

True or False

Does God Burn People in Hell
Forever?



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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter One..... | 3 |
| Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, Gehenna, and the Lake of Fire | 3 |
| The True Meaning of the Word “Hell” | 3 |
| What is Hell?..... | 4 |
| Chapter Two..... | 5 |
| Sheol – Abode of the Dead | 5 |
| What Happens to the Dead? | 6 |
| Chapter Three | 10 |
| Hades – Separation from God; Darkness; Obscurity; Unseen World..... | 10 |
| Hades and Death | 12 |
| Hades a Place of Torment, Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth | 12 |
| Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man..... | 13 |
| Chapter Four | 16 |
| Tartaroo – the Holding Place of the Wicked | 16 |
| Chapter Five..... | 19 |
| Gehenna – Judgment of God to Purify | 19 |
| Judgment of Gehenna | 20 |
| Fire of Gehenna | 21 |
| Chapter Six..... | 22 |
| What is the Purpose of God’s Fire?..... | 22 |
| Fiery Trials – Baptism of Fire..... | 22 |
| Burn | 26 |
| Chapter Seven..... | 26 |
| The Lake of Fire is Not Hell! | 26 |
| The Purpose of the Lake of Fire and Brimstone..... | 27 |
| The Lake of Fire and Brimstone - the Lake of Divine Purification | 28 |
| The Lake of Fire – the Second Death! | 29 |
| Will the wicked, who did not repent in this age, experience judgment and punishment? | 30 |
| The Purpose of the Lake of Fire is to Bring Forth a New Heaven and a New Earth | 31 |
| In Summary..... | 33 |

Chapter Eight 35

- Aion, Olam – Eternity or An Age 35
- Burning in Hell Forever According to Tradition 35
- Punishment for the Ungodly – During the Age, Not for Eternity 36
- Eternal - Endless 37
- “For Ever and Ever” 38

Chapter Nine..... 39

- The Difference Between Aion and Kosmos..... 39
- Where Did All the Confusion Come From? 40
- The Age According to the Feasts..... 41

Chapter One

Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, Gehenna, and the Lake of Fire

The True Meaning of the Word "Hell"

The purpose of this study is to reveal truth and dismantle the distortion attached to the word "hell." The King James Version of the Bible translates the Hebrew word Sheol and three Greek words, Hades, Tartaroo, and Gehenna, as "hell." We will discover these words have different connotations than what has been traditionally taught, and they have caused much confusion about the true meaning of the English word "hell."

J. Preston Eby states it like this: "The English word "hell" once meant "a dark, hidden place," but church dogma has through the years caused the word to take on an altogether different connotation."

To understand God's perspective, it is important to search out the meaning of "hell" from the Hebrew perspective. The Hebrew thought process is very different from the Greek. The Greek goddess of justice was Dike. The Greek culture's perspective on death taught a reward or punishment in the afterlife. In other words, "you get what you deserve." This type of thinking is outside of Hebrew thought because the Word of God teaches God's judgment, His justice, is not vindictive; rather, God's justice is His correction that produces restoration, reconciliation, deliverance, and healing (Jude 1:14-15; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Isaiah 26:9b - [... For when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

The "you get what you deserve" type of thinking even contradicts the New Testament's teaching that we are saved by God's grace through faith, not based on our deeds but based on forgiveness through Christ's shed blood for us on the cross. His sacrifice reconciles us back to a right relationship with God the Father (Eph. 2:8-9).

The following scripture is an example of the Greek mindset:

Acts 28:3-4,6 - But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. 4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "**Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice** (*G1349, dike, goddess of vengeance, avenging justice, should be punished*) has not **allowed him to live.**" 6 Now they were expecting that he was going to swell up or

suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

The amazing truth is that Paul was a murderer! We know from the Scriptures that he persecuted, imprisoned, and even murdered Christians (Acts 7:58; 8:3). However, God, in His mercy and grace, saved Paul and changed his name from Saul to Paul. He transformed his character and set him free, forgiving him of all his injustices, all his sins through the saving power of the cross of Jesus Christ. Man's kind of justice is usually vindictive, wanting to get revenge on, or even with the person whom you feel treated you wrong. I believe this is why many people want to believe there is a hell where people will burn forever.

Praise God, He doesn't give us what we deserve. Instead, He gives us what we need. In God's merciful grace, He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our propitiation for sin, forgiving us and setting us free from the debt and the guilt of sin. Praise His wonderful name! He brings restoration and healing to us when we turn to Him in repentance, applying the precious blood Jesus shed for us through His death on the cross.

Romans 5:18-21 - So then, as through **one offense** the **result** was **condemnation to ALL mankind**, so also through **one act of righteousness** the **result** was **justification of life to ALL mankind**. 19 For as through the **one man's disobedience** the **many were made sinners**, so also through the **obedience of the One** the **many will be made righteous**. 20 The Law came in so that the offense would increase; but where **sin increased, grace abounded all the more**, 21 so that, as **sin reigned in death**, so also **grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord**.

God's grace is not bound by time or space. Grace is an ATTRIBUTE of God! His GRACE does not cease when the spirit leaves the body or when one draws his last breath. God's GRACE reaches beyond the grave, beyond TIME, it is eternal. How can we think that God's love, grace, forgiveness, and mercy are only for this age, only for the one who is living in this life, and that God's grace, love, forgiveness, and mercy end when someone leaves their earthly body?

2 Timothy 1:9 - 'Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own **purpose** and **GRACE**, which was given us **in Christ Jesus before the world (ages) began.**'

What is Hell?

HELL is simply separation from God! We don't have to die to go to HELL! Sin separates us from God. When we live in sin and the **TORMENT** of the **CARNAL MIND**, we are living in hell. Colossians 1:21 says we are *separated* from God in the hostility of our **MINDS**.

Colossians 1:21 – [... you were formerly **alienated** (separated) and **hostile in mind**, engaged in evil deeds,

Isaiah 59:2 NKJV - But your **iniquities** (wickedness, wrongdoings) have **separated** you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Ephesians 2:1-2 - And you were **DEAD IN YOUR TRESPASSES AND SINS**, 2 in which you **formerly walked according** to the **course** of this **world** (system of man), according to the **prince** of the **power** of the **air**, of the **spirit** that is now **working** in the **sons of disobedience**.

Even as HEAVEN (spirit realm) is a disposition of the mind of Christ, so is HELL is the disposition of the carnal mind of man; separated from God. Why would Paul tell us in Ephesians 2:6 that we are seated in heavenly places (spirit realm) in Christ Jesus, if it wasn't a disposition of the mind? Romans 8:6 says that the mind of the flesh is death.

Romans 8:6-7 - For the **mind set** on the **flesh** is **death**, but the **mind set** on the **Spirit** is **life** and **peace**, 7 because the **mind set** on the **flesh** is **hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

Let me reiterate! As the scripture says above, when we walk in the sin nature of our carnality, the first Adam's nature and character, we are dead - dwelling in death, i.e., hell!

As a man thinketh in his heart so is he (Prov. 23:7)!

Chapter Two

Sheol – Abode of the Dead

The English word used for *hell* in the Hebrew is *Sheol*, and it does not carry the same thought pattern as the Greek. According to the Hebrew Dictionary, in the Old Testament, the word *SHEOL* means "*the place of the dead.*" The word always appears in the singular, never in its plural form. It is not the "places" of the dead, not the individual graves where their bodies rest, but the *realm of the dead, the abode of the dead, or the state of the dead.*

The Hebrew word Sheol and the Greek word Hades/hell are synonymous with one another.

The following scriptures are an example of this:

Psalms 16:10 - For You will not leave my soul in **Sheol** (H7585, the place of the dead. KJV – Hell, the equivalent of HADES), Nor will You allow **Your Holy One** to see corruption (undergo decay).

Acts 2:27 - For You will not leave my soul in **Hades** (G86, KJV – Hell, the equivalent of **SHEOL, abode of dead**), Nor will You allow **Your Holy One** to see corruption (undergo decay).

What Happens to the Dead?

The following scriptures refer to Jesus' death and resurrection. Three things happened at Christ's death:

1. His **body** was taken to the tomb (Mark 15:46).

Mark 15:46 - Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and **laid Him** in a **tomb** which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

2. His **soul** went to **Sheol/Hades** (hell, abode of the dead) (Acts 2:31).

Acts 2:31 - He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his **SOUL** was **not left in HELL** (hades, abode of the dead), neither his **flesh did see corruption** (KJV).

3. His **spirit** was committed to God (Luke 23:46).

Luke 23:46 - And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "**Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.**" Having said this, He breathed His last.

The Bible does not say that the spirit dies. The spirit of man is eternal. The following scripture says the spirit will return to God:

Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, then the **dust** [out of which God made **man's body**] will **return** to the **earth** as it was, and the **spirit** will **return to God** who gave it (AMP).

2 Corinthians 5:8 tells us to be **absent from the body** is to be **present with the Lord**.

Even when Stephen, one of the seven, was stoned to death because of his testimony of Jesus in **Acts 7:59**, he says the following:

Acts 7:59-60 - And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, "**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!** 60 And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this he **fell asleep**.

Scripture teaches the soul is not immortal but must die.

Ezekiel 18:20a says, “The **soul** that **sinneth**, it shall **die...**” (KJV).

1 Corinthians 15:50 - Now I say this, brethren, that **flesh** (the body) and **blood** (the soul, Lev. 17:11a, “the life of the soul is in the blood”) cannot **inherit** the **kingdom of God**; nor does the **perishable inherit** the **imperishable**.

Therefore, we see according to the Scriptures that death is a “return.” The body returns to dust, while the SOUL returns to Sheol/Hades, the place of “*the unseen, lack of perception, the abode of the dead*”, which is often described as “sleep” or the unconscious state, whereas the spirit is alive in Christ in His glory.

The body and the soul are both perishable, and they must be transformed to put on incorruptibility and immortality. (1 Cor. 15:53-54) This is why the Bible speaks of a NEW HEAVEN, representative of the MIND or the SOUL, and a NEW EARTH, representative of the BODY (2 Peter 3:13).

