

Tormented Forever and Ever?

by Steve Barwick

According to religious traditions, after the wicked die, their souls are “tormented forever and ever” in hellfire. In fact, you’d be hard-pressed today to find a Christian denomination that doesn’t believe in, and teach, an eternal fiery hell in which sinners are roasted alive in the flames forever and ever, while screaming out in torment and despair.

In some Christian traditions, this “hell” is portrayed as a deep, fiery pit with concentric descending rings, each ring positioned below the next. And in this depiction, each descending ring represents a different level of eternal torment based upon the severity of the individual’s sins.

These depictions of hellfire are, of course, fanciful, utter nonsense, and completely unbiblical as you’ll see throughout the remainder of this study. But we’ll also see how people come to believe such nonsensical traditions, based on their inability to tell the difference between a Biblical parable, and Biblical reality.

While such depictions of eternal hellfire may have made great, epic poetry for poets such as Dante, who wrote *Dante’s Inferno*, and who used his personal vision of hell to skewer the corrupt political and religious figures of his time, for Christians to allow such religious fiction to morph into actual *religious doctrine* is a very serious sin.

That’s because once *fiction* becomes *religious doctrine*, it makes void the truth of God’s Word on the subject. It becomes a fabricated *substitute* for what God’s Word actually says on a matter. And substituting a lie in place of God’s Word, however well-intentioned, is not in the least bit pleasing to our heavenly Father.

But just how *serious* is substituting sensationalistic religious traditions in place of what God’s Word actually says on the subject? As it’s written in the great book of Revelation, changing God’s Word could quite literally cost you your place in the eternity:

Rev 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

Rev 22:19 And *if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

So substituting the empty religious traditions of man in place of God’s Word is a very *serious* and potentially costly sin. And since the great book of Revelation is the very book from which many Christians draw their fantastical and extremely morbid visions of suffering and hell fire, all the more heed should be paid to the passages above which demand strict doctrinal adherence to what God’s Word actually says.

In reality, as you’ll see throughout the remainder of this study, our heavenly Father’s Word states clearly that all unrepentant sinners will be judged at the end of the Millennium teaching period, and then cast into the lake of fire to be consumed by fire in an *instant*, never to exist again.

In fact, as you'll discover later in this study, their utter destruction is so thorough, even the *memory* of them will no longer exist.

So how do Christians justify the idea that our heavenly Father tortures and torments his wayward children in a fiery hell for eternity? Let's do some background work first, so we can answer that question.

What is Hell?

In reality, there are four words in the Bible commonly translated as "hell." Understanding these four words is the first step in understanding the simple fact that there's no eternal hellfire. The four words commonly translated "hell" in the Bible are:

- The Hebrew word *sheol* (i.e., Strong's H-7585), which means a grave or a pit. This word simply refers to being dead in the grave, and should be translated "grave" or "pit" in the vast majority of Old Testament verses it's used in. In some cases, depending upon the context, it can refer to what Smith's Bible Dictionary calls *the place of the dead in the unseen world*, referring of course to the fact that you can't see a soul once it's left the human body after death. All souls go into the spiritual dimension, and we in the flesh dimension can't see them. But in no way does this word refer to eternal torment or torture in a burning pit of fire.
- The Greek word *Geena* (i.e., Strong's G-1067), sometimes spelled *Gehenna*, which is composed of two Greek words, *gay* (i.e., Strong's H-1516) and *hinnom* (i.e., Strong's H-2012) meaning "the valley of Hinnon." This term is often either preceded or followed by the Greek word *pur* (i.e., Strong's G-4442), meaning "fire." So, quite literally, it means the "fire of the Valley of Hinnon." This refers quite specifically to the valley of Hinnon, located just south of Jerusalem, in which the garbage pit for the ancient city was once situated. This is where trash was dumped, dead animals were thrown, etc. And because of that, it burned continually, day and night, at basically a low smolder with flames rising up as new trash was dumped upon it. It's an apt metaphor for hellfire, perhaps. But you'll note there was no eternal torment or torture involved. Only inanimate objects such as trash, or dead animals, were thrown into this smoldering garbage pit. And they were completely burnt up and turned to ashes. So in no way does this word refer to the idea of eternal torment in flames, either.
- The Greek word *hades* (i.e., Strong's G-860), meaning "unseen." This refers, of course, to the state of the dead, i.e. the fact that a dead person is no longer seen among the living. Like the Hebrew word *sheol*, this word, too, should be translated "grave" in some verses that render it "hell." Traditionally, it refers to the abode of wicked souls awaiting judgment. But there's no eternal torture in fiery flames associated with the definition of this word, either.
- The Greek word *tartaroos* (i.e., Strong's G-5020), meaning "to incarcerate." This word refers specifically to the imprisonment of the souls of the wicked after their death in the flesh, while awaiting their judgment. Again, no eternal fiery torment or torture is even implied in this word.

The bottom line is this: In not a single one of the four words commonly rendered "hell" in the Scriptures is there even a hint of eternal fiery torment or torture.

Even the Greek word *Geena*, often spelled *Gehenna*, only refers to a garbage pit in which trash was burned to ashes, never to exist again. This is used as a metaphor for what happens to the wicked on the day of judgment, which is to say, they are burned up, *never to exist again*. It does not even remotely refer to eternal fiery torment or torture of living souls. After all, in a burning garbage pit nothing is left but the ashes.

Lazarus and the Rich Man

Now some Christians will likely say, “Steve, you’re wrong. What about in the book of Luke, where the parable of Lazarus and the rich man is given? Isn’t eternal torment in the fires of hell described in that parable, as set forth by Christ Jesus Himself?”

Well, first, let’s remember this is a *parable*. A parable is a story being told in which the characters and objects described stand metaphorically for something else, in order to impart a greater truth. In other words, in *all* of Christ’s parables, metaphors, types and similes are used. And you’re supposed to meditate on what those metaphors, types and similes stand for, so as to draw that greater underlying truth out of the story.

