

WRITINGS OF GARY AMIRAULT

by Gary Amirault

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Gary Amirault, compiled for study and devotional reading.

24 Chapters

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1. Eternal Death

Eternal Death (Annihilation):

One Step Out of Hell; One Step Short of Glory By Gary Amirault

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Glory

1.01. Introduction

Eternal Death - Introduction When it comes to the final destination of the wicked, or unrighteous, Christians over the past two millenniums have divided themselves into three beliefs: 1. Eternal Torment, 2. Eternal Death (Annihilationism), and 3. Salvation of the whole world through Jesus Christ. Each of these views can be supported with Scriptures. Having been in all three groups, I know that there are sincere Bible centered believers in all of them. Obviously, all three cannot be true. Two of them have to be false. This writing is primarily for Christians who have embraced the Doctrine of Conditional Mortality, often referred to as "eternal death" and also "annihilationism." Many who hold this view, have come to this conclusion because the "doctrine of eternal torment" was repugnant to them. They felt they could bow down to such a God, but could not truly love Him. I know most Christians who hold this view are Bible students, that is, they spend time in the Bible, and enjoy deep study. This writing is designed for that kind of mind and attitude. Some of it is rather technical. It has to be. Having studied and been in all three camps regarding the outcome of the fate of the wicked (eternal torment, eternal death, and the ultimate salvation of all mankind), I feel what is contained in this writing will be helpful to those who cannot love an Eternal Tormentor. This work will also be useful to those holding a view other than eternal death, but the focus of the study is on passages used to support "eternal death." Therefore, I did not deal with many passages of scripture that the other two groups would perhaps want covered. I have other literature and audio tapes on the other viewpoints.

Several denominations, Bible study groups, and many millions of Christians believe and teach the doctrine of "Eternal Death." I know many Christians, even though they attend a main line Protestant or Catholic Church, do not believe God will really torture people forever. These often believe they will just go into unconsciousness never to wake. Millions of people who do not consider themselves Christians believe in "eternal death." Many atheists, agnostics, as well as other religions believe we will just return to dust. Is it Scriptural? It certainly is more merciful than "eternal torment," but can it stand on Scriptural ground? Let us see. This study deals with the leading scriptures which are used to justify the "Doctrine of Eternal Death." We will look into the Greek and Hebrew words as well as the English verses used to teach this doctrine to see if this doctrine can stand up to a thorough test. After all, I think most people would agree, it would be much easier to love a God who just ends a life as opposed to One Who viciously tortures His own creatures. When we see this in a human being, we call them sick, but somehow we don't seem to have the nerve to call this kind of God "sick" also. The beginning of wisdom is to "fear" the Lord, so they say, but what kind of fear, terror or awe? The word "annihilation" is used in this study as meaning that the ungodly, the wicked, the "unsaved," will be ultimately completely destroyed. The English words used in the scriptures to prove this teaching are destroy, perish, abolish, destruction, loss, etc. And words such as everlasting, eternal, and forever. This teaching is not a new doctrine. It has been taught by some Christians throughout the history of the Christian Church. It is a fact that many scriptures in English translations do teach the destruction of some people. In this study, we will consider the original Greek words translated destroy, destruction,

etc., and what these words meant at the time they were written. We will also look at the words translated everlasting, eternal, forever, world, age, damn, etc. This study will not deny that "destruction" is taught in the English scriptures. We do, however, want to be certain what "destruction" meant to the original writers of the scriptures. We often read words in Bibles through our sectarian definitions.

It is usage of words that determines the meaning of words. The meaning of words are often changed as the word travels through the history of a people. The word "carriage" referred to "that which is carried" in King James English. Today, it refers to a vehicle that carries. The English word "let" was often used to mean "restrain" in King James English. Today, it has taken on the opposite meaning of "allow." These are a couple examples of thousands of occurrences of dramatic changes in word usage. The word "villain" used to mean someone who lived in a villa, a rural person. Obviously, that meaning has been completely replaced. This is why it is important to study the words in their historical and cultural sense. There are places in the King James Bible where one would actually completely change the meaning of the passage if one used today's definitions of certain words found in the King James Bible. This study will include a study of the original Greek words and the English words, destroy, destruction, etc., as used in our Bibles. In order to compare the Greek with the English, we must have certain tools to work with. In this study, we must first have a good reference Bible. There are several good reference Bibles. One of the best as far as King James Versions go, is Dr. Bullinger's Companion Bible. The original texts of the Bible were inspired by the Creator, but no translation or version is inerrant. Now, I realize there will be readers who will differ with me on what I just said, but if you lay any of the ten leading English Bibles before you, it will be very easy to show differences in translation among them which involve key doctrinal issues. I will be more than happy to point out a few for those who do not believe me. Write me and I will send you examples.

We also do not have the original writings. When we translate, we translate from copies of copies of copies, often many generations away from the original. Since the copies were made by hand, there is not one copy today which agrees with another copy. This is a fact! If Christians were made aware of some of these things, perhaps they would spend more time in study and less time watching the Super Bowl, or the soaps. A reference Bible that shows some of the variants of different manuscripts is very helpful. Also, a good concordance to the translation you are using is essential. Notice I said a "good" concordance. Many Christians do not even realize that each translation requires it's own concordance. The famous Strong's Concordance is only useful for the King James Translation. Should you be using the KJV, I recommend using the Young's Concordance over the Strong's Concordance because it is much easier to see the original words in the context of the sentences in which they are located. Mr. Young was also brave enough to make notice of places where he believes the King James translators made some grave mistakes. He also wrote a literal Bible translation which is very useful. I highly encourage at this time, for the reader to get their concordance and use it as we go through the following word study. Although, I personally think the KJV is a terrible translation to use in the twentieth century, we will use it for this study because most people have one and a concordance that works with the King James Bible. The truth can be found even in archaic translations if one searches honestly.

Many of the passages below which deal with the Greek language have been taken almost word for word from audio tapes prepared by Louis Abbott from Stover, Missouri. Mr. Abbott has the largest

library of New Testament Greek references of anyone I know. Many Bible colleges and seminaries do not have many of the books he possesses. Mr. Abbott spends most of his evenings and weekends reading and studying Greek. He has studied these particular words more than anyone I know. An objective reading of his findings would serve us all well.

We hear the words "eternal death" in Christian creeds. Although many Christians use these words, the words "eternal death" are not in the scriptures. Again, I repeat, the words "eternal death" are not in our Bibles. Therefore, to study the teaching of "annihilation" or "eternal death" we will have to look for other words to study, "eternal death" is nowhere to be found. The opposite of life is death and the opposite of death is life. According to the scriptures, there cannot be an eternal death. The scriptures declare an "end" to death. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26, KJV). Let us see that "death" cannot be "eternal."

1.02. Resurrection Versus "Being Made Alive"

Resurrection Versus "Being Made Alive" The Greek word translated destroy in the above scripture (1 Corinthians 15:26-27) is not "apollumi." The word used here is "katageo" and means to nullify, discard, exempt, abolish, to make unproductive. This "last enemy" of Christ will ultimately be "nullified, discarded, abolished, or destroyed." Therefore, this clearly teaches that death is the last enemy and that in the future "death" will be destroyed. Hence, there can be no "eternal death." To teach an "eternal death" is to contradict the scriptures.

How will death be destroyed? Paul give the answer in the context, "For as in Adam all die, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22, KJV). Now I know that some say that Paul is teaching in this verse that all will be resurrected, but the word used by Paul is "zoopoiethesontai" and this is a future passive verb meaning to vivify, to make alive beyond the reach of death. The Greek word "anastasis" means resurrection and is used in verse 21. We know that Jesus resurrected several people as recorded in the Gospels, but that does not mean they received unending life at that point. 1 Corinthians 15:22-28 teaches that there are three classes of orders that will be made alive. First, Christ, the first fruit. The word "first fruit" is singular in the Greek, not first fruits plural as in the King James Version. Second, they that are Christ's at His coming (Greek, parousia, appearing). This class includes all the Christians dead or alive (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The third class is referred to as "then cometh the end." This includes the residue of all mankind who died in Adam. This is clearly taught in 1 Corinthians 15:22-28. Therefore, these scriptures teach that all mankind who die in Adam will be made alive in Christ and I repeat, this is not resurrection. Unfortunately, many translations put a period between the second and third order of being made alive. The Greek does not have a period here (1 Corinthians 15:23-24). It is supplied by some translators. The scriptures teach that all will be resurrected. (Study John 5:28-29). The dead in Christ when made alive will be resurrected as being "made alive" which includes resurrection but being "made alive" means more than resurrection. "Made alive" means made alive beyond death. May I remind you that not all Christians will be resurrected. Many Christians will be alive when Christ returns. Therefore, living Christians will not be resurrected, but they will be made alive or vivified. Notice these scriptures: "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep. That ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore, comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, KJV; here is an example of a KJV word "prevent" which has completely lost its meaning. In the 1600's the word meant "precede," not "hinder").

It is most important to remember vivification or being made alive cannot be limited to resurrection of the dead. Resurrection is limited to the dead. You cannot resurrect the living, yet the living in Christ will be "made alive" at Christ's coming (Gr. Parousia). I am speaking of the literal meaning of the resurrection. I do not want to dwell any longer on these words as our subject is "destruction."

1.03. Apollumi

Apollumi

There are two elements one needs to determine the meaning of a word which has been important over a long period of time: 1. The original meaning of the root word from which it is derived, so far as we are able to determine. 2. The history of the word as it passes from one generation to another. Other languages, social pressures, or one important person's or an institution's variant use of the word whose definition sticks with that word. When we go back to the earliest uses of the word "apollumi," "apolleia" and their cognates, we find the words very indistinguishable from each other. We find the word in Homer where the "slayers and the slain" were "perishing from the world," but they reappear in Hades as persons capable of sorrow, joy and the ability to think (Iliad 24:725). "We were 'undone' by their wisdom," says Odysseus (Od. 10:27). According to Professor Plumtree, he knows of no passages in the earliest uses of these words which would mean destruction of conscious existence (The Spirits in Prison, E.H. Plumtree). Searching the Greek Old Testament called the Septuagint, we find exactly the same usage of these words that we find in the New Testament. Below are examples of how these words were used in the Biblical sense.

Those who teach "eternal death" or "annihilation" believe the Greek words translated "destroy," "perish," "loss," mean cessation or end of life with no hope of recovery at a later time. The original words used in the Greek New Testament are: the verb "apollumi" and the noun "apolleia." The verb "apollumi" is translated as follows in the King James Version: perish (33 times), destroy (46 times), lose (42 times), be lost (5 times), lost (4 times), be marred (1 time), die (1 time), for a total of 92 times. The noun "apolleia" is translated as follows in the King James Version: perdition (8 times), destruction (5 times), waste (2 times), damnable (1 time), damnation (1 time), to die (1 time), perish (1 time), pernicious way (1 time), for a total of 40 times.

It is important that Christians understand the meaning of these two Greek words. An improper understanding of these words will result in an inaccurate faith in the destiny of the unbelievers and an inaccurate understanding of God's plan and love. To apply these words to the final destiny of the unbelievers will result in the denial of many scriptures that do refer to the ultimate plan of God's love. I recommend that you check the following scriptures with your concordances. It is not practical for me to quote over 110 verses. Therefore, I will quote only those passages used by those who are teaching that these words mean "destruction with no future resurrection to immortality."

First of all, let me state that I believe the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures were inspired by God. I believe the Creator allowed imperfect man to add his imperfections into Bible translations. When we look at the apostles and prophets, we quickly notice they were far from perfect, and yet were still mightily used. We see Peter, years after he received the Holy Spirit, play the hypocrite when being around gentiles. Paul had to rebuke him to his face. We read Paul saying, "I, not the Lord, say . . ." We find this in the scriptures in 1 Corinthians 7:12. I believe the Creator left us with imperfect English translations that we might rely on the Holy Spirit first. When one puts the

scriptures above being lead by the Spirit, religious rigor mortis quickly sets in. The letter of the law produces death apart from the Holy Spirit quickening to us. This is true whether it is the Old Testament or New Testament. If one's witness in this world does not go past the Written Word, it will only be a witness to religious death . . . not life. When quoting the scriptures contained herein, I will read the King James Version, and immediately after the English word, I will quote the original Greek vocabulary word. Thus the listener will know the original inspired word. By this method, I believe that Christians who do not know Greek will be able to understand how these words are used in the inspired text. I will quote verses that will clearly illustrate what these two Greek words mean. The meaning of a word depends on its usage. Words get their color from their context. Without any dictionary whatever, it is possible to determine the meaning of almost any word if it is seen in a dozen sentences. From this we may deduce the notable conclusion that the actual and understood meaning of a Greek or English word in the Bible is not necessarily its current or dictionary meaning, but that which it absorbs from the passage in which it is found. A dictionary simply records the usage as employed by careful writers of the time for which the dictionary is written. The word "destruction" is one of the key words of the scriptures. Hence, no amount of investigation is excessive if it provides us with a clear comprehension of its meaning. There have been endless discussions about this word resulting in diverging schools of interpretation. But most of the discussions that I have studied do not give a satisfactory answer to all of the scriptures. The argument has been propounded that the first occurrence of a word in the scriptures fixes its primary meaning. Thus the first occurrence of "apollumi" is Matthew 2:13 : "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." In this context, it is argued that "apollumi" means deprivation of life. Now what is this first occurrence of this word in the Greek New Testament? As to chronological time, Paul was the first to put "apollumi" into the scriptures; see 2 Thessalonians 2:10. Matthew did not write until later. Was it necessary for the Thessalonians to wait until Matthew was written in order to know its meaning? It is not at all logical to argue that the vocabulary of the Greek scriptures was not defined until the Gospels were written. Let us test this theory. The Greek noun "ta Biblion" is the diminutive form of "ha Biblios." Ha Biblios means a written volume, a scroll. The diminutive "Biblion" means a scrollet or scroll. In Matthew 19:7, its first occurrence, it is a short legal instrument, what we call a divorce paper. This is not its primary or usual meaning. For it is used to describe the book of Isaiah and the book of Revelation (see Luke 4:17 and Revelation 22:19). Thus in usage this is applied to any book even a large one.

Here is an excellent example from the Old Testament. For instance, there is much controversy as to the meaning of the word "sin." No occurrence is an illustration better than in Judges 20:16. "Among all this people there were 700 chosen men left handed; every one could sling stones at a hairs breadth and not miss." The Septuagint reads: "Kai ouk examartanontes." Therefore, sin in this context, is missing the mark. This literal etymological meaning is worth more than all the arguments which can be advanced. What a mistake it would be to reason from its first occurrence in Genesis 26 that its primary meaning confines it to social trespasses. It would greatly distort the meaning of Judges 20:16, if that meaning were applied to the word "sin" in this context. The only sound system of determining the primary meaning of any word in the scriptures is to study all its occurrences and to inject nothing into its meaning which clashes with any of its contexts.

Again, I ask the reader to study these two words "apollumi" and "apolleia" in a concordance that lists all of the occurrences of these words. This is the only method to know the true primary meaning of these words. The argument that "destroy" in Matthew 2:13 means "deprive of life" is an unfounded inference. "Deprive of life" would partially define the following Greek words. I quote the Greek word first followed with a literal English translation. "Apokteino" (kill), "sphatto" (slay), "onireko" (dispatch, assassinate, massacre), "phoneuo" (murder). Every occurrence of these words actually mean "to deprive of life."

"Destroy, perish," (apollumi) are used of things which have no life. "Wine runneth out and the bottles perish (apollumi)" (Matthew 9:17, see also Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37). Skinned bottles do not die when they perish. "Verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose (apollumi) his reward" (Matthew 10:42). (Compare Mark 9:41). A reward is not mortal. "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perish (apollumi)" (1 Peter 1:7, compare Luke 15:8). Gold and money may perish and be lost but they are not deprived of life. The words which actually do mean "to deprive of life" could not be used in these verses. Neither the primary nor secondary nor any other meaning of "destroy" demands that life be taken. This is entirely a matter of the context. It is not included in the meaning of the words "apollumi" and "apolleia."

"Apollumi" is used of that which is alive. "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose (apollumi) one of them, does not leave the 99 in the wilderness and go after that which is lost (apollumi) until he find it. And when he has found it he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he cometh home he calls together his friends and neighbors saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost (apollumi)'" (Luke 15:4-6). If the lost (apollumi) sheep had been deprived of life, would the shepherd have rejoiced when he found the carcass? The word "apollumi" occurs 8 times in Luke chapter 15 (Luke 15:4; Luke 15:6; Luke 15:8-9; Luke 15:17; Luke 15:24; Luke 15:32). Not one of these occurrences means to deprive of life. Our Lord directed His disciples "Go rather to the lost (apollumi) sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6). The "lost" sheep of Israel were no more dead than the "lost" destroyed sheep which the shepherd sought and found. A word whose primary meaning is to deprive of life cannot have a secondary meaning of a state of life. Life is not a secondary meaning of death. Our Lord said to His disciples, "He that findeth his life (psuche, soul) shall lose it, and he that loses (apollumi) his life (psuche, soul) shall find it" (Matthew 10:39, compare Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; Luke 17:33). Is our Lord urging them to commit suicide? The text refers to the destruction of the soul. Please note the Greek text reads "psuche" soul, not "zoe" life, as the King's translators translated this passage. The destruction of the soul does not mean death, it means to forgo the pleasure of life and endure the suffering due to faithfulness to Christ. Surely, no one will argue that "He that loses (apollumi) his soul" for Christ will be destroyed without hope of life later. Many Christians martyrs were destroyed by burning at the stake. Their souls were destroyed but who will argue that they will not be resurrected in the future and enjoy immortality.

I believe there is one paramount scripture that should teach us what the word "apollumi" means. "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost (apollumi)" (Luke 19:10). This passage refers specifically to Zacchaeus; he was lost, destroyed. Because he was lost, he was ready to be found and saved. The theory of most false definitions of "apollumi" is to prove that the word means "death" from which there is no resurrection, practical annihilation, a state from which salvation is impossible. This passage directly destroys this theory. Instead of the lost being beyond

salvation, they alone are eligible for salvation. You cannot rescue a man who is safe and sound. It is only when a man is in the state denoted by "apollumi" that salvation can operate in his behalf. Antithetical statements such as this are of great value in the study of words. The terms "seek" and "save," are accurate indications of the opposite of destroy. One who is "destroyed" must be lost or no one would seek him. He must be in a state which calls for salvation or Christ would not have come for him. This proves that destruction is a salvable condition, not a state beyond the reach of deliverance. Add to this the fact only the "lost" are "saved" and it reverses the usual theory of "destruction." God seeks what he has "lost." It is a sad fact that most Christians believe that Jesus is seeking to save the "lost" yet on the other hand they do not believe that He will save the "lost." They do not believe that Jesus will save "lost" mankind. Thus Jesus will not be successful in seeking and saving the lost.

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished (apollumi)" (1 Corinthians 15:18). Are the Christians who are now sleeping deprived of future life? They are at present time "perished." They are now deprived of life, but in the future, they will be resurrected to life that is immortal.

"But if thy brother be grieve with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitable, destroy (apollumi) not him with thy meat for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15, compare 1 Corinthians 8:11). According to these scriptures, we can destroy one of our brethren by eating foods which he deems unclean. Does our eating deprive him of life? That would be an easy way to commit legal murder.

Destruction is a relative term. The coin was lost in relation to the woman (Luke 15:8-9). The sheep was destroyed as regards to the shepherd (Luke 15:4-7). The prodigal son had perished in relation to his father (Luke 15:11-32). So with the destroyed sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5-6). They were not deprived of life, they were away from the great shepherd, their Creator. The prodigals were far off from their father who created them, who loves them, who commissioned His Son Jesus to come to seek and save them. Does this prove they were outside of this affair of salvation? It proves the opposite. Destruction is a prelude to salvation. It never means ultimate annihilation. The method of destruction or losing is not included in the meaning of the word. It varies with the context. Those who use the sword "shall perish (apollumi) with the sword" (Matthew 26:52). "But the chief priest and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy (apollumi) Jesus" (Matthew 27:20). Destroy Jesus? Thus our Lord was destroyed by crucifixion. Who will argue that the destruction of Jesus was annihilation? Jesus was only destroyed 3 days and nights, and He returned to life and has immortality. The disciples were afraid that they would perish by drowning (Mark 4:38). The sheep was destroyed by straying (Luke 15:4). The prodigal son was lost for the same reason (Luke 15:24). The fragments that remain would have been lost (apollumi) by neglect (John 6:12). Food perished (apollumi) by decay (John 6:27). We may destroy a brother by means of food (Romans 14:15). We may destroy a weak saint by our knowledge (1 Corinthians 8:11). Especially note the last two passages since they apply to believers in Christ. Can we "annihilate" one of our own brothers with food? Christians saved in Christ may be lost or destroyed. God ultimately will not put out of existence those who are lost. God commends His love to us in that He gave His Son Christ Jesus while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). Our Lord spoke the parable of the Lost Sheep in order to assure His disciples that God was concerned about the one sheep that had strayed. There is no line that the sinner crosses that brings him beyond the reach of God. Neither life, nor death, nor destruction, neither a career

of sin, nor a decaying corpse is any obstacle to Divine Love. Nay, they are challenges which omnipotence must victoriously conquer or suffer defeat. No death, either first or second, can cope with our God or frustrate His purpose. Study Ephesians 1:9-11, Isaiah 46:8-13.

Everyone who has lost anything will bear me witness that the moment it is missing, it assumes an interest and importance which it never had before. Its value increases and we desire it more than ever. Its loss, instead of breaking our connection with it, forges a new link which did not exist before. This becomes tragically true when we lose a loved one. Loss alone brings a realization of the preciousness of possession. Let us never imagine that God is not concerned about the lost; that He is insensible to their condition, or that He would sit complacently by and see them rush to endless oblivion, if He could do anything to head them off. There are a million ways in which we could do this if we had but a tenth of His power. God is able. If the reader of this message will not acknowledge this, he must wait until God makes him realize this.

"Ha Theos agape estin," God is love and all His creatures are dear to Him. Is it not striking that He does not even try to express His affection until they are lost? Whom does God love? He undoubtedly loves all. Whom does He say He loves? God loves the world (John 3:16), and sinners and His enemies (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:22-28) and those who are lost. In God's wisdom, He has decreed that many shall be lost to Him until the end of the ages. Men are often compelled to abandon an enterprise which proved too much for their power. Do you imagine that God is also compelled to abandon His "will to have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4, compare 1 Timothy 4:9-11)? Thus God is unable to save all? Or being able He does not? These errors have polluted the minds of millions of men that they have corrupted the Scriptures to teach everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46) or everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9), and neither of these translations are correct.

Men are sometimes compelled to kill an animal to put it out of pain. They would not do so if they could cure it. Is our God like this? Is God impotent, powerless to cope with those who are destroyed? All that man can do is kill. They cannot recall from death. Is God also limited like we are? Christ proclaimed Himself as the resurrection and the life. Is the Creator unable to make man respond to His unconditional love? Is His love so repugnant or powerless that it can not loose those enchained to hate, fear, ignorance, etc.?

1.04. Apolleia

Apolleia The Greek noun "apolleia" is in the Greek text which the King's translators used in Acts 25:16 which reads: "To whom I answered, it is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die (apolleia)." Many scriptures clearly teach that all the dead will be resurrected for judgment (See Daniel 12:1-3; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:11-15). Therefore those delivered by the Romans to die will be resurrected to life. A Christian martyr is resurrected unto immortality. The sinners, the unbelievers are resurrected to judgment. But death is not the ultimate destiny of any man. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26). How will death be abolished? The context gives the answer. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). According to the historians, Paul was later to die at the hands of the Romans and surely will not ultimately be destroyed. This word, apolleia, is also translated into damnable, damnation, perdition, destruction, pernicious, waste, and perish along with the above meaning of "to die." Those of you who believe in "annihilation" should know that it doesn't matter how bad the word may sound if it only applies to a person before the second death. The resurrection will raise everyone up and give them an opportunity to "get it right." But for those of you who lean toward "eternal punishment," this study of the word "damn" should prove worthwhile.

1.05. Damnation

Damnation

I will begin with a large quote from a book entitled *Mercy and Judgment* by F.W. Farrar, a canon of the Anglican Church. He writes on page 369: The words "damn" and its derivatives do not once occur in the Old Testament. In the New Testament they are the exceptional and arbitrary translation of two Greek verbs or their derivatives; which occur 308 times. These words are "apollumi" and "krino." "Apolleia" (destruction or waste) is once rendered "damnation" and once "damnable" (2 Peter 2:3; 2 Peter 2:1); "krino" (judge) occurs 114 times, and is only once rendered "damned" (2 Thessalonians 2:12). "Krima" (judgment or sentence) occurs 24 times, and is 7 times rendered "damnation." "KataKrino" (I condemn) occurs 24 times, and is twice only rendered "be damned."

Now turn to a modern dictionary, and you will see "damnation" defined as "exclusion from divine mercy; condemnation to eternal punishment." In common usage the word has no other sense. But to say that such is the necessary meaning of the words which are rendered by "damn" and "damnation," is to say what is absurdly and even wickedly false. It is to say that a widow who marries again must be damned to endless torments (1 Timothy 5:12, "having damnation," krima), although St. Paul expressly recommends young widows to do so two verses later on. It is to say that everyone who ever eats the Lord's Supper unworthily, eats and drinks "eternal punishment" to himself, though St. Paul adds, almost in the next verse, that the judgment (krima) is disciplinary or educational, to save us from condemnation (1 Corinthians 11:29-34). It is to say that "the Day of Judgment" ought to be called "Day of Damnation" (John 5:29). It is curious that our translators have chosen this most unfortunate variation of "damn" and its cognates only fifteen times out of upwards of two hundred times that krino and its cognates occur; and that they have used it for "krisis" and "krima," but not for the stronger compounds "katakrima," etc. The translators, however, may not be to blame. It is probable that "damn" was once a milder word than condemn, and had a far milder meaning than that which modern eschatology has furnished to modern blasphemy. We find from an Act passed when a John Russell was Chancellor (in the reign of Richard III or Henry VII), that the sanction of an Act against extorted benevolences is called "a damnation" -- that is, "the infliction of a loss." This is the true etymological meaning of the word, as derived from *damnum*, "a loss"; and this original meaning is still found in such words as "damnify," "indemnify," and "indemnity." In the margin of 1 Corinthians 11:29, we find "judgment" for "damnation"; whereas in 1 Corinthians 11:32 the "judgment" of the Lord is milder than His "condemnation." Dr. Hey, in his lecture on the Ninth Article, thinks that the phrase, "it deserveth God's wrath and damnation," is used in the milder sense of the word which was originally prevalent. However this may be, the word has, as the Bishop of Chester says, undergone a modification of meaning from the lapse of time, and it is an unmixed gain that both it and its congeners will wholly disappear from the revised version of the English Bible. "Judgment" and "condemnation" are the true representatives of *krisis* and *katakrisis*, and they are not steeped, like the word "damnation," in a mass of associated conceptions which do not naturally or properly belong to them. Equally

unfortunate is the word "hell." The above was written in 1881, the year the first revision of the King James Bible appeared. It appears the author above, in his prediction about the "damn" words being removed from the revision was true. Checking a Revised Standard Concordance, I discovered the "damn" words were gone. To show you the above scholars were correct in tracing the "damn" word, I will quote from a modern dictionary of word origins by John Ayto. It is entitled Dictionary of Word Origins published in 1990.

