

[**NB.** This is an archived article. The author no longer holds the view of Universal Salvation expressed herein, which is similar to the view of the renowned church father, Origen. See www.purposeoflife.org.uk for further information]

Is There Really A Hell?

A Study of Body, Soul and Spirit,

Human Destiny and

The Lake of Fire

By

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The popular belief in some kind of Heaven and Hell has been around since the dawn of civilisation. It can be found within many religions and belief systems, including Christianity. It is commonly believed that the good people, who believe in God, will go to Heaven for eternity, and all the rest end up in some kind of hellish torment or annihilation for eternity, with maybe a stopping off in some kind of purgatory first. But what is the truth in this matter? What does the Bible really teach concerning Human Destiny? What is death? Is there really a Hell? The answer to these questions will reveal the true character and purpose of God, and the destiny of every single one of His creatures, so it is therefore of the utmost importance that we gain a correct understanding in these things.

For many years I was under the agonising burden of believing that God was going to send all unbelievers to an eternal hell of torment in a literal Lake of Fire, because that was what the Bible *seemed* to teach. But thank God that I eventually discovered that this was a diabolical myth that had been injected into Scripture through faulty translation, false teaching and a gross misunderstanding of spiritual words. This study will attempt to answer the above questions by taking a look at the correct

scriptural meaning of body, soul and spirit, and what the Bible really teaches on death and hell. So let us begin by taking a look at the creation of humanity in Adam.

(Due to the fact that most translations are inconsistent and discordant in translating the words for soul, spirit, hell, etc, which causes much confusion, this study will be primarily using the Concordant Literal Version. See [The Concordant Version](#) article for further information).

The Creation of Humanity

And Yahweh Elohim is **forming** the human of **soil from the ground**, and He is **blowing** into his nostrils the **breath of the living**, and the human is becoming a **living soul**.

(Genesis 2:7)

Here we have the simple yet profound description of the creation of Adam, the first human. God, through the Channel of His Son (the word Elohim is plural), forms Adam's body of flesh from the elements of the soil of the earth. Then God, who is Spirit, breathes into Adam the breath of the living, that is, the Spirit of God creates the spirit of Adam, which causes Adam to become a living soul, that is, he becomes consciously alive with sensations via the blood; a living, functioning soul.

Now Paul makes it clear in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that we *are* spirit, soul and body, although it is also clear that neither of these can consciously exist on its own. Although Scripture keeps body, soul and spirit *distinct* (when translated accurately that is!), it also reveals that all soulish creatures *are* body, soul and spirit. To be human is to be body, soul and spirit - that is the whole human.

- **The Body** is the physical organic substance of our flesh and bone. This is clear throughout Scripture, and from our everyday experience.
- **The Spirit** essentially determines who we are as individual humans. It defines our personality and will. At present it appears to be linked to breathing, though the air or breath is not *actually* spirit.

Genesis 7:22 literally reads *the breath of the spirit of the living*. The Hebrew 'ruach' and the Greek 'pneuma' used for the word spirit, literally mean 'wind' or 'a blast of air.' Through our spirit we can understand and communicate with God, who is Spirit. John 4:24 literally reads '*God-spirit*' which in Greek is not a figure like

'God is light' but an actual fact - God is Spirit, not a spirit. God is the absolute source of all spirit, which is life (John 5:26; 6:63). *'The spirit is that which is vivifying.'* He gives to all life and breath and everything. In Him we live and move and are (Acts 17:25-28).

Hence anything that is alive has spirit (like plants), or *a* spirit (like living souls). Yet even though we have a spirit that is given to us via generation, which as humans we can understand, we remain soulish. Only the Holy Spirit of God can make us truly spiritual, to be able to understand the things of God.

'For is any of humanity acquainted with that which is human except the spirit of humanity which is in it? Thus also, that which is of God no one knows, except the Spirit of God...Now the **soulish** man is not receiving those things which are of the Spirit of God, for they are stupidity to him, and he is not able to know them, seeing that they are **spiritually** examined'

(1 Corinthians 2:11 and 14)

And these spiritual things of God do not come to us by the spirit of the world or with words of human wisdom, but by the Spirit of God, which gives us understanding of spiritual truth by teaching us through spiritual words.

Now we obtained, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may be perceiving that which is being graciously given to us by God, which we are speaking also, not with **words** taught by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, **matching spiritual (words) with spiritual (truth)**.

(1 Corinthians 2:12-13)

So to come to an accurate understanding of any biblical truth, we must have spiritual understanding to interpret God's words God's way, matching spiritual words with spiritual truth and blessings. This means that we need to correctly cut the word of truth, recognising the progressive time divisions within Scripture (the ages and administrations), as well as understanding the difference between the soulish and the spiritual, the relative and the absolute (2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 4:12). These principles are particularly relevant to this study.

