz) burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen." 2 Chron. 28:3.

"And they (the children of Judah) have built the high places of *Tophet* which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called *Tophet*, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter; for they shall bury in *Tophet* till there be no place." Jer. 7:31,32.

"And go forth into the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called *Tophet*, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter." Jer. 19:2,6.

These and other passages show that Gehenna was a well known valley near Jerusalem in which the Jews in their idolatrous days had sacrificed their children to the idol Moloch. As a result, the valley was condemned to receive the refuse and sewage of the city. The bodies of malefactors were cast into it. To destroy the odor and pestilential influences, continual fires were kept burning. Fire, smoke and worms bred by the corruption and other repulsive features rendered the place a horrible one in the eyes of the Jews. It was a locality with which they were as well acquainted as they were with any place in or around

the city. After these horrible practices King Josiah polluted the place and rendered it repulsive.

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the sons of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter; for they shall bury in Tophet till there be no place. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beast of the earth; and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judea, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; for the land shall be left desolate." Jer. 7:32-34.

"And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them. And they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury. Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet. And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods. Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the Lord had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the Lord's house, and said to the people: Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Behold I will bring upon *this city* and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words." Jer. 19:12-15.

These passages show that Gehenna or Tophet was a locality near Jerusalem, and that to be cast there literally, was the doom threatened and executed. Every Bible reference of Gehenna places it in this world. In Dr. Bailey's English Dictionary, Gehenna is defined to be "a place in the valley of the tribe of Benjamin, terrible for two sorts of fire in it, that wherein the Israelites sacrificed their children to the idol Moloch, and also another kept continually burning to consume the dead carcasses and filth of Jerusalem."

But in process of time Gehenna came to be an emblem of the consequences of sin and to be employed figuratively by the Jews to denote those consequences. *But the reference was always in this world.* The Jews never used it to mean torment after death until long after Christ. That the word didn't mean *post-mortem* torment when our Savior used it is demonstrable:

Josephus was a Pharisee and wrote at about the time of Christ. He expressly says that the Jews at that time (corrupted from the teachings of Moses) believed in endless punishment. Yet, he never employs Gehenna to denote the place of punishment. He uses the word Hades which the Jews obtained from the heathen. He never uses Gehenna as he would have done had it possessed that meaning at that time. This demonstrates that the word had no such meaning then. In addition to this neither the Apocrypha, which was written from 280 to 150 B.C., nor Philo, ever uses the word. It was first used in the modern sense of Hell by Justin Martyr one hundred and fifty years after Christ. Dr. Thayer concludes:

"Our inquiry shows that it is employed in the Old Testament in its literal or geographical sense only as the name of the valley lying on the south of Jerusalem. The Septuagint proves it retained this meaning as late as B.C. 150. It is not found at all in the Apocrypha; neither in Philo, nor in Josephus, whose writings cover the very times of the Savior and the New Testament leaving us without a single example of contemporary usage to determine its meaning from A.D. 150-195. We find in two Greek authors, Justin and Clement of Alexandria, that Gehenna began to be used to designate a place of punishment after death. But this didn't necessarily denote *endless* punishment since Clement was a believer in universal salvation. The first time we find Gehenna used in this sense in any Jewish writing is near the beginning of the third century in the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel which is two hundred years too late. Lastly, the New Testament usage shows that, while it had not wholly lost its literal sense, it was also employed in the time of Christ as a symbol of moral corruption and wickedness. It was especially used as a figure of the terrible judgments of God on the rebellious and sinful nation of the Jews."

The Jewish talmud and targums use the word in the sense that the Christian Church has so long used it, though without attributing endlessness to it. Most likely, however, none of them are older than A.D. 200. The oldest is the targum (translation) of Jonathan Ben Uzziel which was written according to the best of authorities between A.D. 200 and A.D. 400.

"Most of the eminent critics now agree, that it could not have been completed till some time between two and four hundred years after Christ." Univ. Expos. Vol. 2, p.368.

At the time of Christ the Old Testament existed in Hebrew. The Septuagint translation of the Bible was made between two hundred and four hundred years before His birth. In both Gehenna is never used as the name of a place of future punishment. A writer in the *Universalist Expositor* remarks, (Vol.2):

"Both the Apocrypha and the works of Philo, when compared together, afford circumstantial evidence that the word cannot have been currently employed during their age to denote a place of future torment. And we cannot discover in Josephus that either the Pharisees or the Essenes, both of which believed the doctrine of endless misery, supposed it to be a state of fire or that the Jews ever alluded to it by that emblem."