For example, in Matthew 13:24-30, Christ tells one of His most famous parables, the parable of the tares. He then *explains* the metaphors He used in His parable, in Matthew 13:36-43. He explains that the “field” described in His parable represents the world. That the “good seed” described in the parable represent the children of the kingdom. The “tares” represent the children of the wicked one, i.e., the devil. And the “enemy” described in His parable represents the devil himself.

Similarly, in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man from the book of Luke, you have to understand the metaphors being used by Christ Jesus in order to fully understand the meaning of the parable. If you simply take the details of the parable at face value, without understanding the metaphors, you end up believing in something that does not exist, i.e., a fiery hell in which sinful men are tortured in flames forever and ever.

So let’s take a look at the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, and see what we can learn for ourselves about what it really means, and also see how it’s been misconstrued into a religious tradition never meant by the Lord when He told it. As it is written:

Luk 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

It’s important to remember that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Himself is speaking this parable. According to Christ, the rich man in this parable had it all. He lived like royalty. He therefore represents those who are so wrapped up in their riches, they have no time for God, or for Godly matters like love for his fellow man, charity or even goodwill towards others less fortunate than himself. The Biblical commandment to love God with all of your heart and soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:29-31), were never even thoughts in this rich man’s mind.

Luk 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

Next, in the parable, we're introduced by Christ to the character of Lazarus, a beggar who is abandoned at the gate of the rich man, in terrible shape (reference the word "laid" in the verse above, which is Strong's G-906, *ballo*, meaning to be thrown or stricken down with more or less violent intensity, i.e., cast aside.)

In comparison to the rich man who has everything, Lazarus has nothing. He's so sick, he's literally covered in sores. And he's been abandoned. He's in a truly sad state. But as we'll see in the next few verses, in spite of his troubled condition Lazarus apparently had faith in God, for when he passes on he will be transported to heaven where he will rest in father Abraham's bosom, i.e., a euphemism meaning he will gain eternal life for maintaining his faith in the face of great hardship.

Luk 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Lazarus, likely starving, wished only that he could eat the crumbs off the rich man's table. Clearly, the rich man was not a very generous or compassionate man. His ungodliness makes you wonder how he gained his riches, doesn't it?

Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Two different men. Two different situations about to befall them.

Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

There's that word "hell." And yes, it's got the word "torments" directly associated with it. Surely we can see from this verse the fact that ungodly and uncompassionate rich men will be tormented in hellfire forever and ever in the sight of the righteous, correct?

Well...*no*. It does not say that. First of all, the word "hell" in this verse is translated from the Greek word *hades*, which we examined earlier, meaning "unseen".

In other words, the rich man lifted up his eyes from the *unseen dimension* his soul was placed in after his death – meaning the *spiritual dimension* we all go to when we die in order to await our judgment on the great Day of Judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15.

And in that spiritual dimension, the rich man is able to see both Abraham and Lazarus across the way. So exactly *where* is this spiritual dimension the rich man finds himself in after he dies? Well, the rich man could see Abraham and Lazarus off in the distance. So he was obviously in heaven. *That's* the unseen dimension being discussed here.

You see, one part of heaven is for the faithful and righteous, such as Abraham and Lazarus. And the other part of heaven is where the unfaithful and unrighteous await their judgment. And *that* is their torment. For it is at that point they fully realize a most important truth: the ungodly, selfish and unrighteous acts they committed while in the flesh have dire *consequences in the spirit*.

Indeed, on judgment day, when the righteous are *rewarded* for their faith and righteousness, the unrighteous will be severely *punished* for their ungodly wickedness and selfishness.

Short of sincere repentance during the Millennium teaching period under Christ, which takes place beginning the day of Christ's Second Advent, the wicked will be destroyed in the lake of fire, never to exist again. But until Christ's Second advent, the wicked await that time, knowing full well they did not make the grade, and that their judgment awaits them. Again, this is their "torment."

Luk 16:24 And he 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 in this flame.

And there's the metaphor that Christians like to take so literally; they imagine God's children being tortured in flames forever and ever, in full sight of Abraham and Lazarus and apparently all of God's faithful children *in heaven*, and with no water to quench their eternal thirst.

In other words, if this part of the parable were to be taken literally, rather than as the *metaphor* Christ meant you to understand, you'd have to believe that for the entire eternity faithful Christians will be standing there in heaven watching their friends, loved ones and family members who didn't make the grade being tortured in red hot flames, crying out for water and never getting so much as a drop.

Is that *really* your understanding of the heavenly eternity, and of the nature of our heavenly Father? I hope you know your heavenly Father better than that.

So, to reiterate, Christ is telling a *parable*. And therefore the details of this parable are metaphorical, meaning they stand for something else, just like the details in the parable of the tares mentioned earlier.

The torment and flames being experienced by the unrighteous rich man in the parable stand for the great shame and emotional pain of knowing that because of his ungodliness, he must now face his heavenly Father at the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15.

The ungodly rich man knows he'll be judged at that time for his selfishness and unrighteousness. And he knows he deserves nothing more than to be destroyed. So the fiery torment he feels is representative of *excruciating anguish*, knowing that he selfishly enjoyed the benefits of his flesh life without caring a whit about anyone else, and without giving any thought to God, or to the spiritual life to come. And on Judgment Day, he must pay the piper.

Realizing all of this, he cries out for mercy to Abraham. He requests some water to cool his tongue. In other words, metaphorically, he wants the benefits of the water of life (i.e., salvation through Christ), *but without having earned them*. You did notice there's absolutely zero repentance on his part, didn't you? There's not even any acknowledgement of his abject sinfulness. Does the rich man apologize to Lazarus for failing to help him when he was in such dire need? No. Instead, he calls for Abraham to send Lazarus to *serve him*.

So let me ask you what I believe Christ would have you ask *yourself* at this point: Will the *righteous* be servants to the *unrighteous* in the eternity? Will the *merciful* be servants to the *unmerciful* in the eternity?

The answer, of course, is no. Unrepentant sinners will be done away with on Judgment Day. As we'll see throughout this study, they will simply *no longer exist* after the judgment. They served themselves at the expense of everyone else during the course of their existence. And they show no remorse for it afterwards, while awaiting judgment. Therefore, their unrepentant cries for mercy will not be acknowledged.