We shall see that there are usually three levels of truth in relation to most things as taught in Scripture. Let us take the example of fire, appropriate for this study. There is natural fire that is part of this physical creation. Then there is spiritual fire that is part of the celestial (or heavenly) world (or dimension), which is, nevertheless, very real and can manifest itself in this material world. God Himself appears as a consuming fire, which has the power to destroy (Nadab and Abihu - Leviticus 10:1-

2) or to preserve (the burning bush - Exodus 3:1-2). Then thirdly, there is the highest level of figurative fire, the fire that shapes our character, the fiery trials that refine us like gold and silver, the fire of God's righteousness working within us to destroy the flesh, etc.

This is what rightly dividing the Word is all about. We need to understand which fire is being spoken of by the Spirit in a particular text to interpret God's meaning correctly. In some cases though, more than one level of truth can be applied. That's the wonder of the Word.

Anyhow let's get back to the 'birth' of Adam.

Adam at his creation (and later Eve, who was built up from a part of Adam) was filled with the Spirit of God, which would have emanated from his body as a glorious covering of light (Exodus 34:34-35; Psalm 104:1-2; Matthew 17:2). That is why their original nakedness was not shameful, it was glorious! But sin and death has brought a major change to our bodies, so that we only faintly reflect something of that glorious beginning in paradise.

- **The Soul** (Heb. 'nephesh' and Gr. 'psuche') is evidently the result of the fusion of body and spirit, and is intimately connected with the blood, and all physical and emotional sensation. Adam became '*a living soul.*' Leviticus 17:14 says '*the soul of all flesh is it's blood.*' This is because a soulish creature has to live off the organic substances of the earth to survive. When scripture refers to the soul being in the blood, this is a *figure* meaning that as terrestrial creatures we are fed through, and sense things via the blood. ***The soul is not a distinct entity or substance!***

It is very common amongst Bible teachers to confuse **soul** and **spirit**, and use them interchangeably. One of the reasons for this (besides faulty translation) is because Scripture often ascribes similar things to both soul and spirit. For example, in Genesis 26:35 it talks of '*bitterness of spirit,*' yet in 1 Samuel 1:10 it talks of '*bitterness of soul.*' There are numerous examples throughout Scripture. But the clear truth is that soul and spirit are *distinct*, but they are also so intimately combined - because we *are* body, soul and spirit.

The Entrance of Death

Adam was commanded not to partake of the fruit of a particular tree in the paradise garden, but choosing not to correct his wife's deception, he disobeyed. But what was the penalty for this transgression? Genesis 2:17 literally says '*..for in the*

day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying.' The penalty was a dying condition (mortality), bringing increasing infirmity, suffering and eventually the state of death itself (corruption). So from that day humanity was severed from the Life-Source, and death entered humanity and the whole earth, causing foundational changes in all living things, a disruption of the world. This mortality has been passed through into all mankind, which causes us to sin, that is, to miss the target of God's righteous perfection due to sin and death dwelling in our flesh.

'...and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned'

(Romans 5:12. See also Romans 7:17-18; Galatians 5:19-21)

(The 'flesh' is often mistranslated as 'sinful nature,' but nowhere in Scripture is nature, or that which is natural, condemned. Sin is *against* nature and conscience - Romans 2:14-16; 1 Corinthians 11:14-15)

Genesis 3:19 gives us a simple definition of death,

'...till your return to the ground, for from it are you taken, for **soil you are**, and to soil are you **returning**.'

So death is a RETURN to what Adam was before his creation. (See also Psalm 104:29; 146:4; Job 10:9; Ecclesiastes 12:7). Paul confirms this truth by referring to his death as a dissolution in 2 Timothy 4:7 (that is, the breaking up of the body into its original parts).

Concerning the spirit, James 2:26 states that '*...the body apart from spirit is dead.*'

So Scripture clearly teaches this:

- At death, **the body** returns to the soil by decomposing, as stated above.
- **The spirit** returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7),
- and **the soul** returns to the Unseen or Hades (Psalm 9:17; 16:10; Acts 2:27, 31).

We can see that this occurred in the death of Jesus.

- He committed His **spirit** into His Father's care, at which He expired (Luke 23:46).

- His **soul** went to the Unseen (Acts 2:27).
- His **body** was laid in the tomb, although it never saw decay (Acts 2:31).

But you may be asking what the Unseen or Hades is? So let's take a look.

The Unseen or Hades

The Hebrew 'sheol' and the Greek 'hades' literally mean 'the imperceptible' hence the 'unseen.' They are often mistranslated as grave, pit and hell. The word 'hell' though is of Saxon origin meaning 'to cover over,' so it was originally used in early English translations for death and the grave. But as we shall see shortly, the word 'hell' has been used far more liberally in English translations and has changed its meaning to equate with the fiery underworld of ancient myths. The unseen refers to that which is imperceptible to everyone, including the one who has died and it is always connected to the soul, that is, human consciousness.