The Apocrypha, B.C.150-500, Philo Judaeus A.D.40, and Josephus, A.D.70-100, all refer to future punishment but none of them use Gehenna to describe it which, being Jews, they would have done had the word been in use with that meaning. Were it the name of a place of future torment, can any one doubt that it would be found repeatedly in their writings? And the fact that it is never found in their writings demonstrates that it had no such use then. And, given that, doesn't it follow that Christ didn't use it in that sense?

Canon Farrar says of Gehenna (Preface to "Eternal Hope"): "In the Old Testament it is merely the pleasant valley of Hinnom (Ge Hinnom) subsequently desecrated by idolatry, and especially by Moloch worship, and defiled by Josiah on this account. (See 1 Kings, 11:7; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31 19:10-14; Isa. 30:33; Tophet). Used according to Jewish

tradition as the common sewerage of the city, the corpses of the worst criminals were flung into it unburied and fires were lit to purify the contaminated air. It then became a word which secondarily implied

(1) the severest judgment which a Jewish court could pass upon a criminal which was the casting forth of his unburied corpse amid the fires and worms of this polluted valley and (2) a punishment which, to the Jews as a body, never meant an endless punishment beyond the grave.

Whatever may be the meaning of the entire passages in which the word occurs, 'Hell' is a complete mistranslation since it attributes to the term used by Christ a sense entirely different from that in which it was understood by our Lord's hearers. Therefore the word is translated entirely different from the sense in which Jesus could have used it. Origen says (c. Celsus vi:25) that Gehenna denotes (1) the vale of Hinnom, and (2) a purificatory fire (*eis tem meta basanon katharsin*). He declares that Celsus was totally ignorant of the meaning of Gehenna."

JEWISH VIEWS OF GEHENNA

Gehenna is the name given by Jews to Hell. Rev. H. N. Adler, a Jewish Rabbi, says: "They do not teach endless retributive suffering. They hold that it is not conceivable that a God of mercy and justice would ordain infinite punishment for finite wrong-doing."

Dr. Deutsch declares: "There is not a word in the Talmud that lends any support to that damnable dogma of endless torment."

Dr. Dewes in his "Plea for Rational Translation," says that Gehenna is alluded to four or five times in the Mishna, thus: "The judgment of Gehenna is for twelve months;"

"Gehenna is a day in which the impious shall be burnt."

Bartolloci declares that "the Jews did not believe in a material fire, and thought that such a fire as they did believe in would one day be put out."

Rabbi Akiba, "the second Moses," said: "The duration of the punishment of the wicked in Gehenna is twelve months."

Adyoth 3:10. Some rabbis said Gehenna only lasted from Passover to Pentecost. This was the prevalent conception. (Abridged from Excursus v, in Canon Farrar's "Eternal Hope," He gives in a note these testimonies to prove that the Jews to whom Jesus spoke, did not regard Gehenna as of endless duration).

Asarath Maamaroth, f. 85, I: "There will hereafter be no Gehenna."

Jalkuth Shimoni, f. 46, I: "Gabriel and Michael will open the eight thousand gates of Gehenna, and let out Israelites and righteous Gentiles." A passage in Othoth, (attributed to R. Akiba) declares that Gabriel and Michael will open the forty thousand gates of Gehenna, and set free the damned, and in Emek Hammelech, f. 138, 4, we read: "The wicked stay in Gehenna till the resurrection and then the Messiah passing through it redeems them.": See Stephelius' Rabbinical Literature.

