

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

*"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."*

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 231

#### THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (continued)

“And the *sea* gave up the dead that 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” (Rev. 20:13).

“And the *sea* gave up the dead that were in it...” In its symbolical and spiritual meaning the sea speaks of the *manifestation* of those who dwell in that lowest realm of life. Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: “The *wicked* are *like the troubled sea*, which cannot rest, whose waters *cast up mire and dirt*. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, “These are *raging waves of the sea, foaming out their shame*” (Jude 13). The beloved John on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on *many waters*. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, “the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*” (Rev. 17:15). I think there could be no better symbol by which to represent the people and society of any day than by the waters of the sea! At times the human race, even in their carnality, is calm and peaceful, then rough and boisterous, and then dangerous and treacherous.

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every evil and devilish

perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, bigotry, violence, tyranny, oppression, greed, cruelty, strife, war, and bloodshed. Ah, the *sea* is the *lowest realm* on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the **body** with its passions and lusts. Collectively the sea represents **society** as it is guided by physical desires and impulses and aspirations that are corrupt, restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control! You see it especially when crowds are out marching, demonstrating for ungodly and perverse causes, demanding their “rights” to practice perversion and evils of various kinds. The raging sea, foaming out their shame!

Now, it would be strange indeed, would it not, should the “sea” be a clear *symbol* in Revelation 17:15 and other places, yet be *literal* in our present text! Is John really talking about earth’s vast oceans yielding up the bodies of the dead who have been cast there throughout vast millenniums? Is that the “dead” who are brought to stand before God’s throne of judgment? God is certainly able to do such a thing, and I do not doubt that it includes them, but the fact is that ALL who dwell in the sea-realm of this present evil world are **spiritually dead** — dead in trespasses and in sins! Every man outside of Christ is **already dead!** How can he become any more dead than he is? Did Paul not say, “I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and *I died.*” Can we not see that when the *sea* gives up the *dead* that are in it there is a judgment of God coming to all who are dead in trespasses and sins, those who live in the manifestation of that low realm, restless, troubled, angry, cursing, tormented, conniving, fornicating, robbing, murdering, high on drugs, unloving, without natural affection — **“foaming out their shame.”**

“And *death* and *hell* delivered up the dead that were in them.” While the *sea* bespeaks the *manifestation* of the wicked who are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, *death* signifies the *condition* of

the spiritually dead, and *hell* denotes the *realm* of the dead ones. “For the wages of sin is *death*...” (Rom. 6:23). It is not written that the wages *shall be* death, but the passage we have before us, penned by divine inspiration, is, “The wages of sin IS death.” “She that liveth in pleasure,” the scripture again says, “*is dead* while she liveth.” It is a sad and most horrible fact that millions and thousands of millions of people going about this earth today are dead men walking! They are dead to God! Dead to virtue! Dead to truth! Dead to purity! Dead to heaven! Dead to reality! Dead to righteousness! DEAD!

I speak not, therefore, concerning a death that is to come, I speak of the *wages*, in the Greek *opsonia*, which means the reward of a soldier, the *wages* of a man who is fighting as a soldier. Wages he has earned, as a patriot fighting for his king and his country; or wages which he has received as a mere mercenary soldier, fighting for the pay which a tyrant might give him for his work in destroying life and property and liberty to put a usurper in power. The meaning, therefore, of the word is wages for a military man. But Paul says two things. First he says, “the *wages* of sin is *death*,” and then he adds, “but the *gift* of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The free gift of God is the reverse of the wages of sin! God’s soldiers do not receive the LIFE OF THE AGES as wages, but as a *free gift*. There are but two armies in this world, the devil’s army and God’s army. But, my, they do have very different *payment systems!*

If you are enlisted in the devil’s army you are already receiving your wages. The devil’s Saturday night always comes. Every man gets his wages. And Adam and all in Adam HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THEIR WAGES! When Adam sinned and reaped what he sowed, he not only reaped for himself, Adam, but for all men in Adam, the entire race. “In Adam *all die*.” In that day of death, it became more than the death of a single man, for it became the death of all humanity. Humanity left the condition of life, and entered into another condition called death, or if you please, man entered a *life* of death. He entered that realm or that life of death through the acceptance of wages,

which wages was death. He earned the wages by sinning in the devil's army. The truth is not that man is under the *sentence* of death, as the church systems teach, and in *danger* of being lost, but he is *already dead and lost!* And Christ comes to seek and to save the lost, and to *give life* to the *dead* world! "If one died for all then were ALL DEAD" (II Cor. 5:14). Mark it well, *dead*, not in *danger* of death, or liable to it, or waiting to die — but dead already!