2 Peter 3:13 - But according to His promise we are looking for **new heavens** and a **new earth**, in which **righteousness dwells**.

Both will be resurrected, the soul and the body, united to the spirit that is in Christ. This speaks of our glorified bodies. Some will be a part of the first resurrection to rule with Christ in His millennial reign, while others will have to wait until the end of the millennial age to be raised in the second resurrection. Some resurrected to life, while others to judgment.

The following scriptures reveal this truth:

John 5:28-29 – (General or second resurrection) “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the **tombs** will **hear His voice**, 29 and will come forth; those who did the **good deeds** to a **resurrection of life**, those who committed the **evil deeds** to a **resurrection of judgment**.”

Daniel 12:2-3 – (General or second resurrection) “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting (H5769, *olam*, age-during) life but the others to disgrace and everlasting (H5769, *olam*, age-during) contempt. 3 “Those (who were apart of the first resurrection) who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars **forever** (H5769, *olam*, to the age) and **ever** (H5703, *ad*, eternity).”

These scriptures correlate with Revelation 20:11-15, which gives a greater depiction of the general resurrection and the judgment of those described in John 5:28-29. Those who did the “good deeds to a resurrection of life,” and those who “committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment,” i.e., being thrown into the lake of fire to be purged and to destroy

the death of the first Adam's carnal nature within them, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

It is also interesting to note that in Revelation 20:11, it says that earth and heaven are no more. In Revelation 21:1, John tells us, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea," just as 2 Peter 3:13 says.

Revelation 20:11-15 - Then I saw a **great white throne** and **Him who sat upon it**, from whose presence **earth and heaven fled away** (the perishable and corruptible is no more), and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the **dead**, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and **books** (plural – Ps. 139:16 – all our days are written in a book) were **opened**; and **another book was opened**, which is the **book of life**; and the **dead** were **judged** from the **things** which were **written** in the **books**, **according to their deeds** (either works of the Spirit or works of the flesh that had not been confessed and forgiven, 1 John 1:9). 13 And the **sea** (unregenerated humanity) gave up the **dead** which were in it, and **death** and **Hades** (abode of the dead) gave up the **dead** which were in them; and they were **judged**, every one of them **according to their deeds** (either works of the Spirit or works of the flesh that had not been confessed and forgiven, 1 John 1:9). 14 Then **death** and **Hades** were thrown into the **lake of fire** (death of death, death itself). This is the **second death**, the **lake of fire**. 15 And if anyone's **name** (character) was not found written in the **book of life** (Notice the book of life is also opened at this judgment.), he was **thrown** into the **lake of fire**.

In contrast, we also have the following scripture passage that represents the overcomers who allowed God in this present age to purge them of their carnal, beastly nature inherited from the first Adam. The carnal, beastly nature is represented by the number 666 in Revelation 13:18, which says, "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." Therefore, six hundred and sixty-six, or 666, is the number of a man consumed by his carnal, beastly nature, in spirit, soul, and body. Revelation 20:4-6 tells us those who are given authority and power to judge in Christ's kingdom are those who did not worship or receive the mark or character of the beastly nature. They did not manifest the carnal, beastly nature through the works of their hands, nor did they receive the mark or character of the beastly nature on their foreheads, i.e., their thoughts. Instead, they chose to be beheaded, having their carnal, beastly thoughts cut off, choosing to crucify their flesh and deny themselves, exchanging the mind of the flesh, which is death, for the mind of Christ, which is life! Only these overcomers will qualify for the first resurrection to rule and judge with Christ (Rev. 3:21).

Revelation 20:4-6 – (The overcomers who qualified for the first resurrection) Then I saw **thrones**, and they **sat** on them, and **judgment** was given to them. And I saw the **souls** (those who were willing to go through the fire to qualify, Mal. 3:2-3; 1 Cor. 9:27) of

those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the **beast** (bestly nature of man) or his **image** (likeness, representative of the beast's nature), and had not received the **mark** (character of the beast of the first Adam's nature) on their **forehead** (mind and thoughts) and on their **hand** (power, means ability); and they **came to life** (were a part of the first resurrection) and **reigned** with **Christ** for a **thousand years**. 5 The **rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed**. This is the **first resurrection** (resurrection of the overcomers who qualified to rule and reign with Christ in the earth). 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the **first resurrection**; over these the **second death** (the death of death) **has no power**, but they will be **priests of God** and of **Christ** and will **reign with Him** for a **thousand years**.

Revelation 3:12 conveys that those who overcome will receive the new name (character) of their God written upon them, denoting a complete transformation:

Revelation 3:12 - He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will **write** on him the **name of My God**, and the **name of the city of My God**, the **new Jerusalem**, which comes down **out of heaven** from **My God**, and **My new name**.

The next scripture passage reveals the unfaithful stewards, ministers of God who did not qualify for the better (first) resurrection, who will have to wait until the thousand-year reign (millennial age) of Christ has ended to be a part of the second resurrection.

Luke 12:46-47 – the master (God the Father and Jesus Christ) of that **slave** (unfaithful stewards – ministers who were unfaithful to Him and abused His body (the church), living for the pleasures of the world while being ministers in His house) will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will **cut him in pieces** (scourge – discipline, punish), and **assign** him a place **with the unbelievers**. 47 “And that **slave** who **knew** his master's will and **did not get ready** (was not prepared) or act in accord with his will, will **receive many lashes**

This is also the same judgment spoken of by Jesus Christ in Matthew Chapter 25. We see the wicked, lazy servant spoken about in verses 18 and 24-30, was not a faithful servant and was severely chastised by the master (Jesus Christ) upon His return. In verse 30, it says, “*And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*” Those who were not faithful stewards of what the Lord had entrusted to them, will be “cast out,” rejected, and disqualified, for the first resurrection. They will have to go through a purging and wait until the end of that age to be a part of the second resurrection.

On the other hand, we see in the scripture passage that those who were faithful servants, the Master rewards them by giving them an inheritance in His kingdom, representing those who will be a part of the first resurrection who will rule with Christ during His millennial reign in the

earth. This is stated in verse 34, *“Then the King will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”* But again, to those who were unfaithful, who knew what their Master wanted, but did not do it, *“Then He will also say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal (aionios, age abiding; not everlasting) fire (fire that purges and transforms), which has been prepared for the devil (defamer, malicious maligner, etc.) and his angels (messengers; those who represent the defamer, accuser)”* (Matt 25:41).

Again, these scriptures prove that not all believers will rule with Christ in His millennial reign in the earth. Only those who allowed the Lord to baptize them in fire, to conform them to the image and character of Christ, will qualify for the first resurrection and be counted worthy to attain to that age.

Luke 20:34-36 – *(Jesus speaking about the resurrection of the dead)* Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and the women are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 for they cannot even die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Even Paul alludes to this truth in 1 Corinthians 9:26 when he says, All run, but only one receives the prize (Phil. 3:14). Only a remnant who is willing to pay the price to discipline and deny themselves will qualify for the better resurrection.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 - Do you not know that those who run in a race **all run**, but only **one receives the prize**? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I **discipline** my **body** and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself **will not** be **disqualified**.

Chapter Three

Hades – Separation from God; Darkness; Obscurity; Unseen World

The Greek word HADES is the equivalent of the Hebrew word Sheol. It is the Greek word most often translated “hell.”

Hades has been mentioned in eleven different verses in the New Testament. According to the Greeks, Hades is depicted as the god of the underworld, or lower regions of the dead. In Greek mythology, Hades is associated with the Roman god Orcus (the underworld as a place), the infernal regions, a dark and dismal place in the very depths of the earth, the common receptacle of disembodied spirits, the abode of the wicked, and departed souls.

J. Preston Eby gives an understanding of hell and what this word means. He writes the following:

"Hades - the unseen world, the unknown realm.

Our English word hell is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word "hillan" or "helan," meaning a cavern, anciently denoting a concealed or UNSEEN place. In parts of England men still say, "I plan to *hell* my potatoes," meaning to bury them in a hole or pit, that is, a covered place, out of sight. ...

We know that the dead haven't passed out of existence altogether, for man is not only a body and soul, but also *spirit*. And when the spirit of man passes from this present tabernacle of flesh it goes into a realm unseen by the eyes of mortal man. David, in speaking of it at the time his first son by Bathsheba died, said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." He knew there was a place where he would be able to join that infant child (2 Sam. 12:23). And likewise, the phrase often used in the Old Testament of their being "gathered unto their fathers" meant far more than having their bodies buried in the same grave. It spoke of a gathering in the unseen world. And our Lord spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, linking their names together as all being in the same place, and also added that their God is "not a God of the dead, but of the living," thus affirming that they were alive at that time, even though they were in the Hadean state (Matt. 22:32). Indeed, they were all in Hades - the invisible world of departed spirits, (of the unseen)" – *end quote, (emphasis and parentheses mine).*

As mentioned above, Hades is the realm of the imperceptible, or what cannot be seen, discerned, or understood by the mind or the senses. Therefore, I mentioned earlier that separation from God or living in the carnal mind, with its speculations, imaginations, reasoning, delusions, or deceptions, etc., and trying to figure out or understand why or what we are going through, causes great torment of the mind or feeling like we are living in "hell." Hence, hell is living in darkness that obscures "the mind of Christ" and is operating out of death rather than life.

Romans 8:6 - For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.

Hades and Death

In the Book of Revelation, we find that the words Hades and Death are inseparable. Why? Because Hades is the abode (habitation, dwelling place) of the dead, or MORTALITY! Here are some examples:

Revelation 1:18 - and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of **death** and of **Hades** (unseen, abode of the dead). (Jesus overcame death, hell, and the grave!)

Revelation 6:8 - I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name **Death**; and **Hades** was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (YLT) - and when this corruptible may have put on incorruption, and this mortal may have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the word that hath been written, 'The **Death** was swallowed up -- to victory; 55 where, O **Death**, thy sting? where, O **Hades**, thy victory (triumph)?'