Rev. Dr. Wise, a learned Jewish Rabbi, says: "That the ancient Hebrews had no knowledge of Hell is evident from the fact that their language has no term for it." Before considering the passages of Scripture containing the word, the reader should carefully read and remember the following

IMPORTANT FACTS

1. Gehenna was a well-known locality near Jerusalem. see Josh. 15:8; 2 Kings 17:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; Jer. 7:31-32; 19:2.
2. Gehenna is never employed in the Old Testament to mean anything else than the locality with which every Jew was familiar.
3. The word should have been left un-translated as it is in some versions and it would not be misunderstood. It should no more be rendered Hell than should Babylon. It was not misunderstood by the Jews to whom Jesus addressed it. Walter Balfour says: "What meaning would the Jews, who were familiar with this word and knew it to signify the valley of Hinnom, be likely to attach to it when they heard it used by our Lord?"
4. The French Bible, the Emphatic Diaglott, Improved Version, Wakefield's Translation, and Newcomb's retain the proper noun, Gehenna, the name of the well-known place.
5. Gehenna is never mentioned in the Apocrypha as a place of future punishment as it would have been had such been its meaning before and at the time of Christ.
6. No Jewish writer contemporary with Christ, such as Josephus or Philo ever uses it as the name of a place of future punishment as would have been done had such been its meaning.
7. No classic Greek author ever alludes to it proving it was purely a Jewish locality.
8. The first Jewish writer who ever names it as a place of future punishment is Johnathan Ben Uzziel who wrote, according to various authorities, from the second to the eighth century A.D.
9. The first Christian writer who calls Hell Gehenna, is Justin Martyr who wrote about A.D. 150.
10. Neither Christ nor his apostles ever used it when speaking to Gentiles. If it were a place of punishment after death for sinners, it would have been preached to Gentiles as well as Jews.
11. Only Jesus and James ever mentioned it. Neither Paul, John, Peter nor Jude ever used it. Would they not have warned sinners concerning it if there were a Gehenna of torment after death?
12. Paul says he "shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God" and yet, though he was the great preacher of the Gospel to the Gentiles, he never told them that Gehenna was a place of after-death eternal torment. Wouldn't he repeatedly have warned sinners against it if there were such a place?

Dr. Thayer significantly remarks: "The Savior and James are the only persons in all the New Testament who use the word. John the Baptist, who preached to the most wicked of men, did not use it once. Paul wrote fourteen epistles and yet never once mentions it. Peter does not mention it. Neither does Jude. John, who wrote the gospel, three epistles, and the book of Revelation, never employs it in a single instance. Now if Gehenna or Hell really reveals the terrible fact of endless woe, how can we account for this strange silence? How is it possible, if they knew its meaning and believed it a part of Christ's teaching, that they should not have used it a hundred or a thousand times instead of never using it at all? This is especially important when we consider that eternity is involved. The Book of Acts contains the record of the apostolic preaching and the history of the first planting of the church among the Jews and Gentiles and embraces a period of thirty years from the ascension of Christ. In all this history, in all this preaching of the disciples and apostles of Jesus, there is no mention of Gehenna. In thirty years of missionary effort these men of God, addressing people of all characters and nations, never under any circumstances threaten them with the torments of Gehenna or allude to it in the most distant manner! In the face of such a fact as this, can any man believe that Gehenna signifies endless punishment and that this is a part of divine revelation, a part of the gospel message to the world?"

13. If Gehenna is the name of Hell then men's bodies are burned there as well as their souls. Matt. 5:29; 18:9.

14. If it be the place of endless torment, then literal fire is the sinner's punishment. Mark 9:43-48.

15. Gehenna is never said to be of endless duration nor is it spoken of as destined to last forever. Even admitting the popular ideas of its existence after death, it gives no support to the doctrine of endless torment.

16. Clement, one of the earliest Christian fathers, believed in Universal Salvation and yet he uses Gehenna to describe the sinner's punishment. This shows that the word did not denote endless punishment.

17. A shameful death or a severe punishment in this life was, at the time of Christ, denominated Gehenna (Schleusner, Canon Farrar and others) and there is no evidence that Gehenna meant anything else at the time of Christ. With these preliminaries let us consider the twelve passages in which the word occurs.

DANGER OF HELL-FIRE

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of Hell fire." Matt. 5:22.

The purpose of Jesus was to show how exacting is Christianity. It judges the motives. This he affirms in the last sentence of the verse, after referring to the legal penalties of Judaism in the first two. The "Judgment" here is the lower ecclesiastical court of twenty-three judges: the "council" is the higher court, which could condemn to death. But Christianity is so exacting that if one is contemptuous toward another he will be adjudged by Christian principles guilty of the worst crimes as "he who hates his brother has already committed murder in his heart." We give the true meaning of this passage in the words of "orthodox" commentators.