As one has written, "In one of his books Glenn Clark discusses the problem of why a rotten apple in a barrel of good ones will spoil the whole lot, but a good apple in a barrel of rotten ones is powerless to make the rotten ones sound. He says that the good apple has the stroke of death in it already. When the stem was severed from the tree its source of life and health and growth was removed. Even a good apple is a dying thing! He should have added that death was hovering near the apple even while its stem was still fast to the tree. Just let the wind swing the apple against a limb near at hand and break the peel, immediately rot sets in. Let a bird peck a hole in it, or a worm enter its body, at once the forces of decay and death are manifest, and the end is putrefaction. In the midst of life we are in death."

The first warning against disobedience is, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The words "thou shalt surely die" are more correctly translated, "dying thou shalt die," or "thou art dying to die." That is, "dying" is a process, and "to die" is the final act or event in the process. When Adam sinned it was life that he lost: it was death and dissolution that he received. Therefore the word "death" means vastly more than this old dilapidated body going to the grave; it means the whole condition or state of being of the man outside of Christ. May God make this truth real to your heart! There is only one life in the universe, and that life is Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him *was life*, and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:1,4).

In the conflict with which the enemies who have to be overcome by the people of God, the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death. In the final triumph, death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, that is, the death of death and the death of hell. Death is an enemy! Death destroys! Death corrupts! Death, foul, hateful, hell-born, “the wages of sin,” belongs to the devil, and eats out the brain, blinds men to God and truth and righteousness, destroys all vitality, corrupts the mind, perverts the emotions, torments the soul, and reduces the eye to dust and leaves only an empty socket. Do not talk of death as though it were a holy thing. The King of Terrors, Death, is unholy. Death is an enemy. Death is devilish. Death is hellish. Death is corrupt. Death is foul and dark as night. Death is the wages of sin. Sin is the work of the devil. And now John in his vision beholds the wonder of this whole condition of man’s death delivering up its captives to the righteous judgment of God!

And now we come to the scene of *hell* delivering up its dead. The Greek word used here is *hades*. Concerning the literal meaning of the word *hades* there can be no doubt. It comes from the Greek *a(i)des*. The “a” is a prefix which is equivalent to our “un,” and the stem “id” means *perceive*. Thus we have UN-PERCEIVE or imperceptible — the *unseen*. Where do the dead go? They go into what has been called “the unknown.” That is 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. And in the old days a young couple seeking to be alone, sought a *hell*, a place where they could make love without being seen by prying eyes.

We know that the physically dead haven’t passed out of existence altogether, for man is not only a body and soul, but above all *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 or realm or dimension where he would be able to join that infant child. And likewise the phrase often used in the Old Testament of those who died being “gathered unto their fathers” meant far more than having their bodies buried in the same cemetery. It bespoke 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 all alive at that time, even though they were in the Hadean state. Indeed, they were all in Hades — the invisible world of departed spirits.

We must pause for a moment here to make the truth clear that hell — the *realm* of the dead — is not by any means limited to those who have departed this life. It is a sad fact that many men and women in the here and now *live in hell* just as they are also those who are *dead* while they live! Remember, Hades means at its root “un-perceive,” and multitudes live under such a veil of spiritual blindness that they are unable to perceive the world of reality. Sinners live in God’s world, yet they do not perceive Him at all. They are unaware of God, of truth, of redemption, of spiritual realities, of what man’s true state and destiny is. They exist under a shroud of darkness, a swirling fog of ignorance, that secludes them in a shadowy world of spiritual unreality. Even carnal Christians walk in their own hell of un-perception. Many who read these lines have had glorious experiences in God, have seen marvelous realities in the spirit, and have been given to understand the deepest mysteries of the kingdom of God, while family members, friends, and neighbors have no comprehension of any of this, and are completely unenlightened, unaware, unconscious, undiscerning — not cognizant in any way of this beautiful and powerful walk in the Spirit of God! Speak to them of the deep things of God and you may as well be trying to teach them advanced nuclear physics for they will stand there and look at you unknowingly as though you had just stepped out of a space ship from some far distant galaxy! Wherefore, we look with blessed

anticipation to the day when hell “gives up its dead” to the righteous judgment of God, that they might *know Him!*