Therefore death is a return to unconsciousness. Only in God's sight do we still exist, as He 'holds' our spirits. The following Scriptures confirm this by revealing that death is a sleep until the time of resurrection, the great awakening, but until then the dead know nothing, as though they are sound asleep:

'For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing...for in the unseen, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.'

(Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 NIV)

'But man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more...they will not awake or be roused from their sleep.'

(Job 14:10-12 NIV)

(Also Psalm 13:3; 6:5; 146:4; Job 3:11-19; Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14).

Jesus used this figure when He told His disciples that He was going to wake Lazarus out of sleep. The disciples thought He meant natural sleep or repose, but He meant physical death (John 11:11-14).

This is also one of the reasons why God warns against spirit mediums and the like in His Law, because demons, who are deceiving spirits that belong to the kingdom of darkness, are very often the real source of so-called 'contact of the dead,' although many mediums and so-called psychics are just plain tricksters. 'Alien encounters' and other forms of Channelling also fall into the same deception. Humans in death are asleep.

As far as God is concerned though, He is the God of the living, not the dead, because He will one day call them back to life (Luke 20:37-38; Romans 4:17).

A common illustration of body, soul and spirit is that of a light bulb. The filament is the body, the electricity is the spirit, and the light is the soul. At death, the spirit departs (no power), and the soul disappears to the unseen (lights out). The lifeless body then slowly decomposes.

Death is death, hence the need for resurrection. There is no 'spiritual death,' as this is a contradiction of terms because that which is spiritual gives life! And death is not life in another sphere. Yet in a figurative sense, all unbelievers are as though they are dead to God because they are oblivious to His Spirit. In God's sight, since the death and resurrection of Christ, the old humanity in Adam is dead and gone, and the only ones who are living are those who belong to the New Humanity in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Ephesians 4:17-24; Revelation 20:12).

Eventually ALL humanity will be resurrected to immortality, to become part of the New Humanity, but this shall occur in stages. (See [Appendix: The Resurrection Order](#)).

So the conclusion we arrive at is this.

The penalty for Adam's offence is not eternal damnation, but eonian death or death of indefinite duration. All of humanity shares the same fate. But the great news is that death and its consequences are being reversed because of the One who has conquered death - Christ Jesus! (2 Timothy 1:10-11). **This is the Good News!**

For a more detailed look at the reasons why death and sin are part of God's plan and purpose, see the article entitled [Almighty God v Almighty Self](#).

The True Meaning of Hell

As stated above, 'hell' is not a scriptural word. As well as being used for *hades*, the unseen, hell has also been used for two other Greek words - *Gehenna* and *Tartarus*.

The most used of these two words is Gehenna. When people say that Jesus was the one who spoke the most about hell, He was in fact referring to Gehenna. This word stems from the Hebrew meaning 'ravine of Hinnom.' The valley of Hinnom was on the south-western side of Jerusalem, and it had been used as a place of child sacrifice in ancient Israel, where they sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire to the idol Moloch. This was an abomination to God. And the 'hell-fire doctrine' is

also an abomination to God, portraying Him as a barbaric idol of the nations who will burn His creatures in eternal fire!

Anyhow, later Gehenna became the city's incinerator for dead carcasses of criminals and other garbage, which was continuously kept burning, and the parts which were not burning were consumed by maggots (worms). It also became known as Topheth meaning abomination. (See also 2 Kings 23:10; Isaiah 30:33 and Jeremiah 19).

"It is ideal for you to be entering into the kingdom of God one-eyed, rather than, having two eyes, to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, where their worm is not deceasing and the fire is not going out. **For everyone will be salted with fire**, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt...Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another."

In Mark 9:42-49, Jesus is using Gehenna in a figurative sense, revealing that, during the powerful Day of the Lord's indignation, when He will be unveiled from heaven in flaming fire, He will be dealing out vengeance to the wicked and will judge them by fire (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). This accords with the prophecy in Isaiah 66:22-24.

"...all mankind will come and bow down before Me," says Yahweh.
"And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against Me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind." (NIV)

"Wheresoever the corpse shall be, there will the vultures be gathered."

(Matthew 24:28; also Revelation 19:17-21)

In a more literal sense, these texts are also describing the aftermath of God's judgments upon the people of Israel and Jerusalem through invading armies, which caused mass destruction and killing. Many of the corpses would often be thrown into the literal Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom, outside Jerusalem.

So on the one level, the Gehenna of fire was a natural fire, an incinerator, indicative of shame and contempt. In most of the instances where the word Gehenna is used in the New Testament, though, it is figuratively describing the ultimate judgment for rebellious unbelievers at the return of Christ. It is describing the figurative fire of God's Law working out its righteousness and justice. Jesus said that everyone shall be salted with fire. This is the fire of the Divine Law destroying sin. The fire may be figurative, but it is very real. It is a spiritual fire because the law itself is spiritual (Romans 7:14).

Is There Really a Hell?

"Is not My word like fire," declares Yahweh, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

(Jeremiah 23:29 NIV)

For He will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.