Luk 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Abraham tells it like it is. The rich man never lacked for a thing in his flesh life. He took it all for granted, and never gave a thought to those less fortunate than himself...those in need...or even to God or to the eternity itself. He thought only of the moment. In his flesh life, his motto was "Live for today, and to heck with everyone else."

Abraham continues speaking to the rich man, so listen carefully:

Luk 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

In heaven, all souls – the good and the bad, alike -- await the great Day of Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. And there's a great gulf fixed between the wicked and the faithful. A gulf is a deep chasm with nothing in it.

That gulf is symbolic of the *absence of faith and righteous acts* on the part of the wicked. It is that *absence of faith and righteous acts* that separates the wicked from the faithful in heaven, where all souls who have come through this flesh await the great Day of Judgment.

The faithful await their reward. And the wicked await their punishment, which, as we'll see throughout the remainder of this study, is to be completely destroyed, never to exist again.

You see, the wicked will not be allowed to enter into the eternity, because they cannot be trusted to keep the two great commandments described by Jesus Christ in Mark 12:29-31, "*Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*"

Do you understand? Our heavenly Father has promised us an eternity of familial love, peace, happiness and well-being. Those who do not love God, and who do not love their neighbor, which is to say, their brothers and sisters in Christ, simply do not make it into the eternity. As I'll demonstrate for you over and over again in this study, they will be destroyed, never to exist again.

Our heavenly Father is not going to make us put up with the selfishness, arrogance and ungodliness of the wicked during the eternity. And He certainly isn't going to make us watch them burn in hellfire forever and ever, screaming out in torment and pain. What kind of a peaceful eternity would that be? What kind of a God would that be? Think about it.

Luk 16:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

The rich man, who would not lift a finger to help Lazarus in the flesh, now asks that Lazarus be sent to his family home to warn his family.

Luk 16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

The rich man knows his family members are exactly as he was. Ungodly, selfish, self-indulgent, and without compassion for anyone else. He wants Lazarus to be sent to warn them of what will befall them after their flesh life is over.

Again, the “place of torment” is not a burning fiery pit in which the unrighteous are tortured without mercy forever and ever. It is the holding place at which the wicked await judgment. The torment described is simply the excruciating anguish they feel due to the knowledge that they failed to make the grade and will be judged by our heavenly Father *and extinguished* on the great Judgment Day of God Almighty (short of sincere repentance during the Millennium teaching period, of course).

Luk 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

Abraham isn't buying into the rich man's pleas. He tells the rich man his five brothers have the same chance as everyone else. People like Lazarus, whose circumstances in the flesh were horrific, *nevertheless heard the words of Moses and the prophets, and loved and believed in God as a result*. But the rich man – who suffered no such torments in the flesh -- chose to ignore Moses and the prophets. He had what he wanted. His riches were his salvation, or so he thought at the time. And in this parable, his family members are no different than he was.

Luk 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

He's still asking for Abraham to send Lazarus to serve him. Imagine that. He wouldn't lift a finger to help Lazarus in the flesh. He wouldn't even feed him the crumbs from his sumptuous table as Lazarus lay sick and dying, with dogs licking his open wounds. Yet he wants Lazarus to be sent back *into the flesh* to warn his ungodly, selfish and self-indulgent family.

Special privileges for the arrogant and ungodly? I think not. Our heavenly Father is perfectly fair. And what's fair for the one is fair for all. If Lazarus had opportunity to hear Abraham and the prophets in spite of all of his afflictions, and believe in God and His Word, so this rich man and his family had the same opportunities in their great leisure and wealth.

Now Abraham replies:

Luk 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

In this great parable told by Christ Jesus, Abraham's final words to the rich man are the clincher. If the rich man's family members won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they certainly wouldn't believe Lazarus, even if he were allowed by our heavenly Father to return to the flesh and rise from the grave to go warn them. They simply wouldn't believe he had ever died.

You see, the parable is *really* about Christ. Our merciful heavenly Father would indeed send His only begotten Son in an attempt to persuade the world to live righteously, through faith, in order to make it into the eternity. But those whom the Son was sent to would ultimately reject and crucify Him. And even when He arose from the dead, paying for their sins and the sins of the world, the wicked still would not listen. They continue on in their own wicked ways, to this very day.

Look around you, and note how many will *still* not listen to Christ's message of salvation and forgiveness, preferring the empty riches of this world to the eternal riches of the next world.

Our heavenly Father does not torture His wayward children forever and ever in flames. He's not a sadist. And if eternal torment in burning hellfire is what you get out of this parable of Lazarus and the rich man, then you've *missed the whole point*.

It is simply a metaphorical description of the burning torment felt by those who await their day of judgment at the time of the great white throne judgment, knowing they did not make the grade. To turn it into an eternal fiery hell in which God's children are tortured forever in the sight of everyone else in heaven is to completely negate the truth of God's Word on the subject. In essence, it casts our heavenly Father as Satan.

What Does God's Word *Really* Say?

So what does God's Word really say about the fate of the wicked? Let's examine the Scriptures carefully, and find out.

We'll start in Psalm 37, where our heavenly Father uses a special tool called an "acrostic" to teach us what's going to happen to the wicked on the Judgment Day.

In this Psalm, in the original Hebrew language, each new thought is composed of four lines called a quatrain. And each quatrain begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, so you can distinguish where each quatrain starts and ends.

In other words, the first four lines start with the very first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The second four lines starts with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. And in the original Hebrew, this is true throughout the entire Psalm, except for the *fourth*, the *eleventh* and the *nineteenth* letters of the alphabet. The sections starting with these three letters stand out from all of the others because they're composed of only three lines -- i.e., triplets -- instead of four lines.

The fact that they're composed of only three lines each sets them apart from the rest of the Psalm, giving you what's called by scholars the *acrostic*. And if you read this acrostic as a *single message*, these three specific sections reveal a very important truth, straight from your heavenly Father.