And beyond that, on another level, there is no hell that could be more vile than the hell I see around me right here in Texas, the hell of sin, sorrow, torment, fear, demon possession, hatred, murder, strife, drugs, immorality, rebellion, blasphemy, nervous breakdown, godlessness, and wretchedness. We have a great deal of hell here in Texas, and there are no hells that could be worse than San Francisco, Miami, Chicago, New York, Hong Kong, Calcutta, Ciudad Juarez, and ten thousand other cities of this world. “Oh, but there is a hell that is full of murderers!” you say. Well, these cities today are full of murderers. “But there is a hell that is full of devils!” you say. Well, these cities today are full of devils. “But there is a hell that is filled with liars, fornicators, and blasphemers!” you argue. Well, these cities today are filled with liars, fornicators, and blasphemers. “Ah, but there is a hell where the devil himself dwells!” you contend. Well, the devil himself is right here on this earth, cursed to crawl upon his belly, to feed upon the dust of the carnal mind and nature of man. Or is it that people cannot be that bad? What about Dachau and Buchenwald? Just let a war start and see what devilish, satanic, vile, brutal, inhumane things men do! Germany is the place where the Reformation started, it is a place of high education and culture. But it was Germany also where in the second world war some people made lampshades out of people’s skins. It was a German leader who said, “We will eliminate the Jews from the face of the earth,” and Germans killed in mass killings and devilish tortures. Remember how the church in the Dark Ages persecuted the saints? You would not believe that a human being could conceive such evil! What makes them act like that? It is because they are dwelling in a dark world of spiritual denseness where such things as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, righteousness, goodness, life, light, truth, and divine purpose and reality are *imperceptible* to them! They walk under the dark shades of spiritual obtuseness — the Hadean state!

We have lots of hell beyond us, but our work is to follow Christ, to be willing, as sons of God, not only to ascend the throne, but to be poured out as a River of Life INTO THE LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH, INTO ALL THE HELLS, and clean them out by His all-conquering power and transforming life, until there is no more hell anywhere. What father would not go to any of the hells of the world, what father would not trudge through the saloons of the Bowery or the sex-filth of Las Vegas in the hope that he might run across his son or his daughter who is captive to the devil there and bring them back to God and the kingdom? This is the spirit of the Father who “so loved the world” and it is the spirit of the Son who “descended into the lowest parts of the earth” and it is the spirit of every son of God, born of the incorruptible seed of a Divine Hope, a Divine Faith, and a Divine Love. If you would not walk across the street to see some poor soul delivered and converted by the redeeming power of Christ, don’t waste your time relating to me how you are one of God’s “apprehended ones” to help in delivering the whole creation from the bondage of corruption. The Spirit of Reconciliation must reign within our hearts even now. The Ministry of Reconciliation must proceed from our lives even now. God will share with you His throne, He will give judgment into your hands, but you must be willing both now and then to *be there* when He “stands men up,” when He “opens the books,” and begins His corrective and redemptive processes of judgment in their lives!

We stated earlier that hell — *hades* — is the “imperceptible realm,” a dimension of existence that is covered, unseen and unseeing, unknowable, a silent world of darkness. “The dead know not anything,” saith the Lord (Eccl. 9:5). Furthermore, the dead see not anything, nor do they hear or feel anything. Now we know that is true of a dead *body*, but can we not ask how it could be possible for a natural man who is *dead* in trespasses and sins to hope to see or understand the things that belong to the wonderful realm of spirit, life, and glory, since death has closed his eyes to them? It is Christ and Christ alone who raises the dead, making men alive to God and the realm of the spirit. It matters not to Him nor to His resurrection power whether these dead be corpses

buried in the earth or whether they be men walking on top of the ground, dead while they live. “Let the dead bury the dead,” said Jesus, because He understood the mystery I seek now to explain. Well did the Son of God know that outside of Him both the man who was being buried and the men who cast the earth into his grave belonged to the realm of death and were alike dead!

This is the description of the land of the dead in which the whole world lives by nature. The land of the carnal mind, which is death, and the land of trespasses and sins in which there walk the dead. “*Wherein,*” Paul says to the quickened ones, “*in time past ye walked*” (Eph. 2:2). Is that not amazing? We were dead and yet we walked; we were the walking dead, a land filled with zombies, walking, yet dead! Did you ever stop to think that when Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, came into this world HE WAS THE ONLY LIVING MAN IN A WORLD OF DEAD PEOPLE? The whole world lies in the hands of the wicked one and death reigns over all the earth realm! No wonder the scripture says that men are a stench in the nostrils of God because spiritual death sends forth its reek and stench. How the soul of Jesus must have recoiled at the state of death that was rampant over the earth! We, the walking dead, walked according to the course of *this world*, we are told. The good news is — because of Christ, the sea, death, and hell shall deliver up *all* the dead that are in them unto the righteous judgment of God! And consider this, my beloved. Since Paul speaks of the dead *walking*, and we know what he means, can we not in like manner understand John’s words when he says, “And I saw the *dead*, small and great, *stand* before God, and the books were opened...” It is not necessarily a dead body rising up, but it is certainly the *person brought face to face with God!* That is the mystery.

## THE SECOND DEATH

“And *death* and *hell* were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death*” (Rev. 20:14).