(Malachi 3:2 NIV)

...and His eyes as a flame of fire

(Revelation 1:15)

Now if anyone is building on this foundation gold and silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, **each one's work will become apparent**, for the Day will make it evident, for **it is being revealed by fire**. And the fire, it will be testing each one's work - what kind it is.

(1 Corinthians 3:12-13)

...being sorrowed by various **trials**, that **the testing of your faith**, much more precious than gold which is perishing, yet, **being tested by fire**, may be found for applause and glory and honour at the unveiling of Jesus Christ...

(1 Peter 1:7)

These few scriptures will suffice to show that the ultimate fire of God is His righteous Law. Not only will everyone be salted with fire, but Jesus also said that every sacrifice will be salted with salt. Now we all know that salt is a preservative and an antiseptic, and it is also a seasoning for food. In the law of Moses, every grain offering, also termed a sacrifice, had to be seasoned with salt (Leviticus 2:13). The salt represents the goodness of God's Law and character. Jesus said that His followers are to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). We are to be living sacrifices, salted with the salt of goodness, grace and peace.

...present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service...

(Romans 12:1-2)

...offer up spiritual sacrifices, most acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

(1 Peter 2:5)

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt...

Is There Really a Hell?

(Colossians 4:6 NIV)

"Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another."

(Mark 9:50)

Before we can truly have salt in ourselves, though, we need to be salted with the fire of God's Truth.

The Lake of Fire

Now over time, through a distortion of the truth foisted upon the people by the powers of Christendom, Gehenna became synonymous with the 'eternal hell of the Lake of Fire' mentioned in the book of Revelation (Revelation 20:10, 13-15). All the wicked and unbelieving are said to be cast into this Fire after the Great White Throne Judgment of ALL humanity. They are not found written in the Book of Life and they will therefore not be given eonian life in the kingdom of God.

Jesus is describing this judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats. His brethren, the Bride/Body of Christ, are already with Him, having already ruled with Him for (a symbolic) 1000 years, as we learn from Revelation 20. Then all the nations are gathered before Him for judgment. They are judged in accordance with their acts as to whether they have shown acts of loving kindness to His brethren or not. Those who have are called the righteous sheep, and they are accepted into the kingdom and given eonian life. The rest are the unrighteous goats, and they are cursed and thrown into the eonian Lake of Fire, which was originally prepared for the Adversary and his messengers.

"Go from Me, you cursed, into the eonian fire..."

(Matthew 25:41)

And these shall be coming away into eonian chastening...

(25:46)

Now the majority of Bibles read 'everlasting fire' and 'eternal punishment' in the above verses of Matthew 25, but the Greek word 'eonian' does not mean unending, and the phrase 'eons (ages) of the eons (ages)' used in relation to the Lake of Fire in Revelation does not mean forever and ever. For the correct translation of the words usually rendered 'eternal' and 'forever and ever' see [The Concordant Version](#) article.

Also, the Greek word *kolasis* in verse 46 is describing chastening or discipline, not necessarily punishment (though punishment is a part of God's righteous judgments). Chastening carries the thought of correction for the benefit of the one

undergoing it. So already we can see that these unrighteous ones are to receive chastening in a spiritual fire that was originally prepared for Satan, a spiritual being. It is described as eonian because this fire belongs to the eons (or ages) of time, beyond the horizon of time as we now know it, **but it will end. God's justice has a time limit. This Lake of Fire is the ultimate Gehenna of Fire.**

the Lord...is keeping **the unjust for chastening in the day of judging...**

(2 Peter 2:9)

This fire of chastening shall also apply to Satan and his messengers, for whom it was originally prepared.

For if God spares not **sinning messengers**, but thrusting them into the gloomy caverns of **Tartarus**, gives them up **to be kept for chastening judging...**

(2 Peter 2:4)

This text gives us the other Greek word usually mistranslated as hell - Tartarus. There are two other passages in the New Testament that seem to be related to this one (1 Peter 3:18-20 and Jude 6). In putting these scriptures together, we are told about a group of stubborn spirits or sinning messengers who are bound in a place called Tartarus because of their involvement in the early downfall of humanity, in the era before the Flood, but we are not told exactly what they did. It was to these spirits in jail that Christ went sometime after His resurrection to proclaim to them His victory and exaltation. Jude 6 is the most revealing:

'Besides, messengers who keep not **their own sovereignty**, but leave **their own habitation**, He has kept in **imperceptible bonds under gloom for the judging of the great day.'**

So from these scriptures we can see that some of these stubborn spirits abandoned their God-given position of sovereignty and their God-given home in the celestials, and sinned during the era before the Flood. This of course is an abomination to God, so they are confined with invisible chains in the gloomy caverns or jail of Tartarus until the day of their chastening judgment. Then they too will enter the eonian fire.

But why is it called the Lake of Fire in the book of Revelation?