In our English Bible, these three sections of the Psalm correspond perfectly to verses 7, 20 and 34. Therefore, we'll examine those three verses to see what our heavenly Father would have us understand from the acrostic He's placed in this Psalm for our edification, to help us understand exactly what happens to the wicked when they're judged. As it is written:

Psa 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

We're not to get all worked up over the fact that the wicked seem to prosper in their wickedness. Instead, we're to hold our peace, and wait patiently for the Lord to bring His Word to pass. Like the rich man in Christ's parable, judgment is coming. And they will not escape it.

Psa 37:20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

There's the key verse of the acrostic. It reveals that the wicked shall perish, meaning they will be completely destroyed.

And how shall they be destroyed? Our heavenly Father likens them to the fat of a lamb on a spit, roasting over an open fire. Not to the lamb itself, but instead, to *the fat dripping off the lamb into the fire*.

As the fat drops into the fire, it's completely *consumed*. The word "consume," used twice in the above verse for emphasis, is translated from the Hebrew word *kalah* (i.e., Strong's H-3615), meaning "to end...to cease...to be finished...to perish...to destroy utterly."

The word "smoke" in the verse above is translated from the Hebrew word *ashan* (i.e., Strong's H-6227) meaning "vapor."

In other words, as the fat hits the fire, it's completely consumed and turned into vapor. And that vapor rises up forever into *nothingness*. That's how it's going to be for the wicked at the final judgment. On the great Day of Judgment, they'll be cast into the lake of fire and turned to smoke and ashes, *never to be seen again*.

Psa 37:34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

That verse finishes the acrostic of Psalm 37.

Our heavenly Father promises us this is exactly how it's going to happen when the wicked are judged on the Judgment Day. There will be what you might think of as a reversal of fortune. The wicked will be "cut off" (i.e., Heb. *karath*, "to cut down...to destroy or consume"; ref. Strong's H-3772). But God will exalt (i.e., Heb. *rum*, "to be raised high, extolled"; ref. Strong's H-7311) the faithful.

Our heavenly Father even promises we're going to be there to see it when the wicked are destroyed. One minute the wicked will all be there, and the next minute they'll be consumed by fire. They're quite simply turned into vapor that will vanish as it rises. As a result, they will *never exist again*.

Our heavenly Father will not allow the wicked to enter into the eternity. He knows they would destroy the peace and eternal tranquility He's reserved for the faithful. Short of repentance and a sincere return to God through Christ, their fate is etched in stone.

This is why the character of the rich man in Christ's parable of Lazarus and the rich man was so distraught. The burning heat he felt was the conviction of his ultimate fate. He knew that when the Judgment Day finally arrived, he would perish, never to exist again. And his utter distress was expressed metaphorically by Christ as "torment" by "flames."

Now you might say “Well, Steve, this is all very interesting. But I’m not sure about all of this acrostic stuff. Is there anywhere *else* in the Bible that says the wicked are going to be completely destroyed, never to exist again?” And I’d have to reply “Why yes...there are *lots* of places.”

Satan’s Destruction by Fire

Since Satan himself is the ultimate “wicked” soul, let’s start in the great book of Ezekiel, where we learn of the destruction of Satan. Here we’ll see exactly how he dies when the time of his judgment arrives on the great Day of Judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15.

Eze 28:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

This is God’s Word to the prophet Ezekiel, so you can count on it.

Eze 28:12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

The name “Tyrus” here is translated from the Hebrew word *tsor* (i.e., Strong’s H-6865), which means “a rock.”

Of course, Christ Jesus is the true Rock (I Corinthians 10:4) upon whom we are to build our spiritual house. But Satan is the false rock, described in Deuteronomy 32:31, which speaks of the enemies of God, stating, “*For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.*”

So the King of Tyrus is one of Satan’s many titles. He considers himself the king Rock. But he is the fake rock, and not the true.

This verse tells us, however, that he’s one of the wisest and most beautiful of God’s creations (i.e., “thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty”). In other words, if you’re expecting a guy with horns and a black mustache, dressed in red, long-handled underwear and carrying a pitch fork, you’re going to be fooled. Satan is one of God’s most beautiful angels, and is extremely intelligent. He just chose to use his great wisdom and beauty to deceive God’s children, and even pull many of them away from God.

Eze 28:13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

This verse clinches the fact that the king of Tyrus is Satan himself. It was Satan who tempted Mother Eve in the Garden of Eden, in his role as the serpent. As it is written in Revelation 12:9, “*And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*” As you can see, Satan’s title in the Garden of Eden was “the serpent.” But in heaven, he was the king of Tyrus.

Note carefully the precious stones worn by him in Ezekiel 28:13 above. They're a representative sample of the very stones of the priest's breastplate. So Satan, in his role as the king of Tyrus apparently had been given priestly duties in the kingdom of God.

In short, when our heavenly Father created Satan, he was one of God's most magnificent creations. And he was given many responsible positions. Some Bible scholars even say the above verse demonstrates that Satan was the chief musician of heaven. For example, the word "workmanship" in Ezekiel 28:13 above is translated from the Hebrew word *melakah* (i.e., Strong's H-4399), meaning a ministry or occupation. His heavenly ministry or occupation in heaven apparently had to do with musical instruments (i.e., "thy tabrets") and perhaps singing (i.e., "thy pipes").

Eze 28:14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Most importantly, he was the "anointed cherub that covereth," meaning he was one of the two angelic beings (Michael the archangel being the other) that covered and protected the Ark of the Covenant in heaven, upon which sits God's mercy seat. This is the very seat, or throne, of the Savior.

Being anointed to cover and protect the Mercy Seat of Christ is the highest honor that can be paid to one of God's children. It indicates Satan achieved the most trusted of all positions in God's kingdom.

Eze 28:15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Unfortunately, though he was created without blemish, it did not last. Perverseness and unrighteousness was found in him.

Eze 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Satan apparently implemented a world trade system in heaven. The first part of the above verse might be better translated, from the Hebrew, as follows, "By the abundance of your commerce (i.e., traffic in merchandise) thou hast filled thy midst with unjust gain, and hast led astray..."