The scriptures teach an apparent paradox, saying first that to man it is given “*once to die,*” (Heb. 9:27); and secondly, that all men abiding in the state of death must subsequently suffer a “*second death.*” What can this mean?

Children in school learn what we call definitions. A definition is an explanatory statement which tells us exactly what a certain thing is, as “an island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water.” God also gives us definitions in His Word. We could cite hundreds of examples! He tells us exactly what certain things are. And in the passage quoted above God tells us exactly what the *second death* is. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. **THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH.**” Now let me make this a little plainer. Definitions of men can be given backward. For instance, the definition, “An island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water,” can be given thus: “A tract of land completely surrounded by water is an island.” This is but another way of stating the same fact. It does not, in any way, change the meaning.

Now let us try this on the definition of the second death. The Bible states it thus: “Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.*” Now let us turn this statement around for clarity. “The second death *is death and hell cast into the lake of fire.*” Therefore we have exactly the same meaning either way it is stated. What is the second death? **IT IS THE FIRST DEATH AND HELL CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE!** This fact is *very important.* Most Christians and nearly all preachers read the Word of God very superficially. They read and suppose that the second death is men being tortured forever in the lake of fire. Yet there is absolutely nothing in this passage about *men!* The verse that follows the one we are considering speaks of men being cast into the lake of fire. But not this one! It is the state of death and the condition of hell that are cast into the lake of fire. The second death is not *men* cast into the lake of fire, or men tormented or tortured forever. That’s not in the Book! The Holy Spirit has made it very

simple and plain. The second death is the first death and hell *cast into the lake of fire*. That is the Holy Spirit's definition, not mine.

One thing is obvious in this passage: hell and the lake of fire are *not the same thing!* Because the preachers rant on and on about a *fiery hell* multitudes of believers confuse the issue, supposing that hell itself *is* the lake of fire. Brother Elwin Roach once explained it thus: "What do we suppose death and hell are? Some will say it is obvious; but their thinking may be biased due to incorrect information. One common belief is that to be dead is to be a corpse, and hell is said to be a blazing place of fire and brimstone that will burn forever. If this were true, explain to me: **How can hell be cast into itself** (the lake of fire)? If the two words are synonymous, the verse could have been written: "*and hell was cast into hell,*" which we know cannot be. For instance, if we were on a camping trip, I could take a *piece of wood* and ask, What is this *stick* I hold in my hand? The answer would be, that *piece of wood* is a *stick*. The two words are synonymous. I could then cast the *piece of wood* into the *campfire*. Since the *stick* and the *campfire* are two different things, the stick can be cast into the fire. But it doesn't take a genius to know that I can't cast the *piece of wood* into itself — into the *stick*. And so it is with *hell* and the *lake of fire*. IF THEY ARE BOTH THE SAME, *hell* could not be cast *into the lake of fire*, plain and simple. Notwithstanding, since they are different from one another, *hell can be cast into the lake of fire!*"

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to see that everything that is cast into the lake of fire pertains to *death*? Death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Hell, the realm of the dead, is cast into the lake of fire. And those whose names are not written in the *Book of Life*, those who are *dead* in trespasses and sins, who inhabit hell, are cast into the lake of fire. That is the end of death and hell and sin, for God shall destroy death in the lake of fire, He shall burn up hell in the lake of fire, and He shall consume sin and rebellion in the lake of fire. How I long to see the end of sin and death and hell — and sinners as well — for when they come out of their fiery purification they will come forth

as redeemed and transformed men, no longer rebellious sinners. The time is coming, praise His name! when God shall be *ALL-in-all*, and there shall be neither sin, nor sinners, nor death, nor hell. It is clear that God does not destroy *men* in the lake of fire, nowhere does it say that, for that would be a contradiction of terms. How can you destroy death by creating death? How can you abolish death by bringing men under the power of eternal death from which there is no escape? Oh, no, it is not men who are destroyed in the lake of fire — it is the *kind of men they are* that is destroyed. It is *sin* and *death* and *hell* that are destroyed! As it is written, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*” (I Cor. 15:26). Thus the lake of fire is nothing more nor less than THE DEATH OF DEATH!

The following words by Ray Prinzing give precious insight into this wonderful truth. “The offence of the first Adam brought all men under the sentence of death for sin. Hence presently our mortal bodies are in a state of dying, while our minds need to be freed from minding the things of the flesh, to mind the things of the spirit. The act of disobedience of Adam brought forth death. Now, the obedience and work of righteousness of the last Adam also brings forth a death for every man. The question arises, Is the *second death* the same kind of death as the first? Many people think that it is a repetition of the first, and that the results are the same, while its action is more severe and cruel, and destructive, being by fire. And some Christians add very sorrowfully, ‘and from this second death there is no resurrection, it is an endless torment in agony,’ BUT NOT SO! For God’s seconds are never duplicates of the first, they are always better, higher, and more powerful than the firsts, and used to counter-balance all the action of the firsts, and *much more* — He always saves the best until last.