The vision of Revelation is full of spiritual signs and symbols which are deeply rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures, especially as it relates to the Temple services. Outside the Temple of Solomon was the brazen Sea. This was a huge bowl of water for the priests to wash themselves for their ceremonial cleansing (1 Kings 7:23-26; 2 Chronicles 4:6). Now in the New Testament we read about the Sea of Galilee,

which is really a Lake. It is describing a huge expanse of water. So we can already see that the Lake of Fire is related to the brazen Sea as a means of cleansing or purification. Now let us look at the fire element.

We've already established earlier that the fire of God is His Law, His justice, His righteousness. The Greek word for fire is *pur* from which we get such words as purify and purge. Natural fire has this effect on materials that can stand the test of fire, such as gold and silver. These metals can be purified by fire to get rid of all the dross, the unwanted, impure alloys. So we have two witnesses, from nature and Scripture, to show us that fire cleanses and purifies, and so does water. **In the Lake of Fire we have the picture of both in a powerful, figurative image.**

In relation to this, the Lake of Fire is also described as '*the Lake of Fire burning with sulphur or brimstone*' (Revelation 14:10; 19:20). Interestingly enough, the Greeks used sulphur in the rituals of the gods as a symbol of divine cleansing. The Greek word used here for sulphur is *theion* which is the same word translated 'divine,' which comes from the Greek root word used for God or Deity. So even in the sulphur we have the picture of divine cleansing.

In Daniel 7:9-10 we have another vision that is describing the final judgment scene given in Revelation. Here in Daniel the throne of God is described very graphically as a throne of fire with a River of Fire flowing out from before God. This is another figure for the Lake of Fire. **It is describing the purifying, chastening judgments of God's Law during the final age. But this is not torture in a literal fire and it will not be unending. It will last until the consummation of the ages when death will be abolished and ALL will be saved, vivified and reconciled to God** (1 Corinthians 15:22-28; Colossians 1:20).

In God's sight, the legal transaction for this glorious ultimate occurred in 33 AD when Christ became the ultimate once for all Sacrifice for all sin during His First Advent and mission. The price for Adam's initial sin, which then brought death and all other sin to the whole race, has been fully paid. The mission has been accomplished, finished, paid in full (John 19:30; Colossians 2:14-15). In this light, even now **the ends of the ages, the conclusion and consummation of the ages has arrived** (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 9:26; 1 Corinthians 15:24).

The Second Death

But you may be asking, "The Lake of Fire is called 'the Second Death' in Revelation 20:14, and death is a sleep."

'And death and the unseen were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death - the lake of fire**'.

So what does this mean? Well, bear in mind that the First Death, along with Hades, is metaphorically thrown into this fire as well. All of mankind are experiencing the First Death right now, which was brought about by Adam's original transgression. But Jesus has paid the full price for Adam's sin so that one day, ALL MANKIND SHALL BE MADE ALIVE (1 Corinthians 15:22). Christ is the Saviour of ALL mankind and He will eventually save ALL mankind, but there is a process in which this shall occur. See the [Appendix: The Resurrection Order](#) below.

Yet even now, in a figurative sense, all who do not know Christ are dead in their sins. Paul reveals throughout his letters that sin and death are interconnected, that our present bodies of flesh and blood are mortal, that is, they are dying. Only those in Christ are given life by the Spirit of God. Everyone on this earth is either slaving for God through Christ, or slaving for Sin and Death. Throughout Romans chapters 7 and 8, Paul talks of a death that we all experience while we are still alive! This is not a contradiction. He is telling us that our mortal flesh has a law at work within its members that brings sin and death to us. This is the flesh that we have to put to death or crucify daily if we are to grow into Sons of God, that is, spiritually mature men and women of God. The Old Humanity breeds Death, and the New Humanity breeds Life. (For further study, see the article [The New Humanity Versus the Old Humanity](#)).

So the Second Death is related to the First Death but they are not exactly the same. The First Death will no longer exist because it is thrown into the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death, but all those who are not in Christ at that time (or not written in the Scroll of Life) shall be raised and judged as the dead. They will not be granted immortality, or eonian life at that time, so they will not be enjoying an allotment in the Kingdom of God. In relation to the true immortal Life of the New Humanity, they are figuratively dead!

The Second Death, the Lake of Fire, is describing the chastening judging of God for those who will have to serve their sentence in that final age in mortal bodies, being in the presence of God on the New Earth but not in the Kingdom itself, which is the New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of the Temple of God, the Bride/Body of Christ, the Church (Ecclesia) of God, who shall be ruling the earth as kings and priests after the order of Melchisedek.

Even now, God dwells within a portion of sinful mankind by His Holy Spirit and He is conciliated to the whole of humanity in this Administration of Grace. All of this is possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost 33 AD, and the two loaves of bread made with yeast (or leaven) that were used on that day as a wave offering of the Firstfruits of the wheat harvest are a symbol of the true Christian Church, the Joint Body (Bread) of Christ, made up of leavened (sinful) Jews and Gentiles in whom God dwells by His Spirit (Leviticus 23:15-21; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 10:17). In the final Age of the

New Creation, the Holy of the Holies, the Age of the Ages, God shall dwell with ALL humanity.