Damn comes via Old French "damner" from Latin "damnare," a derivative of the noun "damnum." This originally meant "loss, harm" (it is the source of English "damage"), but the verb "damnare" soon spread its application to "pronounce judgment upon" in both the legal and the theological sense. These meanings (reflected also in the derived "condemn") followed the verb through Old French into English, which dropped the strict legal sense around the 16th century but has persisted with the theological one and its more profane offshoots. Condemn, damage, indemnity. In conclusion, I must repeat that these words "apollumi" and "apolleia" like so many other words such as "krima," "krino," and "krisis" are relative terms. The first two words usually carry the sense of loss by someone. God is the great loser in many of their occurrences. The coin was lost by the woman, the sheep was lost by the shepherd, the prodigal son was lost by the father, Israel was lost by Yahweh, men are lost by God. Who was it that created them? Are they not His work? Will He not be the loser if they are not saved?

Almost all the reasoning about the words translated "destruction" fails to recognize the deity of God. We are asked to consider the fate of wineskins which were destroyed. We are told that as wineskins they pass out of existence. Therefore, those who teach annihilation say, men pass out of existence as such when they are destroyed. The fact that these words "apollumi" and "apolleia" are never used of the second death in which this final destruction is supposed to take place should show the fallacy of this reasoning. The fact that all who are destroyed or lost are resurrected to be judged, absolutely refutes the idea of any final destruction. In the theory of annihilation, God is left out of it. We should not equate men losing wineskins to God losing men. Who lost the wineskins? Who lost the men? Suppose we are not able to recover what we lost. Is that proof that God cannot do so? Are we the equals of the Creator? Did anything originate with us? Why then reason about God as though He were unable to find and save what He has lost. God can recall His creatures from the tomb, can we? All mankind was lost and all mankind will be justified and made alive by God. Study Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22-28; Colossians 1:16-20. When we touched the "damn" words (because apolleia was translated as such a couple of times), we found that changes in our English language combined with theological tamperings, have introduced words into our Bibles that no longer convey the true spirit in which the original writers wrote. The word "hell" has almost completely disappeared in most Bible translations. Many of the religiously tainted renderings found in our Bibles are being removed. This is coming about because we are beginning to bypass the inadequate scholarship of the dark ages and reformation which was plagued with superstition and medieval concepts. Due to discoveries such as those found at Qumran, Israel and the deserts of Egypt, we are able to get closer to the original manuscripts and the original meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words contained in the Bible. For more information about words in some of our Bibles which do not faithfully convey the original meaning, write for the audio tape, A Word About The Word.

1.06. Matthew 10:28

Matthew 10:28

There is no reasoning so utterly vain as that which uses one passage of scripture in order to destroy our faith in another. Correctly translated and interpreted with the help of the Holy Spirit, there is no conflict in the Word of God. Matthew 10:28 says, "And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Greek, Gehenna)." These words are supposed to prove ultimate destruction of sinners. In this passage, our Lord is speaking to His disciples regarding the suffering required for entrance into the kingdom. Men will hate them and kill them. Literally death always effects body, soul, and spirit, but our Lord is speaking of their experiences, what they will suffer for His sake. Men will slay them. James and Peter were killed. After they were killed, they suffered no more. In a very real sense, those who killed their bodies ushered their souls into the kingdom without further pain. Speaking of God being able to destroy both body and soul, He is able to do many things, but that does not mean He will do them. He is able to blot a name out of the Lamb's book of life. You are able to stick a dagger into your right eye, but that doesn't mean that you ever will. Be careful what you tell the world that the Creator is going to do. You may find yourself adding to His Word. To be able to do something is not the same as actually doing it.

Every Christian was once lost, destroyed. Not only was this no hindrance to their deliverance, but it was absolutely essential to it. God had lost them. Through Christ, God has found and saved them. The same is true of those who are not now saved. Please remember there is not one except Jesus Christ, who was not lost and had need of a Savior. Some God will call tomorrow, many He will not call until another age. God has definitely declared that He is the Savior of all mankind (Study 1 Timothy 2:3-6; 1 Timothy 4:9-11). Since God has lost them and He has said He will save them, they will be saved in their own order (Study 1 Corinthians 15:22-28).

Destruction, like aionian life, is relative to the eons or the ages. After the eons, all will be vivified. The word used in 1 Corinthians 15:22 is not resurrection (anastasis). As mentioned before, the word used is the Greek "zoopoieo" which means to vivify, to make alive, to be made immortal. The apostle Paul tells us very clearly in that verse that all that are dying in Adam, the same all, will be or shall be made alive in Christ. Neither destruction nor aionian life are the end or aim of God. Imagine a God Whose very essence is love, losing a single creature who has an endless capacity of loving and glorifying Him. To create a creature whose purpose is to manifest the image of God, and then destroy it because it did not live up to the Creator's expectations sounds like something Hollywood would dream up. It sounds like a Frankenstein movie. Is this what God has produced? An error? Then God is sinful. He missed the mark, His purpose, His creation is flawed. What foolish thinking this is! We do not have such a God; He destroys nothing that He cannot restore. He loses nothing that will not return to Him. Destruction is a passing process, not a finished goal. What He destroys is our life to sin that we might live to Him who is Life! First comes death from which He brings life. He produces a field well fertilized with death and then He plants His seed in it

to produce life. He produced the exact amount of death to produce the exact amount of Life He intended. Believe me, our Father wastes nothing! Through destruction, God will work out the welfare of His creatures and bring unending glory to our Savior and Creator.

I know that the scriptures say that God loves the world, thus all mankind, and that God's love will never fail (Study I Cor 13). Therefore, God will resurrect all sinners and judge them and ultimately save them all. We forget that when God's judgments are in the earth, the world will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9). This is God's will and He will not be defeated. God's love will be victorious. The scriptures clearly teach that the lost will be judged in accord with their works. "For the Son of Man shall come in the Glory of His Father with His angels and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). And again, "Who will render every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). And again, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it and death and hell (Hades) delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Revelation 20:13-14). Hence all at the Great White Throne Judgment will be judged according to their works and as every man's works are different, thus every one's judgment will be as variable as their works. Thereafter, they are returned to the second death which is the lake of fire. There is no variance in the second death. It is the same for all, thus it cannot be the judgment according to works.

Many teach that the lake of fire is a place where the sinners are alive and consciously suffering endless misery. On the other hand, many are teaching that the lake of fire is endless destruction. Both of these doctrines are making God the loser of some or most of His creation. He came to "seek and save that which was lost," but apparently He will fail to fulfill His mission (Luke 19:10). "Who will have all men to come into the knowledge of the truth; Who is the savior of all men" (1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 4:10). God says,

"I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure, calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country. Yea, I have spoken it. I will also bring it to pass. I have proposed it; I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:9-11).

Hence God declares He will do all His pleasure. He has proposed it and will bring it to pass. Notice this quotation in which God says through the apostle Paul,

"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He has proposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him, in Whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:9-11).

Therefore it is the good pleasure which God has proposed in Himself to have an administration in the fullness of the era to head up all in the Christ. See the Greek text. Thus in the scriptures we have grace which exhibits God's glory and results in forgiveness and salvation to all. (See Php 2:9-13; Colossians 1:16-20). In these verses in Colossians chapter one we have the word all used 7 times in the King James Version. All Christians will accept all of these all's through verse 16, 17, 18, 19, but when we come to verse 20, they argue that it cannot be. God is not going to reconcile

all, they say. (Greek, ta panta). Now, I ask you, is this being fair to God's word? Verse 16 says He creates all and we have many other passages of scriptures which tell us He creates all, but yet, they will reject verse 20 where He says He will reconcile all. Again, I ask, is that being fair to scripture? Why not believe the scriptures? We go to church, hear that beautiful hymn, There is Power in the Blood, yet we do not believe there is enough power to do what Colossians 1:20 tells us, that is, to reconcile all.

If one refused to believe these plain statements in the scriptures, then they will have to wait until God displays His marvelous grace in the coming administration. Then they will see His grace displayed and this can be expressed in three words: seeing is believing. Therefore, I assume, in spite of the dozens of scriptures that teach God loves all and will reconcile all, many people will have to see God's grace manifested before they will believe. But men make God's love too narrow by false limits of their own and they magnify His vengeance with a zeal He will not own.

Remember, our Lord Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said signifying what death He should die" (John 12:32-33). We know Jesus was lifted up on Calvary. Why not believe these clear plain words of our Savior and also the words of the apostle Paul where he says, "all will be reconciled" (Colossians 1:20), "all will be justified" (Romans 5:18-19), "and all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22)? Why not believe these clear plain statements? Why argue that these plain statements are not true? There can be no statements in the scriptures correctly interpreted and translated that contradict this glorious truth of the salvation of all people.

1.07. II Thessalonians 1:7-10

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 Another scripture in the King James Version used to teach annihilation is:

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all of them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, KJV).

Question: Do the Greek words translated by the King's translators "everlasting" and "destruction" mean a condition from which there is no hope of a future life?

1.08. Everlasting

Everlasting

First let us look at the word translated "everlasting." The following few pages should clearly show that some English translators of the Bible have caused some serious problems for Christians and the rest of the world. It will be shown that a little four letter word can totally change the character of the Creator and our relationship to Him. Many translations of the future be more faithful to the Greek and Hebrew languages and to the nature of the Creator of us all which is love, a love which the most eloquent of words cannot describe. This one little four letter word, mistranslated by many Bible translations, has tarnished His Character to where an earthly father's love exceeds that of the Creator's. After all, few earthly fathers would burn their children in a barbecue pit for even a few hours. Many modern Bibles portray the Father of all mankind torturing most of mankind not for just a few hours, but for all eternity. According to the majority view of church theology, He will not change His mind in this area, it is a finished deal. Let us see if the Greek and Hebrew texts bears this out. The word "aion" in the New Testament in Matthew 24:3 is translated "world" in the King James Version. As we can see from the other versions below, scholars now believe it should have been translated "age."

"Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" (KJV)

"Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (New KJV)

"Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (NIV)

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (NASB)

Why is it so important to differentiate between these two words, one might ask? Because there are many different "ages" according to the Bible, but our theological minds picture basically only two "worlds," the one that is and the one to come. It is this mistranslation of "aion" that has caused many people to rightfully say the Bible contradicts itself. The King James Version speaks of the "end of the world" (Matthew 24:3) and then talks about the same world "without end" (Ephesians 3:21; Isaiah 45:17). It speaks of "everlasting hills" (Genesis 49:26; Deuteronomy 33:15) which will one day no longer be "everlasting." Isaiah 40:4 tells us "every mountain and hill will be made low" and "all the earth shall be burned up" in 2 Peter 3:10. Revelation 11:15 speaks of Jesus as reigning "forever and ever" (a double use of "aion") while 1 Corinthians 15:25 says Jesus must rule "till He hath put all enemies under His feet." He then will deliver up a perfected kingdom to the Father who becomes "all in all." Does He reign "till" or "forever"? Exodus 21:5-6 tells us a slave will serve his master for "ever," when clearly death will end his servitude. Leviticus 24:8 says the Mosaic covenant is to be an "everlasting" covenant whereas Hebrews 8:7-13 speaks of the end of

that covenant. The Aaronic priesthood is an "everlasting" priesthood in Exodus 40:15; Numbers 25:13, yet the book of Hebrews makes it very clear it is to be superseded by the Melchizedek priesthood (Hebrews 7:14-18). According to the King James Version, God would dwell in Solomon's temple "forever," yet Solomon's temple has long been destroyed. The Sabbath (Saturday according to the Old Testament) was to be observed for a statute "forever," yet Hebrews says it was just a "fleshly ordinance imposed until the time of refreshing." Animal sacrifices were to be offered "forever" (Exodus 31:16-17; 2 Chronicles 2:4; Leviticus 16:31), yet every Christian knows these all ended in the work of Jesus Christ. Circumcision was an "everlasting covenant" and this was before the Mosaic Covenant (according to Genesis 17:9-14), but 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:6 tells us it is worthless!

It is this kind of confusion that has turned many sincere seekers away from the Bible. Here we have clear contradictions. The problem is not in the original languages of the Bible, the problem is with human error in translating the Greek and Hebrew texts into current languages. The tradition of the elders is difficult to break. Men and women have built power systems upon error. The love of power, money, and position make many leaders continue the errors. Many church leaders know these contradictions exist, but are unwilling to bring about correction. Their systems are built upon fear and ignorance. To reveal the truth would be the end of their kingdoms. Also keep in mind we, ourselves, often prefer to create our own image of God rather than the true one. We often project our corrupted view of things upon God. Now let us see if there are contradictions in the Greek and Hebrew languages. This word "aion" translated by the King James Bible as "age," "ever," "forever," "forever and ever," "never," "world without end," "evermore," "course," and "eternal," along with its adjective "aionios," has caused the world many serious problems. It has made the Creator a God whose mercy endures "forever," yet the King James Bible says there are sins that will not be forgiven in "this world or in the world to come" (Compare 1 Chronicles 16:34 with Matthew 12:31-32). The New King James and most other Bibles now translate this passage as: "in this age or in the age to come." This was spoken in the "law age." We are now in a different age and the scriptures clearly teach of ages to come. If Jesus wanted to refer to the world, he would have used the word "kosmos," but He didn't. Therefore, when this scripture is correctly translated "age," the Bible does not contradict itself. There is still hope for the Pharisee who would not be forgiven under the "law age" nor under the present age, but there is still hope for him to receive mercy in the ages to come. For a study as to how many ages there are, study the following scriptures: The past ages (aions) - Colossians 1:26; the present age (aion) - Luke 20:34; future ages (aions) - Ephesians 2:7. It will become clear that there are at least five ages with no indication when the ages will end. This radically changes pet end-time eschatological schemes. This is one reason why many theologians do not want to look at this. They will have to dismantle some of their favorite fear-based doctrines. Can this word "aion" be consistently translated one way and make sense without bringing about contradictions in the Bible? The answer is yes! Can this word be consistently translated with words that indicate "eternity"? The answer is no! Let us see how the Bible would read if we translated this word "aion" into eternity in some passages where it appears. We would get some of the following kinds of reading:

"This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of eternity (aionios)" (2 Timothy 1:9). There can be no time before "eternity."

"According to the revelation of the mystery hidden for eternity (aionios) past" (Romans 16:25). If it was hidden in eternity, it can never manifest.

"Who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil eternity (aion)" (Galatians 1:4).

"The harvest is the end of this eternity (aion)" (Matthew 13:39). What then, another eternity?

"Who tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming eternity (aion)" (Hebrews 6:5). There is only one eternity, not past and future ones. As one can see, when we translated this word consistently with eternity, the scriptures make no sense. But if we translated that word "aion" age, and its adjective "aionios," of or belonging to an age, age-during, or age-abiding, then all the scriptures dealing with time and eternity begin to make sense without any contradictions whatsoever. What is even more exciting is that this lines up perfectly with all of our Father's attributes. All seemingly hypocritical, or contradictory scriptures relating to our Father's will, desire, plan, purpose, and power, vanish away. He finishes what He said He was going to do from the foundation of the world, draw all mankind unto Himself. So why don't the translators change? Jesus said there was something more powerful than the Word of God. "You have made the word of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites!" (Matthew 15:6-7). All the systems of Christendom would have to dismantle, and I mean all of them. You can be assured, the heads of these systems have no intentions of giving up the little kingdoms you and I have helped them build. As we have seen earlier, many of the Bibles have cleared up some of the contradictions by translating more of the passages "age" where they used to put "world." Many Bibles today have even put in "age" or "ages" in some places where they used to have "forever and ever," etc. Some Bibles, written within the last 200 years, have become consistent all the way through the Bible and have translated the word "aion" and its adjective "aionios" age, eon, age-during, etc. Some of the Bibles that have been bold enough to buck the tradition of the elders are: Young's Literal Translation, Rotherham's Emphasized Translation, Concordant Literal Version, The Holy Bible in Modern English (Fenton), The New Testament in Modern Speech (Weymouth, 1910), The Twentieth Century New Testament, The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Anointed, The Western New Testament, The New Testament - a Translation, Scarlett's Translation, etc. Even many evangelical/fundamentalist Bibles are breaking from the "traditions of men." The Companion Bible, a King James Reference Bible, shows clearly in the footnotes and appendages, that the word "aion" and its adjective "aionios" was grossly mistranslated by the King's translators. For further information on the subject of how many Bibles are changing for the better, write for the booklet, The Gates of Hell shall not Prevail.

Let us return to the subject of "aion." Many Bible scholars today are willing to concede that the noun "aion" means an age as opposed to forever or eternal, but they are not willing to concede that its adjective "aionios" means pertaining to an age, age-abiding, age-during or something like that. They say this word must mean "eternal, everlasting," etc. In doing so, they make themselves look very foolish. They break a rule in grammar found in every language of the world. An adjective must get its force from the noun from which it is derived. It cannot take on a stronger force. For example, hourly cannot pertain to a year, or month, or eternity; it pertains to the noun from which it came, that is, an hour. To say that "aion" means an "age," and then turn around and say its adjective means "everlasting," "eternal," "forever and ever" is breaking all the rules of language. Why would they do this? If they stay within the rules of grammar, they would have to concede

there is no such thing as "eternal" punishment or "everlasting" death. Religious men usually will go into their graves before admitting their errors. After all, huge empires are built upon these two false doctrines. This noun "aion" occurs in the plural and the singular about 127 times. The plural form occurs over 60 times in the Greek text. May I remind you at this time that if the singular form means endlessness, absolute eternity, time without an end, forever, everlasting, then what on earth does the plural form mean? To top it all off, this word "aion" in the Greek shows up in forms such as this: "eons (plural) of the eons (plural)" (see Galatians 1:5; Php 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18, etc.), "eon (singular) of the eons (plural)" (see Ephesians 3:21), and "eon (singular) of the eon (singular)" (see Hebrews 1:8). Clearly, because orthodox translators are stuck with their concept of "eternal" hell, they have butchered the Greek forms of this word "aion." Why? To maintain their long held traditions. It is quite obvious that you cannot have a plural of infinity or eternity. You cannot have a plural of "forever." You can not have "eternities of the eternities," "eternity of the eternities," and "eternity of the eternity." This is nonsense. But that is exactly what one would get if they translated "aion" and its adjective "aionios" into eternity in these passages. When we translate the word "aion" into its proper English equivalent "age," all begins to make sense. There is also a sense in the word indicating a flowing like streams flowing into rivers which find their way to the seas only to be draw up again to fall to become streams again. The ages are marked, but they cannot be determined until it has ended. The life of a man was an "olam," the Hebrew word translated into "aion" in the Greek. One could not measure a man's life until he died. It is indefinite, but not infinite. In Ephesians 3:9; Ephesians 3:11; Ephesians 3:21, we have two Greek words "ton aionon." This is the genitive plural noun with the genitive plural article "ton." In the 9th verse in the KJV, it is translated "from the beginning of the world." In verse 11, it is translated "eternal" with the word "purpose." In verse 21, it is translated, "world without end." So here we have the Greek genitive plural with the article translated three completely different ways within the same sentence! It is quite obvious this is very poor translating.

If you want to see this word translated correctly in the King James, turn to Colossians 1:26. Here we find "apo ton aionon" which is translated "from the ages." Notice the reference to "age" and that it is in the plural form. The King James Bible was very inconsistent with this word. Fearing to break the KJV tradition, many orthodox Bibles have also wreaked havoc with this little four letter word, unfortunately to our misfortune. In 1 Corinthians 15:25, we have a very interesting verse. In fact, this whole context from 1 Corinthians 15:22-28 is very interesting. Verse 25 says, "For He must reign till He has put all His enemies under His feet." This passage is speaking about Christ Jesus. The word "till" has the same meaning as "until." The word "until" in the English and Greek means, "to the time of, up to, as far as, etc." It definitely limits the reigning of Jesus Christ until He puts every enemy under His feet. It tells us the last enemy to be put under His feet is death. This passage speaks of the end of "death." If there is a second "death" (Lake of fire), there is still death. Please note the scripture does not speak of "soul death," or "spiritual death," or "Adamic death." It simply states that death is an enemy of God which will one day be destroyed. Very simple. Let us keep it that way. One day there will be no more death. Then Jesus Himself becomes subjected that God may be all in all. The passage speaks of an end of Christ's reign. But in Revelation 11:15 we read, "And the seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign 'forever and ever.'" This passage clearly contradicts 1 Corinthians 15:25 in the KJV. Which will He do, reign "until" or reign "forever and ever"?

There are four places in the New Testament in which the adjective of "aion" occurs which proves beyond a doubt it cannot mean "endlessness," etc. These occurrences are: Romans 16:25; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Philemon 1:15. I will also try to show with the first of these verses that the leading translations of this century contradict each other regarding this word. This should cause one to seriously study this out. You will clearly see that most translators followed their creeds instead of the Greek when it came to this word. The 1901 American Standard, the first revision of the King James Bible, translates Romans 16:25 : "Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal" According to the way this verse is translated, the mystery has been kept in silence through times that are eternal. If it was kept secret in eternity, it can never be made manifest! But the verse tells us that now it is made manifest. This is total nonsense. The King James Bible says it was "kept secret since the world began" while the New International Version says "hidden for long ages past." Here we see how leading translators are not in agreement as to how to handle this word. We have "eternal," "world," and "ages." This should at least cause one to seriously study this out. After all, the reputation of our Father is at stake. Does He torture mercilessly forever, annihilate a creature He made, or correct until He accomplishes a perfect work in each of His children through love and patience? In 2 Timothy 1:9 and Titus 1:2, the 1901 American Standard reads "before times eternal." Now what on earth is that supposed to mean? If "eternal," an adjective means without beginning or ending, how can there be a "before"? This is a contradiction in three words! This shows that the translators obviously did not understand the clause which they were working with. If they had not been locked into their "eternal torment creeds," they might have been able to correctly translate the verse. The traditions of men do often blind us to obvious truth. The King James Bible in Philemon 1:15 says of the runaway slave, "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever." The American Standard also says "forever." So according to these two leading translations, this slave will remain Philemon's slave for all eternity. The New International has him back "for good." That makes more sense than "forever," but it is not correct. "Aion" never means "for good." This is paraphrasing of the most corrupt kind.

"Ages" have ends. All of the ages will one day end. To teach otherwise is to contradict scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 10:11 and Hebrews 9:26 which speak of the "end of the ages." The King James in Hebrews 9:26 speaks of the "end of the world," but the Greek word "aion" here is in the plural form "ton aionon." This is nothing short of just sloppy translating. In many other passages of scripture, the King James Bible does not pay attention to the number of the word, that is, whether it was plural or singular. The Bible clearly teaches a "pre-aion" period, at least 5 aions or ages, and a "post" aion period. There is a "before the ages," "times past," "present ages," "these ages," "future ages," and a "consummation of the ages." If the translators of some of the leading Bibles dropped their tradition of translating according to their doctrines and translated according to what the Greek and Hebrew languages say, we would not have apparent contradictions in our translations and we would clearly have a Bible that is in perfect agreement to all of the attributes of our Father, not just some of them. The scripture "Love never fails" would be true for every person born under the sun. Some denominations make Him to be clearly a "respector of persons" which, again, forces the Bible to contradict itself due to people forcing their traditions into the Scriptures. Clearly, He is not a respector of persons if we see the whole picture. Our problems have always stemmed from judging the end by what we presently see. We must be seated in "heavenly places"

in order to see the beginning and the end.

Now let us go back to our study. We dealt with "aion." Now let us look at the word "destruction." The Greek word translated "destruction" in 2 Thessalonians 1:9 is "olethros." This word is a cognate of the Greek word "apollumi" (see Strong's Concordance). This word "olethros" occurs in other scriptures that proves this word does not mean "destruction without hope of life." I will quote a scripture to show that this is true. "To deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction (olethros) of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5, KJV). As this same Greek noun is used in 2 Thessalonians 1:9 and 1 Corinthians 5:5, it is clear that this kind of destruction, does not eliminate the possibility of future life.

If one studies the scriptures and reads 2 Thessalonians 1:9 and reads "everlasting destruction" they would assume the scriptures teach annihilation, but as we know, "aion" and "aionios" cannot mean endlessness, and "destruction" (olethros) cannot mean destruction with no hope of future salvation. Enough said.

1.09. From the Old Testament

From the Old Testament As we have seen, one cannot make a scriptural case for "everlasting destruction" when one looks at what the Greek words refer to. Clearly these words do not teach a destruction from which there is no hope of restoration or else Jesus could not have been resurrected. We will now look at the Old Testament and discover that the Hebrew is harmonious with the Greek on this subject.

"Thou turnest man to destruction and sayest 'Return ye, children of men'" (Psalms 90:3, KJV). In this scripture, we have the word "destruction" followed by "Return ye." Therefore, the word "destruction" cannot refer to "everlasting destruction."

"He has destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope has He removed like a tree" (Job 19:10, KJV).

Job spoke these words, yet Job was not annihilated. He lost all that he had, but it was all restored to him and more. When Job was in the condition that everything was lost, he was "destroyed." The following scripture is often quoted to prove "endless destruction" or annihilation.

"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, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 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. 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" (Malachi 4:1-3). This scripture certainly teaches "destruction" as the wicked will burn as stubble; they shall be ashes, but there is nothing in this scripture which indicates they are beyond the power of the Creator to restore life later. In fact, many of the Hebrew saints are now sleeping in the dust, but their sleep will come to an end. Many saints were burned to death by the church and their ashes were treated in a worse manner than to be stepped on, but this does not mean they will not receive life later on. The fact that man, whether righteous or unrighteous returns to ashes and dust, presents no problem for the Creator since these are the very materials man first came from.

1.10. Speaking of Fire

Speaking of "Fire"

Isn't it rather strange, that this whole business of "eternal torment," "eternal death," and the "salvation of all" seems to center around what kind of "fire" we are going to meet? John said the Judge of all men would immerse people with the Holy Spirit and fire. Jesus said His words were "Spirit and life." Remember the words of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us ...?"

There was a time when I felt led to go into a particular jewelry store. I had no desire to enter, as I had felt I had worn out my welcome with the Jewish woman owner. Being located next door to my business, I frequently visited her trying to lead her to Christ. She, in very definite words, told me she had had enough. But following the leading, I entered again. She was by herself. The meeting was very awkward, but I felt I couldn't leave. A customer then entered. The owner went to the back to get a custom piece of Jewelry this customer had ordered. "You will like this piece of Jewelry, Gary," said the store owner. Seeing from a distance that it was a silver cross, I told her that I really didn't care for religious jewelry of any kind. When she handed it to the customer, I could see that it was the words "Let go, Let God" in the form of a cross. At this point I found myself giving the shortest testimony I had ever given of how Jesus delivered me from alcoholism. With my head bowed down, I spoke for perhaps one and one half minutes. Upon finishing my brief testimony, this stranger came up to me and gave me a giant hug and said something like, "Your words are burning in my heart!" I will never forget that incident. I knew that short little testimony touched the very heart of her being and the best description she could come up with was "fire!" I present this story as a way of introduction to a subject much misunderstood by all of us. Let us look into the subject of "fire" from a Biblical point of view and not from our imaginative religious artists such as Dante and His "Inferno" and Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment." Let us put the wild scenes of our carnal imagination aside and look into the "fire of God."

Perhaps the best way to test which of the three doctrines of the ultimate fate of all mankind is true, is to test each doctrine with the ultimate acid test, "fire." If "eternal torment" or "annihilation" by fire is the wages of sin, then surely, the scriptures should be full of examples to that effect. Symbols, parables, and real events in the scriptures should boldly declare this fate, and with no confusion or contradictions. But when we comb the scriptures for examples of a fire barbecue finale, instead, everywhere we look we find heaven filled with fire and even earth filled with fire. As a matter of fact, when we really analyze fire, apart from misuse of fire, fire is very beneficial. Will we attribute to God that He will ultimately misuse fire? Let us look at the subject of fire.