“All Bible statements prove that the two deaths are absolutely UNLIKE, and that the two are opposite and antagonistic. The second death undoes all the work of the first death in the same manner that the last Adam undid all the work of the first Adam. Not to nullify the purpose being wrought out by the plan of God in the firsts, but to bring

a release from the firsts in a MUCH MORE manner of majesty and glory and power and scope of converge, into the greater and more glorious things of God. Creation was made subject to vanity for a purpose! Sin was allowed for wise ends, but when those ends have been secured it will have to cease to exist. The purpose is not nullified, but the means whereby the purpose has been executed shall be done away. Discipline is a means to an end, but not the end itself, it leads up to the ‘AFTERWARDS YIELDING THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.’

“The first Adam died to God and righteousness, and became alive unto sin. The last Adam died unto sin (Rom. 6:10), and liveth unto God, and so fulfilleth all righteousness. The first made all men sinners, the last makes all men righteous. The lives and the deaths of the two Adams are thus greatly contrasting the one to the other. The *first death* was a transition from life to death, whereas the *second death* is a transition from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. Transformed from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, which transformation is wrought by a dying out to the one realm, to become alive to the higher realm. Because — the second death is prepared to purge out and burn away sin and its results, and so doing cleanse all of God’s universe.

“Death came as an enemy, the fruitage of an act of disobedience that turned man away from God and into the realm of carnality, minding self and flesh. Now God makes death overcome itself. It is by death that death is rendered powerless, and there arises an upspringing, a new life. It takes death to destroy death, and thus Christ ‘did taste death for every man’ — ‘that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage’ (Heb. 2:9, 14-15). Since we are all under the effects of the first death, it is appointed unto us to die once more — not physical death, we are already in a state of mortality — but now a dying out to this present death state. We conquer this death of the carnal mind by dying to it — only God could

use such a process bringing victory, but praise God, He is destroying the first death with the second death!

“All the Crucifixion, our identification with the cross of Christ, must first be accepted by faith as a fact, and then the working of it in and through us is a process. If it is done now, through our yieldedness to the call and claims of Christ upon us, we won’t have to face it later, in what is called ‘the lake of fire,’ which is the second death. The passing through that lake of divine purification will thoroughly purge out the remaining fragments of the rebellion and waywardness of man, till the mystery of iniquity is no more, and then the carnal mind being abolished, death is no more” — end quote.

There is a strange and wonderful statement found in Revelation 2:11. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be *hurt* of the second death.” I would draw your attention to the fact that it does not say that the overcomer experiences nothing of the second death, that he does not pass through it, or that its work is not wrought in his life; but the thought is that he will not be “hurt” by it. It is possible to pass through the most terrible experience and not be hurt by it. Listen! “And the three men, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they *have no hurt*; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Dan. 3:23-25). Oh, to know that we can pass through the darkest night or the hottest fire and not be hurt by it if Jesus goes with us! How heartening and assuring to read such promises as these: “When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; and when thou walkest through the fire, thou *shalt not be burned*; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Isa. 43:2). The great difference between the unbeliever and the child of God is that

the unbeliever is taken hand and foot and “cast” into the lake of fire, fighting, kicking, screaming, and resisting all the way, whereas the child of God willingly and obediently walks into the fiery processings of God hand in hand with His blessed Redeemer. And, one way or the other, ALL MUST DIE UNTO SIN!

A. M. Hinchliff once wrote, “I wondered for many years what John the Baptist was talking about when he said Jesus would baptize us with fire. ‘I indeed baptize you with water...but He that cometh after me is mightier than I...He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire’ (Mat. 3:11). Also in Acts 2:3 we read, ‘And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.’ Luke wasn’t speaking of the languages they were given when he spoke of *tongues of fire*. We have all watched a fire burn and have seen the flames rise in what is often referred to as tongues of flame. They spoke in many different languages by the Holy Spirit, but the tongues of fire were for a different purpose. In speaking of the fire that is spoken about here many people think of the boldness that the Holy Spirit gives. They think of a preacher becoming ‘fiery’ in his speech and actions. The Holy Spirit will do that but that is not what the scripture is talking about.

“Let us read Malachi 3:2-3. ‘Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? 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, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.’ Malachi is talking about the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the fire that God has sent to refine His people! This is the fire that Jesus has baptized us with! This is the fire that rested upon His disciples on the day of Pentecost! God wants us to partake of His Holy Spirit that the fire may refine and purify us.