On the outside are the rest of humanity, the peoples and nations on the New Earth, as well as the Adversary and his messengers, for whom the eonian fire was initially prepared for (Matthew 25:41). Revelation 19:20 and 20:10 state that the Wild Beast and the False Prophet, and the Adversary, Satan, will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire to be tormented for the eons of the eons (i.e. the final ages). That is to say, the world empires of man and the antichrist systems of religion which are empowered by the Dragon, Satan, will be judged at Christ's Return and enter the Second Death.

All of these will be experiencing the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death, the Gehenna of fire, where they shall be salted with the fire of God (Mark 9:47-49; Revelation 21:8; 22:15). This is the best way, *metaphorically speaking*, to describe the chastening judging of unbelievers in that final age (Matthew 25:46; Daniel 12:2). There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in this place of outer darkness, for the people shall be face to face with themselves before God in flesh and blood bodies (Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 22:13). And take note: in the relevant texts of the NT, even hypocritical Christians are said to be thrown into this age-abiding fire, the outer darkness. Only the Overcomers are promised to escape the Second Death (Revelation 2:11).

All shall receive graded chastening in accordance with their acts in this life, in accordance with the Divine Law of God manifested at the universal court of the Great White Throne, which shall bring affliction and torment to their souls as they undergo the fiery justice of God until they also learn obedience to the King (Matthew 11:22, 24; 18:34-35; Romans 2:9). Christ and His saints, the kings of the earth, shall reign over them till all His enemies are under His authority, bringing healing to those who are injured by the Second Death (Revelation 2:26-28; 3:21; 22:2-5). (See also [The First and Second Resurrections and the Judgment Day](#)).

Then, at the consummation of the ages, the last enemy, Death, shall be completely abolished and ALL those who have been experiencing the Second Death shall be given immortality also, and shall be reconciled to God as Father, so that God may be ALL in ALL (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:19-20). ALL creation shall bow before, and acclaim, Jesus Christ as Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11; Revelation 5:13). Then Christ shall hand over the perfected kingdom to His Father.

(For further information on fire and torments see the [Appendix: Fury, Punishment and Torments - A Correct Understanding](#) below).

The Great Resurrection Chapter

It would be appropriate in this study to take a look at the most detailed passage of Scripture on the subject of the spiritual, immortal body - 1 Corinthians 15. This chapter sheds much light on the present constitution of humanity, and also Christ's uniqueness as the Son of God and the Son of Mankind. So let's take a look at this amazing passage.

In verses 1-11, Paul establishes the undeniable fact of Christ's resurrection as the foundation of the evangel for the Uncircumcision, proclaimed by himself, and the evangel of the Circumcision, proclaimed by the Twelve,

'...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures,..'

Then in verses 12-19, He reveals the folly of those who were teaching that there is no resurrection of the dead. The obvious conclusion is that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been roused, therefore they are still in their sins and their faith is vain. Also, all those who have died have perished, and our expectation for the future is meaningless!

(Verses 20-28 are a parenthesis, which is looked at in [Appendix: The Resurrection Order](#)).

Paul continues in verses 29-34, by referring to the ritual of baptism, that identifies the living with the dead, which becomes meaningless if there is no resurrection of the dead! Also, the dangers Paul was facing daily, along with all his sacrificial toil, was also meaningless!

'If the dead are not being roused, "we may be eating and drinking, for tomorrow we are dying." '

In other words, if there isn't a resurrection and judgment, we may as well live it up, for death is the end of it all, hence no accountability! But Paul's warning is

'Be not deceived...for some have an ignorance of God.'

He then proceeds by anticipating some objections to the resurrection,

'But someone will be protesting, "How are the dead being roused? Now with what body are they coming?" Imprudent one! What you are sowing is not being vivified if it should not be dying. And, what you are sowing, you are not sowing the body which shall come to be, but a naked kernel, perchance of wheat or some of the rest. Yet God is giving it a body according as He wills, and to each of the seeds its own body.' (v 35-38)

In answer to these questions, Paul focuses on nature, with which we are all familiar. Each seed of grain has its own body, which has to die when planted in the soil so as to bear fruit. (This is a great object lesson in itself, as everything that soulish creatures need to eat to survive has to die to bring life - John 12:24). The body of fruit that grows from the seed is different from the seed, and is as God wills it. It is a miracle that the seed contains everything that grows from it when it dies in the soil.

'Not all flesh is the same flesh, but there is one, indeed, of men, yet another flesh of beasts, yet another flesh of flyers, yet another of fishes. There are bodies celestial as well as bodies terrestrial. But a different glory, indeed, is that of the celestial, yet a different that of the terrestrial, another glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star is excelling star in glory.' (v 39-41)

He then continues by comparing the flesh of humanity with the flesh of other animals, including birds and fishes. It's all flesh, but with a great variety and distinction, which suits each creature's place in nature. He then begins to introduce the spirit realm, where celestial bodies have a glory that is different from terrestrial bodies. He then compares the glories of the universe, which are figures of the celestial spirit realm, where each has its own glory.