Revelation 20:13-14 - And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and **death** and **Hades** gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then **death** and **Hades** were **thrown** into the **lake of fire**. This is the **second death**, the **lake of fire**.

It's interesting to note when reading Revelation 20:14 that even death and Hades will be destroyed by God's PURIFYING FIRE! He is the ALL-CONSUMMING FIRE!

Hades a Place of Torment, Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

"Some have contended that hell (Sheol and Hades) is never associated with the idea of suffering, pain, or torment. That is far from the truth! A careful examination of the Hebrew and Greek words in context reveals ... those passages which connect hell, either literally or metaphorically, to darkness, restraint, distress, sorrow, suffering, pain, and torment.

Hell is certainly a place, a realm, a dimension of consciousness and existence, yet more than a place - it is a state or condition - in its negative application the inner state of depravity, perverted desire, burning lust and ambition, devilish emotions, mental

anguish, and despair - and because it is so twisted and warped it cannot obtain lasting fulfillment, being tormented by the fires of its own unsatisfied passions. Heaven and hell both are states of the soul rather than the body, whether it be the natural or the spiritual body." - J. Preston Eby. (Parentheses and emphasis mine).

Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man

We see this truth in Luke 16:19-31 with the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. When they both died, I believe they were both experiencing the Hadean state. Lazarus was carried away into the bosom of Abraham, where he was comforted, while the Rich Man was tormented.

Luke 16:22-23, 25 - "Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's arms; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 "And in **Hades** he raised his eyes, **being in torment**, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his arms. ... 25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is **being comforted here**, and **you are in agony** (torment, distressed, pain and sorrow).

Why are we **TORMENTED**? Is it not because we finally see our selfish ambitions of pride and our evil desires to gratify our lust for money, power, etc.?

When we look at the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, we see that the rich man lived in the luxury of this world. He was not willing to sell all that he had and give to Lazarus, who in this parable represented the poor and needy of this world. Isn't this how Jesus instructed the rich young ruler to live in Mark 10:21, when He said to him, "*One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*"? Then the word of God says, he went away grieved, because he was very wealthy. In other words, he exchanged his true spiritual inheritance, which God created him for, and instead chose the lower realm of death because of his selfish desires. He trafficked his soul to the world rather than being submitted to Christ.

It is interesting to note that the Roman counterpart of Hades is the god Pluto, the god of the hidden wealth "of the earth", from the fertile soil that nourished the seed and the grain to the mined wealth of gold, silver, and other precious metals. In ancient Greek religion and mythology, Pluto represents a more positive concept of the god who presides over the afterlife. The Romans named him Dis Pater, or Pluto (Hades), whose name is most often taken to mean "Rich Father" and is perhaps a direct translation of Plouton. The Latin form of Pluto is Plouton, which means "the Lord of Riches!" He is also called "the giver of wealth." It seems that people preferred the name Plouton, "giver of wealth," because the name Hades was fear-provoking.

Jesus alludes to “hell” in his warning to the Laodicea church in Revelation 3:15. It is no coincidence that this church is the Laodicean Church and that their problem is riches and wealth!

Revelation 3:16-17 "To the angel of the church in **Laodicea** write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: (17) 'Because you say, "I am **rich** (G4145, **plousios**), and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

From the scripture above, you can see the Greek word for *rich* is the word *plousios* (Strong's G4145), from which the root word is *ploutos*. *Ploutos* is the singular of *plouton*, the Greek title of what the Romans called Pluto (Hades).

The Greek word *ploutos* (Hell, Hades) meaning “rich” that Jesus is speaking of in Revelation 3:17, is not speaking of Hell as a place of torment where you die, but rather the place where men are self-dependent, having a desire to accumulate money, possessions, and accolades through “their gifts and talents” or their own accomplishments, relying on the earthly dimension of “works” rather than relying on God as their provision, protection, and pleasure.

This is about what “I” can do that feeds the EGO. This is Hell. This is “riches and wealth”: what influences us, overtakes us, and consumes us. This is about operating in a lower dimension of the flesh rather than the higher dimension of the Spirit. It's operating out of death rather than life.

Can you see this correlation with the Rich Man who was serving his own desires, the god Pluto (Hades) of riches or mammon?

When they both died, Lazarus was comforted, he was carried away by the messengers of God into the bosom of Abraham, while the rich man ended up in Hades, in torment. The passage goes on to explain there was a great chasm, or gulf, of separation between them.

Luke 16:24 - “Then he (the rich man) cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am **tormented** (sorrow, intense pain, anguish, distress) in this **flame**.’

Where does the Bible say he was tormented? He was tormented in the FLAME!

The word FLAME (G5395) according to the Strong's Concordance means to flash; literally "a flame" related to *phlegain*, "to burn" and "to shine." The hot, glowing mixture of burning gases and tiny particles that arises from combustion. Combustion means to change. Flash means to give off light or be lighted in sudden or intermittent bursts. The dictionary meaning for the word *flash* is to communicate or display at great speed; a sudden perception; an instantaneous illumination.

The scripture passage says the rich man was **TORMENTED** in the flame! In other words, I believe the rich man had a sudden “FLASH” of understanding and revelation through the fire of God’s judgment of what he could have had. In an instant, a flash, the rich man realized what he had given up because he loved the world, with its riches, fame, and glory more than he loved Jesus Christ, forsaking those things to follow Him. Is this not the reason he was tormented in the flame - the sudden understanding of what he gave up? This is **TORMENT**!

There are several parables in the gospels where Jesus also uses the term “*in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*” Two of them are found in Matthew 24:51 and Matthew 25:30. These two parables contrast those servants who are faithful to the Master with those who are unfaithful. The faithful servants represent those who qualify for the first resurrection to rule with Christ, while the unfaithful servants represent those who do not qualify for the first resurrection but will have to await the second resurrection at the end of the Millennium, to be judged along with the unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-12; Luke 12:46-48). Both groups were called, but only the faithful will receive the reward. This goes along with Luke 20:34-36 and 1 Corinthians 9:27 as previously discussed.

Matthew 24:48-51 - “But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and he will **cut him in two** (*scourging, flog severely*) and **assign him a place with the hypocrites** (*unbelievers*); in that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.** (Luke 12:46-48)

Matthew 25:26, 28, 30 – 26 But his master answered and said to him, “You wicked, lazy slave ... 28 take away the talent from him ... 30 “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer **darkness** (*imperceptible, shadiness (shades of darkness – obscurity), the same meaning as Hades*); in that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

We should also note that in these parables, Jesus is admonishing the religious hypocrites, not the lost sinners in the world. Rather than ministering the Word of God out of love for His people and lost humanity, these ministers chose to serve their own ambitions and lustful appetites. They too lost their inheritance and were given over to punishment (correction that purges and purifies the sinner), along with the “*weeping and gnashing of teeth.*”

I believe every minister of God can apply this truth to themselves. Would we not be tormented if we passed from this age into the presence of Almighty God and we stood before His judgment throne, and He revealed what He planned for us? When we realize we could have qualified for the first resurrection to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom, but because we rebelled against God and chose the momentary pleasures of this world system, we missed it? Won’t that truth bring weeping and gnashing of teeth?

Chapter Four

Tartaroo – the Holding Place of the Wicked

The Greek word TARTAROO is the English form, "Tartarus." In Greek mythology, Tartarus is the lowest division of hell. It speaks of being the holding place of the wicked until their time of judgment.

This word is only found once in **2 Peter 2:4**:

2 Peter 2:4. "God spared not the angels (*G32 aggelos, a messenger (from God), to bring good tidings, an angel, implication, a pastor*) that sinned but **cast** them down to **Tartarus** (*KJV – hell*) and **delivered** them into **chains of darkness** to be **reserved unto judgment.**"

Jude also alludes to this same place when he writes:

Jude 1:6 - "And those angels (*G32 aggelos, a messenger (from God), to bring good tidings, an angel, implication, a pastor*) who kept not their first position of power and authority, but left their habitation (*dwelling place*), **He** has **kept in chains under thick darkness**, for the **judgment** of the **great day**"

Let's look at the context of this scripture passage in 2 Peter 2:4. To gain an understanding of what Tartarus really represents we need to read the first three verses and verse 17 as well.

2 Peter 2:1-4, 17 - But **false prophets** also arose among the people, just as there will also be **false teachers** among you, who will secretly introduce **destructive heresies**, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift **destruction** upon themselves. (2) Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned, (3) and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their **judgment** from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. **(4)** For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to **hell** (*tartaroo, from Tartaros, an abyss in hell (lower dimension of the abode of the dead, darkness and obscurity)*), **and delivered [them] into chains of darkness**, (*G2217- means blackness, the root word is nephos, a cloud of shapeless vapor that obscures the heavens (the mind of Christ)*), to be reserved unto **judgment**;... (17) **These** (*false prophets and teachers*) **are wells without water, clouds** (*nephos- shapeless collection of vapor that obscures the heavens (our mind)*) that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of **darkness** (*zophos- blackness, blindness, cannot see the heavens (spirit realm)*) is reserved **for ever** (*aion, G165 to the age – NOT ETERNITY*).

This scripture passage is referring to false prophets and teachers revealing that the winds of man's doctrines come from or originate out of "TARTARUS" or "HELL." Hell is the "mists of darkness and obscurity" and the "shades of the dead." Hell/Tartarus is a lower dimension because it does not operate in the mind of Christ. It's the mind of what man can do.

J. Preston Eby gives a great perspective of Tartarus. He writes:

"The whole thought is of a **restraint, a confinement, a prison, a condition** in which **apostates** are held for a **specific period of time**, in the same manner as **prisoners** are often held in **jail awaiting the day of trial**. **Tartarus** is not the **judgment itself**, but a **state or condition** in which **persons** are **inescapably held** over unto a **day of judgment**. I see men today who are apostates, they have turned from the truth, **they have usurped the gifts and anointing of God** for their **own advantage** and **to their own ends, making merchandise of God's people**, they have perverted the ways of the Lord and turned the truth of God into a lie, and have sunk into the blinding darkness of delusion, captivated by the fleshly ways and methods of this world, chained in the snare of the devil, they continue going through the motions of their "ministry," unable to escape from the devilish trap into which they have fallen, and are held there in their personal "**Tartarus**" reserved unto a day of judgment." (Emphasis mine).