First of all, we know today, that we are literally on fire. Do we not burn our food? The military has binoculars which see in the dark. They see heat. Human beings can be seen because they are giving off heat. We are slowly burning. Does not fire make meat taste better and rid it of disease? Do you not enjoy the warmth of fire in the winter time? Do you enjoy the comforts of electricity, light, radio, computers, telephones, ovens, laser technology, etc.? Fire, when properly controlled,

is very beneficial to mankind. Apart from the sun, there would be no life on this planet. Even the stars billions of miles away are helpful to man in navigation and make the dark night more enjoyable to behold. When we come to the scriptures, it is even more abundantly clear, that "fire" is the very symbol, not of death, not of eternal torment, nor of fearful judgment, but of life itself. Fire, in the scriptures, is not a symbol of His judgments, but of His very being! It is here we find the true touchstone of which of the three teachings we have been discussing is true.

Fleshly minded thinking is very fearful of God who is an all-consuming fire! His fiery presence, however, will not destroy or eternally torture, but will purify, will cleanse us from sin, from false images of Him, from earthly thoughts. From science we have discovered that fire does not really destroy, in the sense of leaving nothing. Fire takes compound elements and reduces them to simpler forms. Did He not say, "Unless you become as little children, you will not see the kingdom of God." Simple thoughts. Religions, all of them, are very complex. The longer it has been around, the more complex it becomes. When Peter talked about the "very elements will melt with heat," he was talking about something much more complex than atomic elements that would be melted. The Greek word translated "elements" in 2 Peter 3:12, is the word "stoicheion." When one looks at other places this word is used such as in Galatians 4:3; Galatians 4:9, we discover that atoms are not what Peter had in mind. The very laws, rudiments, principles which hold people in bondage will be burned. Systems of religion will be destroyed! The word "religion" comes from two Latin words "re" and "ligare" which means to "return to bondage."

Yes, the carnal, religious mind has always been fearful of God. When God manifested Himself as fire on the mountain, the children of Israel told Moses they didn't want to meet Him. The flesh and carnal (fleshly) thinking never wants an encounter with God. The carnal mind wants to worship its own creation and concepts of God. He will consume, burn all earthly thinking (low life) and break it into lowly, meek, simple, child-like faith. Proudful religious thoughts cannot stand in His Presence. Perfect Love casts out fear. Religious systems are built on fear. These complex systems of myriads of do's and don'ts, rituals, creeds, formulas will be reduced to nothing, for that is what a lie is . . . nothing.

"By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10). An encyclopedia could be written on this beautiful verse which few Christians really understand. If truly understood, this verse alone would dismantle the religious monstrosities of the world. If one studies this verse carefully, one will discover that salvation is an "All God" situation depending upon nothing but Himself. Is not Jesus Christ the author and finisher of your faith (Hebrews 12:2)? We are His workmanship; we are created in Christ Jesus; the works are His prepared before the foundation of the world. It is the faith of Jesus that saves us and finishes our salvation.

Look, Abraham wanted to cut a covenant with God. I won't go into the long details of how covenants were made in those days, but the final part of the ritual was cutting some animals in half (flesh) and walking between the pieces saying something to the effect "If you break this covenant, then let your body become as one of these animals." "As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him" (Genesis 15:12). Then: "And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a

smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram" (Genesis 15:17-18). This is the kind of covenant that God makes with all of us. Our flesh falls asleep and is ridden with fear. Then God cuts the covenant with Himself, Father and Son. Man under the fear of death which was inherited from Adam, is absolutely incapable of cutting any kind of covenant with God. Our religious do's and don'ts fall far short of God's free gift. The works of our flesh will be burned up. The above covenant requires two parties, but man was not one of them. In this passage, God represents Himself as a "smoking oven" and a "burning torch." In this covenant, that which was burned up was flesh, but not Abraham's body. It was his works that were burned up. He is the Father of many nations and "all the families of the earth" will be blessed through the "man of faith" who fell asleep while cutting a covenant with God. You, too, will fall asleep, and the works of your flesh which you offer Him for your salvation will be totally destroyed and counted as nothing. The "salvation" that we are to "work out" are the "good works" God put in us when we became part of His body. They are His works, his gifts, not ours, lest we boast.

Let us look into the Kingdom of our Father and see what we behold. As we have been told by scripture, our God is an all-consuming fire and He is a jealous (zealous in some translations) God. We find this in Deuteronomy 4:24. He then tells them they will worship idols, do evil in His sight which will cause Him to be angry. He will then utterly destroy them, but then immediately tells them He will not forsake them, nor destroy them because He is also a merciful God and will not forget the covenant He made with our fathers (Deuteronomy 4:24-31). Unless we understand that He has the power to kill and then make alive again, this kind of talk is foolishness. But our Father and Potter of men can and will refashion us for our good. As we approach His Kingdom, the flesh and carnal mind become extremely fearful. Why? Because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom. We already mentioned Abram. When Ezekiel was approached by Him, His glory appeared as fire (Ezekiel 1:27-28). This righteous man fell like a dead man. When Isaiah saw Him, the house was filled with smoke and a seraphim had to touch his lips with a hot coal because he, Isaiah, became a man of unclean lips. The hot coal took away his iniquity (Isaiah 6:6-7). When Daniel saw the "Ancient of Days," His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire and a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him (Daniel 7:9). In Daniel we also read of the three young Hebrew men thrown into fire 7 times hotter than normal and One like the Son of Man in their midst. When one truly refuses to worship the images made by man's carnal mind, this kind of fire will only burn off the ropes put on by religious men! I do not hesitate to say, most reading this article are bound by ropes of religion, whether you are sitting on a padded pew, or at a home Bible study. Zechariah says He will be a wall of fire to Jerusalem (Zechariah 2:5). God's ministers are a flame of fire according to Psalms 104:4; Hebrews 1:7. He purges the blood of Jerusalem by the "spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning." When this happens "then the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assembly, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering" (Isaiah 4:4-6). In Malachi chapter 3, Yahweh describes Himself as a refiner's fire to purify the sons of Levi and to purge them as gold and silver that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. Please note these are God's priests being purged (burned) by fire for a good purpose, that they might present a righteous offering unto the LORD. Speaking of the sons of Levi, the priestly group, it is when His own people offer to the world "strange fire," that God really gets mad (Leviticus 10:1-2). When the real fire is present, the types and shadows do not need to be paraded. These two Israelites were

robbing God of His glory. They wanted to perform the "shadow ritual" when the reality was actually present. Much that we count as holy and righteous will disappear when the True Righteousness appears. Does "eternal torment" or "annihilation" really glorify Him or is it beginning to sound more like "strange fire"? When our Father answers prayers or manifests Himself in the earth, how does He manifest Himself? Moses saw Him as a burning bush (Acts 7:30-31). Gideon was answered by fire (Judges 6:21). David's prayer was answered by fire (1 Chronicles 21:26). When God filled Solomon's temple, how did He manifest? By fire (2 Chronicles 7:1; 2 Chronicles 7:3)! Elisha was aided by chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17). The very Words that come out of His mouth are fire (Psalms 18:8). I do not have enough pages in this book to declare that "God is an all-consuming fire"!

Now, man under his own religious system of do's and don'ts, whether it is based on the Bible or not, will always be fearful of the "All-Consuming Fire." By the "law" shall no one be justified in His sight and therefore comes that expectation in the carnal mind of adverse judgment leading to an awful decision. If we choose "eternal torment" or "annihilation" as the end for anyone on this earth, we will find our conscience will condemn us to the same fate. And so, should the fire fall into our own laps, we will most certainly have a right to be fearful. With our conscience in such a condition, we will gravitate towards teachings that put off judgment as long as possible. Therefore, these systems have consigned the ultimate judgment to the end. The Bible shows no such thing. We are constantly judged. We are told we are to judge ourselves. We are to learn to judge amongst each other. The judgments of God are in the earth today. Nature all around us declares this, but because of our fear of meeting our Maker, we deceive ourselves. In preparing this article, I read some of the leading teachings on the doctrine of annihilation. One very well written book was entitled, "The Golden Future" published by Bible Fellowship Union in England. The author begins the book by declaring "The voice of God has two mediums of expression -- the Bible on the one hand, supreme in the sphere of ethics, and on the other hand Nature, now rapidly yielding her secrets to the scientist and investigator." This statement, perhaps, unveils the depth of the error of "annihilationism." Where is God in this statement? He can only speak to man by a little book or by trees and birds and clouds? How foolish! Has He lost His presence? Is He mute? Is His fire out? Are dreams and visions off limits now? Have words of knowledge and prophesy disappeared now that the incorrectly called "New Testament" has appeared? Does the dove again have no place to land? Where did this idea come from that because God added 27 more books to the Bible, He can only speak through the Bible and "nature"? In these last 27 books, do we not find angels? Don't men and women dream dreams and prophesy? Does He not also speak to men like He did with Paul? Are men and women no longer supernaturally gifted? Were the dead no longer raised? The last 27 books reveal that rather than these things being eliminated, they were increased! If you have not experienced this increase, please don't blame God, perhaps you need to move out of the realm of unbelief you reside in. Let us return to the fire!

Jesus said, "I am come to send fire on the earth" and on the day of Pentecost "tongues of fire" came upon a group who testified in the power of the Holy Spirit and 3000 persons were added to the ekklesia. John and James wanted fire to come down on the Samaritan's heads to destroy them and Jesus told them, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's live but to save them" (Luke 9:55-56). I am afraid Jesus would have to repeat these words to most of the ekklesia, because this spirit is still very much alive in those who

belong to Him. John the Baptist tells us that Jesus would "baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). Everyone shall be salted with fire (Mark 9:49). Fire will try everyone's works (1 Corinthians 3:13). People will be saved "so as through fire," even though their works will be burned up (1 Corinthians 3:15). There is a scripture where He tells us to be like Him. He tells us to pour coals of fire on our enemies heads. Those coals of fire are love (Romans 12:20)! He tells us to expect fiery trials (1 Peter 4:12).

Going into the last book of the Bible, should we expect to find a different kind of fire than what we have seen throughout the rest of the Book. We find lampstands that are the Ekklesia, seven stars in His right hand, gold refined by fire, lightnings, seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God, mornings stars, His eyes like a flame of fire, and a sea of glass mingled with fire.

It seems we had better get used to fire, in a literal sense, symbolic sense, and a spiritual sense. God did manifest Himself on earth as fire that consumed material substances. He also spoke of fiery trials, but they were not necessarily being burned at the stake as a heretic. He spoke of good deeds as "hot coals" on our enemies heads. The tongues of fire on the disciples heads did not burn their physical flesh. The tongue James says that "sets the course of nature" on fire has not destroyed this world with literal fire (James 3:5-6). The 7 Ekklesia are not literal stars and Jesus Christ is not a literal lamb. The book of Revelation begins with a sentence the carnal nature has overlooked. The carnal nature cannot receive the things of the spirit and as a result always finds itself overlooking the obvious. The book begins by saying in the King James Bible that this book is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Revelation 1:1). The word for "signified" is a verb whose noun form "semeion" literally means "a sign." A sign that says "to Jerusalem" is not Jerusalem. It points in the direction of the real city of Jerusalem. It is helpful to find the place called Jerusalem, but it is not Jerusalem.

Paul said he went to the third heaven and saw things unlawful to speak about (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). I know he said "I know a man in Christ . . . was caught up to the third heaven," but I am certain Paul was speaking of himself. Why was it unlawful for him to speak of these things? I also know a man who was caught up to the third heaven and I will tell you why it was unlawful for Paul to speak of these things. The spirit world, the real world cannot be truly expressed by human language. The clearest expression in human language falls far short of painting the reality of that world. The expression "unlawful" was used by Paul to say that if he talked about it in human words, it would not truly express the reality, it would fall short, which is what the Greek and Hebrew word for "sin" really means. I point this out that we may read the Book of Revelation with a proper perspective. We are dealing with symbols here which are mere representatives of spiritual realities. Do not expect frogs coming out of people's mouths, a physical woman sitting on a beast which is also a city which will utterly be burned with fire. Why do people always put a physical sword into Jesus' hands when in fact it is a sword coming out of His mouth? Because that picture looks foolish to the natural mind, so we put the sword in His hands. The churches are not really stars nor candlesticks. Jesus doesn't really want you to be 212 degrees or minus 32 degrees indicating you are hot or cold but not lukewarm. The kings of the earth never really fornicated with this woman on a beast which is really a city. Is Jesus really dripping in blood? Is there really a winepress He is treading and is He really a dead Lamb sitting on the throne? The Hebrew

language is a language designed to create great pictures. It is a picture language full of great exaggeration to magnify things. Unless one leaves much room for hyperboles, allegories, and parables, one will most certainly twist the scriptures to their own destruction. While the last 27 books of the Bible come to us in Greek, they borrow the symbols of the Hebrew to convey to us the symbols He uses to express spiritual truths. Even in the last 27 books, Jesus did not speak apart from parables.

I am afraid most of us are very guilty of picking and choosing what is symbolic, what is spiritual, and what is literal. John's statement at the beginning of the Book of Revelation says this book is a book of signs. Signs point to a reality, they are not the reality themselves. How does one express something that happens to a nation over many generations in one word or sentence? It cannot be done. The only way to truly understand an event covering millions of people over decades of time in earthly languages is to give "signs," which will fall short of conveying reality.

I have been pierced by the sword which comes out of Jesus' mouth. He slew me and yet I live! It was not the words written in the book of Revelation about a sword out of His mouth that slew me, but the very Word of God Himself! The reality, not the symbol, nor the written word. And this death actually brought me to life! The carnal mind cannot separate the physical, the symbol, and the spiritual reality. It will bypass the spiritual reality and call the symbol reality. Only when it becomes absurd, will the carnal mind treat the symbol as a symbol. The reason I am spending so much time belaboring this point, is because this desire for man to bring God and His symbols down to man's language is perhaps one of our greatest errors. We make beautiful parables designed to teach us something very beautiful into something terrible and grossly distorted. The parable of Lazarus and the Rich man is a classic example. I will not go into the 5 parables in Luke 15 and 16 which have been twisted into all kind of devilish foolishness. We have literature and audio tapes on that specific subject. I have spent so much time laying down this foundation of understanding the difference between these three different forms of expression because the book of Revelation is perhaps THE book with which all kinds of liberties have been taken to twist these "symbols, signs" to conform to all sorts of scenarios of what God is going to ultimately do with you, your friends, and your enemies.

Only when we read this book with a heart after Him, only after we have begun to truly be conformed to His image by the renewing of our mind, only when we keep all of His attributes together, not setting one or the other aside, and only when we leave the signs exactly what they were meant to be, MERE SIGNS, can we begin to harmonize and see what this book is all about. Leave the sword in His mouth and then try to kiss Him. And when you have been put to death by His Word and you have died to sin and been made alive to Christ, then you will begin to see that the lake of fire is as much a symbol as every symbol in the whole book. Now let us talk about what the "lake of fiery brimstone" speaks about. Remember, if you have a hard time picturing yourself kissing the Son with a sword in His mouth or if you have a hard time snuggling up to a dead lamb on a throne, you should have just as hard a time seeing yourself, friends, family, or enemies, either being tortured in an eternal lake of burning sulfur, or see them being nuked, or vaporized into nothing. They were not made from nothing and they will not return to nothing!

I find it absolutely amazing how our carnal mind works. The scriptures tell us that our minds cannot conceive the things He has in store for us. His love is infinitely greater than ours, and yet we

manage to concoct scenarios which make the love of a mother more loving than the love of our Father. It never ceases to amaze me. One would think that if His love truly manifested in our hearts, we could not help but to hope and believe He will save all mankind, even if our Bible translation said the opposite. It seems even if our Bible said He would torment everyone, it would seem there would be people today who would act like Abraham and Moses and plead and intercede for mankind. Moses, asked Him to forgive Israel when they worshipped the calf and committed many sexual sins. Abraham dared reason with God about Sodom and Lot.

It would seem that those filled with the love of God would spend hundreds of hours combing the scriptures, spend days praying to Him, pleading for mankind. But that is not the case. Most Christians, when doing what they call "Bible Study" spend hours memorizing scriptures to prove He is a tormenter or annihilator. When we try to prove the Love of our Father, we find His love is steadfast and true, even if our translation of the Bible is ridden with error. When your heart is after Him, He will reveal many things to you like what I am about to show you. In the book of Revelation, while I was studying the lake of fiery brimstone for this article, I came across some major discrepancies among the leading selling Bibles. Looking further, checking the Greek manuscripts, there were differences between various manuscripts. As a result, we have renderings such as the following (Revelation 13:8):

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (King James Version).

"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (New King James).

"All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." (New International Version) Footnote: "Or written from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain."

"All on earth will worship it, except those whose names the Lamb that was slain keeps in his roll of the living, written there since the world was made" (New English Bible).

"And all mankind -- whose names were not written down before the founding of the world in the slain Lamb's Book of Life -- worshiped the evil Creature." (Living Bible) (Includes a very long and confusing footnote).

"And all the inhabitants of the earth will fall down in adoration and pay him homage, every one whose name has not been recorded from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life of the Lamb that was slain {in sacrifice} from the foundation of the world" (Amplified Bible).

"and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered" (New Revised Standard Version).

"And ALL who DWELL on the EARTH shall worship him, Whose NAME has not been written from the FOUNDATION of the World in the SCROLL of the LIFE of THAT LAMB who was KILLED" (Emphatic Diaglott).

"And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain." (New American Standard) Footnote: Or, written in the book . . . slain from the foundation of the world.

I left the word "worshiped" spelled incorrectly in the Living Bible because that is how it is spelled in the two copies I have. The old translations like the King James and the new ones have something in common, they both made mistakes, like this simple spelling error. However, they also make some great mistakes, some which will affect your whole life and your relationship to God. This passage is an example which I just recently found.

Those of you who carefully read each translation above should have discovered four completely different ways the passage was written. There are clear important doctrinal issues involved. Focus on the clause "before or from the foundation of the world." Notice the KJV and NKJV have the lamb being slain from the foundation of the world, but translations such as the NRSV and the NEB have the names written from the foundation of the world. Others such as the NIV write it is such a way as to not be able to tell when the names were written, and then we have the Amplified which puts the clause in twice to make it appear that the names were written before and the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. The NAS notes both ways. That is more honest, but it doesn't solve the problem for us.

You see, if your name was written in the book before the foundation of the world, and that is why you will not worship the beast, then it is not your doing, it is all God. It is true predestination, something which the "annihilation groups" don't care for because it takes away "free will."

Now which of the four ways is correct? Or is there a fifth and a sixth way? We are dealing with major doctrines here which Christians have literally killed each other over. Can one determine the true meaning of this passage? Is it important? Does your life depend upon knowing the correct way to deal with this passage? If you were pre-elected, you can't miss, but those who weren't pre-elected cannot help but to worship the beast. How can God find fault? Bibles are full of these kinds of problems. Why are not these kinds of issues brought up in Bible studies? I had to find these things out on my own. Now then, if your salvation is depended upon your knowing the Bible and what it says to you, these kind of problems should have you worried. I have 15 feet of shelving full of different Bible translations. Believe me when I say there are major doctrinal differences among the best of Bibles. Does that bother you? It doesn't bother me.

You see, for me, these tormenting questions are meaningless. I know that if it was up to me, I could never hold up to my part of any agreement with Him. I, like Abram and Jesus' disciples would fall asleep. I have cast my cares upon Him for I have discovered He truly cares for me, has given His life for me. I know who the author and finisher of my faith is. Do you? If you don't, you will live in torment. You will work out your salvation in your strength and come up short. It is guaranteed. And all your efforts and all your works which your soul is full of, will find itself cast among the other filth found cast into the Refiner's Fire, the Lake of fiery brimstone. Or have you not heard that "unbelievers" will have their part in the lake of fire? Those who trust in their own works do not believe Jesus did it all. Unbelievers! Did you not hear idolaters would be cast into the lake of fire? If God is not the "eternal tormentor" or "great annihilator" then have you not been worshipping a false image of God?! Idolater! And if you told those poor sheep around you all the things they must do to get right with God and put burdens upon them they could not carry, and He

says He didn't put any of them on their backs, are you not a liar?! Liars will have their part in the lake of fire! And if the "letter of the law" is truly death and you have been using the "letter" against people, are you not a murderer?! Murderers will have their part in the lake of refining fire! If God truly Loved the world and saved the whole world, are not the Doctrine of Eternal Torment and Annihilation abominable?! The abominable will have their part in the lake of fire! Are you getting the message? With this perspective in mind, let us take a look at the death of this kind of deadly thinking and see if there is hope for the abominable, murdering, lying, idolaters who trusted in themselves and their own works, instead of the finished work of Christ.

1.11. Lake of Fiery Brimstone

Lake of Fiery Brimstone, Commonly Called the Lake of Fire

We find this term only in this apocalyptic writing which has been attributed by many modern writers to John, the apostle. Much has been written about this writing. It was one of the last books to be accepted by the Catholic church as scripture. It is hard for some today to imagine, but large portions of the early church did not consider books such as Hebrews, 2nd and 3rd John, 2nd Peter and others including the book of Revelation as scripture. One of the reasons for the Book of Revelation's late acceptance as scripture was the poor quality of the Greek. A thorough study of the process of canonization is time well spent. It is a real fire that will test your faith. Fortunately, I have the faith given by Jesus Christ, not my faith in Jesus Christ. There is a world of difference.

Perhaps two of the main reasons this book has attracted so much attention is because of the promise of being blessed to those who read it and to those who hear the words of this prophesy and to those who keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near (Revelation 1:3). This was written 1900 years ago. Other translations say that the "time is at hand." There are generally four different types of interpretations of the book of Revelation: Preterist, Idealist, Historical, and Futurist. There are also four general theological perspectives on the book: Postmillennial, Amillennial, Premillennial, and Apocalyptic. A thorough study of the teachings of each of these eight camps should wean one from holding onto any of their pet eschatological systems too tightly. I am not going to touch any of the above. The subject is much too large. I am going to stick with two points: 1. The nature of our Father and His attributes, and 2. the language of the Greek regarding the subject of the lake of fire. This, apart from theological speculation, should convince anyone with a heart full of the love of our Father, that it never entered His mind to either eternally torment any human being nor to put them to eternal death. When the children of Israel burned their children to death in the worship of Moloch, He said, "such a thing never entered my mind" (Jeremiah 32:35). Let us look at the Greek words in the book of Revelation which will bear this out. We will look at the lake of fiery brimstone. The scriptural references for this lake are only to be found in the apocalyptic book of Revelation: Revelation 19:20; Revelation 20:10; Revelation 20:14-15; Revelation 21:8. The Bible defines this lake for us as the "second death." We find this term "second death" also only in the book of Revelation in the following places: Revelation 2:11; Revelation 20:6; Revelation 20:14; Revelation 21:8. Perhaps Revelation 20:11-15 gives us the most clear definition: The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

I could write dozens and dozens of pages on this one portion of scripture and not run out of material. I will try to stay focused and limit myself to the point that the "lake of fire" which is the "second death" does not refer to "eternal death" for any human being. I would like to point out at this time that most Christian writings of the first 3 or 4 centuries do not speak of a fire of "eternal

torture" or "eternal death." They speak of "refining fire." For an article on the early Christian view of salvation, write for the article or tape The Early Christian View of the Savior. The sea was made up of brimstone, called today sulfur. The word for sulfur in Greek is the word "theion." The words in Greek for God and divine are "theos" and "theios." The Greeks used brimstone for purifying their temples! Although carnal man is usually afraid of fire, fire is a symbol for God. Everyone's works will be tested by fire. Who do you think that fire is? A lump of coal or a piece of wood or literal sulfur? NO! Our Father Who is an all-consuming fire will test the works. This is a symbol for God just as the Lamb and the Lion are but symbols of Jesus.

What happens to those who go into the lake of divine fire? Well, according to the KJV and the NIV, the devil, along with the beast and false prophet, will be "tormented day and night for ever and ever." Those of you who have received the teaching of "annihilationism" or "conditional mortality" have, I am sure, discovered that the word translated "torment" has a primary meaning quite different from the picture we get from the KJV and NIV. I won't belabor the point. Just a few brief comments for those who do not know that the primary definition for the Greek words translated "torment" in this passage is "touchstone." Webster's tells us a touchstone is "a black siliceous stone allied to flint; used to test the purity of gold and silver by the streak left on the stone when rubbed by the metal. Any test or criterion by which to try a thing's qualities." It was not until religious folks used instruments like racks and other painful devices to "test" the faith of accused heretics that the thought of torment and pain was added to a perfectly good Greek word which again referred to a "divine test." Gold also symbolizes divinity. Gold with impurities (dross) would show up deficient under the test of fire.

Both the KJV and the NIV say that they will be "tormented" day and night for ever and ever. Here again, we will see both translations producing contradictions which would not occur had they translated "aion" correctly. The words "for ever and ever" are in Greek, "aionas ton aionon." The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English, which has the KJV, NIV, the Nestle's Greek text with a literal rendering beneath the Greek, reveals on page 771 that "aionas ton aionon" literally reads "ages of the ages." This makes much more sense since this passage also refers to "day and night." Technically, if "aion" means eternity, then this would be rendered "eternities of eternities" which is "absurdities." A few more things about fiery sulfur. It cannot be put out by water. The benefits of sulfur are too numerous to mention. In its pure state, it is tasteless, odorless, and colored light yellow. It is used in various compounds for fungicides, sulfa drugs, many skin ointments, matches, vulcanization of rubber, dyes, fixatives in photography, special cements for anchoring metals, hardening paper and woods. Sulfuric acid is one of the most important of all industrial chemicals because it is employed not only in the manufacture of sulfur-containing molecules but also in the manufacture of numerous other materials that do not themselves contain sulfur such as phosphoric acid. The acid is used in numerous industries from fertilizer, petroleum, pigments, metals, and making organic products. A little side story here just to stir further research on this subject. Brimstone was first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis where the "circuit" of the five cities was destroyed by fire and brimstone. This region is where we now have what is known as the "Dead Sea." This region has been known to be active off and on with fire for hundreds of years. The "Dead Sea" has brimstone deposits. Gehenna (hell) is a valley which leads to the Dead Sea. Although the subject is too detailed and complicated to get into in this article, there seems to be enough material to indicate that the "Dead Sea" and "Lake of Fiery

Brimstone" which is the "second death" have some possible connections which have not been thoroughly evaluated in orthodoxy. Remember, Sodom, will one day be restored to her former estate. Sodom is in the vicinity of the Dead Sea. (Ex. Chapter 16)

Most of you have heard at least one end-time scenario of how the end of this age or world will come about. The book of Revelation is always the center of the story. Without the beasts, false prophets, lake of fire, and plagues, these stories lose their holding power. The charts would not be so graphically gruesome without these images. Perhaps the reader should know, that probably every generation in Christendom has lived through the so-called "end-time." Starting with the Montanists at the end of the second century among whose followers is none other than the church father, Tertullian, who was perhaps one of the leading influences of turning the church toward legalistic death. They prophesied the descent of New Jerusalem to a plain in Phrygia seven years straight, obviously missing it each year. We then come to St. Jerome who predicted the present destruction of Rome would usher in the end of the world. The church then became God on earth under Roman Catholicism so there was no need to declare an end to the earth. The "city of God" had arrived. When the Reformation came on the scene, the end of the world prophets came out in full force. Luther predicted the end of the world in his generation. Zwingli prophesied doom. Many of the leading Protestant Reformers called the Pope of their time anti-Christ which indicates the end of the world. Dozens of minor players predicted the end throughout the 1500's, 1600's and 1700's. In the 1800's we had the following false prophets: William Miller, Ellen G. White, Charles T. Russell, Joseph Rutherford, Herbert Armstrong, C.I. Scofield, and Clarence Larkin just to name a few. Moving into the 20th century we have H.A. Ironsides, Milton Lindberg, Oswald Smith, Herbert Lockyer, William Orr, Jack Van Impe, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsey, Pat Robertson, and the list goes on into the thousands. Pulpits, T.V. stations, radio stations, newsletters, and books are full of fear-filling prophets and prophetesses. The closer we get to the year 2000 thousand, the crazier it will get. The year 1000 brought similar responses. Fill your heart with fear, or fill your heart with love. You will get hotter or colder as the years roll by. I would like to point out that many who set dates who were in error taught the doctrine of "eternal torment," or the "doctrine of eternal death." I am not aware of any who believed in the salvation of all mankind who have misled people in "judging before the time." The words "destroy," "perish," "destruction," etc., mean that whatever is destroyed is not at the time of destruction useful for what it is intended. Man was created to enjoy a life of commune with his creator. Because of sin, man finds himself estranged from his purpose and as a result is destroyed during the ages. Our Father says He kills and He makes alive, He creates good and He creates evil, He makes vessels, can and does destroy them, and He is able to refashion them for future use. If you are presently a Christian, did you not find your former life, in the words of Paul, "dung"? Christian, is He not refashioning you presently? Are you so vain as to think that He cannot do the same for the lowest of men or the greatest of men? What do you have to offer the Creator that wasn't given to you? And if received and not earned, why do you boast? Why do you call the Creator a "respector of people"? If you did not "earn" your estate in Him, be very careful before you exclude one single human being from His goodness and mercy. Do not find yourself complaining to Him if in the last hour He decides to "hire" every person under the sun and give them the same wages you will receive. Do not find yourself calling His goodness "unrighteous" and "unjust." In this present age (aion) we are experiencing sin, sickness, dying, death, judgment -- which are all relative truths, but not one of these will be experienced by anyone after the end of the ages. Let us not confuse the present process of eonian chastening, correction

during the ages with the ultimate goal of our Father's love. After the present experience of separation in our minds from our Creator, we will be able to truly appreciate the glory of being in the will and purpose of our Father. We will never succumb to the temptation of believing any other voice except our Creator's. Everything He does for His children is for our good, including the painful time of learning what it is like for men to be separated from their Creator in the vanity of their carnal minds. Man has never been separated from Him. Where can man go that the Creator is not? Of Him, for Him and to Him are all things. It is only in the realm of the "lie" in our minds that we believe we are separated. One day, that lie will be completely dispelled. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, and the remedy for the consequences of the "lie" was also provided for before man was ever created. The scriptures declare that the glory of the latter house will be greater than the former. There will come forth something wonderful from these many ages of pain and suffering. After the present experiences of our Father's chastening, and our suffering the consequences of not being our brother's keeper, we will be able to appreciate the glory of our Father's blessings and universal reconciliation in the future. It is an obvious fact that when we lose something or something we have is destroyed, it becomes more precious to us and a return of something which has been lost brings much joy.