“I once visited a silver refinery. As one looked in through the door of the furnace you could observe a beautiful sea of molten silver. The flames were reflected mirror-like in the melted metal and one would

doubt whether anything could be more pure. Then the operator of the furnace added a chemical reagent and within minutes none of that beautiful silver was visible. The material that was added reacted with certain impurities in the silver and these impurities rose to the top. The beauty was completely obscured. The operator then used a long-handled tool to rake all these impurities out the door of the furnace. The silver returned to its original beauty. Another reagent was then added and the same thing happened again. This process went on for about a week and by that time the silver was over ninety-nine percent pure.

“This is similar to the work of the fire of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We may look at one another and think we all reflect the beauty of Christ from within. Then God sends some circumstance which acts as a reagent and suddenly we find that beauty clouded over. Many times things come to the surface that we didn’t even know were in our lives! We are then able by the help of the Holy Spirit to remove these ugly things that were hidden beneath the surface of our lives. We must pray for the process to go on until we are completely in His image and likeness. To have this work done in us by the Holy Spirit’s Fire is not easy on the flesh! It is like a warfare. We must willingly submit to the process if we desire to be among the overcomers who sit with Christ in His throne” — end quote.

Let me repeat — all men shall die unto sin. Some lovingly submit to God’s dealings that the dreadful death of the carnal mind in their members may be “mortified” or put to death, while others must be subdued and broken under the severe heat of judgmental fire. The former pass through the death to self — but are not “hurt” by it. In dying by a living and active faith to everything of the flesh, and living by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, a perfect work is wrought in which everything that is in any way opposed to God is brought to death. These become what God seeks in order to satisfy His heart. God has apprehended in this hour, as in all preceding generations, a remnant in whom *His Spirit* is working, and they are becoming daily experiential partakers of His death, overcoming all the desires, allurements, deceits, and lusts of the carnal mind and the fleshly heart. To those who now

**overcome**, the same shall not be “hurt” of the “second death.” For us who willingly submit to this process “no man taketh our life from us, we lay it down.” But for those who will not lay it down, I do not hesitate to say that IT WILL BE TAKEN FROM THEM. Make no mistake about it. There are multitudes who shall resist God until the extreme measures He must use to subdue them are beyond our comprehension. For them the second death shall hold terror, and will prove a most painful experience. Let us die now! Let us take the cup of suffering and submit to the refining fires now! Let us arise in the newness of *His life* now, to be conformed to His image. He that overcometh **now** shall not be **hurt** by the second death!

There is another passage that speaks to this truth. “*Blessed and holy* is he that hath part in the first resurrection: *on such the second death hath no power*, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6). Those who experience the first resurrection are the ones who have their *soul* fully redeemed and transformed into the nature of Christ. Because they are both *blessed* and *holy* the second death hath no more power over them! That is, they do not need to be forcibly “cast” into the lake of fire under the sovereign command of the Lord, and in truth the fire of God has already accomplished its complete work in them. There are several different words in the Greek which are rendered in many of our Bible translations by the one English word “power.” There is *dunamis* from which we get our words “dynamo,” “dynamite,” and “dynamic.” This power is that of great force. There is another word which is very similar to our word “energy.” Still another word, *kratos*, gives us the power of ruling, as in our combined words, “democrat,” “aristocrat,” and “autocrat.” But there is still another word, *exousia*, which is translated “power” in such statements as, “power to become the sons of God” (Jn. 1:12). This word would be better translated “authority.” This is the word that is used in the passage above. The second death has no “**authority**” over those who have been blessed and made holy in Christ, whose souls have been fully saved, raised up in His life, and made one in Him! For these the judgment day is over, ended! And even in that

judgment day they were not “hurt” by the second death for they yielded themselves willingly to the fire of God and there was One who walked with them through the fire! This means that the work is complete in the overcomer, there is nothing more ever to be dealt with by the righteous judgments of God — this is the true “eternal security” of which men speak! The “second death” no longer has any authority in their lives! Isn’t it wonderful!

It is true that some men are cast into the processing of the lake of fire. But what a disreputable lot! “...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” (Rev. 21:8). These are men saturated with, and captivated by, the power of the first death — dead in trespasses and in sins, sold under sin, slaves to every devilish passion, possessed of corrupt and perverse natures, obsessed with every evil device, unrelentingly driven by the spirit of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And nothing God has done has yet broken these stubborn wills or brought these men to repentance. The wages of sin has not broken them. The harvest of evil has not broken them. Hell has not broken them. The tender mercies and longsuffering of the Lord have not broken them. The Spirit has faithfully told us of a second death into which unbelieving and incorrigibly wicked men shall surely go. They go there with death and with hell. The second death will be an experience and a period of time similar to this first death we are now experiencing, but much more severe and intense than anything we now know. But don’t entertain the idea that it is some literal kind of fire, some physically tortuous method God uses like tyrants who poke men with red hot irons, or like water-boarding techniques used in times past by our own CIA in order to coerce men into confessing, recanting, or yielding up information. Oh, no! God is not a sadistic tyrant. The fire and brimstone are THE HOLY GHOST FIRE OF GOD! Our God IS a consuming fire! It is, therefore, a *spiritual exercise of God*, not a literal or physical tactic of ruthless men. Aren’t you glad!