Dr. Adam Clarke says: "It is very probable that our Lord means no more here than this: 'If a man charge another with apostasy from the Jewish religion or rebellion against God and cannot prove his charge, then he is exposed to that punishment (burning alive) which the other would have suffered if the charge had been substantiated.' There are three offenses here which exceed each other in their degrees of guilt.

1. Anger against a man accompanied with some injurious act.
2. Contempt expressed by the opprobrious epithet 'raca', or shallow brains.
3. Hatred and mortal enmity expressed by the term 'moreh' [apostate] where such apostasy could not be proved.

Now proportioned to these three offenses were three different degrees of punishment. Each exceeded the other in severity as the offenses exceeded each other in their different degrees of guilt.

1. The judgment, the council of twenty-three, which could inflict the punishment of strangling.
2. The Sanhedrim, or great council, which could inflict the punishment of stoning.
3. The being burnt in the valley of the son of Hinnom.

This appears to be the meaning of our Lord. Our Lord here alludes to the valley of the son of Hinnom. This place was near Jerusalem and had been formerly used for those abominable sacrifices in which the idolatrous Jews had caused their children to pass through the fire to Moloch."

We do not believe that a literal casting into Gehenna is meant here as Clarke teaches. What is meant is that the severest of all punishments are due those who are contemptuous to others. Gehenna fire is figuratively and not literally used and the torment is on this side of life.

Barnes: "In this verse it denotes a degree of suffering higher than the punishment inflicted by the court of seventy, the Sanhedrin. And the whole verse may mean: He that hates his brother without a cause is guilty of a violation of the sixth commandment and shall be punished with a severity similar to that inflicted by a court of judgment. He that shall suffer his passions to transport him to still greater extravagances and shall make him an object of derision and contempt shall be exposed to still severer punishment corresponding to that which the Sanhedrin or council inflicts. But he who shall load his brother with odious appellations and abusive language shall incur the severest degree of punishment represented by being burnt alive in the horrid and awful valley of Hinnom" where unburied criminals and city refuse were thrown and incinerated.

A. A. Livmore, D.D., says: "Three degrees of anger are specified and three

corresponding gradations of punishment proportioned to the different degrees of guilt. Where these punishments will be inflicted he does not say and he need not say. The man who indulges any wicked feelings against his brother is punished in this world. His anger is the torture of his soul and unless he repents of it and forsakes it, all future states of his being will be infected by it." Whether Jesus here means the literal Gehenna or makes these three degrees of punishment symbolic of the severe spiritual penalties inculcated by Christianity, there is no reference to the future world in the language.

CAST INTO HELL-FIRE

"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell." Matt. 5:28-29.

"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into Hell-fire." Matt. 18:9.

"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into Hell-fire." Mark 9:43-49.

CONTEXT is everything. These passages mean that it is better to accept Christianity and forego some worldly privilege than to possess all worldly advantages and be overwhelmed in the destruction about to come upon the Jews when multitudes were literally cast into Gehenna. Or it may be figuratively used. Jesus probably used it this way: It is better to enter the Christian life destitute of some great worldly advantage, comparable to a right hand, than to live in sin with all worldly privileges and experience that moral death which is a Gehenna of the soul. In this sense it may be used of men now as then. But there is no reference to an after-death suffering in any proper use of the terms. The true idea of the language is this: Embrace the Christian life whatever sacrifice it calls for. The latter clause carries out the idea in speaking of the undying worm.

"Where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched."

Undoubtedly Jesus had reference to the language of the prophet: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, says the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for the worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched: and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Isa. 66:23-24.

This was literally fulfilled when Jerusalem fell in 70 AD. The prophet and the Savior both referred to the overthrow of Jerusalem. However we may, by accommodation,

apply the language generally understood as Hell or Gehenna and say it is that condition brought upon the soul in this world by sin. But the application by the prophet and the Savior was to the day then soon to come in 70 AD. The undying worm was in this world and a perfect description of Gehenna, Jerusalem's garbage incinerator. The worms that bred in the filth of Gehenna are made symbolic of the corruption of the sinful soul in this world. This is what Isaiah taught and Jesus quoted his language.

Strabo calls the lamp in the Parthenon and Plutarch calls the sacred fire of a temple "unquenchable" though they were extinguished ages ago. Josephus says that the fire on the altar of the temple at Jerusalem was "always unquenchable," *'abeston aie'*, though the fire had gone out and the temple was destroyed at the time of his writing. Eusebius says that certain martyrs of Alexandria "were burned in unquenchable fire," though the fire was extinguished in the course of an hour! The very expression in English which Homer has in Greek *'asbestos gelos'* (Iliad, i:599) *means unquenchable laughter*.