I am reminded of a popular song sung in the 1970's which contained the line: "Don't it always seem to go, that we don't know what we got till it's gone." It seems deep gratefulness is best ingrained by "losing" it for a season. For Adam (mankind, in Adam all died), his separation from the presence of his creator will be something that laws cannot teach. His experience in darkness, his ignorance of the ways of his Creator will be remembered. The prodigal, while being restored to the kingdom, will never forget his "pigpen" experience. That experience will do something that the prodigal's brother did not learn. As a result, the prodigal's brother had a flaw in character. Often we, Christians have that flaw - self-righteousness. We constantly need to search our hearts for that disease. Is there anything in you that might desire to see some people eternally "below" you either as dust and ashes or eternally tormented in flames of fire? Would you like to see yourself in a seat a little closer to Jesus than some others you are familiar with? Search your heart. These kind of attitudes most assuredly will find the flames. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. The lake of fire is the second death. It is the death of death which brings life! The deathly attitude of wanting one's brother in a lower state will certainly find itself eventually destroyed. It is not in line with the character of the Almighty Who loves all and is willing that all mankind be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. He Who is greatest in the kingdom of our Father is servant of all. Have we come to the place of truly desiring to serve? If not, then we have other things in our heart which must be replaced.

We have covered most of the main scriptures and arguments used to teach "eternal death." Those we did not cover, are as easy to deal with as the scriptures we just discussed. Most of the arguments stem from the words we covered in this article. The doctrine of annihilation, when thoroughly analyzed, is not to be found in the languages of the Bible. Unfortunately, most best-selling Bible translations, due to the allegiance by the translators to the traditions of their forefathers, teach all three views: annihilation, eternal torment, and the reconciliation of all mankind. This has caused many people much grief and has perplexed many theologians to make statements like this one from a leading scholar, Dr. C. Rider Smith:

"In the earlier chapter, it has been shown that the New Testament teaches everlasting punishment. On a review of the whole evidence, therefore, it follows that throughout the book there are two doctrines which to the human mind are irreconcilable; the doctrine of Universalism and the doctrine that there are those who will not be saved. It is then to be concluded that on this subject there are two doctrines in the New Testament which cannot be both true, or if the right conclusion, that here there are two doctrines that are both true, though the mind of man cannot reconcile them." (The Bible Doctrine of the Life Hereafter, page 258 by Dr. C. Rider Smith.)

If one stays within the English of the best-selling Catholic and Protestant Bibles and remains objective, one must come to the above conclusion. However, if one digs deeper, through a little search into the meaning of a few key words such as "eternal," "destroy," "lose," "perish," we will discover there is no inconsistency throughout the scriptures regarding the fate of mankind. We can be assured that our Omnipotent, Omniscient, Loving, Just, Wise Father knows exactly what He is doing, and He is doing all His good pleasure.

Man, as a builder, has shown that in the end, apart from the Creator, he is able to produce nothing but "dung," waste. Look at our landfills. Look at the thousands of cities now beneath the sand. Vanity, emptiness, futility . . . these are the products of man. This most certainly speaks of "annihilation." But it is man who is the annihilator, not our Father. He can take our "dung," plant his seeds into it, and produce wonderful everlasting life. He not only can, but He will. He is not the builder who set out to build and could not complete it. He is not the general who went to war too short handed. We, in our short-sighted Christian traditions and creeds have made Him fit this mold. But I assure you, He will break this teaching from the minds of men and bring forth the everlasting truth that His Love for His Creation, of which we are a part, will not end up in a garbage pile of ashes, as the annihilation doctrine teaches, nor will any of His creations experience a "living death" - a torment for eternity as the "eternal torment" doctrine teaches. No, Our Father is not a waster, destroyer. He is a Creator, and the mind of man cannot conceive of the riches of His kingdom.

1.12. Judging Our Maker

Judging Our Maker or "Vengeance is Mine," Saith the Lord

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and [to] Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think [of men] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (1 Corinthians 4:5-6, KJV).

"For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30-31, NKJV).

Whether we admit it or not, nearly all believers "judge before the time." We do not know the end from the beginning, yet most of us have pet doctrines as to what will happen to mankind when it is all finished. We bring out our little pet end-time doctrines and tell the world what one must do to avoid eternal punishment, or annihilation. What we, unfortunately, do not realize is that in doing so, we have also judged our Maker. We have judged His work, His people, and since He identifies with His people, we have judged Him. When we, through our doctrines determine whether our Creator will roast or annihilate someone, we have made a judgment. When we state a person is going to "hell" if he or she does not invite Jesus into their heart, we have judged our Creator. When we say that He will resurrect all, give all a chance to "make the decision" and those refusing to join up with Jesus, will be annihilated, we have judged our Maker. Of course, we say we are just quoting what the Bible says, but are we really quoting what the Bible says, or are we chaining scriptures out of context to make the Bible say what is really just in our hearts? Are we just projecting onto the Creator what we feel would be just if we were the Creator?

Let us take the above scripture in Hebrews as an example. How often have we heard this scripture used to tell people that God is vengeful, wrathful, and angry toward sinners. It is said that one day His wrath will be poured out upon his enemies and when it does, it will result in terrible eternal torment or utter destruction. However, the above scripture says no such thing. In the first place, notice the Lord will judge His people, not those who are not his people. Also notice this verse does not say what the outcome of His vengeance will be. He just states that it belongs to Himself, not us. When we study that scripture further, we see that that first part is a quotation from Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 32:35). We discover it is found in what came to be called the Song of Moses. Moses, just before his death prophesies to Israel, not the world, that they would rebel and do evil in the sight of the Lord and provoke Him to anger. Please note that this verse speaks of an entire nation who are called God's people and he does not specify individual people. He is referring to Israel as one. When studying the Bible, notice how often the Lord deals with nations, tribes, and lands as one entity. The judgments are inflicted upon the entire people as a group, not on individuals. This is most important to understand when handling the scriptures. In the midst of this prophecy predicting God's people Israel will fall away from the Lord and righteousness is the

scripture, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." In this same song is found the scripture many Christians seem to be unfamiliar with, "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from my hands" (Deuteronomy 32:39, NKJV). Our Maker follows that with extremely strong language which is typical of judgments against nations throughout the Bible. "If I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay those who hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh, with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy."

Now please note, we have here a prophecy from the Creator through Moses the leader of His people, that they would do wickedness which will result in them becoming enemies of the Lord. He would take vengeance upon his enemies with "arrows drunk with blood" and his "sword" would be wet with the "blood from the slain and his captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy." Now let me ask you this: if I end the story here and begin to preach "hell-fire, annihilation, and damnation," would I be rightly dividing the Word? The answer is absolutely not! Why? Because I failed to show the true end of His judgment. Read the paragraph right after the arrows and sword devouring flesh and you will see the final outcome of His judgment.

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people" (Deuteronomy 32:43). The ultimate outcome of His vengeance will provide atonement for His land and His people. This is the same people who He prophesied would be His enemies! The gentiles are everyone else in the world who are not "his" people and the scripture tells them to "rejoice." His vengeance brought atonement. You see the reason why vengeance must belong to the Lord is because only He can kill and then make alive again, wound and then heal. You and I can only kill. We do not have the power to resurrect, but He does.

You may say at this point, but He will not save all of physical Israel, He will only provide atonement for spiritual Israel, those who are born again. Those who teach this usually point out that only those who have the circumcision of the heart are true Jews or true Israel. If you will turn to Romans 11:26-36, I want to ask you a plain question: Did spiritual Jews or Israel become the enemies of the church or did physical Jews or Israel? It is abundantly clear that the "all Israel" who would be saved was clearly physical Israel.

"The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins. Concerning the gospel they are enemies but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:26-29).

Now, one may perhaps say, "Well, of course, the Lord will eventually provide atonement for the sins of His people, even though they may become His enemies, but do not carry this to the extreme of including pagans, heathen, sinners, the ungodly, etc." I would say to that statement, "Be careful who you think are 'God's people.'"

"It shall come to pass in that day that I will answer, says the Lord; I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil; they shall answer Jezreel (God will sow). Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, and I will have

mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God'!" (Hosea 2:21-23). Do you really want to get on the judge's seat and conjecture who will receive mercy and who will not? Do you really want to judge our Maker and tell him who will respond to His love and mercy and who will not? The Bible is absolutely full of these kinds of examples where He speaks very strongly using language of wrath, judgment, and destruction. Remember, however, He Who kills, even though one's theology may deny it, can make alive; He can heal and He can take the clay and remold it. The Bible makes it very plain that "in Adam" all would die (1 Corinthians 15:22). Be careful, before you say that when He shows His mercy to all, that not all will live and be healed. Despite what John Calvin has carved in stone, the Lord will have mercy upon all. That mercy will bring deliverance. The following scripture is another one that warns us not to be dogmatic about consigning multitudes into abysses of torture that would make Hitler look like a mercy killer or to conclude that our Father created a huge garbage landfill where He dumps all of His mistakes. He makes no mistakes, even though we cannot see his wisdom in some of His creation.

"For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:32-33). His ways and judgments are past finding out, yet does not each denomination have formulas, dogmas, doctrines which spell out what God will do to the "unrighteous"? Do they not tell you whether you are in good standing or not? Do they not warn you of the consequences of violating their doctrines? They most certainly do, despite the fact the scriptures warn, "Judge nothing before the time."

1.13. Sodom's Judgment and Her Final Restoration

Sodom's Judgment and Her Final Restoration

Perhaps the leading example used to express God's wrath and the finality of His judgments is the example of Sodom and Gomorra. Those who wish to project their own vengeful wrath upon our Creator who is love often use this example to consign the basest of society to everlasting torture. They point to the passage in Jude where Jude describes them as examples of "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 1:7, KJV). Peter said they were condemned to destruction (2 Peter 2:6). We are presently going to take these five words and dig a little deeper than the level the King James translators dug. The theology of the Anglican Bishops who presided over the translating work was not far removed from Roman Catholicism. Do not forget that the Anglican church was formed due to Henry VIII's love life, and not from a love of the scriptures, mind you.

We must keep in mind, when we read our Bibles, men, for the most part, did the translating. As to the King James Bible, all 46 or so people involved were males filled with the knowledge and superstition of their times. The scholarship of King James day has been grossly exaggerated. I will not spend any more time on this point other than to give one example to provoke you to study this out further yourself.

One of King James' favorite medicines, which he swore by as did many other leading "intellectuals" of his days, was a salve for the healing of sword wounds. The following is an account of how it was made and applied: "Take of moss growing on the head of a thief who has been hanged and left in the air; of real mummy; of human blood, still warm, of each, one ounce; on human suet, two ounces; of linseed oil, turpentine, and Armenian bole - of each, two drachmas. Mix all well in a mortar, and keep the salve in an oblong, narrow urn. With this salve the weapon, after being dipped in the blood from the wound, was to be carefully anointed, and then laid by in a cool place. In the mean time, the wound was to be duly washed with fair clean water, covered with a clean, soft, linen rag, and opened once a day to cleanse of purulent or other matter." As we can see from the above example, the scholastic community had a mixture of truth mixed with gross darkness.

One last point dealing with King James and his translators, be very careful about consigning homosexuals to "hell" as if this sin was "the unpardonable sin." While doing some research on the King James Bible, I came across some love letters written by King James to men. In *The Wisest Fool in Christendom* by William McElwee, we read: "The cheerful, unaffected and unselfconscious ordinariness of James's behavior in public, though it lacked dignity, had hitherto been in many ways an asset in his dealings with his subjects. But now it led him to treat Carr in public with the same exaggerated, gross affection as in private, and what had already been a little odd in a sixteen year old boy when he was worshipping at the shrine of Esme' Stuart, became grotesque in the middle-aged man. He appeared everywhere with his arm round Carr's neck, constantly kissed and fondled him, lovingly feeling the texture of the expensive suits he choose and bought for him, pinching his cheeks and smoothing his hair." James considered himself to be a brilliant intellectual

and scholar.

James selected the scholars who were to be on the King James Bible translation committee. The leading Hebrew scholar of that day in England, Hugh Broughton, when asked to endorse the translation said he would rather "be rent to pieces by wild horses than have had any part in the urging of such a wretched version of the Bible on the poor people" (Men and their Motives by Jimmie H. Heflin and many other sources). It would be very unwise to believe that the superstitions, politics, and religious biases of sixteenth century England did not find their way into the English Bible of that time. Even today, when comparing twentieth century translations, the doctrinal positions of the translators finds itself on the pages of the Bibles they produce. Calvinists, for example, will translate predestination and "total depravity" type scriptures quite differently than Arminianists. With this in mind, let us examine the "vengeance of eternal fire" and see if we cannot get past fifteenth century and twentieth century scholarship with their doctrinal biases. Let us look at this scripture as it appears in the Greek and leave the theology to the theologians.

1.14. "Suffering the Vengeance of Eternal Fire"

"Suffering the Vengeance of Eternal Fire"

Suffering: In modern thinking, the English word conveys pain and agony which would correspond to a condition of being in hot fire. This word, however, did not have that meaning in seventeenth century England. The English word in that time period meant "allow" or "let." The underlying Greek word in this passage is the word "hupecho," Strong's number 5254. Strong's definition of the word is "to hold under." Young's Concordance has to "to hold up under." If Jude wanted to express pain or torture in this passage, he could have used many Greek words to express that, pathema, atimazo, pascho, are but a few examples. Clearly the problem here is the change in meaning of the English word "suffer" which meant "allow" in the seventeenth century which today has an entirely different meaning. This is a clear example of the need for Bible translations to convey the meaning of the original languages in clear present-day English. King James Bible English is just too archaic. This is also an example to show that current dictionaries offer little help and actually hinder the discovery of the true meaning behind original Greek and Hebrew words. A contemporary dictionary offers the meaning of words as defined by the present society. The meaning of a word today may be completely different from the same word used in a previous time period. This is very important to understand.

Vengeance: This English word conveys in the twentieth century an idea of "getting even, settling scores, an eye for an eye." Often it is synonymous with the word "revenge" as one will find out in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Vindictive is the first definition in Webster's under "vengeful." Clearly, this English word conveys the idea of retribution, a final getting even, or of someone finally getting what they deserve in the form of punishment, an "eye for an eye" justice, so to speak. In the Seedmaster Bible program, using its Strong's numbering system, we find the Greek word used here for "vengeance" is "dike." The Thayer's lexicon in this Bible program lists the following definitions for this word in the following order: 1. Custom, usage. 2. Right, just. 3. A suit at law. 4. A judicial hearing, judicial decision, esp. sentence of condemnation. 5. Execution of a sentence, punishment. 5a. To suffer punishment. 6. The goddess Justice, avenging justice. Please note that the primary definitions do not indicate a negative quality. It is not until we get to pagan concepts such as the "Justice Goddess" that we begin to see a vindictiveness in the definition. This word "dike" is also used in Acts 25:15 where the chief priests wanted a "judgment against" Paul. In the Greek, a word had to be added to "dike" to make it a "judgment against" Paul. Clearly, the word simply means "judgment" in both these cases.

Why do we often think in negative terms of His judgments? It seems that Christians have been taught that the Creator's righteous judgments are without mercy, that heavenly justice demands "getting what you deserve." A recent book edited by William Crockett entitled Four Views on Hell will illustrate the point. One essay in this book is written by one of the leading spokesmen for the doctrine of a literal burning of literal bodies in an eternal fire. John Walvoord, former president of Dallas Theological Seminary, writes, "The problem for all is to comprehend the infinite

righteousness of God that must judge those who have not received grace. The human mind is incapable of comprehending an infinite righteousness and must bow to the Scriptures and their interpretation when directly and faithfully set forth." He makes God's righteousness almost appear as if it contradicted His mercy. We see in the natural all kinds of examples where our legal systems grant pardons, clemency, plea bargaining, lighter sentences, etc. The Creator's mercy and love is far greater than the legal system of this world, yet we refuse Him the right to make the end of His judgment, mercy for all, jubilee! James says that mercy will triumph over judgment (James 2:13). James even warns that judgment without mercy is to those who show no mercy! This should serve as a strong warning to those who refuse to acknowledge that ultimately mercy will triumph over judgment.

Eternal: We have many tapes, booklets and tracts proving that the Greek word *aion*, translated by the KJV translators several different ways, cannot possibly mean "eternal." This King James Bible error is perhaps the most grievous of them all. Other popular Bibles have followed the tradition of the "Authorized Version" in perpetuating this error. The early revisionists of the KJV received (and still do) great persecution for correcting this error in dozens of places. Write and we will be happy to send you complete documented research proving that the Greek word "*aion*" when properly translated is a time word with a beginning and an end. The word "eternal" in this verse is the adjective of the word "*aion*." An adjective cannot have a greater meaning than the noun from which it is derived. The adjective "hourly" must pertain to the "hour," it cannot mean "weekly," "monthly," or "eternally." The Greek word "*aion*" means "age." It would be improper grammar to give the adjective "*aionios*" a greater meaning than its noun. Aions (ages) are made (Hebrews 1:2), there is before the aions (1 Corinthians 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:9), the end of the aions (ages) (Hebrews 9:26; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Matthew 24:3). There are at least five ages mentioned in the Bible: ages past (Colossians 1:26), present age (Luke 20:34), and at least two more in the future (Ephesians 2:7). Ages have beginnings and endings, they deal with time, space, and matter. Before He made the "ages, aions" our Father was still the "I Am." The King James Bible translated this word many different ways ranging from "world," "age," to "forever," "everlasting," and "eternal." Many recent translations have cleaned up much of the mess. There are a few dangling places where some translators refuse to be consistent. I am familiar with many translations which have consistently translated the word "*aion*" and its adjective "*aionios*" into English words pertaining to periods of time with beginnings and endings. Most of you who are reading this booklet realize these two words do not speak of eternity in its true sense. Therefore I will not spend any more time on the subject.

1.15. The Final Word on Sodom

The Final Word on Sodom

We have all seen, and probably are all guilty of taking portions of scripture out of context and distorting the true spirit behind the words. A passage of scripture must be interpreted in context and with a true knowledge of the heart and intent of those involved in the passage. Most of us have heard bad reports about persons we know to be of outstanding character. We are less apt to receive a bad report about such a person than about a person who has a bad reputation.

I believe most people, including Christians, do not personally know the true character of our Father. We are too quick to put Him on a throne of judgment casting all his enemies into eternal oblivion whether it be eternal torment or eternal annihilation. The following chapter of Ezekiel depicts very well the transgressions of those who claim to know Him and His methods of judgment. This portion of scripture classically reveals who the greatest transgressors against Him are and how our Father will deal with the minor transgressors. It also reveals how He will deal with the greatest transgressors, that is, those who claim to be His own. The entire sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel is such a segment of scripture. It is a classic example of the creator's view of what modern Christendom calls the chiefest of sins. As pointed out in the previous section, our Bibles have been twisted somewhat to reflect the doctrines of the translators. The larger the portion of scripture, the more difficult it is to change its meaning. In a short sentence, one word can entirely change the whole sentence. It is much more difficult to change the meaning of an entire chapter. Ezekiel chapter sixteen, I believe, truly reflects our Father's view of the grossest of mankind's sins and his ultimate dealings with our infractions.

I leave it to the reader to study the entire chapter carefully and prayerfully. We will just refer to certain passages that express the Creator's view of the sins of Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem and his ultimate judgment of each of them. I believe it shows very clearly why vengeance must be left to our Father and what the outcome of His vengeance will be. As you read the chapter, please note:

1. Our Maker begins the chapter with His grievances against those who were at this time called "His chosen people." He reminds them they were heathen when He called them and it was He who turned them into "chosen" (Ezekiel 16:1-14).
2. His "chosen people" trusted in their own beauty, played the harlot and chased after foreign gods. He called this adultery which, according to the law, was punishable by death.
3. The God of Israel said He would judge their sins by bringing against them all those with whom she committed adultery.

"And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. . . They shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked

and bare (please note the symbolism). They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords" (Ezekiel 16:38-40).

4. This was their judgment, He would then be quiet, and angry no more. Question: will He judge them again for this sin, or is this the judgment for that sin? If this is their judgment, let us see what follows their judgment. "You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations, says the Lord. For thus says the Lord God: I will deal with you as you have done, who despise the oath by breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed . . . when I provide an atonement for all you have done, says the Lord God." Please note the final judgment for Israel would be an atonement for their sins even though He had them "stoned and thrust through with a sword." They were killed! "I kill and I make alive."

5. In this chapter which graphically describes the sins of the "chosen people" and their judgment, is also the sins of Sodom, and her judgment. Sodom's sins, from the Creator's viewpoint were not nearly as bad as His "chosen people's" sins. "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abominations before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit. Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done" (Ezekiel 16:49-54).

6. Our Maker's own people committed more wicked sins than the heathen. They broke the covenant with the Creator. In spite of this, He would provide atonement for their sins, forgive their iniquity, and will at that time give Sodom and her daughters to God's chosen as daughters (Ezekiel 16:53-63)! If one looks at the history of Israel or the Church, one will discover that the sins of His people have always been greater than the sins of the heathen. We just refuse to acknowledge them. We are blinded by our pride, which was Israel's problem as well. It is perhaps a believer's biggest problem, pride and self-righteousness.

7. When this happens God's own people will remember their ways and be ashamed and will receive their sisters Sodom and Samaria as sisters. This chapter is a classical example showing how the Creator kills and then makes alive again. It shows that while He judges for grievous sins against Him, the ultimate end of His judgments is mercy. It shows that the most heinous of sins are committed by those who claim to know Him, not those who do not. It also shows we have judged Him before the time. Have we received Sodom back as a sister? I think not.

We see the Ruler of the Universe pronounce the same kind of judgments He gave to Israel upon the heathen nations surrounding Israel. Moab shall be like Sodom, Ammon like Gomorra. He will destroy Assyria, and make Nineveh desolation (Zephaniah 2:13-15; Zephaniah 2:9). Yet in Jeremiah our Maker promises to "bring back the captivity of Moab in the latter days" (Jeremiah 48:47). In the 49th chapter of Jeremiah, He said He would totally destroy Ammon, yet in the 6th verse He promises to afterwards "bring back the captives of the people of Ammon" (Jeremiah 49:1-6). The Father of all's chastening and judgments of the nations are severe, but ultimately will end in mercy. Mercy will triumph over judgment even though His people have usually represented Him as ultimately "getting revenge." We, who have become Abel's voice still cry out for revenge and call it our Father's voice. No, it is not the Father's voice. It is time to stop projecting our

self-righteousness and vengefulness upon a God Who desires mercy not sacrifice. We are the ones who call revenge "Justice." We must repent from our false judgments. When we do, our Father will give us the heathen for an inheritance (Psalms 2:8). Our sisters will come back into the family.

1.16. Glory

Glory

We will not do a thorough word study of the various Hebrew and Greek words used to express what we in English call "glory." There are many studies on these words. These words center around concepts such as: weight, honor, valuable material things, divine presence, an opinion, estimate, high esteem, dignity, praise, worship, etc. We will not enter into a deeper study of "glory" than the above definitions.

Jesus Christ was said to be the express image of the invisible God.

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of Majesty in heaven" (Hebrews 1:1-3). The entire book of Hebrews is really a warning to Jews who were beginning to forsake the glorious latter day house by returning back to the former house consisting of outer appearances, rituals, and customs. In the above passage, the writer refers to his days as the "last days." The writer warned of severe consequences of going back to shadows of things to come. In 70 A.D. those shadowy things were completely destroyed by the Roman army. So the writer of Hebrews was telling us the very image of the shadow the Jews felt they were giving glory to had appeared. When Jesus began to focus on fully glorifying the True Father through His suffering on the tree, they began to abandon Him in droves. Even those closest to Him could not bear the weight of this "glory." From Gethsemane to the tree of crucifixion was a lonely walk indeed.

Why did the vast majority of the Jews forsake Jesus and return to the shadow? What was the shadow? The shadow was the "law." What is the "law"? When we look at the foundation of what came to be called the "Mosaic Law," it was really nothing more than a second hand word, an intermediary word. The Creator said He wanted to speak to them personally, but when they saw the mountain in thick black smoke they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die" (Exodus 20:18-19). When Jesus manifested as the word of the Creator, they again said, "We have Moses."

Moses speaks of written words, yesterday's message, not living. Since he is dead, we can twist his words to say whatever we want them to say because he is not here to tell us the "spirit" behind the words. Religious man, whether he has just the Hebrew portion of the Bible or both the Greek and Hebrew portions never really wants the Creator around, who is a spirit. Religious man seeks revenge which he calls "justice." The true heart behind all of our Father's words is love, mercy, grace. These things religious man, whether he is Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Moslem, Pentecostal, Kingdom, Charismatic, or whatever, really is not interested in except for himself. We want the Judge of all to judge us with mercy but give "an eye for an eye" to everyone else. When

we look at the harsh strong words of rebuke which Jesus spoke, they were not directed to the same people to whom the religious leaders directed strong harsh words. Religious man, past or present, has directed the strong words of judgment towards those whom he deems a "sinner." This may mean breaking a set of laws, or not being in the right denomination, or being born on the wrong side of the tracks, or having the wrong color or lineage or such a simple thing as not having spoken the right set of words or being baptized a certain way. Religious man says we have "the law" and each sect has its own "law." Those who do not conform to these laws are sinners. When observing a religious person, one will observe they spend much of their time judging according to their laws which, of course, are also their God's laws.