The penalty of sin is very great. The processes of God to break the resistance of willfully wicked men are extremely severe. Not only in this present age do they smite us, but in the second death which is to come. It can only be described as the “lake of fire.” This dealing of God is reserved for those who have not profited from the previous judgments and still need further correction to subdue them to the will of God. When the process is complete, and the last sinner has emerged from the discipline with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, having learned the lessons of the awful fruit of man’s “own way,” fully yielding to the Lordship of our Saviour, then at last shall be fulfilled the beautiful promise, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle (dwelling place) 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*. 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*. 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*” (Rev. 21:3-5).

Whatever we hold as the nature of the death state, may we let this truth sink deep into our hearts: DEATH IS TO BE ABOLISHED. The ringing declaration, “The ***last*** enemy that shall be destroyed is death,” overthrows the whole structure of accepted, but unproved, theology which shuts up the mass of the human race in “***eternal death***.” When the “last” enemy is destroyed, abolished, it is self-evident that none remains. Those wretched religionists who demand the ***endlessness of death***, who argue for eternal torment in the lake of fire, the second death, do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. The lake of fire ***must*** end because death and hell are cast into it, which is the second death, and in the end THERE SHALL BE N-O M-O-R-E D-E-A-T-H. No more death! No more first death. No more second death. No more of any kind of death. To say there is no more death is to say that there is no more sin and no more sinners, for sinners are ***dead men***, and the wages of sin ***is death***. To say there is no more death is to say

that God has not “burned up” all the wicked and left them dead, or in hell, for as long as any creature of God is in a state of death, death is not abolished — its power still reigns. To say there is no more death is to say there is no more hell, for hell is “the realm of the dead.” To say there is no more death is to say there is no more a lake of fire, for the lake of fire *is* the second *death*. What a universe of truth is contained in three little words: NO MORE DEATH!

We are now approaching the final verse of chapter twenty. “*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*” (Rev. 20:15). The grammatical construction is not that strong in the actual Greek text. As you can see by consulting an *interlinear* the literal translation of the Greek is: “*And IF anyone was not found in the scroll of life having been written he was thrown into the lake of fire.*” In Greek grammar it is very *conditional*, indicating a big “if,” as though at this point in the processes of divine judgment there would be but few who would face the sentence of the lake of fire. The wonderful truth is, however, that even in the lake of fire there is *hope!*

Most Christians are confused not only about the *purpose* of the lake of fire, but also about the length of time men stay there. Have you ever heard a vivid, graphic sermon about the pains of the wicked in the lake of fire? I have! One brother related the following: “I heard in a sermon as a young boy in Arkansas, a description of how long ‘eternity’ really is. The preacher was speaking of everlasting torment in the lake of fire for all outside of Christ, even the little baby that dies without knowing Jesus. To impress the audience with just how *long* that torture — that blistering, sizzling, pain-wracked, excruciating agony of torture would be prolonged, he said, ‘Imagine, if you can, a huge, solid granite mountain exactly one mile high, and one mile wide. Once every year, imagine that a little bird flies to the top of that one-mile-high block of solid granite and cleans his beak. A whole year goes by, and the bird flies to the top of the granite mountain and cleans his beak again. You get a fair idea of how long is *eternity* if you imagine how long it would take for that bird, cleaning his beak atop that one-mile-high block of

solid granite to wear the granite completely down until it was *gone!*' The young boy wondered within himself, All of *this?* All this pain and suffering because a little *baby* who had never heard the name of Jesus; perhaps a baby belonging to another race, or to a non-Christian religion, who died under what the churches call 'Adam's sin,' went to the lake of fire? He then proceeded to ask what horrible things that innocent baby could have done to merit even a moment's punishment, even a harsh *spanking*, let alone TORTURE, and that for **ALL ETERNITY!**" — end quote. The truth is, however, the Bible nowhere speaks of "eternity" in connection with the lake of fire! The Greek term is "*unto ages of ages*" signifying the on-going dealings and processes of God until the work is complete and all men are purged, purified, and fully reconciled to God.