Bloomfield says of this text in his Notes: "Deny yourself what is desirable, alluring and what seems the most necessary when the sacrifice is demanded for the good of your soul. Some think that there is an allusion to the amputation of diseased members of the body to prevent the spread of any disorder." Dr. A.A. Livermore adds: "The main idea here conveyed is that of punishment or extreme suffering and no intimation is given as to its place or its duration."

Dr. Ballou says: "Jesus uses this well known example of a most painful sacrifice for the preservation of corporeal life that he may more strongly enforce a corresponding solicitude to preserve the moral life of the soul. And if so, it naturally follows that those prominent particulars in the passages which literally relate to the body are to be understood as figures and interpreted accordingly. If one's eye or hand become to him an offence, it is better to part with it than to let it corrupt the body that will then become fit, due to sin, to be thrown into the valley of Hinnom."

DESTROY SOUL AND BODY IN HELL

"And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell." Matt. 10:28.

"But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him which, after he has killed, has power to cast into Hell; yes I say unto you, fear him." Luke 12:5.

We just discussed how Jesus said to pluck out your eye and cut off limbs but everyone agrees it was not to be taken literally. The reader of these verses and the accompanying language will observe that Jesus is exhorting his disciples to have complete faith in God. The most that men can do is to destroy the body, but God "is able or has power" to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. It is not said that God has any disposition or purpose of doing so. He is able to do it. It is said in Matt. 3:9 God is "able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." He never did and never will raise up children to Abraham from the stones of the street. He is able to just as he is able to destroy soul and body in Gehenna. Men could only destroy the body there. Fear the mighty power of

God who could, if he chose, destroy both the soul and body of man. It is a forcible exhortation to trust in God and has no reference to torment after death. Fear not those who can only torture you, meaning man, but fear God who can destroy [Greek 'apollumi'] both body and soul. The most this could be used to teach is annihilation. This can't be used to teach eternal torments. But we don't believe eternal torments or annihilation is meant. Here again, let's add CONTEXT and original language.

1 Christ said these words to his disciples. This was not said to sinners.

2 It proves God's ability to annihilate (destroy) and not his purpose to destroy. The word 'destroy' is '*apollumi*' and is defined in many dictionaries as "to destroy utterly." If you think this makes a case for eternal burnings or eternal separation from God, you need to know the exact same word '*apollumi*' is translated 'lost' in these verses: Mat. 10:6, Mat. 15:24, Mat. 18:11, Luke 15:4, Luke 15:6, Luke 15:9, Luke 15:24, Luke 15:32, Luke 19:10, John 17:12 twice, John 18:9. Go ahead, look them up, don't be lazy. You will find these verses refer to the prodigal son and sinners in general and ALWAYS in the context that what was lost was not eternally lost. Yet, this is the word Jesus used to mention God "destroying both soul and body in hell." Give this some serious thought.

Dr. W. E. Manley observes that the condition threatened "is one wherein the body can be killed. And no one has imagined any such place outside the present state of being. Nor can there be the least doubt about the nature of this killing of the body for the passage is so constructed as to settle this question beyond all controversy. It is taking away the natural life as was done by the persecutors of the apostles. The Jews were in a condition of depravity properly represented by Gehenna. The apostles had been in that condition but had been delivered from it. By using the word Gehenna to denote a condition now and in the present life is not absurd. Sinful men may here suffer both natural and moral death. However, in the future life natural death cannot be suffered regardless of your beliefs regarding moral death. Fear not men, your persecutors, who can inflict on you only bodily suffering. But rather fear him who is able to inflict both bodily suffering and what is worse."

"Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you travel sea and land to make one convert; and when he is converted, you make him twofold more the child of Hell than yourselves." Matt. 23:15.

Looking upon the smoking valley of Hinnom [Gehenna] and thinking of its corruptions and abominations and calling a man a "child of Gehenna" was to say that his heart was corrupt and his character vile. However, it did not indicate a place of woe after death.

1Chron. 21:13 repeated in 2 Samuel 24:14, "And David said to Gad, I am in great and distressing perplexity; let me fall, I pray you, into the hands of the Lord, for very great and many are His mercies; but let me not fall into the hands of man."