'Thus also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is roused in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is roused in glory. It is sown in infirmity; it is roused in power. It is sown **a soulish body**; it is roused **a spiritual body**'. (v 42-44)

Then using the figure of nature, Paul shows that the human body is sown (dies) in corruption, dishonor, infirmity and is **soulish**. But in direct contrast to this, it is awakened by resurrection in incorruption, glory, power and as **a spiritual body**.

(It needs to be said here that Paul is talking about the resurrection of believers to immortality, which is a special prior resurrection that is out from among the dead. There will also be the general resurrection at the White Throne Judgment for all the rest when Christ returns, but the majority at that time will not be raised to immortality. They are still figuratively classed as the dead in Revelation 20:11-15. This is covered in [Appendix: The Resurrection Order](#)).

'If there is a **soulish** body, there is a **spiritual** also. Thus it is written also, The first man, Adam, "became a living soul;" the last Adam a vivifying Spirit. But not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual. The first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven. Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. And according as we wear the image of

the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial'. (v 45-49)

Paul then contrasts the fleshly, soulish body of humanity in Adam, with the spiritual heavenly body of Christ Himself. All of humanity is soilish and soulish, that is, we originate from the earth and are dominated by the soul via the flesh, which is indwelt with sin and death.

When Christ came to earth as the man Jesus, He was unique. Even though He had a human body that was capable of death, He was not like other men. His conception was directly of God, and therefore His spirit and flesh were unique, untainted with sin and death passed on from Adam. He is a vivifying Spirit. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He was full of life, which is why He could heal the sick and raise the dead. (Even though these miraculous signs were also given to the apostles by the power of the Holy Spirit, they did not have the fullness of life within themselves as Jesus did).

Jesus voluntarily laid down His life in obedience to His God and Father, so that all will be drawn to Him and be saved. (John 10:17-18; 12:32-33; 18:4-6; Matthew 26:52-54). He wouldn't have grown old or died otherwise. He would have lived indefinitely, that is, for the eon.

It is interesting to note that Adam would have lived for the eon if He had been able to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life. Adam, and many after him, had great longevity, which slowly faded through the generations, but if he had been allowed to eat the special fruit of the tree of life, he would have lived indefinitely, constantly combating sin and death within, which was not God's plan at that time (Genesis 3:22-24). Christ is the Tree of Life and in the future ages on the New Earth, Christ will be at the centre of the Paradise of God in His kingdom. He will give life and health to ALL EVENTUALLY (Revelation 2:7; 22:2,14; Ezekiel 47:12; John 11:25-26). Yet I'm sure that there will be some real trees full of fruit in that future day as well. Even today, a healthy diet of fruit and vegetables can improve our health, along with many herbs. How much more so for those who'll need it on the New Earth!

As the Son of God, He is the Celestial One, the Lord out of heaven. In God's sight there are only two men whom all others are fashioned after - the first man, Adam, and the second and last Adam, Christ.

Paul reveals the glorious truth here that believers in Christ, especially those of the Body of Christ ecclesia (Gr. 'called-out ones'), who have a celestial destiny, will one day have a celestial body just like Christ. This body will be spiritual, not soulish, nevertheless, it will be a body - a spiritual body. This means it will be dominated by the power of the Spirit of God, not the soul. It will not be hampered by the limitations of the fleshly, soulish body we now have. It will be immortal, incapable

of dying and free from sin. We will not be bound to this earth and its laws of gravity, etc - Acts 1:9-11; John 20:19.

It would appear that blood will be absent, even though we will be flesh and bone, and we may eat if we choose, though it will not be essential - Luke 24:36-43. We will be like the celestial messengers (angels), but we will still be human, as Christ is, not spirits - Luke 20:36. We will be fit for the glories of the spiritual dimension as well as the material world, and we shall be able to traverse both in the New Creation.

So as a brief summary, as humans,

- a. we have a soulish mortal **body**
- b. we are **souls**, and
- c. we have a **spirit** (and as believers we have a deposit of the Spirit of God, and also the spirit or mind of Christ!)

In vivification or resurrection, as the New Humanity,

- a. we will have a spiritual immortal **body**
- b. we will still be **souls** (but without the need for blood), and
- c. we will have a **spirit**, plus the fullness of God's Spirit and of Christ

The Secret of the Resurrection

'Now this I am averring, brethren, that **flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God**, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption. Lo! A secret to you am I telling! We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.**' (v 50-53)

Paul now reveals that a flesh and blood human (a corruptible mortal) cannot enjoy a portion in God's heavenly kingdom (in incorruption and immortality). He then reveals a secret (or mystery) concerning that which will need to take place at the Return of Christ. He clearly states that not all believers will sleep the sleep (or

repose) of death - but we shall all be changed at the same time! When Christ returns, those of the Bride/ Body Ecclesia who are living and surviving till that day shall be changed in a split second into immortals, and then snatched away into the air to meet with the dead in Christ who have been resurrected first as incorruptible immortals.