Now one would think that Jesus would be thankful and lavish much praise upon those who were the guardians of "God's law," but made themselves the guardians of "yesterday's word." "We have Moses!" was their reply to the Living Word. This is the very group to whom He spoke those harsh words. This is the very group that shut their ears and gnashed their teeth when they heard "the Father's Words" coming through Jesus Christ. This group, according to Jesus, sat in Moses' seat, a seat of judgment. He said this group was not willing to enter the kingdom and hindered others from entering into it. Religious man loves law and judgment which he equates to "justice." The heart of the Father is "love covers a multitude of sins." The law man asks, "how many times do I have to forgive before I can do away with him forever." The heart of the Father is "His mercy endures forever."

Jesus came to show how far the mercy of the Father goes. If ever there was a time for the Creator of the Universe to manifest "justice" which means "judgment" to the religious man, it was at the crucifixion of His Son. Jew and Gentile both were guilty of the greatest of sins, greater perhaps than all the sins of the world combined. If ever there was a moment in which no man would have found fault with the Creator if He blasted that entire group of people into eternal flames, this was the moment. Yet what were the words of the Almighty Himself through Jesus Christ who only spoke what He heard the father say? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Did the Father forgive them for the highest of sins in the entire universe? Many Christians still say no. Millions of Jews have been tortured, burned, maligned as Christ killers by the church.

How quick the church is to parrot the famous words of John and James who wanted to command fire to come upon the heads of the Samaritans because they refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ. We, Christians, are so quick to consign to flames those who have refused to yield to our disgraceful counterfeits we call the gospel.

Imagine this situation. Imagine the greatest evangelists of all time converging on your town, evangelists who personally knew Jesus Christ himself. Imagine these evangelists holding a revival at the local Baptist church. The advertising would read, "The world's greatest evangelists." It would bring the entire town. They would preach their hearts out and then give the usual Roman Road close with the usual invitation to raise their hands while no one is looking. Those who secretly raised their hands would then be told they must now come up front. But no one comes forward. How often I have heard Christians consigning those who refuse their version of the gospel to everlasting punishment. They feel justified in consigning them there. They heard "the Gospel" and refused it. They had their chance. If they go to "hell" now, they deserve it! Have you ever seen this kind of response? I have seen it more times than I care to remember. But listen to the words of

Him of Whom the Gospel is all about. Listen to His words dealing with this exact situation which occurred in the first century A.D. in Samaria. Jesus said to His disciples who wanted to destroy these men who refused their gospel, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's life but to save them" (Luke 9:55-56). Not much has changed in the last 2000 years. Jesus' disciples did not know what manner of spirit they were of then, and neither do they know what manner of spirit they are of today. They still would rather bring down real coals of fire than use the coals of fire Jesus would have us use.

"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:14-21). The above passage reveals our Father's vengeance and His Glory. One can justify their hatefulness, self-righteousness, religious pride all they want. The touchstone (test of their faith) is right here. Those who lack the patience of the Saints will always quickly turn the true coals of fire of overcoming evil with good into natural coals of fire meant to hurt and destroy men's lives. How well we have rehearsed, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Do we really understand the magnitude of that statement? No, of all the denominations I have been a part of, none of them have seen the depth of that verse. We often take a measure of that verse for our personal sins, but most of us cannot or will not extend the depth of that verse to our enemies. The glory of the Creator will be seen when He will manifest what He has said a thousand times in the scriptures and yet we refuse to believe Him. His mercy will triumph over judgment. He will overcome all evil with good. His mercy will not end when your heart stops beating, nor will it end in the ages to come. It will not end at the supposed Great Judgment when all our enemies are expected to get what we think they should have coming to them, nor will it end if one ultimately "decides" not to "choose" Jesus. Salvation never was a choice, which requires effort, forethought, will, etc. We are born of the will of God, not of our own will (John 1:13). Salvation is a gift that will come upon all, even upon those too ignorant to know what it is or is not .. NO, His glory will be seen when we see that His love, even though we didn't believe Him, will conquer all enemies. They will submit to Him not because He bent their necks into submission with vindictiveness and human wrath, but that He indeed had all time, power, and authority to bring about the circumstances to finally draw mankind unto Himself. He, Jesus Christ, glorified His Father by loving all His enemies enough to bring them all to the Father through His love manifested on the tree of crucifixion. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all mankind unto myself. This He said, signifying by what manner of death He would die." Did the Father not give into His hands all things (John 13:3; John 16:15)? Did Jesus not have all power and authority (John 17:2)? Was it not the Father's desire or will to save all mankind (1 Timothy 2:3-4)? Was this not Jesus' mission? To seek and find that which was lost (Luke 19:10)? Do you dare say that Divine Love will not accomplish that which He was sent forth to do?

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him.

And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them" (John 17:1-10).

Jesus came but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 15:24). "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". His body indwelt with the Holy Spirit is sent to the rest of the whole world. The scriptures declare, "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Anyone, who has ever been touched by His love knows He will never be satisfied until He finds every single sheep that was ever lost in the world of religion, superstition, sin, selfishness, vanity, pride . . . no, He will only be satisfied when Perfect Love is complete.

I am reminded of a story J. Preston Eby tells in his book *God is Love*. It was a story of an incident which occurred in mid-nineteenth century Russia. A Russian nobleman accompanied by his faithful servant of many years was making his way home across the frozen steppes of Russia in a dogsled. They had traveled many, many miles across the barren wastes and were now but twenty miles or so from home, when the servant spied something which, indeed, brought great terror to their hearts. About a mile or two behind them they could make out the form of a huge pack of wolves that had scented them and was now descending upon them. They gave the reins to the dogs, cracked their whips, and shouted whatever the Russian equivalent of "mush" is. The dogs strained their muscles and tried to go faster. Yet, irresistibly, the wolf pack closed the gap until finally there were only a hundred or so yards behind them ... then only fifty ... then only ten ... then only five. Their eyes glowed like coals out of hell and their large yellow fangs were visible. The growling deep within their throats and the panting noises of their breathing, could be heard as they drew closer and closer. There was no hope; there was no place of escape. Suddenly, the servant threw himself off backward from the dogsled, with predictable results. The onrushing pack converged and stopped, tearing the servant to pieces while his master escaped. I thought to myself, "What a wonderful illustration of love!" but upon more mature reflection, I realized that it only vaguely glimpsed the real meaning of love. It hardly touched the fringe of its garment. Ah, it would have come closer if the nobleman had thrown himself off for the servant! "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10). In both the doctrine of eternal torment and the doctrine of annihilation is an element quite foreign to our Father's plan of redemption, that of man's choice. We forget so quickly that when our Father Abraham cut his covenant with the Maker of us all, he, Abraham, fell asleep. It has always been a one sided covenant. In the garden of Gethsemane, again, the faithful fell asleep. The arm of salvation is the Lord's and none other. It is all of Him, including and especially the decision. He subjected creation to futility and He will restore it. And the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former house.

It is time to put our pride away and give Him true worship and honor. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalms 127:1). We are His workmanship. How quickly we forget. He finds the lost sheep, and He loses none. Believe it, little lost sheep. Another love story taken from Eby's God is Love will illustrate the point.

While reflecting upon the parental love of God, a story came to mind that I read some months ago. In this story a man who was entirely careless of spiritual things died and went to hell. And he was much missed on earth by his old friends. His business manager went down to the gates of hell to see if there were any chance of bringing him back. But, though he pleaded for the gates to be opened, the iron bars never yielded. His cricket captain went also and besought Satan to let him out for just the remainder of the season. But there was no response. His minister went also and argued, saying, "He was not altogether bad. Let him have another chance. Let him out just this once." Many other friends of his went also and pleaded with Satan saying, "Let him out, let him out, let him out." But when his mother came, she spoke no word of his release. Quietly, and with a strange catch in her voice, she said to Satan, "Let me in." And immediately the great doors swung open upon their hinges. For love goes down through the gates of hell and there redeems the damned! Our Father and God, incarnate in the Person of Jesus Christ, holds in His nail-pierced hand the keys to death and hell. O grave, where is thy victory? O gates of hell, thou shalt not prevail, for the Redeemer of Israel and the Savior of the world, the God who is LOVE, holds in His triumphant hand thy key! This is how the doctrine of eternal torment and the doctrine of annihilation will come to an end. There is no true victory in either teaching, not for The God Who is Love. In fact, it has already ended. Have you not heard, "It is finished!"

I ask you to prayerfully humble yourself and meditate with all earnestness on the following scripture. Pride will keep one out of this realm, so I encourage you to ask our Father to "destroy" your pride before you read this scripture.

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

I would like to point out an interesting observation regarding the teaching of the doctrine of "annihilation." The two leading denominations of the teaching, (Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists) had their origins in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was at this time evolution destroyed many people's faith. Many denominations lost thousands of members. One of the principles of evolution is the possibility of matter being created apart from God. That everything came out of nothing. This principle made it easier for people to accept the doctrine of annihilation,

which is a return to nothing, total destruction.

However, the scriptures are very clear that there is no thing that is not:

"out of Him, and through Him, and unto Him" (Romans 11:36). And again, "For by Him were created all that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist . . . For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:16-20). And again, for a triple confirmation, "for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live" (1 Corinthians 8:6).

No, things do not come out of nothing, as evolutionists conclude, all things come out of God. Will He take a part of Himself and utterly destroy it or will all things return unto Him through Jesus Christ? Consider this very carefully as you read through the rest of this article.

Another point I would like you to consider is this: When we have a pet that becomes so ill that we feel it would be better to end it's life, we say things like, "It would be best for the cat if we put it to sleep." While this may sound very humane, the fact is, we are killing the cat. Many who embrace the utter destruction of millions of human beings, use terms such as "Conditional Mortality" and "Eternal Death." They get uncomfortable when someone uses plain speech like, "God is going to annihilate, utterly destroy, 'nuke' or disintegrate them." Why do they feel uncomfortable inside? Could it be their conscience telling them their doctrine is wrong? Could it be that dozens of scriptures pass through their minds like "love your enemies," and "love never fails," etc. And they find themselves repulsed by their own beliefs? You see, if annihilation is a true doctrine, then all the butchers of the world like Hitler begin to become justified by God's actions. If God can burn to death His enemies, and we are made in His image, then Hitler was just conforming to the image of God. After all, the Jews were Hitler's "enemies." When bloody Mary killed thousands of Protestants, it has been said her comment was something to the effect of, "I only do here on earth what my God will do to them in Heaven." Our concept of God will be acted out in our daily actions here on earth. Be very careful in formulating a concept (image) of God. You may become just like it. Now if your image of the Creator is One Who wants to, can, and will win all of His enemies through His love, then we will begin to conform to that image. Which image will make this world a better place to live in? I think the answer is obvious.

We must ask our Father to destroy "pride" in us because it is religious pride which makes us think we are receiving from the Holy Spirit when in fact we are receiving from the mind of man. Think the highest thought of the Creator, and that thought will fall short of His glory. Surely, annihilation and eternal torment fall very short of the glory of the All Powerful and Loving Father which He is. These teachings line up very nicely with the history of man ruling over man, don't you think? That is truly the source of these monstrous doctrines, the carnal, vain, mind of man. It is full of all manner of unclean thoughts which will one day be consumed in the lake of fire.

Now read and study the following scriptures and allow your spirit to soar to heavenly heights as the Spirit of Truth guides you into the riches of His kingdom and His love for you, your family, your

friends, and the enemies in your mind.

1. 1 Timothy 2:4 God will have all to be saved (KJV). Can His will be thwarted?
2. 1 Timothy 2:4 God desires all to come to the knowledge of truth. Will His desire come to pass?
3. 1 Timothy 2:6 Salvation of all is testified in due time. Are we judging God before due time?
4. John 12:47 Jesus came to save all. Will He succeed?
5. Ephesians 1:11 God works all after the counsel of His will. Can your will overcome His?
6. John 4:42 Jesus is Savior of the world. Can He be Savior of all without saving all?
7. 1 John 4:14 Jesus is Savior of the world. Why don't we believe it?
8. John 12:32 Jesus will draw all mankind unto Himself. To roast or to love?
9. Colossians 1:16 By Him all were created. Will He lose a part of His creation?
10. Romans 5:15-21 In Adam all condemned, in Christ all live. The same all?
11. 1 Corinthians 15:22 In Adam all die, in Christ all live. Again, the same all?
12. Ephesians 1:10 All come into Him at the fullness of times. Are you getting tired of seeing the word "all"?
13. Php 2:9-11 Every tongue shall confess Jesus is Lord. Will the Holy Spirit be given to everyone?
14. 1 Corinthians 12:3 Cannot confess except by Holy Spirit. See what I mean?
15. Romans 11:26 All Israel will be saved. But most Jews don't believe yet!
16. Acts 3:20-21 Restitution of all. How plain can you get?
17. Luke 2:10 Jesus will be joy to all people. Is there joy in "hell"?
18. Hebrews 8:11-12 All will know God. How long, O Lord?
19. Ephesians 2:7 His grace shown in the ages to come. Have we judged Him before the time?
20. Titus 2:11 Grace has appeared to all. Experientially to prophetically?
21. Romans 8:19-21 Creation set at liberty. How much of creation?
22. Colossians 1:20 All reconciled unto God. There's that word "all" again.
23. 1 Corinthians 4:5 All will have praise of God. What for?
24. James 5:11 End of the Lord is full of mercy. Is "hell" mercy?
25. Revelation 15:4 All nations worship when God's judgments are seen. Could His judgment be mercy?
26. Romans 11:32 All subject to unbelief, mercy on all. All?

27. Romans 11:36 All out of, through, and into Him. All into Him?
28. Ephesians 4:10 Jesus will fill all things. Including "hell"?
29. Revelation 5:13 All creation seen praising God. Including Satan?
30. 1 Corinthians 15:28 God will be all in all. What does that mean, preacher?
31. Revelation 21:4-5 No more tears, all things made new. "All" made new?
32. John 5:25 All dead who hear will live. How many will hear?
33. John 5:28 All in the grave will hear and come forth. How will the "righteous" judge, judge?
34. 1 Corinthians 3:15 All saved, so as by fire. How can fire save you?
35. Mark 9:49 Everyone shall be salted with fire. Including you?
36. Romans 11:15 Reconciliation of the world. Will fire save the world instead of destroy it?
37. 2 Corinthians 5:15 Jesus died for all. Did He die in vain?
38. John 8:29 Jesus always does what pleases His Father. What pleases the Father? (1 Timothy 2:4).
39. Hebrews 1:2 Jesus is Heir of all things. Does "things" include people?
40. John 3:35 All has been given into Jesus' hands. Can you accept this?
41. John 17:2 Jesus gives eternal life to all that His Father gave Him. How many did the Father give Him?
42. John 3:35 The Father gave Him all things. Study the word "things" in the Greek.
43. 1 Timothy 4:9-11 Jesus is Savior of all! Can't seem to get away from that word "all."
44. Hebrews 7:25 Jesus is able to save to the uttermost. How far is "uttermost"?
45. 1 Corinthians 15:26 Last enemy, death, will be destroyed. Including "lake of fire" which is "second death"?
46. Isaiah 46:10 God will do all His pleasure. Does Old Testament agree with the New?
47. Genesis 18:18 All families of the earth will be blessed. Here comes that word "all" again.
48. Daniel 4:35 God's will done in heaven and earth. What can defeat His will?
49. Psalms 66:3-4 Enemies will submit to God. Can any stay rebellious in "hell"?
50. Psalms 90:3 God turns man to destruction, then says return. How can one return from "destruction"?
51. Isaiah 25:7 Will destroy veil spread over all nations. All nations?
52. Deuteronomy 32:39 He kills and makes alive. Kills to bring life?

53. Psalms 33:15 God fashions all hearts. "All" hearts, including men like "Hitler"?
54. Proverbs 16:9 Man devises, God directs his steps. What about "free will"?
55. Proverbs 19:21 Man devises, but God's counsel stands. So much for "free will."
56. Lamentations 3:31-32 God will not cast off forever. Why does He cast off in the first place? (I Cor 11).
57. Isaiah 2:2 All nations shall flow to the Lord's house. "All" nations?
58. Psalms 86:9 All nations will worship Him. "All" nations!
59. Isaiah 45:23 All descendants of Israel justified. Including the wicked ones?
60. Psalms 138:4 All kings will praise God. Are you catching on?
61. Psalms 65:2-4 All flesh will come to God. That sounds wondrous.
62. Psalms 72:18 God only does wondrous things. I wish we would believe that.
63. Isaiah 19:21-23 Egypt and Assyria will be restored. Really?
64. Ezekiel 16:55 Sodom will be restored to former estate. Sounds impossible.
65. Jeremiah 32:17 Nothing is too difficult for Him. Nothing? No, nothing!
66. Psalms 22:27 All ends of the earth will turn to Him. For what purpose?
67. Psalms 22:27 All families will worship before Him. Praise His name!
68. Psalms 145:9 He is good to all. Including your worst enemies.
69. Psalms 145:9 His mercies are over all his works. Let's start believing that.
70. Psalms 145:14 He raises all who fall. Who hasn't fallen in sin?
71. Psalms 145:10 All His works will praise Him. For "eternal torment"?
72. Isaiah 25:6 Lord makes a feast for all people. And you are invited.
73. Jeremiah 32:35 Never entered His mind to torture his children with fire. This came from the carnal mind.
74. John 6:44 No one can come to Him unless He draws them. You can't "choose" to follow Him.
75. John 12:32 I will draw all mankind unto Myself. Amen!!!
76. Psalms 135:6 God does what pleases Him. If it pleases Him to save all that He might be in all, are you upset? The death of living for sin, error, missing the mark, is the second death, the death of deathly living which was inherited from Adam. The glory of our lives living in Adam, in our sinful nature, falls far short of the Glory of living in a sinless life, no error, hitting the mark. The Glory of the Latter House will be far greater than the glory of the former house, not only in terms of quantity, but in terms of quality. The covering that Adam had was far from the Glory that Jesus has. Jesus' covering is our True covering. "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

If we do not put off the flesh, the Sword in His mouth will cut us in half and as with the animals Abram offered, the fire of the Almighty will consume it. The law of death in our members will be utterly destroyed, but we live, as a result of the second death, the death to death. The fiery Word of God will eventually find us out and we will finally live to bring true glory to our Wonderful, Awesome, and Loving Father through our Life in Jesus Christ, His Son.

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as you have given Him" (John 17:1-2).

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true god, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth, I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:3-5).

"The Father loves the Son and has put everything in His Hands" (John 3:35, NIV). The Father and the Son have Glorified One another. Can we give them more glory than "eternal torture" and "eternal death"? Jesus came to destroy death. His last enemy is death. To be carnally minded is death. Pray for the death of your death, that you might see and live in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. This is your inheritance. We may partake of our aionian life today. Believe, and watch the grave stone roll off the mind of death . . . the carnal mind which prevents one from truly bringing glory to our Father.

"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctified Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:18-23).

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:4-6). Are we abiding in Him, or in our works? What is death? Death is anything that we do that does not come from abiding in Him. We were created unto good works prepared for us in Him. If we draw from that well and manifest it in the world, we are alive to Christ and dead to the flesh (self works). But if we are building religious kingdoms, no matter how small, we are drawing our glory from the earthy which is death. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. Righteousness, Peace, and Joy, in the Holy Spirit. Gifts, fruit of the Spirit, good works that do not produce pride and self-righteousness. A servant's heart that does not grumble. Do you know these things? Rivers of living waters flowing out of our bellies. If this all sounds foreign to you, then come to the fire. He will cleanse you of all death, dead works which are so wearisome. Take His yoke upon you, for His burden is light and His yoke is easy and enter

into His labors that you may find rest for your soul. Let His Word divide your heart into soul and spirit. Then let the All-consuming Fire of the Father and Son, the smoking furnace and the burning lamp consume all that is not of Them, that you might live in the realm of true Glory.

Tentmaker

118 Walnut Hermann, MO 65041 www.tentmaker.org

2. Does "foreverS AND everS" Make Sense to You?

Does "foreverS AND everS" Make Sense to You? By Gary Amirault

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3. Conclusion 1 - Introduction This article deals with one of the leading mistranslations of the Greek New Testament into English. Most leading selling English Bible translations contain this error. Some of the Bibles that contain this great error are: the King James Version, the New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, the New Revised Standard Version, the Living Translation, the Amplified Bible, all Catholic versions as well as many others. This article serves only as an introduction to this most important topic. There is a list of other works at the end of the article for those who want to prove out this serious error further. This one single error has caused much of Christianity to completely misrepresent the True God of the Christian Bible. If one accepts the proofs contained in this article, they will find themselves in direct conflict with much of "traditional" Christianity. Only a few of those reading this article will take the step of faith to turn aside from the traditional stand and repent, that is, change their minds and stand for the truth. But as we have seen from many Bible stories, God doesn't need a majority to accomplish His purposes in this earth. A "remnant" will do just fine.

Question: If it was found to be true that the concept of God having created a place of "everlasting punishment" called Hell was false, would that change the world's view of God, of Christianity, of themselves and their position with God? The answer is an obvious "Yes"! And that is precisely what the world will learn in the next few years...that God loves them and always has loved them and it has NEVER entered His mind to eternally torture anyone. This truth will change many people's outlook on life, themselves and their neighbors. This article is a Scriptural baby step towards proving that the Christian Bible in its original form NEVER taught a place of being "tormented for ever and ever." This is a gross mistranslation!

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"In Hebrew and Greek, the words rendered 'everlasting' have not this sense. They signify a long duration of time, a period, whence the phrase, 'during these eternities and beyond'" - Dr. Lammenois.

"All the way through it is never feasible to understand 'aionios' (Greek word translated eternal, everlasting, and forever in many English Bible translations) as everlasting" - Dr. Nigel Turner.

"Let me say to Bible students that we must be very careful how we use the word 'eternity'. We have fallen into great error in our constant usage of that word. There is no word in the whole Book of God corresponding with our eternal..." - Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

"Olam (the Hebrew for aion) simply signifies for a long time. The Hebrew Scriptures do not contain any doctrine of everlasting punishment" - Rabbi Loewe.

These statements from leading Greek and Hebrew scholars may come as a shock to many Christians. One will not hear statements like the ones above in a typical Sunday school class, nor will one find them in some of the most prominent Biblical language reference works such as Strong's Concordance, Thayer's Lexicon, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, etc.

How is an average Christian not versed in the original languages of the Bible to know which view is correct? Our whole concept of Christianity radically changes depending upon how one interprets these key words. This short article has been prepared to prove conclusively that those scholars and Bible translations which have rendered the words "aion" and its adjective in terms like "for ever and ever," "everlasting," or "eternal" are simply wrong. And one does NOT need to know Greek or Hebrew to prove this out for themselves.

I realize MOST Christians will follow tradition rather than "seeing if these things be so." It is the exceptional person who is willing to go against the tide of tradition and willing to stand for the truth regardless of the persecution it may bring upon themselves. If you are the type of person who wants the truth regardless of what it will cost them, then this article will be a blessing to you. We are going to look at the Greek behind the English expression "for ever and ever." We have many other articles and books dealing with other mistranslated words like "Hell," "damnation," "torment," etc.

## 2.1. For ever and ever

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### 2 - For ever and ever For ever and ever

Many English-speaking peoples have heard and used the English expression "forever and ever." This phrase has become an "idiomatic" expression to most English-speaking people meaning "eternity, perpetuity or everlasting." This is an English rendering of actually several DIFFERENT phrases found in the Greek New Testament.

Many seminary students have been taught that the expression "forever and ever" is an idiomatic expression meaning "everlasting." Those of the Fundamentalist persuasion, who believe the Bible should be translated literally say that this term is translated into the English literally, that is, it is NOT an idiomatic expression, but a word-for-word literal rendering. Both are wrong. The ancient Greeks would probably render this translation "idiotic," NOT idiomatic! You see, the Greek construct of this term would make it extremely difficult for a first century Greek to see how we moderns even came close to concocting terms like "forever and ever" from the Greek word "aion" and its adjective "aionios" and their derivatives. Let me explain. The English idiom "It's raining cats and dogs" only makes sense to us because we have been taught to associate the meaning, "It's raining heavily" with those words. Should a Chinese person just beginning to learn English read "it's raining cats and dogs," their natural instinct would first be to take the phrase literally. There is no way they could determine the "idiomatic" meaning of that phrase unless someone explained to them they were reading an idiom and then gave them its meaning. An idiom is an expression peculiar to a particular people or language, the meaning of which is not apparent to those outside that group. Most languages have them. American English is filled with them. "I'm hip," "that's cool," "far out, man," "I dig you," are some examples. (I say "American" English because many idioms of the United States are not idioms of other English-speaking countries).

Many Bible translations contain the words "forever AND ever." It sounds nice because we have heard and read this expression thousands of times. Once a tradition is set into the language or customs of a particular people, it is difficult to remove. However, just because a tradition has been around a long time and has been assimilated by a large group does NOT make it true. There are more traditions in this world based upon pure falsehood and superstition than one can imagine. Santa, the Christmas tree, and the Easter Bunny are examples of how pagan myths and superstitions have entered christendom. Many of our Bible translations contain material as far off from spiritual truth as is the Easter Bunny. The phrase "forever and ever" is one of them. The phrase "forever and ever" is a traditional phrase which has been around in English-speaking nations for several hundred years. It has been accepted as a true rendering of the Greek New Testament for a long time by millions of people. Nevertheless, this "tradition of the elders" is false. Furthermore, it is a tradition that has caused great havoc and produced many contradictions in our English Bibles. Even more significantly, it is a tradition that besmears the character of the God of Christianity to such an extent that the original writers of the Bible would not recognize this God as the one they were inspired to write by in the first place! For example:

Revelation 20:10 is one of several places where we find the English phrase "forever AND ever." In the original it is written: eis tous aionas ton aionon Literal translation:

Unto (or into) the eons of the eons.

King James Version: for ever and ever.

Zondervan Parallel NT in Greek and English: unto the ages of the ages.

Young's Literal Translation: to the ages of the ages.

Concordant Literal New Testament: for the eons of the eons. The part we want to focus on in the Greek is the "aionas ton aionon" part. As we can see, the literal translations and the Greek clearly focus on "ages of the ages," or "eons of the eons," rather than "for ever and ever" which actually makes no sense at all the way the Greek is constructed here.

Both "aionas" and "aionon" are in the plural in the Greek. There is no plural of "ever" in English. And if "ever" means eternity, what is the purpose of adding another "ever"? How does "eternity and eternity" sound? Sounds pretty stupid, doesn't it? Well, that's how stupid our "for ever and ever" would sound to an early Christian. However, "ages of the ages" made perfect sense to them then and it makes perfect sense to us in modern English. Our English word "eon" comes directly from the Greek word "aion." Our "eon" DOES have a plural form just like the Greek word "aion." So then, our English word "age" AND our English word "eon" work perfectly in correctly translating this Greek phrase. Why don't ALL of our English translations use these words instead of "for ever and ever" which makes so sense at all? Tradition! As mentioned before, "aionas" and "aionon" are both PLURAL forms of "aion." Ever is singular. This should throw up a red flag. Furthermore, the Greek word "ton" between the two plural forms of "aion" means "of" or "belonging to" or "what comes out of" the aionon. It NEVER means "and" in the Greek. Why did some of our leading selling Bible translations violently break translation rules in this phrase and translate "ton" -- and? Again...plain old tradition. As we can see from the above examples, bringing the plural forms of "aion" into a plural form of age or eon works perfectly in the English. And translating "ton" into "of the" also works perfectly. There are many English translations which are done exactly like that either directly in the text itself or in the margins or footnotes. So why do SOME leading selling English translations still violate the original Greek and Hebrew text by grossly twisting this Greek phrase into the nonsensical "for ever and ever"? I'll explain the REAL reason at the end of this article.