In other words, in heaven, Satan, in his role as the king of Tyrus, used his great wisdom and beauty to institute a system designed to rip off God's children right and left, in order to enrich himself.

For those who know the Scriptures, this system likely included all four hidden dynasties of politics, economics, education and religion – the same four power centers he controls today through his children the Kenites.

Can you see now why Christ Jesus would tell the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, which we examined earlier in this study? While there's absolutely nothing wrong with being wealthy through God's blessings, the deceitfulness of riches has corrupted many souls, including Satan himself, who was once one of God's most trusted souls.

At this point, our heavenly Father pronounces judgment on the king of Tyrus/Satan. His place in the eternity was lost (i.e., “therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God”). And destruction was pronounced upon him (i.e., “and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire”).

But exactly *how* will our heavenly Father destroy him? Will Satan be cast alive into burning flames to be tormented forever and ever with the rest of the wicked? We’ll see the answer to that question in two more verses...

Eze 28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

This is called pride, i.e., his “heart was lifted up” far above his assigned station. In other words, Satan began to think of himself as God. He wanted God’s children to follow and depend upon him. In spite of the fact that our heavenly Father promoted him to the highest and most trusted of positions, he could not accept any less than the role of “God” for himself. He wanted God’s children to worship him, instead of God.

Eze 28:18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

This verse demonstrates that Satan was indeed even in charge of religion (i.e., “defiled thy sanctuaries”). He likely peddled religion as a means of gaining the love and respect of God’s children, so he could rip them off easier – this, much as false preachers today peddle feel-good religion to gain their followers trust (and money).

And how will our heavenly Father handle this? Is he going to torture Satan in fire for the eternity, leaving him screaming and yelling and crying out in pain in the sight of God’s children forever?

Not hardly. As the above verse states, He’s going to turn him to *ashes*. And He’s going to going to do it right in front of everybody. And at that point, Satan will *no longer exist*.

That’s how our heavenly Father plans to deal with the wicked. There is no eternal torment. No torture. No screaming out in flames of hellfire for the rest of the eternity, begging for drops of water to quench one’s thirst.

Our heavenly Father is just. But He is not a sadist. And any preacher who preaches otherwise is a deceiver. Be very careful of those who put the horns and pitchfork on our heavenly Father, and try to make Him out to be Satan. He is not.

Eze 28:19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Once Satan is destroyed by fire from within, *he will never exist again*. It’s over for him. This is how our heavenly Father handles the wicked, starting with their leader, Satan. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise, for you’ve heard the truth of the matter straight from your Father’s Word.

The Great White Throne Judgment

Are there other places in the Bible where we can verify the fact that there is no eternal torment in hellfire for the wicked, but instead, they'll be destroyed by fire in an instant, never to exist again? Indeed there are. Let's take a look at a few of them. We'll start in the great book of II Peter, chapter 3, where St. Peter is teaching about the final days and explains how everything's going to end. As it is written:

II Peter 3:7 -- But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against **the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**

The flesh age we now live in is reserved by God's Word to be cleansed by fire on "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." This is not an eternal hellfire. As stated clearly by St. Peter, it's a *one-day thing*. And frankly, it probably won't last more than five minutes.

The word "perdition" in this verse is translated from the Greek word *apoleia* (see Strong's 684). It means "ruin," "loss," "destruction" and "to perish." It's from the Greek root word *apollumi*, (i.e., Strong's G-622), meaning "to destroy fully."

In other words, on the Day of Judgment, all of the ungodly are going to be destroyed fully. They're going to be gone for good. They're going to perish, never to exist again.

Those who oppose God and His Word, and who revel in their wickedness will perish on that great Day of Judgment spoken of by St. Peter in the verse above. It's our heavenly Father's absolute right to do as He will with the souls He's created. And why would He want to keep a wicked soul around for the eternity if that soul hates Him, seeks to rip off His children and refuses to repent of its wickedness?

The perdition of ungodly men will take place at the time of the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-20, when the books are opened and the wicked will be judged for their utter rejection of God and His Word, and for all of their ungodly deeds.

And their sentence – which is *irreversible* -- will be carried out in full accord with God's Word. They will simply exist no longer. As it is written in the 20th chapter of the great book of Revelation:

Revelation 20:7 -- And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

After the Millennium teaching period, Satan will be loosed out of his prison and sent forth to one last time to see who he can convince to join him in his final campaign to overthrow and defeat our heavenly Father and His Word.

Revelation 20:8 -- And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

These people – the wicked who were not able to participate in the first resurrection at Christ's return -- have had 1,000 years of perfect teaching from Christ Himself at this point. If they fall for Satan's deception when this event takes place at the end of the Millennium teaching period, they have no

excuse. It's of their own volition to follow Satan rather than to follow God. And they'll follow him right into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:9 -- And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

They joined Satan in his final attempt to overthrow Jerusalem. But their attack won't last five minutes, beloved. Satan and his followers are doomed. Note that "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." No eternal torment. No torture. No screams. No begging for water to quench their thirst. They're just devoured by the flames. Turned to ashes, along with Satan. Gone for good.

In point of fact, this great body of wicked souls that attempts to conquer Jerusalem under Satan's command at the end of the Millennium teaching period is what the lake of fire is made up of. As the consuming spiritual fire of our heavenly Father comes down from heaven, it enters into this great body of souls and burns them from within. *Instantaneously.*

Revelation 20:10 -- And the devil 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 for ever and ever.

Here's the verse in the book of Revelation that has so many Christians stymied. But don't let it stymie you. You've seen that our heavenly Father plans to turn Satan to ashes from within (Ez. 28:18). That's his "torment." And it lasts "day and night for ever and ever," meaning quite simply that it's *irreversible*. He can't get out of his sentence. There's no "resurrection" for him. No reprieve. He's gone for good. The only thing left will be the rising smoke and smoldering ashes.

Revelation 20:11 -- And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

This is your heavenly Father's throne, beloved. It is His judgment seat – the one Satan was supposed to protect in his role as the king of Tyrus, but chose instead to covet for himself.