THE DAMNATION OF HELL

"You serpents, you generation of vipers! how can you escape the damnation of Hell?"
Matt. 23:33.

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT. This verse undoubtedly refers to the literal destruction that soon after befell the Jewish nation in 70 AD when six hundred thousand experienced literally the condemnation of Gehenna by perishing miserably by fire and sword. The next words explain this damnation:

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you all these things shall come upon this generation."

This was long before prophesied by Jeremiah 19: "Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the Lord had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the Lord's house, and said to all the people, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring upon this city, and upon all her towns, all the evil that I have pronounced against it; because they have hardened their necks, that they might hear my words." Isaiah has reference to the same in chapter 66:24: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." This explains the "unquenchable fire" and the "undying worm." They are in this world.

SET ON FIRE OF HELL

"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire of Hell."
James 3:6.

A tongue set on fire of Gehenna, when James wrote, was understood as a profane and vulgar tongue. No reference whatever was made to anyplace after death or a place of eternal torment. The allusion was solely to a locality well known to the Jews as a place of corruption and it was figuratively and properly applied to a vile tongue.

CONCLUSION

We have briefly explained all the passages in which Gehenna occurs. Is there any intimation that it denotes a place of punishment after death? Not any. If it meant such a place no one can escape believing that it is a place of literal fire and all the modern talk of a Hell of conscience is most erroneous. But that it has no such meaning is corroborated by the testimony of Paul who says he "shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God," and yet he never, in all his writings, employs the word once and uses the word Hades only once and then he signifies its destruction; "Oh Hades, where is thy victory?" If Paul believed in a place of endless torment would he have been utterly silent in reference to it

during his entire ministry? His silence is a demonstration that he had no faith in it though the Jews and heathen all around him preached it and believed it implicitly.

A careful reading of the Old Testament shows that the valley of Hinnom was a well known and repulsive valley near Jerusalem. An equally careful reading of the New Testament teaches that Gehenna or Hinnom's valley was explained as always in this world. (Jer. 7:29-34: 19:4-15: Matt. 10:28) It was to befall the sinners of that generation (Matt. 24) and their bodies and souls were exposed to its calamities. John, who wrote for Gentiles and Paul who was the great apostle to the Gentiles, never used it once. Neither did Peter. If it had a local application and meaning we can understand this, but if it is the name of the receptacle of damned souls that will burn throughout all eternity, it would be impossible to explain such inconsistency.

The primary meaning of Gehenna is a well-known locality near Jerusalem; but it was sometimes used to denote the consequences of sin *in this life*. It is to be understood in these two senses only in all the twelve passages in the New Testament. In the second century after Christ it came to denote a place of torment after death, but it is never employed in that sense in the Old Testament, the New Testament or the Apocrypha. It wasn't used by any contemporary of Christ utilizing that meaning. It also was never used in that manner by any Christian until Justin and Clement used it (A.D. 150) and the latter was a believer in Universal Salvation. It wasn't used by any Jew until in the targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel about a century later. Even then it only denoted future, but did not denote endless punishment until a later period.

The English author, Charles Kingsley, writes ("Letters") to a friend:

"The doctrine occurs nowhere in the Old Testament, nor any hint of it. The expression in the end of Isaiah about the fire not quenched, and the worm not dying, is plainly of the dead corpses of men upon the physical earth in the valley of Hinnom or Gehenna where the trash of Jerusalem was burned perpetually. The doctrine of endless torment was, as a historical fact, brought back from Babylon by the Rabbis. It may be a very ancient primary doctrine of the Magi, an appendage of their fire kingdom of Ahreman, and may be found in the old Zends long prior to Christianity. St. Paul accepts nothing of it as far as we can tell, never making the least allusion to the doctrine. The Apocalypse simply repeats the imagery of Isaiah and of our Lord; but asserts distinctly the non-endlessness of torture declaring that in the consummation not only death but Hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. The Christian church has never held it exclusively till now. It remained quite an open question till the age of Justinian, 530 AD. Significantly enough, about 200 years before that endless torment for the heathen became a popular theory, purgatory sprang up synchronously by the side of it as a relief for the conscience and reason of the church."