Given the fact that both "aionas" and "aionon" were in their plural form, if the King James Bible and its cousins wanted to translate the Greek word "aion" as "ever," AND stay true to the Greek forms of speech, they should have come up with the following rendering: "for the evers and evers." As we can plainly see, this is getting pretty messy. Neither "for evers AND evers" nor "for evers of the evers" makes any sense in English at all. But "for the ages of the ages" or "for the eons of the eons" makes perfect sense both in the Greek and in the English.

There are MANY English Bibles who have broken the "tradition of the elders" in this regard in order to bring forth the true meaning of the Greek. Many more will do so in the years to come. They have translated this Greek phrase "aionas ton aionon":

"for the eons of the eons" -- Concordant Literal New Testament.

"for the ages of the ages" -- Young's Literal, and others.

"for the aeons of the aeons" -- The New Covenant by Dr. J.W. Hanson.

"unto the ages of the ages" -- Rotherham's Emphasized, and others.

"through the ages of the ages" -- The Holy Bible in Modern English.

What is really more amazing is that the double construct phrase of the Greek word "aion" appears in two other forms in the Bible. In one form both aions appear in the singular and in the other form, one aion is singular and the other is plural. In order for the "traditional" folks to be honest in their translating and still maintain that "aion" means "ever," they would have to give us English that reads like this:

"Ever and ever," and "ever and everS," and "everS and everS." As a rational person can begin to see, our English "forever and ever," has NO resemblance to the original Greek form. The Greeks would NOT be able to understand at all how we came to such a meaning so remote from the original Greek. They would NOT consider these Greek constructions "idiomatic" expressions at all, NOR literal translations. They would consider it all theological bunk (which is what it all really is). The Greeks had no problem with plural forms of the word "aion," because it meant to them what our modern word "eon" means to us. Eons are periods of time, NOT eternity. Eon, eons, eon of the eon, eon of the eons, eons of the eons, made perfect sense to the Greeks of the first century A.D. AND they make sense in modern English. We have many translations which have translated these Greek phrases this way or similar ways, as I pointed out previously. When we allow "aion" and its derivatives to be an indeterminate period of TIME (which is what it really means), rather than "eternity," reason returns to us instead of senseless meanings which only wreak havoc by destroying the true image of the God of the Bible. When it is determined that "aion" means and has always meant "an indeterminate period of time," sometimes long enough to be called an "age," sometimes as short as the three days and nights Jonah spent in the fish (Jonah 2:6), then we can easily see a number of ages in succession. Then phrases like the "age of the ages" becomes a particular age out of several ages. This is exactly what the Greeks had in mind.

Below are some examples where the Greek double construct of aion shows three completely separate renderings which the King James and its kissing cousin Bibles hide from our hungry eyes. The Greek language is a very precise language. If it uses three different constructions of the double use of "aion," there is a very good reason for it. To arbitrarily translate all of them exactly the same way "forever and ever" as the KJV, NIV, NASB, NRSB, Amplified, Living, etc. have done, is NOT translating, it's butchering the Greek through dark age traditions.

Singular/plural (aionos ton aionon): Ephesians 3:21.

Singular/singular (aiona tou aionos): Hebrews 1:8.

Plural/plural (aionas ton aionon): Revelation 20:10; 1 Peter 4:11.

The word "aion" in ALL its forms refers to "ages" which have ends AND beginnings. There are at least 5 ages (perhaps more) mentioned in the Greek New Testament. There is only ONE eternity, not multiples.

If there were "aions" in the past, then it means they each must have ended for they are now past! The New Testament writers spoke of "the present wicked aion" which ended during that very generation. Obviously, it was followed by another "aion" -- the "aion" in which we presently live. If there are "aions" to come, it must mean that this one we live in will also end.

There is a verse which says "the consummation of the aions" showing that each "aion" ends. So how can they be eternal?

There is "the coming eon" (Matthew 12:32; Luke 18:30).

There is "the present wicked eon" (Galatians 1:4).

There is "the oncoming eons" (plural and future) (Ephesians 2:7).

There is "the conclusion of the eon" (present) (Matthew 13:39-40).

There is "the secret concealed from the eons" (past) (Ephesians 3:9).

The Greek and Hebrew languages have several expressions which are constructed similarly to the double construct of the word "aion" as in "aionas ton aionon." We frequently find expressions like "King of kings," "Lord of Lords," and "Holy of Holies." But "for everS AND everS" makes no real sense to anyone in any language except to the traditionalist who refuses to let go of their tradition because it would cost them more than they are willing to let go of.

## 2.3. Conclusion

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### 3 - Conclusion

Pride, control, money, prestige, anger, wrath, vengeance, self-righteousness, etc. are NOT things most of us, especially religious folks of all persuasions, are willing to let go of easily or without a big fight. Are you willing to let go of these things? We all know how hard it is to let go of these things -- but let go we must -- if we are to go on into a deeper relationship with our Creator and Father. Unless we let go of these traditions, our image of God is nothing more than an idol, a false image formed in our minds from false information. The greatest form of idolatry is not bowing down to a stone or piece of wood -- it is holding our very life to a false concept of God in our hearts and minds. Ezekiel warned of such idolatry in the fourteenth chapter of his book. Do not be deceived -- the image of God as one who created a place in which He is either going to annihilate or torture many of the human beings He created, is an idol of the magnitude of Moloch, or Baal -- nay, it is an abomination a thousand times worse. The plain fact of the matter is that most of Christianity has been and presently still is bowing down to this hideous image. And we wonder why the world is in the confusion that it is. We wonder why the church is so full of hypocrisy. The answers become very plain and simple when we become honest enough with ourselves and our belief systems to look at the facts regardless of what it will cost us.

Jesus said that to follow Him would cost us our lives. Will you lay down your inherited traditions so that the True Image of God may rise in your hearts and minds and find expression through your being? I warn you, just as Jesus had to come against the very people who claimed to represent Him and His Father, you too, will find yourself standing against a huge army of traditionalists who refuse to allow the True Gospel (which will set creation free) from coming forth. You will understand what it means to "suffer for His Name's sake." Jesus and His Father have been greatly maligned by the traditional view of Christendom. God is raising up an army of men, women, AND children who will strike this false image at its feet and destroy it forever (Daniel 2:45). I hope the reader is given the grace and boldness to join in the cause.

Dear honest Christian, please study this out. Ask some Greek experts why some English translations have the word "and" between the two "aions"? Oh, make sure you find an expert who knows what the word "is" is. You may discover there are as many spinmeisters in theology as there are in politics. Ask them why they don't make "ever" plural like it is in the Greek. Let them explain what "foreverS AND everS" or "foreverS of the everS" means. "Forever and ever," the present English form in many of our Bibles would make absolutely NO sense to those who were inspired to write these words in the first place over 1900 years ago. When we get honest enough with ourselves to examine whether our beliefs are based upon tradition or the Truth, we will discover that "forever and ever" makes no sense period. We will discover we have been duped. Paul warned 1900 years ago that many wolves would enter the church after his departure. John, the apostle warned that even during his time there were MANY anti-christs. The fact there are over 30,000 denominations of Christendom should attest to their warnings. There is only ONE body of

Christ, not 30,000 of them. Paul warned about following after men in his letters to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 3:1-10). Today, we have literally thousands of denominations each built upon the teachings of some man or woman. We have Lutherans, Wesleyans, Calvinists, etc. We have those who swear allegiance to the Pope or a Patriarch. It is this error which has caused us to fall from the truth and be trapped in systems of tradition which make the word of God of no effect. Do you know that the Bible speaks of something more powerful than the Word of God? "Thus you have made the word of God of no effect by your TRADITION. Hypocrites! Well, did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines commandments of men'" (Matthew 15:6-9). Are we going to stay true to the "tradition of the elders" or are we going to become faithful to the Spirit which inspired the writers of the New Testament? If we desire to be true to the Spirit of inspiration, then we will have to abandon this tradition, and many others that are outside the parameter of this article. The reason why some scholars, Bible publishers and preachers have not already abandoned this false translation is because of what it would cost them should they translate these words correctly. If they pull further on this thread we have just exposed, and unravel it completely by translating it honestly, the whole concept of a hell in which people are tortured endlessly (forever and ever) completely falls apart! Many in Church leadership simply haven't caught on to the fact that Love will draw a lot more people than fear. Perfect love casts out fear. We become what we worship. Look at church history and see what the doctrine of endless punishment has left behind...thousands of wars, Christians killing each other and killing non-believers by the tens of millions in the name of God. Jesus' sword of His mouth has been replaced with the sword in the hand leaving behind a river of blood up to the horse's bridle.

If we believe God is going to waste most of mankind, our actions in the world have and will continue to reflect our beliefs and the nature of the God we worship. We cannot rise to a higher level than the concept of the god we hold in our hearts. If our God hates His enemies enough to have created a place to do to them what no human on earth is capable of doing to another human being, then we will, in a measure, manifest some of that hatred. Look to church history. Those of us who read church history without applying tons of whitewash will find a very gruesome picture, regardless of whether they be Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant.

It has been said that when the Catholic Mary, queen of England, had thousands of Protestants burned at the stake that she said something like, "I only do here on earth what my God will continue to do to them perpetually." The wars, hangings, burnings, and drownings the Protestant denominations and the Orthodox branches have committed proves that ALL denominations of christendom which assemble under the banner of a god who will endlessly torture or annihilate most of mankind do NOT reflect the nature and character of the One who laid down His life for His friends AND His enemies.

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." (Matthew 5:44) This is a far cry from what "traditional" christendom has manifested during the last 1600 years. I say, 1600 hundred years rather than 1900 years because the early church of the first few centuries did NOT believe in such a fiend. (Read "Early Christian View of the Savior" from Tentmaker Publications.) They knew this image of God was the false image all the OTHER pagan nations believed in. When the church was married to the Roman Emperor under Constantine, and the Roman Empire's military arm became an instrument of the church used to destroy its enemies and its heretics and apostates,

the death knoll sounded. The majority of Christians who believed in the salvation of all mankind was replaced by a new majority which advocated violence. The God of Christianity was changed from the Savior of the World to the Eternal Torturer of most of mankind. The God of Christianity was conformed to the tyrant murderers who controlled the Church. Those gentle-spirited Christians who believed in non-violence were either killed or they headed to the wilderness and became recluses.

After the church picked up the weapons of the Roman Empire as its own (military and law), it brought forth the darkness which we know today as "the Dark Ages." During this time, the doctrine of endless tortures was the main instrument church officials used to hold the masses in check. Did it produce holiness? Law-abiding citizens? Loving people? Study this time period yourself and you will find the greatest cruelty and superstitions that mankind has ever experienced.

Compare the effect the early church had on civilization with the effect the "Dark Ages" Church has had on the world. The first taught that God loved all mankind AND would redeem, restore, reconcile, and save all mankind. And they laid their lives down as proof of their belief. The "Dark Age" Church taught a cruel fiendish god who was so hard that even the Pope himself was not assured of his own salvation. And this evil church took other's lives instead of following Christ's and His early Church's example.

Today, both churches still exist. The early church whose majority believed in the salvation of all mankind, which has only one head, Jesus Christ -- and the "Dark Age" church, made up of many thousands of denominations started by human beings, which still teaches the Dark Age gospel that God will only save a handful while torturing endlessly the great majority of the rest of mankind. Only a remnant of those who believe as the early church did has survived throughout the dark diabolical centuries -- but survive it has. And now it is time for this rock cut out of the mountain by the Hands of God to come forth and strike this false image at its feet (Daniel 2:45). As I said earlier, God does not need a majority to accomplish His work. Read about Gideon.

It is time for a people to arise who will be bold enough to set aside man-made traditions to follow the Truth. If the person presently reading this article is stirred to move in such a direction, the following books and articles will be helpful in their journey to follow the ways of Abraham who left behind the traditions of his ancestors to seek a city whose Maker is God (Hebrews 11:10). If your heart yearns for all that the New Jerusalem, the mother of us all represents, then the following books and articles will be found helpful to you. They may all be freely downloaded at the Tentmaker site. Some of them are available in hard copy from Tentmaker Ministries at the address below.

"Time and Eternity" by G.T. Stevenson

"Aion" by J.W. Hanson

"An Analytical Study of Words" by Louis Abbott

"The Power of a Four Letter Greek Word--Aion" by Gary Amirault

"Bible Translations that do not teach Eternal Torment" by Gary Amirault

"The Bible Hell" by J.W. Hanson

"The Origin and History of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment" by Thomas Thayer

And many more

We also have many of the books and articles in print form as well as audio and video tapes. A list of them can be had by requesting it from the address below.

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118 Walnut Hermann, MO 65041 <http://www.tentmaker.org> [tentmaker@ktis.net](mailto:tentmaker@ktis.net) "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw (drag in the Greek) ALL mankind unto Myself."

Spoken by Jesus the Messiah in John 12:32.

## S. Etymology of the Word - Damn

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Etymology of the Word "Damn" by Gary Amirault The words "damn" and "Hell" are among favorite words spoken by theologians of the "hell-fire" type, that is, as long as they are used in church. These same words used in the local bar or on the athletic field would constitute "cussing" which would not be considered proper. If you are a little uncomfortable even reading about the word "damn" just remember the "Authorized" King James Bible uses it quite frequently. Let us look into the etymology of this word "damn." We may find some interesting surprises. The Dictionary of Word Origins written by John Ayto published in 1990 states the following about the word "damn":

Damn: Damn comes via Old French "damner" from Latin "damnare," a derivative of the noun "damnum." This originally meant "loss, harm" (it is the source of the English "damage"), but the verb damnare soon spread its application to "pronounce judgment upon," in both the legal and the theological sense. These meanings (reflected also in the derived "condemn") followed the verb through Old French into English, which dropped the strict legal sense around the 16th century but has persisted with the theological one and its more profane offshoots. Condemn, damage, indemnity. As we can see, originally the word was neither a "cuss" word nor did it have theological significance. It was a perfectly good word with which to translate the Biblical Greek words "apollumi," "krino," and "apolleia." But when theologians twisted this word out of its original meaning, it became a word which would smear the character of our Father. The world followed the church and used it as a "cuss" word, but it should be noted, that it was the church that turned it into its present meaning, not unbelievers. The present meaning of the word does great injustice in rendering the Greek words in the Bible that have been translated "damn," "damnable," "damnation," etc. Many scholars have raised their voices protesting the use of this word in the Bible and it seems the trend presently is to remove it from scriptures. Below is given an example of the view of some very orthodox scholars on this subject. The author is F.W. Farrar, a canon of the Church of England. In his book "Mercy and Judgment" he writes: The words "damn" and its derivatives do not once occur in the Old Testament. In the New Testament they are the exceptional and arbitrary translation of two Greek verbs or their derivatives; which occur 308 times. These words are "apollumi" and "krino." "Apolleia" (destruction or waste) is once rendered "damnation" and once "damnable" (2 Peter 2:1; 2 Peter 2:3). "Krino," (judge) occurs 114 times, and is only once rendered "damned" (2 Thessalonians 2:12). "Krima," (judgment or sentence) occurs 24 times, and is 7 times rendered "damnation." "Katakrimo," (I condemn) occurs 24 times, and is twice only rendered "be damned."

Now turn to a modern dictionary, and you will see "damnation" defined as "exclusion from divine mercy; condemnation to eternal punishment." In common usage the word has no other sense. But to say that such is the necessary meaning of the words which are rendered by "damn" and "damnation," is to say what is absurdly and even wickedly false. It is to say that a widow who marries again must be damned to endless torments (1 Timothy 5:12 "having damnation," krima), although St. Paul expressly recommends young widows to do so two verses later on. It is to say that everyone who ever eats the Lord's Supper unworthily, eats and drinks "eternal punishment" to

himself, though St. Paul adds, almost in the next verse, that the judgment (krima) is disciplinary and educational, to save us from condemnation (1 Corinthians 11:29-34). It is to say that "the Day of Judgment" ought to be called "the Day of Damnation" (John 5:29).

It is curious that our translators have chosen this most unfortunate variation of "damn" and its cognates only fifteen times out of upwards of two hundred times that krino and its cognates occur; and that they have it for "krisis" and "krima," not for the stronger compounds "katakrima," etc. The translators, however, may not be to blame. It is probable that "damn" was once a milder word than condemn, and had a far milder meaning than that which modern eschatology has furnished to modern blasphemy.

We find from an Act passed when a John Russell was Chancellor (in the reign of Richard III or Henry VII), that the sanction of an Act against extorted benevolences is called "a damnation" -- that is, "the infliction of a loss." This is the true etymological meaning of the word, as derived from damnum, "a loss"; and this original meaning is still found in such words as "damnify," "indemnify," and "indemnity." In the margin of 1 Corinthians 11:29, we find "judgment" for "damnation"; whereas in verse 32 (1 Corinthians 11:32) the "judgment" of the Lord is milder than His "condemnation." Dr. Hey, in his lecture on the Ninth Article, says that the phrase, "It deserveth God's wrath and damnation," is used in the milder sense of the word which was originally prevalent. However this may be, the word has, as the Bishop of Chester says, undergone a modification of meaning from the lapse of time, and it is an unmixed gain that both it and its congeners will wholly disappear from the revised version of the English Bible. "Judgment" and "condemnation" are the true representatives of krisis and katakrisis, and they are not steeped, like the word "damnation," in a mass of associated conceptions which do not naturally or properly belong to them. Equally unfortunate is the word "hell." The above writing was penned before the first major revision of the King James Bible was printed. His words came true. The Revision of the KJV removed the "damn" words from the Holy pages of the Word bringing us a few steps closer to removing the tarnish the church has put upon the character of the Creator of all human beings. For more study in this area, write for the audio tape "Christian Cussin" and the 50 page article entitled "Eternal Death: One step out of hell, One step short of Glory." In conclusion, it is time for many preachers to stop blaspheming our Father. When they say that hordes of humanity are "damned to hell," they themselves are actually guilty of misrepresenting the Creator's role as Judge. The Scriptures declare that the earth will learn righteousness when His judgments are in the earth. It is we, who call ourselves Christians, who need to clean up our mouths and hearts far more than the unbeliever drowning his miseries at the local bar.

G.A.

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## S. Greek Four Letter Word

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The Power of Life and Death in a Greek Four Letter Word --

Aion By Gary Amirault The understanding contained in this article was first given to me through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, whom Jesus promised to send us to guide us into all Truth. As I entered into various denominations, it was taken from my memory. I believe God allowed this to show me how powerful religion can be in a negative way. The traditions of men and the doctrines of demons are tremendous forces in much of the church. Jesus said there were leaders of God's own people who "have made the Word of God of no effect by their traditions" (Matthew 15:6). In His Sovereignty I have experienced how true these words are. May this article help those who also have been seduced by the "traditions of men and the doctrines of demons to be set free." My wife and I can truly say, that when we personally discovered Jesus Christ to be the Son of the Living God, it was a dramatic turning point in our lives. While the change brought a peace which could not be bought for any price, it also brought about a war that almost broke our marriage apart. My wife was raised a reformed Jew. I did not have a religious background of any kind. I was an atheist most of my life. Unlike most Christians, who are raised in a particular denomination or stream of Christian thought, we were immediately immersed into all different types of denominations and movements. One day I tried to count how many different churches I attended in the first 4 or 5 years of our walk. It was over 200! Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Word/Faith, Quaker, Episcopalian, Jews for Jesus groups, etc. For those of you who have been in different denominations, you know the torment of trying to decide on different doctrines like "once saved always saved" versus "you can choose to give the gift of life back." We were immediately confronted with many profound differences of beliefs among the various denominations. Of course they all thought they were right! Predestination vs free-will, Saturday versus Sunday worship, tongues is from the devil vs tongues as evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus only vs Trinity, sprinkle vs immersion. There were literally dozens of different major issues that confronted us. Most Christians who spend their entire life in one or two denominations never have to wrestle with these differences. So as you can imagine the first few years of our lives became a continuous search for the truth. We wondered how Christians could come up with so many different, often contradictory beliefs using basically the same Bible!?

Often I would be in several different churches from different denominations in the same week! As you probably can imagine, pastors were not too thrilled when I showed up because they knew I was going to ask difficult questions. Often they did not have answers to these questions and instead of searching for the answers, they would get angry.

One of the first major conflicts began with the Law versus Grace issue. Living in the Washington D.C. area at that time, we became familiar with several congregations which had a large numbers of Jews who had found their Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus). Many of these congregations kept a very large portion of the Mosaic Law. There was never a consensus as to how much of the Law was to be kept. It varied from one congregation to another. For example, some worshipped on Saturday

instead of Sunday. Some kept all of the dietary laws contained in the Law. Others added extras contained in the Talmud and some came up with their own ideas of what to keep and what was not applicable for today. Most celebrated the Old Testament feasts, but the method varied from congregation to congregation. Believe me, once a person puts themselves back under the Mosaic Law, there is no end to the discussions on how to keep it. While we were wrestling with the various different interpretations of what to do with the Mosaic Law, we also had to wrestle with the various differences between the other churches we attended on Sunday and mid-week.

During those first 4 or 5 years of our Christian walk, the Law versus Grace issue was a subject that we were not able to fully resolve. We came to really understand all the sides to the issue. They each had very good Scriptural supports. There seemed to be no end to these debates. Had we known what was in this article, we would not have had most of the torment we went through.

Those who believed that the Law of Moses was still for today pointed to several Scriptures which seemed to indicate that the Jewish system would never pass away. Yet, there were several Scriptures in the New Testament which declared it was passing away in that very generation. Some of the Old Testament Scriptures which were used to support the "everlasting"ness of the Old Covenant were: Exodus 40:15, which describes the Aaronic Priesthood as "everlasting," yet Hebrews 7:14-18 declares an end to it being replaced by the Melchizedek Priesthood; the children of Israel were to "observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant" (Exodus 31:16), yet Paul states there remains "another day" of Sabbath rest for the people of God (Hebrews 4:8-9); the Law of Moses was to be an "everlasting covenant" (Leviticus 24:8) yet we read in the New Covenant the first was "done away" and "abolished" (2 Corinthians 3:11; 2 Corinthians 3:13), and God "made the first old" (Hebrews 8:13). The Hebrew word which is translated "everlasting" and "perpetual" in the above Old Testament passages is the word "olam." This same word was used by the King James Bible translators to make Jonah stay in the "belly of hell forever" where the "bars of the earth closed behind me forever." Yet in the same verse God brought his life "up from the pit"! (see Jonah 2:2; Jonah 2:6). In verse 1:17 (Jonah 1:17) the King James translation clearly says Jonah was in the fish for 3 days and nights. How could this be forever? The King James Bible, as well as many others, tells us that a bondsman was to serve his master "forever" (Exodus 21:6). It also tells us that God would dwell in Solomon's Temple "forever" (1 Kings 8:13). I began to see there was not only a problem with Old Testament Scriptures contradicting New Testament ones, but even within the Old Testament itself. Passages such as God dwelling in Solomon's Temple "forever" clearly contradict history which shows that Solomon's Temple was destroyed long ago.

While studying this Hebrew word "olam," I came across some quotations from leading scholars which began to give me much understanding. The classical Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies by William Wilson gives as the meaning of "olam," "duration of time which is concealed or hidden," in other words, an unknown length of time. This unknown length of time could be 3 days and nights as in the case of Jonah, or the length of a man's life, or as long as the period of time the Aaronic Priesthood was in effect, which was around 1600 years.

Well, that seemed to solve all the problems. This definition took care of all the clear contradictions between the Old and New Testament and got old Jonah out of "hell forever." From Jonah's point of view, while he was in the fish, he didn't know how long he was there since he couldn't see the sun

and moon. (They didn't invent Timex watches until a few thousand years later.) But while the problem was solved in the Old Testament, it presented some different problems in the New Testament. The Greek equivalent for the Hebrew *olam* is the word *aion*. We get the English word "eon" from this word. It seems that many Bible translators carried the error of mistranslating *olam* to the Greek word *aion*. Here are the various ways the KJV translated the word *aion*: age (2), world (40), never (7), course (1), ever (72), evermore (4). The adjective of this word (*aionios*) was translated: everlasting (25), eternal (42), world (3), Ever (1). Strong's, Young's or Smith's Concordance will bear this out.

Well, as we can see, the problem in the Greek didn't get much better, it actually got considerably more confusing causing some clear contradictions to occur in the King James Bible, as well as several other leading translations. The fact that the same word translated "forever," "everlasting," and "eternal" is also translated "world" and "age" may be shocking to many believers, but that is the case, nevertheless. Let us look at some problems this kind of poor translating has caused those who are trying to live a Christian life, patterned after Jesus Christ.

One of the major problems the King James translators have caused by their incorrect handling of this word, deals with the end of the world. It seems most Christians throughout the Christian era have been very interested in this time period. Martin Luther, in his time, was convinced he was living in "the end of the world." The King James translation contradicts itself using this phrase. Most present day Bible translations have corrected this error in many places, but not enough to clear up the confusion completely. In Hebrews 9:26 we read from the King James translation: "For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." According to this King James verse, the end of the world occurred 1900 years ago. If we are supposedly living in the end of the world, the "end of the world" has been going on for 1900 years of the 6000 year Biblical record! But this is not the end of the confusion, it gets worse. According to Ephesians 3:21 (see also Isaiah 45:17), there is to be no end of the world: "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." The King James Bible tells us that the end of the world occurred 1900 years ago, yet at the same time tells us the world will never end! And we wonder why there are so many atheists out there! This problem is immediately cleared up when we discover *aion* should never have been translated world. The Greeks had a perfectly good word to describe world, the word *kosmos*. We use this word in the English today, but with a slightly different meaning than in the Greek of Biblical days. If the King's translators had done what most leading Bible translations today have done with the word *aion* in these cases where the KJV translated it "world," much of the confusion about the "end of the world" would disappear. The word *aion* should have been translated "age" (or something similar). Jesus would then have been living at the end of the Jewish "age." After that came a new "age," the one we are currently experiencing.