Revelation 20:12 -- And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Notice that "the dead" – which is to say, those who willfully chose to remain spiritually dead to our heavenly Father by rejecting His Savior – are judged "according to their *works*." Note also that their "works" are documented in "the books."

In other words, their names are *not* found in the Book of Life, because in rejecting Christ Jesus, the source of all life, and following Satan instead, they've forfeited their own eternal lives. Therefore, their names are found in a *separate* set of books which documents their abject and unrepentant wickedness.

Revelation 20:13 -- And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Your works are what's recorded in the books. If you've embraced the Savior, Jesus Christ, and have served Him faithfully and truly, then your works are recorded in the Book of Life. And if you've rejected the Savior, Jesus Christ, then your evil works are recorded in "the books."

Revelation 20:14 -- And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Short and simple, the lake of fire is the "second death." This means the death of not just the body, *but the soul that dwells in the body as well*. In other words, body and soul no longer exist. You can look, but you'll never find those who are destroyed in the lake of fire, because all that's left of them is the rising smoke and the smoldering ashes.

Revelation 20:15 -- And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

And there you have it. All those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be destroyed in the lake of fire. They suffer the same sentence as Satan, which is to say, complete and utter destruction forever. Never to exist again. Like Satan, they will be burned from within by the spiritual fire of God Almighty, and *vanish*. You might think of it as God simply hitting the "Delete" button on his computer.

Further Proofs: Ashes Underfoot

As it is further written of this great white throne judgment in chapter four of the great book of Malachi:

Mal 4:1 -- For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Yes, that day is the day of the great white throne judgment of God Almighty, which we learned of in Revelation chapter 20, above.

The enemies of God – the proud and the wicked -- will be burnt up on that day. Neither root nor branch will be left, meaning top to bottom, they're *gone*.

Euphemistically speaking, your root is your very soul. It's your root into the spiritual realm, when your flesh body dies. Your branch is your body, which houses your soul. If the branch (i.e., body) dies, that's one thing. But if the soul (i.e., root) is destroyed as well, then there's nothing left. That's the second death, which is the destruction of both body and soul in the fire of God's judgment. At such time, *nothing* will be left but the rising smoke and ashes.

Mal 4:2 -- But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

This is the inheritance of the saints, who revere our heavenly Father and faithfully follow His Word. Eternal life in Christ. Perfect peace in Christ. Perfect healing in Christ. And nothing lacking, ever again. Fulfilling sustenance, eternally. This is what the wicked turned down in order to revel in their worldly wickedness, and ultimately, to follow Satan himself rather than our heavenly Father and Creator.

Mal 4:3 -- And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

At the great white throne judgment, all that will be left of the enemy will be *the ashes under the soles of your feet*. You simply can't get any plainer than that, beloved.

So don't *ever* let anyone tell you your heavenly Father is a torturer. He does not condemn His children to eternal fiery torment. Those who reject Him and His Word in favor of Satan and his lies are simply destroyed in an instant, in the lake of fire, at the time of the great white throne judgment. They will never exist again. And we will have an eternity of perfect peace and harmony as a result, *for the only ones left will be those who truly love our heavenly Father and His Word*, as well as each other.

That's why we work so hard to become familiar with His Word through study. You're going to spend an *eternity* with it. So you'd better learn it. And don't let the unlearned pull you off track with sensationalistic nonsense such as their misinterpretation of Revelation 20:10, or their misinterpretation of Christ's parable of Lazarus and the rich man, both of which are borne out of their failure to understand Biblical euphemisms and metaphors.

A God of Love and Patience

Our heavenly Father wants to save *all* of His children. With the exception of Satan and the fallen angels whose death sentences have already been pronounced, He is not willing that any should perish in the fire. As it is written:

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should **perish**, but that all should come to repentance.

The Lord doesn't want a single one of His children to end up in the lake of fire. He wants them all to come to repentance. He is "not willing that any should perish," which is to say, He does not want to destroy anyone in the lake of fire on the Day of Judgment. But if their record demands it, He most certainly will.

Once again, the word "perish" used here is translated from the Greek word *apollumi* (i.e., Strong's G-622), meaning "to destroy fully." You can hardly get any plainer than that. No eternal torment, or torture. But instead, full and complete destruction is the final destination for all those who refuse to come to repentance through Christ Jesus the Lord.

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The "day of the Lord" begins at Christ's Second Advent, when the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire and the Millennium teaching period begins.

On that day, all of Satan's little tools (such as the four hidden dynasties of politics, economics, education and religion) and all of his many roles will be burnt up, taken away from him, so he will not be able to

avail himself of them when he goes forth to recruit and deceive one last time at the end of the Millennium teaching period.

What's more, the evil works of this world – everything based upon lies, theft and deception and corruption of any kind – will be burned up on the day of the Lord. The earth will still be here. And so will all of His children, both the righteous and the wayward souls. But not the evil works thereof. The Millennium teaching period will begin with this great cleansing of the earth in which all immoral works (i.e., pornography, homosexuality, drugs, theft, deception, etc.) will be done away with.

2Pe 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

That's a good question. At Christ's Second Advent, do you want to be found entwined in the ways of the world and wallowing at Satan's feet with the ungodly, or do you want to be found standing faithfully for God and His Word?

2Pe 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

The "day of God" is a completely different day than the "day of the Lord" which we read of in verse 10 above.

The "day of the Lord" takes place at Christ's Second Advent, and *begins* the Millennium teaching period. But the "day of God" is the Judgment Day we read about in Revelation chapter 20:7-15, which takes place at the *end* of the Millennium teaching period.

This is the point at which all of the wicked will perish – which is to say, any of God's wayward children who refused to repent and embrace our heavenly Father and His Living Word after receiving 1,000 years of perfect teaching and Biblical discipline. This is the *only* time at which souls will go into the fire, to be fully destroyed. Although our heavenly Father would prefer they repent and live, if they reject His salvation this final time, they'll be fully destroyed.

If it's ungodly at this point, it's *gone*. All evil will be "dissolved," having been burnt with "fervent heat."