Again, I will use the account of Jonah to beautifully illustrate this example. Jonah, who was a messenger from God, rebelled against God's command for him to go to Nineveh and bring His salvation message. In the first chapter of Jonah, because of Jonah's rebellion, he is thrown over the side of the boat into the sea and swallowed by a big fish. In Jonah 2:2,6,9-10, we see that Jonah cries out in his distress or tribulation while in the belly of the fish to the Lord for deliverance from the depths of **Sheol** (i.e., abode of the dead, darkness, and obscurity. KJV – hell (hades)). He says:

Jonah 2:2,6,9-10 - ... "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I called for help from the depth of **Sheol** (darkness and obscurity, KJV – hell (hades)); You heard my voice.... 6 "I descended to the base of the mountains. The **earth** with its **bars** (earth as a prison) was around me **forever** (*olam, indefinite, undetermined time, not eternity*), But You have brought up my life from the pit (corruption), LORD my God.... 9 But I will sacrifice to You With a voice of thanksgiving. That which I have **vowed I will pay**. Salvation is from the LORD." 10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it **vomited** (resurrected) Jonah up onto the dry land.

Let me ask you a question. Did Jonah stay in the belly of the fish forever? Obviously not! He was in a "dark hidden place," in a prison of the earth for three days and nights without any concept of time because of his rebellion toward God. This was described as *olam*, an obscure amount of time. When he repented, God released him from *Sheol, from the prison, of a dark hidden place – the realm or abode of the dead*. We also see that *Jonah is a type of Jesus Christ, who was also*

in the belly of the earth for three days – the lowest part of Hades, Tatarus, where he preached to those who were bound in prison.

Ephesians 4:8-9 - Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE **LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES**, (referring to those spirits of disobedient men in Noah’s day) AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.” 9 (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had **descended** into the **lower parts** (i.e., **hades**, Christ descended into the **lower parts of hades, darkness and obscurity - Tartaroo**) of the earth (Ps. 68:18)?

Jesus descended into the lower parts of Hades, Tatarus, and proclaimed (1 Peter 3:19, see below) to the prisoners the Good News of the gospel, that through His blood, He had even set them free! That although they would be judged according to men in the flesh, they would live according to God in the spirit (1 Peter 4:6)! They were bound in prison, darkness, and death in Hades/Sheol/Tartaroo for an AGE (an undetermined amount of time, not forever)! And at the end of that TIME (i.e., age), it was determined that Christ would set them free from their PRISON of DEATH. He ASCENDED and LED them CAPTIVE to HIMSELF! Wow, the grace and mercy of our Heavenly Father! It is not His WILL that any should perish, but that ALL come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)! Hallelujah to the Lamb of God - our Almighty God and Savior!

1 Peter 3:18-20, 4:6 - For Christ also **died for sins ONCE FOR ALL**, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also He went and made **proclamation** (proclaiming liberty) to the **spirits** (*disembodied spirits*) in **prison**, 20 **who once were disobedient**, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. ... **4:6** – For the **gospel** (good news) has for this purpose been preached even to those who are **dead**, that though they are **judged in the flesh as men**, they may **live in the spirit** according to the **will of God**.

Isaiah 61:1 - The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to **proclaim liberty** to the **captives**, and the **opening of the prison** to them that are **bound**.

I would like to share a personal story with you that goes along with this truth. Growing up, my father was an Evangelical traveling evangelist, and later in life he became a pastor in the Southern Baptist denomination. He believed that fallen man had to endure living with two natures, the flesh, and the Spirit. And held to the doctrine that we could only be perfected after we died and went to heaven. During his life, he rejected the principles of the kingdom message of perfecting our character to be like Christ in this age.

Quite a few years ago, my father passed away at the age of 76. He had lost both kidneys from reoccurring battles with cancer and was on weekly kidney dialysis treatments at the time of his

death. A few days before he died, the Lord led me to go and visit him in the hospital. While we were sharing with one another, to my amazement, at one point he asked me to explain and interpret the scriptures to him. Then, as he was resting, I began spontaneously singing prophetically. Suddenly he woke up, looked at me, and asked me to teach him to sing the songs I sang. It so touched my heart that the Lord allowed me the opportunity to witness his open heart to hear and receive.

Shortly after his death, the Lord gave me a dream. In the dream, my father walked into one of our church meetings, and I looked at him and said, "Dad, what are you doing here? You're supposed to be dead!" And he said, "I've come to be taught and learn from you (referring to the church)." Even though he did not manifest this truth in the physical, he was now learning the truth in the spiritual.

When I woke up from the dream, the Lord immediately drew my attention to 1 Peter 4:6, the previous scripture we just talked about. That dream was such an encouragement to me and a confirmation that God is not finished with our lives in this age only.

Chapter Five

Gehenna – Judgment of God to Purify

Gehenna is mentioned 12 times in the New Testament. Gehenna is a type of judgment by God's fire to purify His people. Jesus never referred to Gehenna when warning or correcting the sinners of the world, but instead used it in reference to warning and correcting God's people. If you look up the scriptures where this word is found, you will see that Jesus, in many incidents, used Gehenna when warning and admonishing the Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of His time.

I love how J. Preston Eby explains Gehenna. He states the following:

"In the New Testament there appears the word *Gehenna* referring to the Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, which was the city dump outside the walls of Jerusalem, a place of constant burning of refuse. It is interesting to note that those who are pictured as going into Gehenna are, without exception, not the sinners of the world, but the *sinners among God's people*. ... Gehenna was the city dump of Jerusalem, the Holy City, where every unclean and unnecessary thing was burned and consumed. The antitypical Gehenna to which our Lord alluded in His teaching is the process of purification by which every unclean and unnecessary thing in the lives of His Holy People is purged and consumed by the fires of His judgment."

"The Lord whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...but 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: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi (the Priesthood), and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:1-3).

Gehenna stands as a type of place or process for the purification of God's people. It is referred to in the Old Testament by the name "Tophet," located in the Valley of Hinnom, a place where many sacrifices were made, and dead bodies consumed." (Emphasis mine.)

Did you get that?!! Gehenna represents the place where EVERY UNCLEAN and UNNECESSARY thing within our lives is PURGED and CONSUMED by the FIRES of His judgment! It is the PROCESS of PURIFICATION God uses to purify His people.

In the scriptures GEHENNA is always associated with JUDGMENT and FIRE. Why? Because God's FIRE is His JUDGMENT. As we will see in the following scriptures, even Deuteronomy 33:2 speaks of God coming with tens of thousands of His saints to judge His people according to His FIERY law, His divine law of justice, to bring restoration and deliverance.

Deuteronomy 33:2 – And he said, The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with **ten thousands of saints:** *(Jesus is coming with His saints to execute justice on all the ungodly, **Jude 14; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:14; Ps. 68:17-18)** from His right hand went a **FIERY law** (i.e., flashing lightning, God's divine law of justice and judgment. His fiery law brings light, illumination, revelation, and understanding) for them.*

Again, I believe it is worth using Jude 1:14-15 to prove this:

Jude 14-15 - Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with **ten thousands of His saints** (holy ones), 15 to **execute judgment on all, to convict all** who are **ungodly** among them of all their **ungodly deeds** which they have committed in an **ungodly way**, and of all the **harsh** things which **ungodly sinners** have **spoken against** Him."

Why? Isaiah 26:9b says, "*For when the earth experiences Thy judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness!*"

Judgment of Gehenna

Matthew 10:28 YLT - 'And be not afraid of those killing the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but fear rather Him who is able both **soul** (blood) and **body** (flesh) to destroy in

Gehenna. (G1067, lamentation, wailing, where every unclean thing is destroyed, pride, arrogance, lust, etc., KJV – hell).

Remember what the scripture says, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” This is why the soul and the body must be transformed. The transformation is a result of the fire, the purifying process of God’s judgment on our flesh.

Matthew 23:33 YLT - '**Serpents! brood of vipers!** (i.e., the religious leaders, hypocrites) how may ye escape from the **judgment** (justice, divine law to bring forth righteousness, restoration, reconciliation, and healing) of the **Gehenna** (where every unclean thing is destroyed, pride, arrogance, lust, etc., KJV – hell)?

Fire of Gehenna

Matthew 18:9 YLT - 'And if thine eye doth cause thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast from thee; it is good for thee one-eyed to enter into the life, rather than having two eyes to be cast to the **gehenna** (where every unclean thing is destroyed, pride, arrogance, lust, etc., KJV – hell) of the **fire**. (G4442, *pyr* - fire (lightning), fiery, to purify).

Matthew 3:11 - 'I indeed do baptize you with water to reformation, but he who after me is coming is mightier than I, of whom I am not worthy to bear the sandals, he shall **baptize** you with the **Holy Spirit** and with **fire**, (G4442, *pyr* – same fire as used for Gehenna’s fire, to purify, to purge).

Can you see that all these scriptures referring to Gehenna have to do with the process of God’s judgment on those who are living according to their fleshly desires to purify them through His fire (i.e., the judgment of His divine law that purges and purifies)? We must all be purged of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – the WORLD (1 John 2:15-17)! Only as this happens can we be conformed and transformed into the IMAGE of Christ to qualify to become a SON to rule and reign with Christ; to become the judges that Revelation 20:4 speaks of, being qualified for the first resurrection!