Canon Farrar says, in his "Eternal Hope": The word rendered Hell is in one place the Greek word "Tartarus", borrowed as a word for the prison of evil spirits, not after, but before the resurrection. It is in ten places 'Hades', which simply means the world beyond the grave. It is twelve places 'Gehenna' which means primarily the Valley of Hinnom

outside of Jerusalem in which, after it had been polluted by Moloch worship, corpses were flung and fires were lit. It was secondly a metaphor of, not final and hopeless but of purifying and corrective, punishment which we all believe does await impenitent sin both here and beyond the grave. The Jews to whom and in whose metaphorical sense the word was used by Jesus never did, either then or at any other period, attach to that word 'Gehenna' the meaning of endless torment which we have been taught to apply to Hell. To them and to Jesus who addressed them it means, not a material and everlasting fire, but an intermediate and metaphorical retribution."

In Excursus II, "Eternal Hope," he says the "damnation of Hell" is the very different "judgment of Gehenna;" and Hell-fire is the "Gehenna of fire" an expression which on Jewish lips was never applied in our Lord's days to endless torment". Origen tells us (c. Celsus vi:25) that finding the word Gehenna in the Gospels for the place of punishment, he made a special search into its meaning and history; and after mentioning (1) the Valley of Hinnom, and (2) a purifying fire (*Greek 'eis teen meta basanon katharsin'*) he mysteriously adds that he thinks it unwise to speak without reserve about his discoveries. No one reading the passage can doubt that he means to imply the use of the word "Gehenna" among the Jews to indicate a terminable and not an endless punishment."

The English word Hell occurs in the Bible fifty-five times, thirty-two in the Old Testament and twenty-three in the New testament. The original terms translated Hell (Sheol-Hades) occur in the Old Testament sixty times and in the New Testament twenty-four times; Hades eleven times, Gehenna twelve times, and Tartarus once. In every instance the meaning is death, the grave or the consequences of sin in this life. Thus the word Hell in the Bible, whether translated from Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, or Tartarus, yields no validity to the doctrine of future, much less endless, punishment.

<p>It should not be concluded from our expositions of the usage of the word 'Hell' in the Bible that believers in Universal Salvation deny that the consequences of sin extend to the life beyond the grave. We deny that the Bible has named Hell as a place or condition of eternal punishment in the after life. There are many Scriptures that teach some form of 'reward based' future life that is affected to a greater or lesser extent by human conduct here. However, to say Hell is a place or condition of eternal suffering after death is not Biblical and we believe this document makes this clear.</p>

Sheol, Hades and Tartarus denote literal death or the consequences of sin here and Gehenna was the name of a locality well known to all Jews into which sometimes men were cast. It was made an emblem of great temporal calamities and of suffering resulting from sin. *Hell in the Bible, in all the fifty-five instances in which the word occurs* never refers to the immortal world. We have shown that there is nothing in the threatening verses of the Bible that in any way goes against "the restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouths of all his holy prophets since the world began".

To the Reader

The purpose of this book will not be fully accomplished if the reader shall perceive only that God's punishments of sin are not endless. The fatal defect of the doctrine of endless torment is that it teaches that punishment can be avoided by repentance and any sinner who chooses can escape all penalty. But the Bible teaches that "Wrath," "Judgment," "Fire," "Damnation," "Hell," and all the words by which the consequences of sin are designated denote penalties that are limited in duration because they are a means to a good end. Make no mistake, those penalties are absolutely certain. Every sinner will infallibly receive the exact amount of punishment deserved: "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished." It is because God is good and holy that he has ordained:

- 1 That all sin and sorrow shall end and
- 2 That sin and sorrow shall be inseparable.

When the sinner shall repent and return to God here or hereafter, God will be more willing to receive than the sinner can be anxious to return. God's threatening words are a portion of his methods of securing the final gathering of all nations, families and kindred of the earth into the one holy and happy family in heaven. And it is because of this sublime purpose of restoring all to himself that he has made sorrow to continue in every human soul until sin is discarded.

"The more profoundly learned any one was in Christian history, so much more did he cherish and defend the hope that the suffering of the wicked would at some time come to an end."-- Doederlein. "Is the Law against the Promises of God? God forbid!"-- Paul

[Go to Understanding Universal Salvation Part Three](#) or [Universal Salvation University](#)

© Copyright 2006 Richard Wayne Garganta All RIGHTS RESERVED

You are truth seeker