2Pe 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Properly translated, the word "new" should be "rejuvenated" or "refreshed." We look forward to a rejuvenated heaven and earth, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (see also Revelation 21:1-4).

No more evil of any kind will exist any longer. Why? Because it will all be destroyed completely in the lake of fire. And there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more death for those who love our heavenly Father and serve Him.

2Pe 3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

That's *very* good advice, beloved. Do not be found in rebellion to God and His Word. Be at peace with Him. Trust and love Him. Rest easy in His Word.

2Pe 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.

Simply put, this means it's taking so long to reach the time of the Second Advent and the final judgment, because our heavenly Father is giving His wayward children *every chance possible* to repent, and to come to love Him and embrace the salvation He's offered through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

He is indeed a God of love. The very *last* thing He will do before the eternity begins is fully destroy those who hate Him and His Word, and refuse to repent of it. They will be destroyed in the lake of fire.

It does not give Him any pleasure whatsoever to destroy His own children. But He will fulfill His promises to the rest of us who love Him, and have always loved Him. He will bring about that eternity of perfect peace and family harmony and unity, which He has promised us.

And in that eternity, there will be no evil left, because they will be destroyed by fire at the time of the great white throne judgment of Revelation chapter 20, after having received every opportunity to repent and mend their wicked ways.

Our God Is a Consuming Fire

As it is written, so it shall come to pass. After all, the in great book of Hebrews, chapter 12, verses 28-29, the Scripture tells us our heavenly Father is a "consuming fire." Let's take a quick look at those verses:

Heb 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

God's kingdom is eternal. It cannot be toppled. Satan's efforts to do so will be in vain. And we who love Him, and serve Him, will receive His kingdom as part of our eternal inheritance.

Therefore, we should be diligent to make sure that the divine influence which is upon our heart is always reflected in our daily lives. And we should always strive to serve our heavenly Father in a pleasing manner, with all due respect and esteem to Him.

Heb 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

The fire of His Holy Spirit warms and comforts those who love Him. But ultimately, it utterly consumes those who would go against Him.

Note carefully that the above verse does not say our heavenly Father is a "tormenting" fire. Nor a "torturing" fire. He is a *consuming* fire. Which is to say, He is a fire that completely destroys that which is evil, just as we've learned throughout this study.

The word "consuming" in Hebrews 12:29 above is translated from the Greek word *katanalisko* (i.e., see Strong's G2654), meaning "to consume utterly."

καταναλίσκω

katanaliskō

kat-an-al-is'-ko

From [G2596](#) and [G355](#); to *consume utterly*: - consume.

When the time of the great white throne judgment of Revelation chapter 20 comes to pass, the wicked will no longer be able to stand in His presence. They will be utterly consumed.

Evil simply cannot survive in His presence on the Day of Judgment. So when that great fire comes down from heaven at the end of Revelation chapter 20, which we examined earlier, it is our heavenly Father Himself returning. The full Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – will then be on this earth, as One. And at that point, the eternity is ushered in, as we're about to discover.

The Eternal Kingdom: Who Goes There?

At that point in time, as it is written in Revelation chapter 21, the eternal kingdom will be ushered in, and the righteous will inherit it. As it is written:

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Once again, the word “new” is more properly translated “rejuvenated” or “refreshed” (see Strong’s G5237). And the word “first” should be translated “former.” In other words, this flesh earth age will be over with and we go into the eternity. There will be no more growing old, no more death and no more dying. Instead, earth will be rejuvenated -- returned to its original pristine state as it was at the creation. And life eternal will be ushered in, for those who earned it.

There’s “no more sea” because the water firmament of Genesis 1:6-7 will be returned to its place above us, as a protective barrier. (See my study on the [Three World Ages](#) for more on this topic.)

Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

New Jerusalem, the very dwelling place of the full Godhead, will come down to this earth from heaven. And all of those whose names were written in the book of life will be part of that city. They are the bride, and Christ is the husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior *is* the tabernacle of God, which is to say, the very body God dwells in. He is the “king of Salem” (Heb. 7:1-2), which is to say, the King of Jerusalem.

He will dwell in that city, New Jerusalem, with His faithful servants, which is to say, with all those whose names are found written in the book of life. This is why we’re told in Ezekiel 48:35 that the name of that city will be *YHVH Shammah*, which is to say, “The LORD is there.”

Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

The eternity will be in full force at that point in time. All evil will be done away with, completely destroyed in the lake of fire. Utterly consumed. Don't let anyone tell you different. Don't be taken in by the vain traditions of man that contradict God's Word. There will be no people screaming out in pain and anguish from the flames. What part of "neither sorrow, nor crying" do the preachers not get?

This verse also demonstrates that not only will the wicked be destroyed, but *the very memory of them will be destroyed as well*. After all, if we remembered our friends or even family members who went astray and followed Satan, and were destroyed in the lake of fire at the time of the great white throne judgment, how could we possibly have no more tears and no more sorrow, nor crying?

When our heavenly Father blots out the wicked, it will be a complete blotting out. Even the memory of them will be gone. In the eternity, it will be as if they never existed. Christ Jesus is the Prince of Peace. And *perfect peace* He will give us in the eternity.

Rev 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Again, the word "new" should be translated "rejuvenated" or "refreshed." You can count on it, beloved. For it is written. And as it is written, so it shall come to pass.

Rev 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Christ Jesus is the Creator. He began it all. And in Him, there is no end. He is the "fountain of the water of life." He is the Living Word of God, the very source of eternal life (John 1:1-4). And He gives it freely, to all who will believe on Him.

Rev 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Those who are victorious over the deception of Satan "shall inherit all things." It's all yours, beloved. As it is written in Luke 12:32, "*Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*"

Rev 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 burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Again, the second death is the death of *both* body and soul at once. Kaput. Never to exist again in any form. Up in smoke. They simply don't make it into the eternity because of their wickedness which they've refused to repent of...because of their embrace of Satan at the end of the Millennium teaching period...and because of their refusal to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That's how it ends for them.