The TRANSFORMATION takes place in the BURNING, and the BURNING comes from the FIRE (purging to purify) that produces LIGHT – truth and revelation! Is it not the FIERY TRIALS, the tribulation and testing, that cause a change in our lives when we yield to God’s correction? God’s judgment, His correction, and love are not to destroy us but to TRANSFORM us! Therefore, Hebrews 12:10-11 tells us that God’s discipline for His sons (i.e., the principle of sonship, which includes both sons and daughters) seems sorrowful for the moment, but those who are trained by it afterwards yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness and become partakers of His holiness.

Let's take a deeper look at the meaning and the purpose of God's FIRE.

Chapter Six

What is the Purpose of God's Fire?

The Greek word for fire is *pur* (G4442), and its root word is where we get our English words, *pure, purify, purge, and purification*. Thus, we can see from the root word of these words that God's fire is to purge and purify us. Fire means a rapid, persistent chemical change that releases heat and light and is accompanied by a flame, luminosity, or brilliance, as of a cut and polished gemstone.

Flame is the supernatural fire of God, an accompanying theophany - the invisible manifesting in the visible. Remember, fire is light and means FLAME, as used in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Flame means, metaphorically, a sudden perception, an instantaneous illumination.

What is the purpose of FIRE?

First, we must understand that God is the ALL-CONSUMING FIRE!

Hebrews 12:29 – “For our God is a CONSUMING FIRE.”

Fiery Trials – Baptism of Fire

Luke 3:16 - John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will **baptize** you with the **Holy Spirit** and **FIRE**.”

Again, God's Word is full of patterns, types, and similes. When we allow God to consume our flesh in His fire, we are transformed into His marvelous light. What is He transforming? Through the fire, He is transforming our character and nature to be like Christ (Rom. 5:3-5). This is God's ultimate purpose for these fiery trials! Where light is, darkness has no power!

We see many examples of this in God's Word:

The three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, allowed God to test and purge them through fiery trials! Daniel 3:10-30 tells us they were thrown into a fiery furnace for not worshipping the king. God's Word tells us they were not destroyed by the fire. Instead, they

overcame the fire with the help of the fourth man, Jesus Christ, who was with them through the fire! The physical fire could not touch them because God's ALL-CONSUMING FIRE was greater within them than the physical fire (tribulation) of the world. What the enemy meant for their destruction; God turned it around for their good (Rom. 8:28). Not only did God protect them through the fire for standing for righteousness and not compromising, but their enemies were destroyed while they were promoted over the nation for God's glory!

Another example is when the Lord first appeared to Moses in the wilderness as the "blazing fire" in Exodus 3:2.

Exodus 3:2 - The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a **blazing fire** from the **midst** of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was **burning with fire**, yet the bush was **not consumed**.

Moses was amazed that the bush was burning with fire, yet it was not devoured by the fire. God took Moses into the wilderness to purge his character through trials and testing. The bush represented Moses, and the consuming fire represented God, who was destroying Moses' flesh to prepare him to be a deliverer of God's people – a type of Jesus Christ and the overcomers in the earth. The purpose of the fire is not to kill us physically but to transform us spiritually, so that we become his messengers of flame of fire – burning with a message from His presence to deliver lost humanity (Ps. 110:4)!

Through the fiery trials, we are consumed by His divine character and nature – nothing of the carnal man, the 1st Adam, can remain!

Similarly, this goes along with Hebrews 12:18, which tells us, "For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire...", for even the Israelites had to go through the purging of their character through trials and testing to reveal the motives of their heart. Therefore, they had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years (number of testing and trials). Through the trials and testing, God was preparing a generation to cross over the Jordan to possess the land that He had promised them. Recall that God commanded Joshua to circumcise the people to prepare them to cross over the Jordan. Circumcision represents the removal of the flesh, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We too must undergo a circumcision of the heart – a removal of our fleshly desires, thoughts, and will, so that we will walk according to the Spirit and not our flesh. This was a type of crossing over death (the mortality of our flesh) to be transformed and inherit the promise of our glorified bodies to implement Christ's kingdom and dominion in the earth.

Another example is found in Exodus 24:17-18 which tells us the Israelites saw God's glory as a CONSUMING FIRE! Exodus 20:18 and 21 say the people stood at a far distance from God when they witnessed the thundering and lightning flashes, the sound of a trumpet, and the mountain smoking, while Moses was willing to be tested by going into the glory cloud of God's consuming fire.

Exodus 24:17-18 - To the Israelites the **glory** of the **LORD** looked like a **CONSUMING FIRE** on top of the **mountain**. 18 **Moses entered** the **midst** of the **cloud** (God's glory – Consuming fire!) as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain **forty** (40 is the number for trials and testing) days and **forty** (trials and testing) nights.

The earth trembled that day, and Hebrews 12:26-28 goes on to say that the Lord is shaking everything, and the only thing that will remain is that which is of His Kingdom! This is the same pattern God uses to purge us with His fire to transform us and change us into the image of Christ!

Hebrews 12:26-29 - And His voice **shook** the **earth** (1st Adam, man of dust, nature) then, but now He has promised, saying, “YET ONCE MORE I WILL **SHAKE** NOT ONLY THE **EARTH** (carnal nature and body of 1st Adam), BUT ALSO THE **HEAVEN** (mind of carnal 1st Adam).” 27 This expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the **removing** (*to transform, to change, to alter (Jesus appearance was altered when he was transfigured – a type of glorification – Luke 9:29)*), of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those **things** which **cannot** be **shaken** may **remain**. 28 Therefore, since we receive a **kingdom** which **cannot** be **shaken**, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our **God** is a **consuming fire**.

One more example is Joshua the High Priest, who represents Jesus and His overcomers, who had also submitted to God's fire, and at the right time he became a firebrand plucked out of the fire – his filthy garments (carnal nature and character) exchanged for festival robes that represent the transforming glory of God. His character was purged and prepared in the fire to rebuild God's kingdom and His people (Zech. 3:1-7)!

Like the example of Joshua, the High Priest, Malachi 3:2 also verifies this truth.

Malachi 3:2 - “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**. 3 “He will sit as a **smelter** and **purifier** of **silver** (*Christ's redemption*), and He will **purify** the **sons** of Levi and **refine** them like **gold** (*God's divine nature*) and **silver** (*Christ's redemption*), so that they may present to the **LORD offerings in righteousness**.

Can you see in this scripture passage that the Lord is a REFINER'S FIRE who is refining His Priesthood? He sits to purge the impurities out of the gold and silver, refining them, drawing away the dross, so the precious metal comes forth, pure, shining forth the reflection – the character of the REFINER – God, the all-consuming fire! This is a priesthood of Spirit, the overcomers, who will qualify through the fire (i.e., the baptism of fire), to be purified from the flesh, transformed in His character and nature, so we can be a pure living sacrifice to minister to Him in holiness and purity.

Can you see the pattern of the purpose of God's fire and the types that are transformed by His purging fire? Joseph, Daniel, David, and Christ's disciples are all examples of those who overcame through the fire of God; they overcame the trials and testing that purged and purified their character. Jesus also was tempted and tested in the wilderness for 40 days and came forth out of the wilderness in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14)!

At some time in all our lives, if we want to qualify to be overcomers, we will have to be willing to undergo a BAPTISM OF FIRE (a wilderness experience of purging and testing) just like Jesus and these patriarchs who have gone before us! As we allow God to purge and purify us through trials and tribulations, we are learning to live in truth, to deny our flesh, and to recognize what is Spirit and what is flesh. Through this process, we learn not to depend on or be ruled by our senses and emotions, but rather we learn to trust and rely on God's Spirit and His Word, which is yes and amen! It is the trials, the testing, and the tribulation in this age that QUALIFIES us to be the overcomers who will rule and reign with Christ in the age to come, i.e., the millennial reign of Christ.

Jesus, our Lord, is perfecting His church, coming for a Bride without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27; 2 Peter 2:13). The spots and wrinkles represent character flaws. These character flaws are removed, purged through the fires of tribulation. 1 Peter 4:12 calls them "fiery trials."

1 Peter 4:12 - Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the **fiery trial** (*G4451, pyrosis, a burning, a refiner's fire, calamities, or trials that test character. From G4448 pyroo, which is from G4442, pyr – to purge, purify, same fire used for Gehenna's fire*) which is to **try** you, as though some strange thing happened to you.

1 Peter 1:6-7 - In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been **distressed by various trials**, 7 so that the **proof** of your **faith**, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though **tested by fire**, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:3-5 - And not only this, but we also rejoice in our **tribulations**, knowing that **tribulation** brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, **proven character**; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

James 1:2-4 - Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you **encounter various trials**, 3 knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces **endurance**. 4 And let endurance have its **perfect result**, so that you may be **perfect and complete, lacking in nothing**.

Every living thing will have to be purged – sanctified, made holy - by God's refining fire!
Hallelujah to His wonderful, powerful Name!

Burn

When something catches fire, it burns, causing COMBUSTION! What does the COMBUSTION – the BURNING produce?

In the following quote, J. Preston Eby gives us a wonderful understanding of what it means to BURN:

“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 firewood, 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**. – (Emphasis mine).

Chapter Seven

The Lake of Fire is Not Hell!

Many have erroneously equated the lake of fire with hell, a fiery place of eternal torment. We will endeavor to show the truth about the meaning of the lake of fire and brimstone through the scriptures and how the Greeks viewed the purpose of brimstone, which also correlates with the scriptures already talked about. Remember, the Book of Revelation, from which this phrase is taken, was recorded as a vision revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos. Therefore, we should not interpret this book from a literal standpoint, but rather the vision of symbols and signs should be interpreted in a metaphoric sense, which should be applied to our lives spiritually.

The Purpose of the Lake of Fire and Brimstone

The reason why many people confuse “hell” with the “lake of fire” and don’t understand the difference between the two is because of the way they have been taught. As we have already shown from the meaning of the Greek word *Hades* and the Hebrew word *Sheol*, they are **not** a place of eternal fire as taught by the religious church. Rather, hell is a holding place, a prison house so to speak, for the dead. Those wicked men who are shut up in hell, reserved under chains of darkness, awaiting a day of release and deliverance when God, according to His purpose, will save them. It is not God’s purpose that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)!