Because of the way the King James Bible was translated, many people have really only two ages in their minds, the "Old World" and the "New World." This is due to the way the KJV handled the word *aion*. The Bible actually speaks of at least 5 ages or "worlds" as the KJV incorrectly puts it. Things now revealed are said to have been concealed in past "ages" (plural) in Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 3:9. There is a "present age" which the writers of the New Testament were living in, which is revealed in passages such as Luke 20:34-35; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 1:21, Titus

2:12, etc. And at that point there are at least two more ages to come. Ephesians 2:7 tells us that, "in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Allowing Scripture to define itself instead of modern theologians twisting Bible words into their pet doctrines, we find that: The aions have beginnings

Scripture

Literal

King James Version

Hebrews 1:2

God made the ages

God made the worlds

1 Corinthians 2:7

before the ages

before the world

2 Timothy 1:9

before the beginning of time

before the world began

The aions have ends

Scripture

Literal

King James Version

Hebrews 9:26

the end of the ages

the end of the world

1 Corinthians 10:11

the ends of the ages

the ends of the world

Matthew 24:3

the end of the age

the end of the world

These ages have important purpose

Ephesians 3:8-11

Ephesians 1:9-10

Php 2:9-11

Colossians 1:15-21

1 Corinthians 15:22-28

Please note under 1 Corinthians 2:7, the literal translation has the word ages in the plural, but the KJV has it singular. You will see in the rest of this article, the translators took even greater liberty than this when translating this word aion. The proper understanding of the correct use of this word aion will truly bring forth the Good News of Jesus Christ's plan for mankind. That will bring a priceless joy to your relationship with Him and your fellow man. I will point out one obvious revelation right now. The Unpardonable Sin

We have all heard of the term "the unpardonable sin." You will not find this term in the Bible, at least not in the Greek text. Some Bibles, such as the New Open Bible New American Standard puts headers into the text such as "Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin." These headers are not in the Greek text. They have been added by the editors of that particular translation. This is one reason why so-called "study Bibles" often are a detriment rather than a help. The Scofield Reference Bible was among the first to use such techniques. The Pre-trib Rapture teaching was greatly aided by these kinds of additions into Bibles such as Scofields. They clearly "add to the Word of God" as do most "study Bibles." As to the so-called "unpardonable sin," the Bible speaks of no such thing. What you will find, is just the opposite. "His mercies endure forever" (Psalms 106:1; Psalms 107:1, etc.) When the disciples tried to determine the place where they did not have to forgive anymore, Jesus told them 7 times 70, making the point that you should always forgive. Yet the King James Bible tells us of a sin and a group of people who will never be forgiven, a total contradiction to many other passages of Scripture. When the Pharisees said that Jesus did His miracles by the power of Beelzebub, He warned of the sin of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The King James in Mark 3:29 has Jesus saying, "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." The New International Standard Version puts it this way: "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin." (Please note the word "eternal" in both these translations is aionios, the adjective form of aion. We will get back to that word later in the article.) There is a parallel account of this incident in Matthew 12:25-37. Here the King James translators have Jesus saying, "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Now if your theology says there are only two worlds, that closes the door of mercy to those pharisees forever. The Pharisee lived in the Old Covenant World, and the world to come under this type of reasoning was the New Covenant World. Therefore, the Pharisee was doomed to "eternal damnation," as the King James puts it. But the New King James renders Matthew 12:32 "either in this age or in the age to come." So does the New International Version as well as almost every other version produced since the King James Version, printed in 1611. With the knowledge we have gained from Ephesians 2:7 that there are more "ages" (plural) than one to come, this

opens the door of hope for the Pharisee, and confirms the many Scriptures which declare the foundation of unending mercy.

Well, it seems a proper translation of this little word *aion* eliminates many contradictions in quite a few Bible translations, which, by the way, have caused many to abandon Christianity because they said the Bible contradicts itself. The fact of the matter is, some Bible translations do contradict themselves, but not in the original languages.

Now what I have just revealed will be great news to many reading this little article. In their hearts is the love of Christ, which wants to reach all of mankind. Their desire is to bring glory to their Savior, Jesus Christ. What I have just shown will be graciously received by those filled with Christ. But to the hard-hearted, to those who like to use fear to hold people in their power, to those who confess Christ with their mouth, but their hearts are full of bitterness, prejudice, hatred, unforgiveness, the previous pages will make them uneasy. I realize this and there is nothing I can do about it. I am writing to those who truly have been born from above of incorruptible seed who have tender, clean hearts and desire to spread the love of God to the whole world. To you, I say, prayerfully take the rest of this article and search out the matter for yourselves. Pray and study and you will see it is Truth. The hard-hearted will totally reject these plain facts, which can easily be verified. Those who have built a kingdom on fear, will not see what I am revealing. Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). If you are fearful or if you use fear to enslave others, you will not be able to see this truth. Fear will blind you to it (1 John 4:16-18; John 10:27-29). There are many Christians who have been so bound up by the false traditions of the elders, that this little article will do little good in breaking off the chains which enslave them. May the Lord Jesus send them a boldness to cast off the fear of men and the desire to seek their approval and replace it with a reverence for God and a desire to be approved of Him more than receiving the approval of men. This is a stronghold which will probably require more than an eight page article. As we have shown, consistently translating this word *aion* into "age" (or something indicating indeterminate time with a beginning and end) is solving a lot of obvious contradictions in many Bibles. The confusion between Mosaic Law versus Grace is solved; the number of ages is clearly expanded beyond the two in the King James which opens the door to God's mercy extending beyond the church age; 1900 years ago wasn't the "end of the world," as the King James states, but the end of the Mosaic Covenant, the end of an age. The question arises: Can and should this word *aion* be consistently translated a time word like "age?" It certainly cannot be consistently translated with words that imply the concept of eternity. Look at what we would have in some of these passages if we translated *aion* as "eternity."

"God designates before the eternities" (1 Corinthians 2:7)

"The present wicked eternity" (Galatians 1:4)

"Neither in this eternity, nor in the next" (Matthew 12:32)

"At the close of this eternity" (Matthew 13:39)

"At the end of the eternities" (Hebrews 9:26)

And many more absurdities!!!

To the one truly seeking the Truth, the question will arise, "Well, if translating *aion* all the different ways the King James Bible translated it has caused so many contradictions, and translating the

word consistently as an 'eternity' or 'eternal' word obviously doesn't work, what would happen if the word was consistently translated a time word such as 'age' or 'age-during' or 'age-abiding' or something like that?"

It may come as a surprise to many of you, but there are a number of Bibles which have done just that. Not only that, but many outstanding scholars have protested the King James translation of this word and have written at length on the subject. But you will probably not hear about that at your local Bible study because this correction will destroy many current church theologies or doctrines. When one translates this word as a time word consistently some of the greatest contradictions of all quickly disappear. Oddly, many church leaders are not willing to give up these contradictions. Their whole theology, their creeds, their articles of faith, their whole program of bringing in converts and money would fall apart. The power of fear would have to completely be laid down. There is the problem. Most denominations have been built on the power of fear. This has been a powerful force in bringing in converts and money. Most church leaders who have used fear as the main power to build these religious institutions are incapable of dropping this weapon and replacing it with true agape love. The entire institutional structure would collapse. The cost is too high. And so it will require the power of God to bring judgment which will destroy these institutions. Seventy AD was the judgment day for Israel. Read Josephus' War of the Jews and see the writing on the wall for christendom.

Those of you who truly have the love of Christ in their hearts are well aware of the fact that there are dozens of Scriptures, if not hundreds, which declare that Christ's work on the cross will save all mankind. I will mention just a few here. (A lengthy list is available to those who desire to study this out.)

Clearly, God desires or "will have" as the KJV puts it "all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4), the salvation of all will be testified in due time (1 Timothy 2:6), Jesus came to save all (John 12:47), He is declared the Savior of the world (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14), He will draw all mankind unto Himself (John 12:32), He is able to save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25), in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22), every tongue will confess Jesus as Lord and one cannot do that apart from the Holy Spirit (Php 2:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3), there is to be a "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21), all will be reconciled to God (Colossians 1:20), He will have mercy on all (Romans 11:32), all has been given into Jesus' hands (John 3:35), Jesus will lose nothing (John 6:39), Jesus is Heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2), Jesus died for all (2 Corinthians 5:15), He will take away the "sin" (singular) of the world (John 1:29) and, therefore, is the actual Savior of the world (1 Timothy 4:9-11). The above list can be multiplied greatly, but I have to limit this article to four pages.

If the Greek word *aion*, and its various forms such as the adjective *aionios*, is translated in a consistent manner as a time word with beginnings and endings, then all these Scriptures would be absolutely true. Jesus Christ would be declared the absolute Savior of all mankind. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw (drag in the Greek) all mankind unto myself" (John 12:32). These words would all of a sudden be pure simple uncomplicated truth. You see, when the word *aion* is consistently translated as a time word with a beginning and end, the doctrine of eternal torment or punishment vanishes from the pages of the Bible! The handful of Scriptures such as those similar to Matthew 25:46, could no longer be used to void Jesus Christ's declaration to the Universe that He drew or dragged all mankind to Himself. "Eternal punishment" would become "age-abiding

correction" as the Rotherham Emphasized Bible puts it. Young's Literal Translation renders it "punishment age-during" while the Concordant Literal translates it "chastening eonian." I have found over a dozen Bible translations which have been consistent with the translation of aion and in each of them, the doctrine of eternal torment disappears off their pages! If the love of Christ is in your hearts, there should be a Hallelujah in your mouth right about now!

It is vitally important that we perfectly understand this word aion. Whether God "eternally tortures" or "corrects through the ages" totally changes the very nature of the Father. If "eternal punishment" is correct in Matthew 25:46, then His mercy and forgiveness certainly has an end. But if "age-during correction" or something similar is correct, then we have a Father Who chastens to bring correction - a Father Who has the ability through time, patience, and a burning or consuming love to bring back all of His wayward children. In this instance, the parables such as the Shepherd leaving the 99 to find the one lost sheep is in perfect harmony with "age-during correction." Present-day "orthodox" theology is more like the Good Shepherd torturing most and just barely saving a few.

We will conform to the image of the God we have in our hearts. History tells us, Queen Mary, the Catholic Queen of England, burned many Protestants to death because she conformed to the image of the God she was taught in Roman Catholicism. Protestants would later in history do the very same thing.

Whether one's God is an eternal tormentor, annihilator, or Savior of all mankind will ultimately determine how one treats their fellow man. Jesus told us how to treat our enemies in Romans 12:20-21. Do good to your enemies. Will our Father do likewise or will He become a hypocrite? No wonder little children are much quicker to jump into the laps of Santa Clauses, than to feel secure with the knowledge of a loving heavenly Father. Little children pick up quickly the message of hell-fire evangelists. They can't reconcile a God Who may torture them endlessly with a loving Father. Neither can I and neither can correctly translated Bibles. Our concept of God will also determine how close one will get to the True Father. I don't know of too many people who want to snuggle up to a God Who is going to torture most of their brothers and sisters, especially if they are not absolutely certain that they themselves will be one of those who will escape the barbecue pit.

It is extremely disappointing to me that while most of the leading selling Bibles have corrected the mistranslations of the word aion in many places, they are very reluctant to get completely consistent. Why? The doctrine of eternal torment has been the primary instrument of fear used to build most current denominations of Christianity. To admit they have been wrong on such a central part of Christianity would totally discredit them. The heads of these denominations would strongly protest the introduction of Bibles which no longer contained the man-made doctrine of eternal torment. They certainly would not recommend them to their members.

Most Bible publishing companies, whether we like it or not, are profit-making ventures, often very profitable. Those Bibles which are currently published and do not contain the doctrine of eternal torment such as Young's Literal, Rotherham's Emphasized, or Concordant Literal are usually accorded no space in Christian book stores. They must be special ordered. The big publishers like Nelson, will not print totally consistent Bibles until they feel the denominational structures will not come against them.

Until then, the leading selling Bibles with the most money behind them will continue to give us clear errors and embarrassing contradictions. When they finally will break completely free from their bondage to a corrupt King James tradition and some key traditional, but false doctrines of modern denominations, Bibles will get better and clearer. To give you an idea of how badly such leading selling Bibles as the NIV, NASB, NKJV, and NRSV have to twist the Greek Texts to make them conform to the false doctrine of eternal torment, I want to give you some clear evidence. The first revision of the King James Bible was the Revised Version. In 1901 an American version of the Revised Version was printed. The first attempt to update the King James Bible received great hostility from the fundamentalist community. Because the Revised Version and American Version were revisions of the King James Bible and not actually a new translation, they had to stay as close to the King James Bible as possible. As a result of this kind of limitation, here is an example of the kinds of idiotic phrases that can occur. 2 Timothy 1:8-9 says in the American Standard translation of 1901: "Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God; who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before times eternal."

"Before times eternal" is a contraction in three terms! It sounds good, but it does not make sense! How can there be time before eternity? The translators put in the margin of this Bible "long ages ago." Now this makes sense. Why didn't they just put this in the text? Because the sacred cow, the King James Bible, has been billed as the "Authorized and Inerrant" one, and that is all a bunch of bunk! The revisers also felt it was not proper for the King's translators to arbitrarily translate the Hebrew word Sheol into three different words in English, that being "grave" 31 times, "pit" one time, and "hell" 31 times. The revisers put in the word Sheol without translating it at all. This wiped out "hell" from the entire Old Testament. This made it consistent with Jewish Bibles which also do not contain the word "hell." Of course the fundamentalists went mad and to this day, they still are. Breaking traditions to return to the truth is a slow painful process. The King James Bible has many translational errors and archaic English, which is not in our English language anymore. Can anyone tell me what these words mean: sottish, nitre, wist, collops, mallows, meteyard, tabering, murrain, sith? There are many of 17th century words in the King James Bible which have passed out of use in the English language. Why should we deprive our children the precious word of God by forcing them to read a Bible which makes no sense to a twentieth century person? Back to aion. In the Book of Revelation in the 20th Chapter and the 10th verse, we see the the devil, the beast, and the false prophet thrown into the lake of fire, which by definition, is called the second death. There they are tormented (literally "touchstoned") "day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10). If you go to any Bible which contains the Greek text such as the Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English, or the Tyndale New Greek English Interlinear New Testament or any standard Greek Text, you will see that the Greek says they will be there for the *aionas ton aionon* which literally means "ages of the ages." Throughout the New Testament, we find this word *aion* used in double such as above only in important different forms. In Ephesians 3:21 we read of the "age (singular) of the ages (plural)." In Hebrews 1:8 we read of the "age (singular) of the age (singular)." In other places we read of the "ages (plural) of the ages (plural)." The Greek language is a very exact language and God is very exact also. If we neglected to take into consideration that there are at least three different forms here which should come through into the English, we would certainly do the Greek language and God a great injustice. But then that is

exactly what these best selling Bibles have done. They have rendered all three of these phrases with "forever and ever." The word "and" is not even in the Greek! Obviously, there is some foul play here. The publishers have gone half way with correcting many of the King James Bible mistakes, but they will not correct this most major and dangerous error until they feel they can do it and still make a profit. A proper regard for the different forms of these three forms is vitally important. The Bible speaks of the Holy of Holies, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. "Age of the ages" is a particular age out of more than one age. To render all three forms "forever and ever" is not just bad translating, it is outright deception. In Revelation 20:10 the fact that there are "days and nights" here should tell you that we are not dealing with eternity. The renowned Bible teacher and translator of a New Testament, Dr. William Barclay, points out in his "The Letters to the Corinthians" that if the Greek words *eis tous aionas ton aionon* means endless time, as translated in the KJV, "forever and ever," we have a contradiction in Scripture, for Revelation 11:15 says, in the same version (KJV): "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." That contradicts 1 Corinthians 15:25, which says: "He must reign till ...." If Revelation 11:15 is translated "eons of the eons" or "ages of the ages," there is no contradiction.

There are some who after wrestling with the facts above will admit that the word *aion* means "an age," but they say its adjective *aionios* has to mean "eternal" because it is used so often to describe God. Professors in seminaries say these kind of foolish things. Anyone with a little bit of sense recognizes that an adjective cannot have a greater force or meaning than its noun. Hourly cannot mean "yearly," for example. The adjective gets its force from the noun. If the noun *aion* means age, then the adjective *aionios* has to pertain to "age" and not to something greater than "age." It cannot therefore correctly represent eternity. Just because *aionios* is used to describe God Who is eternal does not mean *aionios* means "eternal." God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Does that mean He is not the God of the rest of us? Of course, not! God can be the God of ages as well as being eternal. The very nature of God commands the idea of eternity. He doesn't have to be called eternal to make Him eternal. That is part of His nature. The Bible has many other ways to express endlessness or not being exposed to the corruption of death. Endlessness is expressed in the Scriptures by the simple phrase "no end" (Luke 1:33; Daniel 7:14; Isaiah 9:7). The thought of permanence is also expressed in Hebrews 7:16, "the power of an endless or indissoluble life," and in 1 Peter 1:4, "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." The word *aion* and its adjective *aionios* is not used in the above passages to describes conditions of endlessness or incorruptability. The Greek language uses prefixes indicating "not" or "no" or "un" in words to describe conditions we would normally use to describe conditions of the eternal. "Un"ending, "in"corruptible, "in"dissoluble are a few examples.

After thoroughly studying the Scriptures and being convinced the doctrine of eternal torment was not found in the original languages, I searched early Christian history and writings of that period. Among many things, here are a few items which may interest you:

Many orthodox Christian historians acknowledge that the majority of the early church did not teach eternal torment. A couple of examples: Geisler - "The belief in the inalienable capability of improvement of all rational beings, and the limited duration of future punishment was so general in the West, and among the opponents of Origen, that it seems entirely independent of his system." (Eccles. Hist., 1-212). (Origen has been accused of bringing into the church the heresy of the

salvation of all. Geisler points out the belief was prevalent even apart from Origen's influence). The German theologian and historian Johann Christoph Doerderlin writes: "In proportion as any man was eminent in learning in Christian antiquity, the more he cherished and defended the hope of the termination of future torments." Professor and historian Henry Oxenham informs us that the "Doctrine of endless punishment was not believed at all by some of the holiest and wisest of the Fathers, and was not taught as an integral part of the Christian faith by any, even of those who believed it as an opinion." Historian Pfaff says: "The ultimate restoration of the lost was an opinion held by very many Jewish teachers, and some of the Fathers." Dietelmaier: "Universalism in the fourth century drove its roots down deeply, alike in the East and West, and had very many defenders." Reuss: "The doctrine of a general restoration of all rational creatures has been recommended by very many of the greatest thinkers of the ancient church, and of modern times" (Hist. De la Theol. Apost.)

Prior to Augustine in the 5th century, the vast majority of Christians including the leadership believed in the Salvation of all mankind through Jesus Christ. St. Basil the Great (c. 329-379) in his *De Asceticis* wrote: "The mass of men (Christians) say that there is to be an end of punishment to those who are punished." St. Jerome (342-420): "I know that most understand the story of Nineveh and its King, the ultimate forgiveness of the devil and all rational creatures." The Christian leader most instrumental in bringing in the damnable heresy of eternal torment, Augustine, admits himself that "There are very many (imo quam plurimi, which can be translated majority) who though not denying the Holy Scriptures do not believe in endless torments" (*Enchiridia*, ad Laurent. c.29). Imagine, the champion of the doctrine of eternal torment admitting out of his own mouth that as late as the 5th century many or the majority of believers did not believe in eternal torment and he said they did not deny the Scriptures in believing so.

Of the six theological schools known to the early church, four taught the salvation of all, one taught annihilation, and only one taught eternal torment.

The Greek word *aion* was not used to mean eternal in the early church writings.

The President of the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, was an outspoken Universalist, that is, he believed in the Salvation Of All Mankind Through Jesus Christ. Would the church designate a heretic as its head at such an important meeting?

When Emperor Justinian finally declared the teaching of the Salvation of all as heresy, he used the word *ateleutetos* to describe "eternal punishment," not *aionion* which is the Biblical term. If *aionion* meant "eternal" why didn't he use it? He didn't because it didn't mean eternal!

Many writings are still preserved from the early Christian bishops which clearly show they did not teach eternal torment. To mention just a few: Clement Alexandrinus, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Ambrose, Titus of Bostra, Diodore of Tarsus, Isidore of Alexandria, Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, etc.

When studying the lives of the early leaders, those embracing the Salvation of all clearly showed much more love and fruit in their lives than those who taught eternal torment. Compare Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa with Tertullian and Cyprian.

If the doctrine of the salvation of all was heresy, why didn't the church declare it as such until the church entered the dark ages? Could it be that when the pagan doctrine of eternal torment entered the church, this very doctrine brought about the gross darkness which the church plunged into?

It was not until the church left the Greek text and went to the Latin Vulgate Text that large numbers began to believe in eternal torment. That was because Jerome mistranslated those very words we have just been talking about. The Latin Vulgate perpetuated the error. As long as the Church primarily used the Greek Text, it taught the Salvation of All Mankind.

As late as the 16th century lexicographers such as Phavorinus knew that *aion* was just a time word. But he also noted where the idea of changing the meaning came from. He writes, "Aion, time also life, also habit, or way of life. Aion is also the eternal and endless as it seems to the theologian." Here we see where the deception came from, the theologian!

In addition to the above, there are many scholarly volumes which have voiced protest against the way the King James Bible and others have mistranslated this word. The famous G. Campbell Morgan, sometimes called the "prince of expositors," in his book "Studies of the Four Gospels" concerning Matthew 25:31-46 says: "Then, moreover, we must be careful not to read into this section of prophesy things which it does not contain; for while it has been interpreted as though it were a description of the final judgment, the Great White Throne - 'these shall go away into age-abiding punishment; but the righteous into age-abiding life' - the terms are co-equal in value, and whatever one means the other means. Only remember that here Christ is not dealing with the subject of the soul's destiny either in heaven or hell. They are terms that have to do wholly with the setting up of the kingdom here in this world..." He states in his book "God's Methods with Men," "Let me say to Bible students that we must be very careful how we use the word 'eternity.' We have fallen into great error in our constant usage of that word. There is no word in the whole Book of God corresponding with our 'eternal,' which as commonly used among us, means absolutely without end."

(I just want to make a note here. As long as Jesus is still subduing His enemies, we can only attain "aionian life." Our true "eternal" life does not begin until all death is destroyed (first and second death). This does not occur until the Father becomes all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). The Bible does not speak of this condition. I think that it is because words could not adequately describe this state of being.) On the subject of eternity, I could quote many scholars agreeing with G. Campbell Morgan. A handful will suffice: Dr. Edward Plumtre, "I fail to find, as is used by the Greek Fathers, any instance in which the idea of time duration is unlimited." Professor Knappe, "The Hebrew was destitute of any single word to express endless duration. The pure idea of eternity is not found in any of the ancient languages." Professor Taylor Lewis, "The conception of absolute endlessness as etymological of *olam* or *aion* would clearly have prevented plurals." He continues, " 'ever' (German, *ewig*), was originally a noun denoting age, just like the Greek, Latin and Hebrew words corresponding to it." He points out the German because most of the English language is derived from German. The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible says, "Eternity: The Bible hardly speaks of eternity in the philosophical sense of infinite duration without beginning or end. The Hebrew word '*olam*,' which is used alone (Psalms 61:8; etc.) or with various prepositions (Genesis 3:22; etc.) in contexts where it is traditionally translated 'forever' means itself no more than 'for an indefinitely long period.' Thus '*me olam*' does not mean 'from eternity' but 'of old' (Genesis 6:4, etc.). In the

N.T. 'aion' is used as the equivalent of 'olam.'" The famous Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible under the headings for "eternal" shows olam, aion, and its adjective aionios to mean "age" and "age-lasting." He also translated a Bible called Young's Literal Bible which also translated these words correctly.

Even King James Bibles such as The Companion Bible by Bullinger have corrected the text in the margins and the appendages.

Great large-hearted men and women throughout the ages such as Abraham Lincoln embraced the message of the salvation of all mankind. Sadly, he was called an "infidel" by many fundamentalist type Christians in his own day.

I have several shelves of books by many scholarly Christians from all over the world which show the same things I have been revealing in these eight pages. I hope I have stirred your heart enough for you to search to see if these things be so. As I said, it depends upon what is in your heart. If it is full of love, you will search the matter out and your heart will be greatly satisfied. As the famous German theologian and historian Johann Christoph Doederlin (1829-1888) said of the ancient church, and I think it speaks to those today whose hearts and mind are linked to that early church: "In proportion as any man was eminent in learning in Christian antiquity, the more did he cherish and defend the hope of the termination of future torments." This article will cause some of you to study. Others will cast it away as rubbish. The key is what is in the heart. Perfect love casts out fear. Conversely, fear, casts out love.

Some materials we have put together which will help you on your search are: "Bible Translations That Do Not Teach a 'Hell' of Eternal Torment," "The Early Christian View of the Savior," "An Analytical Study of Words," "The Greek Word Aion" and many tracts. We also have many audio tapes on the subject. A couple of good titles to start with are: "Is the King James Bible Inerrant?," "Good Bye King James," "The Power of a Four Letter Word" (Two Tapes), "The Origin of the Word Eternal" (two tapes), and "The History of the Doctrine of Eternal Torment" (4 tapes).

Some books that would be of great benefit to the sincere student which may be purchased at your local Christian bookstore would be The King James Version 1611 Edition by Thomas Nelson Publishers which will reveal that there are tens of thousands of differences between that edition and a present day one.

Also helpful is "The English Bible From KJV To NIV" by Jack P. Lewis, published by Baker House. "The King James Only Controversy" by James R. White is helpful. It is published by Bethany House. While these books do not clear up the matter as much as they should, they are steps in the right direction.

Hard-hearted or Love-filled, you will eventually meet Jesus Christ Who saved the whole world in His Love for us. He came, taught, was crucified, rose again, and conquered death for all mankind, but each in his own order (1 Corinthians 15:22-28). The mistranslation of the word aion killed the image of a Loving Father Whose nature is Love, Who is truly all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent, and just. With a proper understanding of the word aion, Scriptures such as the following, and many more, will cause us to see Him as He really is, thus allowing us to be conformed to His true image. As the title of this article states, the power of life and death are indeed in a four letter Greek word, aion.

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Php 2:9-11).

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach" (1 Timothy 4:9-11, New King James Translation).

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:1-3, NKJV).

"The Father loves the Son, and has given ALL THINGS into His hand" (John 3:35, NKJV).

Write us and we will gladly send a list of dozens of Scriptures which declare that Jesus truly is Lord of all!

Give Him all the glory He deserves!

Tentmaker

118 Walnut Hermann, MO 65041 [www.tentmaker.org](http://www.tentmaker.org)

## S. Hell is Leaving the Bible Forever

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Hell is Leaving the Bible "Forever." By Gary Amirault The word "heaven" appears in the Bible hundreds of times. If "Hell" is the fate of those who do not accept Jesus as their Lord, how often do you think God should put it in the Bible Scriptures warning all the citizens of the world the consequences of failing to accept Jesus as their Savior? As least as many times as the word "heaven"? At least once in each book in the Bible? Thousands of times? The FACTS may shock you.

Number of times "Hell" appears in the text in English Bible Translations

Bible Translations

Old Testament

New Testament

Total

"Authorized" King James Version

31

23

54

New King James Version

19

13

32

American Standard Version

0

13

13

New American Standard Bible

0

13

13

Revised Standard Version

0

12

12

New Revised Standard Version

0

12

12

Revised English Bible

0

13

13

New Living Translation

0

13

13

Amplified

0

13

13

New International Version (best-selling English Bible)

0

14

14

Darby

0

12

12

New Century Version

0

12

12

Wesley's New Testament (1755)

0

0

Scarlett's N.T. (1798)

0

0

The New Testament in Greek and English (Kneeland, 1823)

0

0

Young's Literal Translation (1891)

0

0

0

Twentieth Century New Testament (1900)

0

0

Rotherham's Emphasized Bible (reprinted, 1902)

0

0

0

Fenton's Holy Bible in Modern English (1903)

0

0

0

Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech (1903)

0

0

Jewish Publication Society Bible Old Testament (1917)

0

0

Panin's Numeric English New Testament (1914)

0

0

The People's New Covenant (Overbury, 1925)

0

0

Hanson's New Covenant (1884)

0

0

Western N.T. (1926)

0

0

NT of our Lord and Savior Anointed (Tomanek, 1958)

0

0

Concordant Literal NT (1983)

0

0

The N.T., A Translation (Clementson, 1938)

0

0

Emphatic Diaglott, Greek/English Interlinear (Wilson, 1942)

0

0

New American Bible (1970)

0

0

0

Restoration of Original Sacred Name Bible (1976)

0

0

0

Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, Old Testament (1985)

0

0

The New Testament, A New Translation (Greber, 1980)

0

0

Christian Bible (1991)

0

0

0

World English Bible (in progress)

0

0

0

Original Bible Project (Dr. James Tabor, still in translation)

0

0

0

Zondervan Parallel N.T. in Greek and English (1975)\*\*

0

0

Int. NASB-NIV Parallel N.T. in Greek and English (1993)\*\*

0

0

(\* The KJV and the NKJV are the only two of the major translations in the list above to use "Hell" in the Old Testament. Even the NKJV which was only supposed to modernize the English of the traditional "Authorized Version," the KJV, took a dozen Hell references out. (2 Samuel 22:6, Job 11:8, Job 26:6, Psalms 16:10, Psalms 18:5, Psalms 86:13, Psalms 116:3. Isaiah 5:14, Isaiah 28:15, Isaiah 57:9, Jonah 2:2). It seems even in the King James Tradition, the use of the word "Hell" is decreasing. The NKJV, RSV, ASV, NRSV, and NASB are all technically revisions of the original King James Bible. From 54 times to 32 and then to 12 or 13 times—who knows—maybe the next revision will bring it in line with the many Bibles which have eliminated the pagan word Hell all together.)