If there were a great lake of fire that would burn throughout eternity, this would mean that people whom God had created for His pleasure would be suffering on and on, endless ages of time. Always God would realize that in His universe the souls of the vast majority of mankind were suffering torment so hideous that it is beyond comprehension, and that would never end. God's mercy could not find them, God's grace could not reach them, and God's power could not save them! Satan would be the victor and God's universe would be marred forever! Sin would be constantly before God and never again could God be happy amongst His children — unless He is a sadistic psychopath! What kind of God do you serve? Is He a fiend that takes pleasure in roasting and toasting His children forever? Or is He so cold and callused, so void of empathy, that He just ignores them without feeling? Or does He pull them out of the fire when they have scorched a little too long and when they have cooled down, drag them back into the flame? Is this the kind of God we serve? No, A THOUSAND TIMES NO!

Think of the lake of fire as God's great Rehabilitation Center. The fire of that dealing is His very professional and effective Rehabilitation Therapy. Some years ago there was a reality television show called

*Clean House*. It was about three trained specialists who go into homes that are a mess. In each episode, there is clutter everywhere. In some homes there is so much junk that visitors must remain standing because the furniture is covered with all kinds of stuff. The *Clean House* specialists face the challenge of convincing the residents to get rid of their junk. And the strange thing often is — even though it makes their lives miserable, they don't want to get rid of the clutter! So some very interesting scenarios play out as the specialists do what they have to do to change these people's mindset! You and I can be the same way in our relationship with God, not to mention the world! We say we want to clean things up, and we can see what's got to go. But so often even we cling to things that make life miserable for us and for others. But our God has a wonderful Rehabilitation Therapy! Oh, yes, HE is a specialist! God builds a great bonfire — whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life — whoever is not expressing and manifesting the Christ — is cast into His great bonfire! And as Paul wrote, "EVERY MAN'S WORK shall be made manifest (the "books" opened!): for the day shall declare it, because it shall be *revealed by fire*; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide...he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but *he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire*" (I Cor. 3:13-15).

"And He saith 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*...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" (Rev. 21:6-8).

"*I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*" May I reverently ask, Who would be more **thirsty** than the man in the lake of fire? These passages must be taken in their association and context. If you don't believe the man tormented in fire is a thirsty man just ask the rich man in our Lord's parable who died and

lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments. He sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and cries out: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue." Now, it is not my purpose to explain the meaning of the parable in this writing, for that is another story altogether. But, irrespective of its spiritual meaning, in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man was tormented in fire and wanted Lazarus to come and cool his tongue and slake his thirst. He had been a very bad man, and so was tormented in the hell that he had created for himself. But when he asked that Lazarus should come, Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: *no one can cross it.*" Abraham could not cross that gulf! David could not cross that gulf! Moses could not cross that gulf! None of the prophets and none of the Patriarchs could cross that gulf! NO MAN could cross it!

There is no denying that, BUT THE CHRIST CROSSED THAT ABYSS. There is the difference! You say that Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us." Let me remind you that, although Abraham said that, the Christ did not. That is right, Abraham, you could not bridge that gulf! And even if you could, you did not have the *keys to the gates*. But the Christ crossed that gulf, He strode into Hades, He went and preached to the spirits that were in prison, and He led captivity captive; that is, He captured the captives, those who were captives to sin, captives to the devil, and captives in hell, and led out from thence a mighty host of captives, and delivered them into the liberty of the children of God. The Christ crossed that gulf, and HIS SALVATION BRIDGED IT. Christ bridged it! The Christ Himself IS THE BRIDGE! It is no use talking nonsense, saying that the gulf was not bridged. It was not bridged at the time Jesus told that story, but when He arose and grasped the *keys of death* and of *hell*, He made a way for His banished to return.

It was bridged by Jesus Christ, and there is not any gulf that He cannot bridge. I believe it! If there is, then He is not God, because there is no gulf that God and His love cannot bridge. Jesus Christ has bridged the gulf between God and man, between heaven and earth, between Israelite and Gentile, between bond and free, between male and female, between rich and poor. He has bridged all the gulfs, blessed be His name, and so “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all *one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28). “For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged *according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit*” (I Pet. 4:6). Thank God! a greater than Abraham is here. He bridges the gulf between heaven and earth and between earth and hell, for it is written, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things *in heaven*, and things *in earth*, and things *under the earth*; and that *every tongue should confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil. 2:10-11). Weymouth translates, “That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in the highest heavens, of those on the earth, and of **THOSE IN THE UNDERWORLD**, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The hymn writer captured the wonderful truth of this when he penned these immortal words:

Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan!  
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!  
Oh, the mighty GULF THAT GOD DID SPAN —  
At Calvary!

To be continued...

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