Remember, hell/Hades is the realm of the dead or death, and those who will be cast into the lake of fire will be judged to remove the first death that the first Adam imputed to all mankind.

If hell/Hades (separation from God, the abode of the dead, death, and darkness) was a place of fire, why would Revelation 20:14 say, “Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire?” We see then that even death and Hades (hell, separation from God, etc.) are going to be destroyed by the lake of fire, a place where the fire of God’s Spirit does a divine work of purification, purging, and refining that will finally cause transformation! A place where DEATH will be swallowed up by God’s Divine nature and life (1 Cor. 15:54-55)!

1Corinthians 15:54-55 - But when this **perishable** will have put on the **imperishable**, and this **mortal** will have put on **immortality**, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS **SWALLOWED UP** in **victory**.” 55 “O **DEATH**, WHERE IS YOUR **VICTORY**? O **DEATH**, WHERE IS YOUR **STING**?”

Let me remind you, His fire is what purges and destroys death, the carnal, wicked nature of the 1st Adam out of us. This is the baptism of fire!

Revelation 20:14 - Then **Death** (mortality – death – mortality that the 1st Adam imputed to us) and **Hades** (separation from God, the unseen region, darkness, place of the dead) were cast into the **lake of fire**. This is the **second death**.

Therefore, those who are purged by the Lake of Fire will suffer great loss, for they shall not INHERIT ALL THINGS. They will not lay hold of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is the prize for the overcomers, those who qualified for the first resurrection in the Millennial reign of Christ, because they allowed God to baptize them in fire during this age. As Jesus said, they are those who were considered worthy to attain to the age (the Millennial Age).

Luke 20:35-36 - but those who are considered **worthy** to **attain** to that **age** and the **resurrection from the dead** (i.e., first resurrection) neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 for they cannot even die anymore, for they are like angels, and are **sons of**

God, being sons of the resurrection. (These are also the “adopted sons of God” who were anxiously awaiting the redemption of their bodies (glorification) (Rom. 8:23).

These overcomers will not be HURT by the *second death* (the Lake of Fire, to destroy death itself), because they already allowed God to purge them in this present age of the 1st Adam’s carnal fleshly nature, which is mortality or death itself.

Revelation 2:11b – [... He who **overcomes** will not be hurt by the ***second death***.

The scripture does not say the overcomers will not have to go through the second death, but that they will not be “hurt” by the second death. The Spirit of Christ Jesus, when speaking to the church of Smyrna, where this scripture is found, encourages the church not to fear the testing and tribulation they were about to experience, but to be faithful unto death (*death to self, the 1st Adamic nature*), and they would receive the crown of life (*the victor’s crown for the overcomer in Christ*). We cannot be “hurt” by the process of the second death when we understand God’s purpose for allowing us to go through fiery trials and tribulations. We understand it is to perfect our character to qualify as kingly priests to offer sacrifices to God in righteousness. God’s discipline is His love (Rev. 3:19; Heb. 12:6)!

Revelation 20:6 - Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the **first resurrection**; over these the **second death** has no power, but they will be **priests of God and of Christ** and **will reign with Him for a thousand years**.

The Lake of Fire and Brimstone - the Lake of Divine Purification

In the following J. Preston Eby gives great insight into the real meaning and purpose of the lake of fire and brimstone:

"The Lake of Fire and **Brimstone** signifies a **fire burning** with **brimstone**; the word '**brimstone**' or **Sulphur** defines the **character of the fire**. The Greek word **THEION** translated '**brimstone**' is exactly the same word **THEION** which means '**divine**.' **Sulphur** 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 ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it." (Emphasis mine).

Revelation 21:7-8 - He who overcomes will **inherit** these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the **lake that burns** (combustion, to change) **with fire** (heat and light representing illumination, truth and revelation – God is a consuming fire) and **brimstone**, (or Sulphur – divine purification) **which is the second death** (Death or destruction of death)."

Therefore, a "lake of fire and brimstone" (Sulphur) would signify a lake of divine purification or consecration to God.

The Lake of Fire – the Second Death!

The FIRST DEATH is MORTALITY – death that the first Adam imputed to all mankind. The SECOND DEATH IS TO DESTROY DEATH. So, the purpose of the lake of fire, the second death, is to destroy, to purge the FIRST DEATH, Adam's sin nature and character – the carnal mind of man, which is death (Rom. 8:6-8).

This purging of the first death is the process of sanctification by the blood of Jesus and the power of a Spirit led life, transforming us from death to life – the Life of the LAST ADAM, the LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT of JESUS CHRIST. This is accomplished through the LAKE OF FIRE, the SECOND DEATH (the DEATH of the SELF-LIFE), and the ALL-CONSUMING FIRE OF GOD HIMSELF. DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY BY CHRIST'S LIFE (Heb. 12:29; 1 Cor. 15:45-49; 53-54).

We also see from the scriptures that the beast, the false prophet, the devil, hades, and death, as well as anyone whose name (character) is not found in the book of life, are finally ALL cast into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone! All these things, which are a picture of the first Adam's character and nature, will all be consumed in God's judgment of fire that purifies and transforms our character and nature to be conformed to the IMAGE OF CHRIST!

Revelation 19:20 - And the **beast** (bestly nature of man, the mark of the beast 666, the number of a man, Rev. 13:18) was taken, and with him the **false prophet** (false doctrines and lies) that wrought miracles before him, with which he **deceived them** that had **received the mark** (character) of the **beast**, and them that **worshipped his image** (likeness). These both were **cast** alive into a **lake of fire burning with brimstone**.

Revelation 20:10 - And the **devil** (adversary, accuser, slanderer) that **deceived them** was **cast** into the **lake of fire** and **brimstone**, where the **beast** and the **false prophet** are, and shall be **tormented** day and night **to the ages of the ages** (*i.e., aionas ton aionon*, not forever and ever, but for an indefinite, undetermined amount of time, until such time when there has been a change of heart, a transformation into the image of Christ, when this mortality puts on immortality – when death is swallowed up by life – Christ’s life!).

Revelation 20:11 - Then I saw a **great white throne** and **Him** who sat upon it, from whose presence **earth** (old earthly nature of the 1st Adam) and **heaven** (carnal mind) **fled**, and **no place** was found for them. 12 And I saw the **dead**, the **great** and the **small**, standing before the throne, and **books were opened**; and **another book** was **opened**, which is the **book of life**; and the **dead** were **judged** from the things which were written in the books, **according** to their **deeds**. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and **Death** and **Hades** gave up the dead who were in them; and they were **judged**, each one of them **according** to their **deeds**. 14 Then **Death** and **Hades** were **thrown** into the **lake of fire**. This is the **second death**, the **lake of fire**. 15 And if **anyone’s name** (those who do not have the character of Christ) was **not found written** in the **book of life**, he was thrown into the **lake of fire**.

Revelation 21:8 - But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, 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** (*Judgment and destruction of death, mortality - the carnal mind and nature of the 1st Adam.*).

1 Corinthians 15:26 says, "The **last enemy** that shall be **destroyed** is **death**." **Therefore, there is NO such thing as ETERNAL DEATH!** Wow! Can you see this truth?

Will the wicked, who did not repent in this age, experience judgment and punishment?

Yes, the wicked who do not repent in this age will experience judgment and punishment, as 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 teaches:

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 - For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His **mighty angels** (*a messenger from God, one who is sent, a pastor, etc.*) in flaming fire, 8 dealing out **retribution** (*dispensing God’s justice that causes restoration, reconciliation, and healing*) to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay

the **penalty** (*suffer punishment; justice; judicial decision; execution of a sentence*) of **eternal** (*aion – age-abiding*) destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

Who are these “mighty angels”? Are they not the saints, the “holy ones” of Jude 1:14-15, who are coming with Christ to judge the ungodly as previously discussed? This is also the “saints” that Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 when he says, the saints will judge the world and the angels.

Have we not all experienced the consequences and judgment of our rebellion against the Lord at some point in our lives? What was the result? For many of us, God the Father, in His love, first sent one of these “mighty messengers” into our lives to warn us to repent. Then we have a choice. We could humble ourselves, and repent so we would be forgiven and restored, or suffer greater tribulation with greater loss for our continued rebellion, until we finally repent. Some of us either fall on the Rock, or the Rock falls on us! Either way the principle is the same throughout God’s Word.

Jeremiah 2:19 says, *“Your own wickedness will correct (reprove) you, and your apostasies will reprove you.”*

The Purpose of the Lake of Fire is to Bring Forth a New Heaven and a New Earth

Revelation 21:1 - Then I saw a **new heaven** (transformed mind of Christ) and a **new earth** (glorified body); for the **first heaven** (mind of the flesh) and the **first earth** (carnal, fleshly body) passed away, (purified through divine fire) and there is no longer any sea (unregenerated humanity; Christ will restore ALL things back to the Father).

According to scripture, how will God bring about a New Heaven and a New Earth?