Blotted Out

As it is further written in the great book of Matthew, chapter 10:

Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

We are not to be in awe of those who can kill our flesh body. It is our heavenly Father, and *only* our heavenly Father who is in charge of what happens to our soul. So we most definitely *should* be in awe of our heavenly Father, who is able to “destroy both soul and body in hell,” which is to say, in the lake of fire at the great white throne judgment.

Once again, the word “destroy” in that verse is translated from the Greek word *apollumi* (i.e., Strong’s G-622) which we’ve looked at previously in this study, and which means to “destroy fully,” or “perish.” Our heavenly Father is the *only one* who has the power to completely and utterly destroy both body and soul in the lake of fire.

Finally, as it is written of the wicked in the great book of Psalms, they will simply be “blotted out of the book of the living...” with the word “blotted” meaning “erased, abolished, wiped away” (i.e., see Strong’s H-4229).

Psa 69:28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

As we’ve already studied in Revelation chapter 20, the “book of the living,” which is also referred to as the Book of Life, contains the names of those who are granted eternal life due to their faithfulness in Christ. If you’re “blotted out” (i.e., “erased, abolished, wiped away”) of the book of the living, then you’re no longer in existence. It’s that simple.

Our heavenly Father does not torment His wayward children “for ever and ever” in fire. He gives them every chance to repent of their wickedness, and to get back in line with His Word, and to love Him through Christ the Savior.

But in the end, those who willfully refuse will be consumed by fire at the time of the great white throne judgment, never to exist again. It’s that simple. All that will be left are the smoke and the ashes.

Salvation v/s Destruction

Nevertheless, as two of the most popular verses in the New Testament attest, Christ came to this earth to *save* God’s wayward children. He came to give eternal life, *not* eternal damnation:

Joh 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should **not perish**, but have eternal life.

The word “not” in this verse is translated from the Greek word *me* (i.e., Strong’s G-3361), meaning “never.” And the word “perish” in this verse, once again, is *apollumi*, meaning “to destroy fully.”

As long as the condition is met, which is to say, faith in Christ, you will not be utterly destroyed in the lake of fire at the time of the great white throne judgment, but instead, you'll have life eternal. Those are quite simply, *the only two options*.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Yes, God so loved the world that He allowed His own Son to take the death sentence we all so richly deserve for all of our sins.

In the verse above we have that same, two-word Greek phrase, *me apollumi*, meaning “never destroyed.” In other words, instead of suffering the fate of the wicked, which is to be destroyed fully in the lake of fire, the faithful will enjoy everlasting life. As it is written:

1Co 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

The wicked consider belief in Christ's atoning death on the cross “foolishness,” meaning they believe it to be an absurdity. That is why, short of repentance, they will ultimately perish (i.e., *apollumi*, destroyed fully).

But those who believe on Christ's atoning death on the cross are saved by it, which is to say, *preserved* eternally.

So it is written in your heavenly Father's Word, and so it will be. Don't let anyone tell you different, even if it comes from someone standing behind a pulpit.

One Final Thought...

In His time on this earth, Christ Jesus severely derided the religious leaders of Israel for substituting the oral traditions of the elders in place of God's Word.

At one point, directly after pronouncing “Woe” upon them for substituting empty religious traditions in place of God's Word (Mt. 23:15-23) He even asked them, rhetorically, “How can ye escape the damnation of hell?” -- this, of course, emphasizing the severity of the sin involved in leading God's children astray with vain religious traditions rather than sticking with the truth of God's Word.

But in many ways, the tradition-fixated rabbis of old had nothing on the Christian preachers of today, who spin fanciful yarns from the pulpit, such as eternal torture in the flames of hell, rather than disciplining themselves to teach the straight-on truth of God's Word exactly as it's written.

Indeed, seeing Christian preachers portray our heavenly Father as a God who fries His wayward children like bacon in a frying pan, leaving them screaming and burning in eternal torment, must delight the devil to no end.

After all, as you've seen throughout this study, this traditional view of hell fire is a whopping lie. And, of course, the devil is the father of all lies (John 8:44). So it must do the devil's heart good to see Christian preachers *doing his work for him* when they twist the Scriptures out of all proportion regarding

the fate of God's wayward children, and put words into our heavenly Father's mouth that He never uttered.

Indeed, way back in the Old Testament times, when God's People Israel turned to idolatry, and began practicing the worship of the idol known as Moloch in which they sacrificed their children – alive, in burning flames -- in order to gain the blessings of God, our heavenly Father stated unequivocally that practicing such an abomination had never so much as crossed His mind. As He stated in the great book of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 7:30 -- For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the Lord. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it.

Jeremiah 7:31 -- And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.

Since our heavenly Father is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, the same must hold true to this very day and throughout the eternity. Our heavenly Father does not seek to torture His children forever in hell fire. As we've seen in this study, He doesn't even want to burn the wicked instantaneously in the lake of fire. He prefers, instead, for them to repent and be saved (II Peter 3:9).

We know our heavenly Father is not a sadist. Instead, He is a God of love. And as such, it gives Him no pleasure to punish His children, much less to deprive them of their very lives. Don't get me wrong. He will utterly destroy those who deserve it, come Judgment Day. And it will happen in an instant, much like hitting the "Delete" key on a computer to remove a document.

But the very idea that our heavenly Father harbors such morbid plans as to torture His wayward children in hell fire, day and night, forever and ever, in essence, portrays Him as Satan. It takes the pitch fork from Satan's hand, so to speak, and puts it into our heavenly Father's hand. And it drives away many, many lost souls who might otherwise have come to repentance had our heavenly Father not been portrayed to them as a serial torturer.

The Scripture makes it abundantly clear that at the end of the Millennium when the great white throne judgment takes place, those among the wicked who choose to reject the salvation offered by our heavenly Father and who remain firmly rooted in their wickedness by following Satan when he makes his final attempt to capture Jerusalem, will simply be destroyed by fire, in an instant, never to exist again. No torture. No screaming out in pain. It's all over in an instant.

That's it. *Finis*. No more. No less. So let's preserve our heavenly Father's Word exactly as it's written, and put an end – once and for all times -- to this particular empty church tradition of eternal torment in the fiery flames.

-- End --

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