(\*\* A note about the Parallel Interlinears. I am referring to the word-for-word translations beneath the Greek in these works, NOT the English versions which are also in these reference works. Obviously the versions in these books (NIV, NASB, and KJV) contain the word Hell as many times as they normally would.)

There are other translations like the Companion Bible King James Version, American Standard Version (1901), the Newberry Reference Bible (Still published by Kregal Publications), and the Riverside New Testament by Ballantine (1934) which contain footnotes, marginal readings and appendages which point out that several key Greek and Hebrew words regarding Hell have been MIStranslated by such Bible versions as the King James Bible. Please note that the above list of Bibles which do NOT contain the word Hell in the text is NOT exhaustive—we are discovering more translations all the time in which the translators did not feel justified in using the Teutonic pagan word Hell to translate the Hebrew word Sheol and the Greek words Gehenna, Hades, and Tartarus. The End of "Forever" in the Bible

Another pleasant change which more Bible translations of the future will make deals with the subject of the words "everlasting," "eternal," and "for ever and ever." These words have been used in times past to translate the Hebrew word "olam," and its Greek counterpart "aion," and its adjective, "aionios." These ancient words should NEVER have been translated this way. Many modern scholars are beginning to cut the grain of tradition and speak the truth which has been shackled by the chains of tradition long enough. It's time for light. The body of Christ has had enough of living in the shadows. It's time for pure light!

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, a well-known Bible teacher, hailed as "the prince of expositors" wrote in his book "God's Method's With Men" on pages 185, 6, "Let me say to Bible students that we must be very careful how to use the word 'eternity.' We have fallen into great error in our constant use of that word. There is NO word in the whole Book of God corresponding with our 'eternal,' which as commonly used among us, means absolutely without end." The above statement may come as a shock to the traditional Christian in the typical Church. It was certainly a shock to me. How could he make what appeared to me such a ridiculous statement. The Bible translations I had were FILLED with verses that spoke of things which were "eternal," "everlasting," and went on "forever and ever." How could he be hailed as a renowned Bible teacher and be given the honor of being called by the evangelical world the "prince of expositors" and yet make what appeared to me

based upon my few Bible translations an utterly ridiculous statement? But when I decided to dig through my walls of tradition to see if what the famous Doctor Morgan said was true, I found MANY other well-known and respected scholars and Bible teachers had come to the very same conclusions to which Dr. Morgan had come. And after doing some intensive studies comparing English Bible translations and noting great discrepancies among them, comparing translations to the original languages of the Bible and studying the teachings of the early Christian believers and leaders and aided by the Spirit of Truth whom Jesus promised to send His disciples, I came to the conclusion based upon solid facts that Dr. Morgan was correct in his assertions. The "traditional" teachings which I had consumed in the many churches I had attended over the years were false. This was a very painful discovery in one sense. It brought about division with some of my other Christian brothers and sisters who were not willing to look at these plain facts. They didn't want to rock the boat. They were comfortable being in the majority whether they were right or wrong. The fear and respect of man had gripped them and they didn't even know it. Jesus said that His word would divide, didn't He? Sometimes it even divided brother from sister, father from son, etc. Even though that brought sorrow for a season, the Truth shall make you free. The freedom I found after being set free of some "traditions of men" and "doctrines of demons" which had held me imprisoned is impossible to put in words. Truly God expanded Himself greatly in my life after the religious shackles which enslaved me came off. I pray that the rest of my brothers and sisters who are still enslaved to "majority rule" thinking be given the courage to look at the truth instead of bow down to the fear of man.

Today, many years after this shocking discovery, I can't believe I ever believed the "traditional" view. Today, the Bible speaks from cover to cover of a MUCH more glorious God than I had been taught in the traditional fundamentalist, evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Churches I had attended. I wrote this brief article to serve as an introduction to a subject on which we have written and reprinted hundreds of articles, tracts, books, audio tapes, CD's etc. It is merely a tiny spark—a spark which I hope will set ablaze once and for all every single tradition the reader has been taught by men and women which are contrary to the true Word of God. This article will NOT answer all your questions—this article's purpose is to free the reader to begin to ask the RIGHT questions which, with diligent study and prayer, will bring the answers to the reader. At the end of this article are listed some Internet sites which contain literally hundreds of articles and books which will greatly expound upon the tiny spark which this brief article is. If the reader lets this spark take its course in their lives, I believe a real resurrection will follow—a resurrection from the death found in the "traditions of men" and the "doctrines of demons" and into the glorious light of the truly Good News of Jesus Christ which most of the world to this day has NOT heard, especially in church.

Before reading the rest of this short article, I beg the reader to pray a short prayer something like this. Use your own words, of course: Dear heavenly Father, if I have swallowed traditions and doctrines which have made the word of God of no effect in my life (Matthew 15:3-9), then I ask you to reveal this to me, no matter how hard it may be for me to bear it. I want the Truth and nothing but the Truth. Please send the Spirit of Truth into my life. Make all my beliefs line up with the Truth found in Jesus Christ alone. Cause me to yield myself completely to the Spirit whom Jesus promised to send to His believers. Set me free from ALL traditions, rituals, doctrines, beliefs and associations which have NOT come from you. And Father, if the message in this article is indeed

true and from you, then let it do its work in me. Use it as a spark which will burn up everything and anything which is NOT from You. Humble me, Father, that I might be able to receive your Truth found in Your Son, Jesus Christ. Send my Your Precious Holy Spirit, and reveal the Truth to me. Amen.

Now please take the English Bible translation of your choice and find the following Scriptures and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. It would be helpful if you compared at least three English translations. Since the King James Bible has held sway over the non-Catholic and Orthodox Churches for the last 350 years, that should be one of the translations. Then find another one of the leading "selling" English translations like the NIV, NASB, NRSB, Amplified, Living Translation, etc. I emphasized the word "selling" because the merchandising of the Gospel is one of the leading factors which has brought corruption into our English translations. The third Bible to have at hand would be perhaps Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible published by Baker Book House, or "Rotherham Emphasized Bible" published by Kregal Publications (both publishing houses are leading well-established evangelical publishers). The last two translations can be ordered from just about any Christian bookstore, including our own; Tentmaker Resources ("[http://tentmakerresources.spreadtheword.com/store/comersus\\_index.asp](http://tentmakerresources.spreadtheword.com/store/comersus_index.asp)").

Now let's discover how long the "eternity" REALLY is in many leading "selling" English translations:

Sodom's fiery judgment is "eternal" (Jude 1:7)—until—God "will restore the fortunes of Sodom" (Ezekiel 16:53-55).

Israel's "affliction is incurable" (Jeremiah 30:12)—until—the Lord "will restore health" and heal her wounds (Jeremiah 30:17).

The sin of Samaria "is incurable" (Micah 1:9)—until—the Lord "will restore ... the fortunes of Samaria" (Ezekiel 16:53).

Ammon is to become a "wasteland forever" and "rise no more" (Zephaniah 2:9; Jeremiah 25:27)—until—the Lord will "restore the fortunes of the Ammonites" (Jeremiah 49:6).

An Ammonite or Moabite is forbidden to enter the Lord's congregation "forever"—until—the tenth generation (Deuteronomy 23:3).

Habakkuk tells us of mountains that were "everlasting," that is—until—they "were shattered" (Habakkuk 3:6).

The Aaronic Priesthood was to be an "everlasting" priesthood (Exodus 40:15), that is—until—it was superseded by the Melchizedek Priesthood (Hebrews 7:14-18).

Many translations of the Bible inform us that God would dwell in Solomon's Temple "forever" (1 Kings 8:13), that is,—until—the Temple was destroyed.

The children of Israel were to "observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant" (Exodus 31:16)—until—Paul states there remains "another day" of Sabbath rest for the people of God (Hebrews 4:8-9).

The Law of Moses was to be an "everlasting covenant" (Leviticus 24:8) yet we read in the New Covenant the first was "done away" and "abolished" (2 Corinthians 3:11; 2 Corinthians 3:13), and God "made the first old" (Hebrews 8:13).

The fire for Israel's sin offering (of a ram without blemish) is never to be put out. It shall be "perpetual"—until—Christ, the Lamb of God, dies for our sins. We now have a better covenant established on better promises (Leviticus 6:12-13; Hebrews 8:6-13).

God's waves of wrath roll over Jonah "forever"—until—the Lord delivers him from the large fish's belly on the third day (Jonah 2:6; Jonah 2:10; Jonah 1:17);

Egypt and Elam will "rise no more" (Jeremiah 25:27)—until—the Lord will "restore the fortunes of Egypt" (Ezekiel 29:14) and "restore the fortunes of Elam" (Jeremiah 49:39).

"Moab is destroyed" (Jeremiah 48:4; Jeremiah 48:42)—until—the Lord "will restore the fortunes of Moab" (Jeremiah 48:47).

Israel's judgment lasts "forever"—until—the Spirit is poured out and God restores it (Isaiah 32:13-15).

So, narrow is the way to life and few find it—until—The Lord proclaims liberty to the captives and His church confiscates the "strong man's" booty, setting the captives free so God becomes all in all (Isaiah 61:1, Luke 11:21-22, Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 16:18, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

The King James Bible, as well as many others, tells us that a bondsman was to serve his master "forever" (Exodus 21:6), that is,—until—his death.

God is now calling out "a people for His name"—an "elect" or chosen priesthood people who will represent and reflect His loving nature. Many are called and few are chosen—until—the small chosen priesthood people, by the Spirit, restore "David's tabernacle" so ALL mankind may inquire of the Lord. Thus we see that the church is the first-born, the beginning—until—in ALL (later born new creatures in Christ) our Lord will have supremacy (Amos 9:11-12, Matthew 22:14, Acts 15:14-18, Ephesians 3:15, Colossians 1:18).

All manner of sin will be forgiven in this AGE as well as in the AGE (not eternity) to come, except blasphemy against God's Spirit—until—such blasphemy finds pardon in the fullness of the times (or ages) when God unites all in Christ. For the Lord does not retain His anger forever because He delights in mercy (Matthew 12:32; Matthew 18:11; Matthew 18:21-22, Ephesians 1:9-11, Revelation 4:11; Revelation 5:13, Micah 7:18-20).

God's wrath has come upon Israel "to the uttermost" (1 Thessalonians 2:16). So there is a gulf between "the rich man in purple" (Royal Covenant "Son", Israel) and the saved gentiles (Lazarus) which no man can cross—until—Christ Himself crosses it to bring His promised restoration. For again, Scripture promises that ALL Israel will be saved (Jeremiah 50:5, Luke 16:19-26, John 12:32, Romans 11:26-29).

Christ's fallen apostle, Judas, will be restored just as surely as fallen Israel (of which he is a member) will be restored. For the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable, and He has purposed to unite all in Christ. For Scripture assures us that He who calls us is "faithful". He will surely

perform it. So Judas is lost—until—the Lord restores Him (John 15:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:24).

So, Christ will say to unrighteous NATIONS, "Depart from Me into 'everlasting' fire." And these nations will go away into "everlasting" (original language: age-lasting) punishment or pruning, that is—until—by God's severe mercy shown in judgment, ALL nations He has made glorify and worship Him. Thus God will fulfill His covenant with Abraham that in Christ all the families of ALL the nations will be BLESSED (Genesis 12:3, Psalms 67:4, Psalms 86:9, Matthew 25:41; Matthew 25:46). For according to Paul (Galatians 3:8), God's covenant with Abraham means that ALL will be justified and set right with God. So all flesh will bless His name forever and ever (Psalms 145:21).

Therefore, ALL scriptural references that speak of everlasting fire or judgment MUST be understood in light of God's (Love's) clearly expressed heart, promise, desire, purpose and will. They ARE "everlasting"; that is, they are continuous and on-going—until—God's judgments serve to accomplish His unchanging will and purpose to unite ALL creation in Christ (Genesis 12:3, Romans 4:13, Hebrews 6:17).

Truly God's judgments are in the earth—until—mercy shall triumph over those judgments. (James 2:13)

In Adam ALL died, that is,—until—in Christ shall ALL be made alive, but each in his own order (1 Corinthians 15:22). Paul reemphasized this important truth in Romans 5:18. "Through the one man's offense judgment came to ALL men, resulting in condemnation, that is,—until—through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to ALL men, resulting in justification of life." It is righteous AND fair that because all were condemned to death through Adam's one act of disobedience that God undo that unrighteous act and give us all life. We didn't ask to die and we shouldn't have to ask to live. God is God. Why do we get mad when He becomes good to all just because He delights in doing good? There is a parable about some workers who worked all day yet were given the same wages as those who only worked a short while. Perhaps we, Christians, should learn the lesson of that parable (Matthew 20:1-16). What is in us that doesn't think it's fair if God gives us all eternal life? After all, did we earn ours? Maybe that's where the real problem lies. Many of us have been duped into mixing law and works with grace thereby falling from grace and becoming unrighteous judges just like the Pharisees of old.

Gehenna's fires are not quenched and its worm does not die—until—the restoration of all things which has been spoken of by all God's holy prophets (Christ included) since the world began. For our Savior did not come to contradict His own prophets. Our Good Shepherd and Faithful Deliverer came to fulfill the law and the prophets! Thus our Lord does not cast off forever (Lamentations 3:31-32, Hebrews 13:8). He who taught us to forgive and bless our enemies will surely do the same for His. For every tongue will give thanks that in Him they have righteousness and strength. All flesh will bless His name forever and ever! For our Lord will not fail or become discouraged until He fulfills all of God's purpose, word and will. For He tells us that everyone will be "seasoned" with fire (Matthew 5:17, Mark 9:42-49, Acts 3:21).

Those who disobey the gospel and persecute Christians will be repaid with "everlasting" (that is, continuous) tribulation, destruction and punishment—until—by such persistent correction God shows them their need for Christ. So what is written in the prophets will come to pass, that ALL

shall be taught of God, and everyone who has heard and LEARNED from the Father (eventually) comes to Christ. Thus, all the families of the nations will remember Him and worship before Him. And all will submit to Him and sing His praise. So God's promise will be fulfilled that ALL men shall reverence Him, proclaim His works, and wisely consider His doing (Psalms 22:27-28, Psalms 64:4-5, Psalms 64:9, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Paul the apostle understood the "forever until" principle at work in God's redemptive judgments. He knew the heart of God, and Paul also knew God's will, purpose and plan. His knowledge of God's character, will and purpose governed his understanding of Scripture. That is why Paul could appear to contradict the prophet David! Have a look at Romans 11:9-12 in the NIV translation, where David prophesies in Psalms 69:22-23 :

"May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution to them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see and their backs be bent FOREVER." And observe how Paul responds:

"Again I ask: Did they (Israel) stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? NOT AT ALL! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the gentiles (pagans, all who are spiritually unenlightened) to make Israel envious. For if their transgression means RICHES for the WORLD, and their loss means riches for the gentiles—how much greater riches will their (Israel's) fullness bring?"

Wow. . . ! In the next three verses (Romans 11:15-16) Paul assures us:

that Israel's fall is the reconciliation of the WORLD;

that Israel's fall will be (for them and all the world) life from the dead! (Eze. 37);

that because the FIRST fruit (Israel) is holy, the whole world ("lump" or "harvest field") is holy.

Read all of Romans chapter eleven, and the Scriptures will clearly speak for themselves. Practice reading all of God's Word in light of His character, commitment, purpose and reliable good pleasure and will. Get God's "forever until" policy of judgment settled in your heart—and get ready! The "forever until" principle should really more accurately be termed "present time until" principle, NOT "forever until." As the reader can plainly see from the many Scriptures we quoted, the terms "forever and ever," "eternal," "everlasting," etc., are MIStranslations which appear in many of our leading "selling" translations, but they never appeared in the original languages of the Scriptures. The wages of sin have always been DEATH, NOT "everlasting" punishment, "everlasting" destruction or burning in a lake of fire "for ever and ever."

Yes, death, which was IMPUTED to all mankind through the one unrighteous act of Adam, would send ALL of mankind to death—until—Jesus would overcome all His enemies, the last one being death itself. ALL death will be overcome by Jesus. The lake of fire is defined by the Bible itself as the "second death" (Revelation 20:14, Revelation 21:8). Death would reign—until—Jesus overcomes it and then Jesus will deliver the kingdom unto God the Father, that He may be "all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28).

If one wants to get downright technical about it (which I don't particularly want to do in this article), many leading selling English Bible translations have just plain missed it when translating the

Hebrew word "olam," the Greek word, "aion," and its adjective "aionios." These words simply should never have been translated by words which indicate an eternal state. Many leading scholars today readily admit that. I'll just quote one for this non-technical article just for the reader's sake.

Dr. R. F. Weymouth, translator of the "New Testament in Modern Speech" states in that work, "Eternal, Greek aeonian, i.e., of the ages: Etymologically this adjective, like others similarly formed does not signify, 'during' but 'belonging to' the aeons or ages." Many more scholars who make similar statements regarding these key Hebrew and Greek words may be found at the "Scholar's Corner," at the following Internet sites: [www.tentmaker.org](http://www.tentmaker.org) [www.what-the-hell-is-hell.com](http://www.what-the-hell-is-hell.com)

You are about to embark upon a love affair with our Heavenly Father that will transform your life. His heart will heal and transform your heart! For of Him and through Him—and to Him—are ALL things (Romans 11:36)! Yourself included. For again, we must remember, our Savior did not come to contradict the words of His own prophets. He came to fulfill them. God hardened all of us, that He might have mercy upon all of us. One can't give mercy to someone unless one is in need of it. And that is why God does not unhardened and give mercy to all at once. WE must learn to be like God Who overcomes His enemies with His Love. How can we possibly practice becoming like Him unless He gives us hardened unbelievers who look like enemies? How can we love the unlovely unless He allows some of us to remain unlovely until He chooses to unhardened them as well? Paul told the early church that those whom God hardened were to be won through the mercy shown them through us who had received God's mercy.

Concerning the Jews whom God hardened for a season that the gentiles might be grafted into the tree:

"Concerning the gospel they are enemies FOR YOUR SAKE, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet now have obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. (Study Church history and see if the Church has shown this mercy to the Jews. Sad story indeed.) For God has committed (shut them all up in) disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 'For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid?' For of Him and through Him and to Him are ALL things to whom be glory forever. Amen." The Father seeks worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. The Father also implores us to reason with Him. Try to fathom the height, depth, length, and width of His Love. Imagine truly knowing the beginning from the end. Imagine being absolutely sovereign over all things, where NOTHING takes you by surprise. Imagine mercy which does not know an end (Psalm 136). Imagine a judge who always delivers absolutely perfect righteous judgment. Imagine a God who is ever-present everywhere. Imagine a God who says all souls are HIS and that He fashions EVERY heart (Ezekiel 18:4; Zechariah 12:1; Isaiah 45:9; Psalms 33:15). This God is perfectly Holy. He is NOT a man that He should lie. He does NOT break His promises. He does NOT break His word. While He can get angry for righteousness sake, He will NOT be angry forever nor will He cast off man forever (Lamentations 3:31-32; Isaiah 57:16). He is a God Who said He was going to overcome

His enemies with love and commands us to do likewise if we want to be like Him (Matthew 5:43-48). When some of Jesus' disciples wanted to pour fire down on some unbelievers' heads because they refused Jesus as Lord, Jesus responded to them, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did NOT come to destroy men's lives but to save them (Luke 9:54-56). How much is the spirit of the modern church like these two disciples' and so much UNLIKE the spirit of Jesus?

Imagine a Love that NEVER fails (1 Corinthians 13:8). Imagine a loving God for whom NOTHING is impossible (Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26). Imagine a Creator who made you in HIS image—one who desires that you call him Daddy, Abba. Imagine YOUR loving heavenly Father who not only says that He loves, but Who says the He IS LOVE!!! Imagine this Love who said in one of His parables that He leaves the ninety-nine sheep to find the single one that is lost and He does NOT give up until He finds it. Have you got all this in your mind and heart? It's really all too big, too wonderful, isn't it? That is why we will need a new spiritual body. Our natural bodies are simply incapable of handling all that our glorious Maker is. Hold all these attributes in your mind as well as you are able.

Now this heavenly Father, our Maker, has a Son. He sent His Son to the earth to accomplish a few things. He gave this Son all power and all authority to accomplish the Father's will and desires. Here are a handful of Scriptures which declare why God the Father sent His only begotten Son into this world:

God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). Who comes down from heaven and gives Life to the world (John 6:33). The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them (Luke 9:56). And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself (John 12:32). As you have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as you have given Him (John 17:2). The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand (John 3:35).

God, Who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1-2). His purpose is very clear: to reconcile all things back to His Father (Colossians 1:16-20).

According to Scripture, Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, created all things, reconciles all things, is Heir of all things, has authority of all things, will have all men to be saved, His grace comes to all men, He takes away the sin of the world, He gives His flesh for the life of the world, He is the propitiation for the sins of the world, whose gifts are irrevocable of which life is one of the gifts, He manifested to put away sin, He preached to the spirits in prison and holds the keys to death and hell, who changes not, He is Lord of both the living and the dead, He will destroy all enemies of God the last one being death, Who made all things alive, Who completes the work the Father gave Him to do, Who restores all things, gave Himself a ransom for all, He takes away the curse and said He came to do the will and work of the Father who wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth so that God, the Father may be all in all! I could lengthen this paragraph considerably, but I think the point has been made.

Now—think and reason with your Maker and the Son Who is probably in your heart. Is it reasonable that God should consign everyone who was ever born to endless misery burning forever in a literal lake of fire which will never be quenched considering the above nature and character of the Father and the purpose of Christ? Most of traditional Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Fundamentalist, Evangelical, Charismatic Christianity seems to think so. They all say one will burn in Hell if they don't make some kind of decision before they die. Is it reasonable and just to tell the world that if two people commit murder just before they die, if one says the sinner's prayer, he will escape punishment forever and if the other doesn't, he will burn in Hell forever without a chance of pardon? Is this really "justice?" Millions of church-going Christians are taught it is.

Now stay with me for a little while longer. How are people saved? Paul tells us through the foolishness of the preaching of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:21). "Faith cometh by hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:8-10).

Paul and Jesus make it quite plain that people are "saved" by hearing the gospel preached, responding to it by believing in one's heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confessing Him with the mouth, they will be saved. The Bible also makes it quite clear there is no other name by which mankind can be saved except the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). There are a couple of verses that might indicate one needs to be baptized in some fashion or another as well (Mark 1:8; John 1:26-33).

Dear reader, are you aware that 2000 years after the gospel was sent into the world, that there are literally thousands of languages in the earth today which do NOT have even pieces of Scriptures let alone an entire Bible? Do you understand that from Adam to the present day, probably well over 95 percent of the world never heard the one name under heaven which men must be saved? Are you also aware that most of the world who did hear the name hear it from a Catholic priest who told them that Jesus was a piece of cracker which they had to eat in order to be saved? Are you also aware that most denominations of Christianity throughout the ages have added hundreds of other qualifications which potential converts also had to perform or rules one had to abide by in order to stay saved? The list is endless—it ranges from being a member of the "right" church or denomination to a certain form of water baptism to declaring a certain formula to having to speak in tongues, etc. Once a person is saved, there are literally hundreds of ways one can lose their salvation according to the thousands of different denominations which have formed around creeds, men, styles of buildings and worship, nationality, forms of church government, etc.

Let's face it, if we add all the things Jesus said about those who thought they knew Him but to whom He would say, "I never knew you," (Matthew 7:23) and the many luke-warm who he would "vomit" out of his mouth (Revelation 3:16), surely there is scarcely a person who can really have absolute assurance they are truly saved. Contrast this depressing situation with the nature and character of our heavenly Father and His Son. Do you see a terrible discrepancy? As a matter of

fact, the discrepancy is so great that many Christians have had to create other gospels to remedy this great gap. Some Christians have invented the "age of accountability" to get the little ones out of the eternal flames. Surely they do it quite unscripturally. There isn't a shred of Scripture which supports such a cause noble as it may be. The Scriptures plainly state "there is NONE righteous, nay, not one" (Romans 3:10-12). "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). No—the teaching that children are innocent until a mythical age of accountability might partially remove the black eye He suffered from the church's "good news" which is terribly bad for almost ALL of mankind, but it's not in the Bible.

Some well-meaning Christians try to justify God for sending almost all of mankind to Hell even though they never heard the name of Christ by stating Romans 1:20 makes it plain that all can see that there is a god just by looking at trees, stars, rocks, etc. Well, there were MANY heathens who believed in a god through nature. The nation of Israel was surrounded by nations who believed in gods of all kind because they saw something divine in nature, but did that save them? NO! They were called idolators! One does not find Jesus by looking at clouds and trees. One finds Jesus through the preaching of the Good News. No preaching, no salvation. Archaeology conclusively proves this fact. We only find Christian civilizations where the Gospel was preached. We do NOT find it in civilizations in which there were no Bibles or preachers of the Gospel. To try to get some of those who never heard the gospel into heaven because they realize it isn't fair to send someone to Hell if they've never heard the gospel tell us that God will judge people based upon the condition of their heart. If they are good people, God will save them even if they've never heard the gospel. While that certainly makes God look a lot better than what traditional Christianity teaches, this teaching totally contradicts the Bible which plainly states "there is NONE righteous, nay not one." Furthermore, it negates the cross completely. If people can get saved outside of the cross, then there was no reason for Christ's death. Good people go to heaven, bad people go to hell. But according to Scripture, there are no "good people" from God's point of view. When someone called Jesus good, Jesus said to them, "Why do you call me good? There is none good except God."

All these extra-biblical ways to try to get more people out of the traditional Hell and into heaven is because the traditional view has so grossly distorted the gospel and the character of God, that well-meaning Christians have felt the need to invent non-scriptural means to empty the traditional Hell some. The traditional concept of salvation, when carefully scrutinized, surely puts almost all of mankind into Hell. How can grace have abounded much more than sin with such pathetic results. Adam condemns all of mankind to death, Jesus manages to squeeze out a pathetic handful for Himself and then is compelled to send the rest of mankind to eternal tortures which would make Hitler's actions look like child's play.

Until the heart of God and the will of God become the foundational factors determining our understanding of Scripture, our "gospel" will be bad news—not good. "God is Love, but" is simply not the message the Holy Spirit is conveying to us in the Bible (1 John 4:10; 1 John 4:14).

(Many of the above "forever—til" verses came from an excellent work entitled "Absolute Assurance in Jesus Christ: Four Views of the Salvation of Our God" by Charles Slagle. The book may be ordered from Charles & Paula Slagle, P. O. Box 17419, San Antonio, TX., 78217 or phone at 817-685-7617. It is also on the internet at: [www.tentmaker.org](http://www.tentmaker.org) under "books.")

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