Let’s take a closer look at the scriptures that verify the process of God’s fire (*i.e., fiery trials or testing, fiery judgment – Gehenna (to purify and purge) and the lake of fire*) to produce a new heaven and a new earth within us - His righteousness. Remember, God is purging His sons through the fires of Gehenna, where every unclean and unnecessary thing is destroyed and consumed from our lives. But for those who are not willing to undergo a baptism of fire in this age, God will purge them in the lake of fire (a place of judgment and divine purification) that

burns with brimstone. As Philippians 2:10-11 tells us, every knee will bow before Jesus Christ and every tongue will confess, He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

2 Peter 3:10-14, the Amplified version explains this truth when it says, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will vanish (pass away) with a thunderous crash, **and the [material] elements [of the universe] will be dissolved (melt, be loosed with fire), and the earth (soil, a region, the inhabitants of the earth) and the works (deeds, employment, effort of occupation, self-effort, what occupies your time) that are upon it will be burned up (to burn means to change; when something is burned up, it is not destroyed, meaning it does not exist anymore, instead it is changed into another form and it is upward in its motion).** 11 Since all these things are thus in the process of being dissolved, what kind of person ought [each of] you to be [in the meanwhile] in consecrated and holy behavior and devout and godly qualities, 12 While you wait and earnestly long for (expect and hasten) the coming of the day of God by reason of which the flaming heavens will be dissolved (same word as melt), and the [material] elements [of the universe] will flare and melt with fire [Isa 34:4]? 13 **But we look for new heavens and a new earth according to His promise, in which righteousness (uprightness, freedom from sin, and right standing with God) is to abide [Isaiah 65:17; 66:22].** 14 So, beloved, since you are expecting these things, be eager to be found by Him [at His coming] **without spot (free from censure, irreproachable, vice, defilement, or character flaws) or blemish (without faults, moral blemish, gluttony, disgrace, insults, contempt, and offenses) and at peace [in serene confidence, free from fears, agitating passions, and moral conflicts] (Col. 1:21-22).**

The Greek word *element* means *principles (fundamentals), rudiments, elements from which all things have come, the material causes of the universe. Each element is distinguished by its ATOMIC number, i.e., the number of protons in the nuclei of its atoms. They are the primary constituents of matter.* This goes along with 1 Corinthians 15:51-57, which tells us that those overcomers who are alive and remain at Christ’s appearing in the earth will not experience death, but they will all be changed or transformed (metamorphosed) in a “*moment*,” or as the Greek word *atomos* denotes, in the atoms. An atom is the smallest particle of matter. It means uncuttable, for it cannot be broken down any further. Everything about us, down to the smallest particle of matter, is going to be transformed and changed for His glory.

The scripture says the elements are going to be dissolved with fire. The Greek word *dissolve or shall melt* in this passage means to *loose any person (or thing) tied or fastened, to loose one bound up or bound in chains – loose one from prison, let go, to unbind, release from bonds, to*

set free. To deprive of authority, to declare unlawful, to break up, demolish, destroy, to overthrow, to do away with. "TO LOOSEN" (literally and figuratively) means break up, destroy, dissolve, (un) loose, melt, and put off.

Then this physical body made up of *matter* that is passing away will be LOOSED from its bondage to the perishable and will put on the imperishable and the immortal (deathless) glorified body. And how is this mortality of the physical matter destroyed, dissolved, or burned up? It is destroyed by fire or, as some other translations say, intense heat. The word *heat* means "to set on fire" – *burning, burning up, light, to consume with fire*. As previously stated, to burn means to change. When something is burned up, it is not destroyed, meaning it does not exist anymore, but instead it is changed into another form, and it is always upward in its motion. We are consumed by His divine fire since God is an all-consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). The purpose of the fire is to purify us and change our character (1 Peter 4:12; James 1:2, 12; Rom 5:3), so we can receive our new bodies. This is when we will receive our New Heaven and New Earth. The New Heaven being our minds and the New Earth being our bodies, where righteousness will dwell - complete, full salvation in Christ.

Revelation 21:1-2 - Then I saw a **new heaven** (new mind – the mind of Christ) and a **new earth** (new, glorified body); for the **first heaven** and the **first earth passed away**, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the **holy city, new Jerusalem** (the Bride of Christ – a church without spot or wrinkle – without character flaws), **coming down out of heaven** (spiritual realm – presence of God) **from God, made ready** as a **bride** adorned for her **husband**.

In Summary

When you begin to study these different words and their meanings, you will wonder how the translators could use one English word like "hell" to describe one Hebrew word and three different Greek words. As traditionally taught, "hell" has been distorted to mean a place where sinners go who have never said the "sinner's prayer" asking Jesus Christ into their hearts. A place where they will burn in the fires of hell for all eternity without any hope of ever being redeemed. This doctrinal error has maligned the name and character of our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and God the Father and has weakened the sacrifice and saving power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Either Jesus' blood is powerful enough to save ALL or NONE! He died ONCE for ALL (Heb. 10:10)!

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 – For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in **Adam ALL die**, so also in **Christ ALL shall be made alive**.

1 Peter 3:18 - For Christ also **died for sins ONCE FOR ALL**, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

We have proven from scripture that God's fire is His love to purify, cleanse, and refine us to destroy the first death, the mortality that Adam imputed to all of creation, in the hope (confident expectation) that all of creation will be transformed and changed into the image of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, the life-giving Spirit of God (Rom. 8:19-24).

We can either allow God to transform us through His fire of judgment now, in this age, qualifying us for the first resurrection to rule with Christ in His kingdom in the age to come, or we can wait to be refined by God's fire of judgment, the lake of fire, afterwards in the second resurrection. The latter will be saved but will suffer great loss, as 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 states; they will not qualify for the reward - the first resurrection.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 - According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. **But each person must be careful how he builds on it.** 11 For no one can lay a **foundation** other than the one which is laid, which is **Jesus Christ**. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones** (deeds of the Spirit), **wood, hay, or straw** (deeds of the flesh), 13 each one'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 each one's **work** (deeds). 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it **remains** (only the works of the Spirit will remain), he will receive a **reward** (He will be a part of the first resurrection). 15 If anyone's work is **burned up**, (works of the flesh, destroyed through God's fire of judgment) **he will suffer loss** (he will not inherit all things, he will not qualify for the first resurrection); but he **himself** will be **saved** (be a part of the second resurrection), yet only so as **through fire** (because of God's transforming fire).

Let's allow the Lord to refine us now, in this age, so that we qualify for the better resurrection, even as the patriarchs of faith described in Hebrews Chapter 11 are an example for us to follow.

Hebrews 11:33-35 - who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a **better resurrection**.

Chapter Eight

Aion, Olam – Eternity or An Age

Burning in Hell Forever According to Tradition

According to Church tradition, if you haven't said the "sinner's prayer," asking God for forgiveness of your sins and asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart before you die, you will go to hell and burn in the torment of fire forever, and it will never end throughout eternity. So, if God so loved the whole world and sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of ALL mankind, does God really burn people in a physical hell endlessly – for eternity?

I believe we need to answer this question. To answer it, we must understand the true meaning of the Greek word *aion* and its Hebrew counterpart *olam*, which have been traditionally recognized to mean "forever."

The Greek word *AION* has many different interpretations, and as a result, it has caused much confusion for the body of Christ. The translators of the King James Version render *AION*, together with the adjective *AIONIOS*, as "*age, course, eternal, forever, evermore, forever and ever, everlasting, world, beginning of the world, world began, world without end.*"

Aion is the Greek word from which we get our English word, *EON*. Webster's 1826 dictionary defines *eon* or *age* as "*a long period of time, a particular period, or duration of time*".

Duration means indefinitely, and indefinitely means not determinate (the end of the time has not been determined).

For example, you are living for an *indefinite period of time* in this age. It has not been DETERMINED when your life in this age will expire. Only God the Father knows this. He has determined the days of our lives in this earthly body.

Acts 17:26 - And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having **determined their appointed times** and the boundaries of their lands and territories.

Therefore, TIME is indefinite, NOT INFINITE. Time has a BEGINNING and an END.

The following are examples of the use of *AION* and its Hebrew equivalent, *OLAM*:

Example 1: When Jonah was describing being in the belly of the fish, it seemed forever to him, but it was only for a determined, appointed time (*olam*), only until he repented. We know that he was not left there forever but was vomited up (resurrected) by the big fish onto dry land.

Jonah 2:2,6,9-10 - ... "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I called for help from the depth of **Sheol (KJV – hell (hades))**; You heard my voice.... 6 "I

descended to the base of the mountains. The earth with its **bars** (H1280, earth as a prison) was around me **FOREVER** (*olam, should have been translated: TO THE AGE, a period of time in this age, not forever/eternity*), But You have brought up my life from the pit (corruption), LORD my God.... 9 But I will sacrifice to You With a voice of thanksgiving. That which I have **vowed I will pay**. Salvation is from the LORD.” 10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

Example 2: In Numbers 25:13, God made a covenant with Phinehas, the son of Aaron, not for eternity but during the age (i.e., age during) when he was zealous for God. We know that Aaron’s priesthood, the Levitical priesthood, did not endure forever (eternity), because it was replaced by a greater priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ. Phinehas’ priesthood was for “an age.”

Numbers 25:13 - And he (Phinehas) shall have it, and his seed after him, even the **covenant** of an **everlasting** (*olam, should have been translated of this age, not everlasting/eternity*) **priesthood**; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

Here are some other examples of the Greek word *aiionios* that were mistranslated as “everlasting”:

John 3:16 - For God so loved the **world** (*kosmos*), that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have **everlasting** (*aiionios* – during the age) **life** (*zoe* – *Christ’s zoe life*).

In other words, we have Christ’s *zoe* life now, in this age! Not one day in the sweet by and by when we die and go to heaven. No, we can experience His life during this age, right now!

Romans 6:22 - But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end **everlasting** (*aiionios* - *during the age*) **life** (*zoe* – *Christ’s zoe life*).

Punishment for the Ungodly – During the Age, Not for Eternity

According to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, the Lord is coming to be glorified in His saints. This scripture passage reveals that the Lord will be revealed from heaven (spiritual realm) with His mighty angels (His messengers) in flaming fire, those burning with a message that will purify the sinner (Psa. 68:17-18), to deal out or dispense His justice (retribution) on all those who do not know Him and have not obeyed His gospel (Deut. 33:2-3).

This also correlates with Jude 1:14-15, which states:

Jude 14-15 – It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with **many thousands** of His **holy ones** (saints, morally blameless, consecrated), 15 to **execute judgment** (justice, bringing restoration, reconciliation, deliverance, and healing) upon all, and to **convict** all the **ungodly** of all their **ungodly deeds** which they have done in an **ungodly way**, and of all the **harsh** things which **ungodly sinners** have spoken against Him.”

Yes, the ungodly will be judged, and they will have to go through a PURGING in the FIRE, but I don't believe this is a literal, physical fire because Hebrews 12:28 says, “Our God is an ALL-CONSUMING FIRE.” He is the FIRE, and His law is a fiery law that PURIFIES the sinner and brings judgment with a view to restoration, reconciliation, and healing. The ungodly will be punished, but only until they repent and surrender to Jesus Christ. Only God knows how long it will take for each person to humble themselves, repent, and surrender to Him. Therefore, His punishment or correction is for an “AGE,” an indefinite period of time, which only He has determined, not for eternity!

2 Thessalonians 1:9 verifies this truth:

2 Thessalonians 1:9 - Who shall be **punished** (*pay the penalty, destruction*) with **everlasting** (*aionios – during the age, not eternity*) destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Young's Literal Translation says it like this:

2 Thessalonians 1:9 - who shall **suffer justice** -- destruction age-during (during the age) -
- from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his strength,

God's purpose is not to destroy us but to destroy our fleshly nature so we would be TRANSFORMED into the character and nature of Christ.

Eternal - Endless

ETERNITY is WITHOUT TIME and therefore cannot be added to – it is ENDLESS or INFINITE. It is without beginning or end. If the writers of the Old and New Testaments wanted to convey the thought of “ETERNITY,” they would have used words like “ENDLESS” or “WITHOUT END.”

In the Scriptures, eternity or endlessness is expressed by the phrase “no end.” We see examples of this in the following scriptures:

Hebrews 7:16b – “[... the power of an **endless** (*akatalytos* – **eternal**, indissoluble, permanent) **life.**”

1 Peter 1:4 – “to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that **fade not away** (*amarantos* – **eternal**; perpetual) ...]”

Luke 1:33 – and He will reign over the house of Jacob **forever** (*aion*, **an age**), and His kingdom will have **no end** (*ou telos* - i.e., **eternal**, ageless).

Likewise, in Psalm 45:6, it shows that eternity goes beyond *olam* (an age), because when the Psalmist expresses eternity (endlessness), he says, “*olam va ad*,” or “the age and beyond (forever/eternity).”

Psalm 45:6 - “Thy throne, O God, is **forever** (*olam*, **an age**) and **ever** (*‘ad*, **eternity**); a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.”

Therefore, as seen in the scriptures above, when the Holy Spirit wanted to convey true eternity (i.e., endlessness) in reference to the punishment and suffering of the lost and enemies of God, He would have used words like those found above: “*akatalytos*” (eternal, permanent); “*amarantos*” (eternal, perpetual); “*ou telos*” (eternal, ageless); and “*va ad*” (beyond, eternity) instead of *OLAM* or *AION*, which plainly denote periods of time (i.e., an age), not eternity.

“For Ever and Ever”

The use of “for ever and ever” (i.e., *aionas ton aionon*, “ages of the ages”) is also a mistranslation of *AION*, an age. Remember, eternity cannot be added to! Only time may be compounded. If “forever” is “eternity,” how can you add “and ever,” attaching ANOTHER ETERNITY to an already existing eternity? Ages are time, and time can be added to! Even our English word “ever” appears in the singular form; we have no plural form for “ever.” When the Greek speaks of “the ages of the ages,” it is speaking of AGGREGATED PERIODS OF TIME – not eternity!

This is shown in the following scriptures:

Revelation 11:15 - Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the **world** (*kosmos*) has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign **forever** (*aion*, *to the ages*) **and** (*ton*, “of the”) **ever** (*aion*, *ages*).”

Revelation 14:11 - “And the smoke of their torment goes up **forever** (to the ages) **and ever** (of the ages); they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Revelation 22:5 - And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign **forever** (to the ages) **and ever** (of the ages).

1 Timothy 1:17 - Now to the King eternal (*aion* – ages), immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory **forever** (to the ages) **and ever** (of the ages). Amen.

The following shows AION in its different forms, but it was still translated as “for ever and ever” in the KJV as well as many other versions:

Ephesians 3:21 - to Him is the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all the generations **of the age of the ages** [Singular/plural (*aionos ton aionon*)] (for ever and ever - KJV). Amen.

Hebrews 1:8 - and unto the Son: 'Thy throne, O God, is **to the age of the age** [Singular/singular (*aiona tou aionos*)] (for ever and ever – KJV); a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy reign;

Revelation 20:10 - and the Devil, who is leading them astray, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are the beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night –**to the ages of the ages** [Plural/plural (*aionas ton aionon*)] (for ever and ever – KJV).

1 Peter 4:11 - if any one doth speak -- 'as oracles of God;' if any one doth minister -- 'as of the ability which God doth supply;' that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power -- **to the ages of the ages** [Plural/plural (*aionas ton aionon*)] (for ever and ever – KJV). Amen.

Chapter Nine

The Difference Between Aion and Kosmos

Not only has *aionios* been mistranslated to mean eternity and everlasting, but it has also been mistranslated to mean “*world, beginning of the world, world began, and world without end.*” This has caused added confusion with the Greek word *kosmos*, which literally means *an arrangement or world system produced by the corrupt, carnal nature of man*. This includes an order, system, or arrangement of things; the practice of life, customs, and manners of men; pleasures and interests; the present state of existence; public life, society; a way of life; social philosophies, political ideologies, religion, economics – which are all products of the carnal mind.

So, you can see the translators used the English word, *world*, for two different Greek words that don't mean the same. To avoid confusion, we must understand the difference between the Greek words *kosmos* and *aion*. *Kosmos* is correctly translated as *world*, while *aion*, which is being mistranslated, should be correctly translated as *age*.

The following scripture passage in Matthew 13 proves this. It is a parable of Jesus that He interprets and best contrasts the difference between *aion* and *kosmos*:

Matthew 13:38-40 (NASV) - And the field is the **world** [G2889 – *kosmos*, world]; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the **end of the age** [G165 – *aion*. **KJV uses, world**]; and the reapers are angels. 40 "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and **burned with fire**, so shall it be at the **end of the age** [G165 - *aion*, **age**. **KJV uses, world**].

Where Did All the Confusion Come From?

The truth is that we have been misled into error by translators who mistranslated Greek and Hebrew words. This is because of bias on the part of translators who were NOT Spirit filled and who were afraid to go against the teachings of the perverted doctrinal creeds of the religious church that were taught at that time. Therefore, the beliefs of the translators deeply influenced the way the Bible was translated.

This is proven according to the Bible helps of Bagster's edition:

The King James' Bible, a translation of the original text, commissioned by King James, instructed the men who gave us the Authorized Version, "**To sanction no innovation that would disturb the orthodoxy or peace of the Church.**" It is said that "The translators were careful in the main to respect the rules laid down by the king." Therefore, they were careful not to "rock the boat," so to speak, concerning the mainstream doctrinal heresies of the harlot church system in their time. Unfortunately, this has brought about much confusion and conjecture that has produced much fear and hopelessness within the body of Christ, concerning the words "eternity," the "age of the ages," and the "ages."

We also know, according to *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, that the harlot church system of Catholicism, during the Inquisitions, tortured people and burned them at the stake for not agreeing with their false teachings (i.e., doctrines of men and demons; 1 Tim. 4:1; Eph 4:14; Matt. 15:9), charging them with heresy. This is where the traditional hell driven, damnation messages and

teachings originated. Most people understand this was done to control and manipulate the people through fear and ignorance to accomplish their own agenda and build their kingdom.

To keep from being confused about these words, you must either look up the Strong's numbers or use a translation that correctly translates these words.

There are many English Bibles that have broken from the "tradition of the elders" and are good literal translations that are very accurate in their interpretation of the Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek word *aion*.

1. **Rotherham's The Emphasized Bible**
2. **Young's Literal Translation** use the terms "age-abiding," "age-enduring," and "age-lasting," rather than eternal or everlasting.
3. **The Concordant Version** prefers to leave it as eonian, since our English word "eon" means "an age."
4. **The New Covenant**, by Dr. J.W. Hanson, uses for example, "for the aeons of the aeons."
5. **The Holy Bible in Modern English**, uses for example, "through the ages of the ages."

The Age According to the Feasts

To better understand what an *age* is, you must understand God's plan for the *ages*, according to the different Feasts of the Bible. God's people were to celebrate the three main feasts. These were the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and finally, the Feast of Tabernacles.

When you understand the true meaning of *aion* according to its original meaning in ancient Greek, it makes more sense, removes the confusion, and gives a greater understanding of God's justice and plan for all of His CREATION! God's heart is that there be a RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS (Acts 3:20-21)! This will happen at the end of the age of Christ's millennial reign, when all things are brought under the feet of Christ, when He restores and gives back all things to God the Father.

We are presently in the CHURCH AGE (i.e., "*the age*"). The coming Age is the Messianic Age – the Feast of Tabernacles, the Kingdom Age (i.e., the "*age of the ages*").

Revelation 20:4-6 – Then I saw **thrones**, and they sat on them, and **judgment** was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and **reigned with Christ for a thousand years**. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over

these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will **reign with Him** for a **thousand years** (Millennial Kingdom of Christ, the Feast of Tabernacles, Messianic Age).

Even CHRIST'S Kingdom will come to an END! It is for an AGE – the Messianic Age. “Then comes the END,” when God the Father will be ALL in ALL!

1 Corinthians 15:22-28 – For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the **first fruits** (i.e., “the anointed first fruits,” the overcomers who will rule with Christ in His millennial reign), after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 **THEN COMES THE END**, when **He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father**, when He has **abolished ALL rule and ALL authority and power**. 25 For **He must reign UNTIL** He has put **ALL His enemies under His feet**. 26 The **last enemy** that will be **abolished** is **death**. 27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that **He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him**. 28 **When all things are subjected to Him**, then the **Son Himself** (Jesus Christ) also will be **SUBJECTED TO THE ONE** (God the Father) who **subjected all things to Him (the Son, Jesus Christ)**, so that **GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL**.

Hebrews 6:20 - where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a **high priest forever** (*aion*, “to the age,” not eternity) according to the **order of Melchizedek**.