We shall then be assembled together with Christ to return with the armies of heaven as the Firstfruits of the New Humanity. Here is what Paul had previously revealed concerning this glorious event.

Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing, lest you may sorrow according as the rest, also, who have no expectation. For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him.

For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose, for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first. Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord. So that, console one another with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; see also Matthew 24:30-31; Revelation 19:7-8, 14).

For further information, see the article [The Destiny of the Israel of God](#).

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-9, Paul uses the figure of buildings to describe the two states of mortality and immortality. The mortal body is temporary, '*a terrestrial tabernacle house*,' while the immortal body is a permanent building of God. He is using the figures of the Tabernacle or mobile Tent of God, which was temporary, and the Temple of God in Jerusalem which was more permanent. Believers are spiritually the true Temple of God of the New Jerusalem, but for the meanwhile, we are housed in a Tabernacle that is temporary.

He then changes the analogy to that of clothing, where death for the believer is figured as being naked, and is undesirable, for we would rather be clothed with the immortal body at the return of Christ, so '*that the mortal may be swallowed up by life*.' Our true home is with the Lord in our immortal bodies.

Paul concludes by saying that when this glorious event occurs, the following scriptures will truly be fulfilled,

'He (Yahweh) will swallow up death permanently'

(Isaiah 25:8)

'From the hand of the unseen will I ransom them;

From death will I redeem them.

Where is your plague, O Death?

Where is your sting, O Unseen?' (Hosea 13:14)

The sting of Death is sin dwelling within our flesh, yet the power that causes sin to rise up is the law, because we are unable to fully keep it. The good news, though, is that through our Lord Jesus Christ, God is giving us the victory over sin and death! (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). In the meantime, only One has immortality now, and that One is Christ Jesus. His celestial glory is so awesome that no human can perceive Him apart from becoming a celestial, immortal human.

...He is King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone has immortality, making His home in light inaccessible, Whom not one of mankind perceived nor can be perceiving, to Whom be honor and might eonian!
Amen!

(1 Timothy 6:15-16)

Conclusion

We have covered much ground in this study concerning the subjects of death, humanity's constitution of body, soul and spirit, and the grand truth of the immortal body. We have also briefly looked at Human Destiny and the Lake of Fire, and it has been shown that there is no 'hell' in the traditional sense of the word, and that one day ALL humanity shall be raised from the dead and will come into a realisation of the truth that God, in Christ, is the Saviour of ALL.

This is THE GOOD NEWS! No wonder Paul said that he was not ashamed of the evangel! (Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8-12)

There are a few scriptures that appear to contradict the above teaching on death. I will conclude this study by stating them briefly.

[The Rich Man and Lazarus](#) - Luke 16:19-31.

This text is often interpreted quite literally, but it must be understood when reading this passage that this is a parable that contains much ancient Rabbinic symbolism, which Jesus was using to rebuke the Pharisees. It is not to be taken as a literal event. Parables highlight certain aspects of doctrine but doctrine shouldn't be built on parables or allegories alone - especially on only one parable!

Jesus is graphically describing here, in figurative language, the judgment of Israel. Those like the Pharisees, who loved self righteousness and money, would be tormented in their soul at the judging, while the poor and afflicted with little faith would be comforted at the judging, and will enter the kingdom with Abraham. This is a powerful illustration of the future judging and the consequences of ignoring the teaching of the Scriptures, especially for those living a selfish, wicked life. Jesus summed up the somber truth of this parable by indicating that even His resurrection will not convince the majority of the unbelieving leaders of Israel that He is indeed the promised Messiah and Lord - and that judgment is coming.

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

(Luke 16:31 NIV)

[The appearing of Samuel's spirit to the medium at Endor](#)

(1 Samuel 28:7-19)

[And the appearing of Moses and Elijah with Jesus when He was transfigured](#)

(Luke 9:28-36)

These unique events were supernatural visions from God for specific reasons. King Saul needed to be rebuked for his hypocrisy in consulting a medium, and he did this after he had originally banished them all from Israel in accordance with the

Law. And the medium herself needed to see that she was a fraud. So God produced an apparition of the prophet Samuel to speak to Saul, although it is possible that this was a demon spirit impersonating Samuel. A number of religions and sects have been started by angels or spirits appearing to certain individuals impersonating such great spiritual messengers such as Gabriel or others.

Moses and Elijah appeared in vision with a transfigured Jesus to give the three apostles a glimpse of His kingdom glory. Moses represents the Law, and Elijah represents the Prophets, and all shall be fulfilled as promised. This event also revealed that the disciples hadn't fully grasped who Jesus really was, as they proceeded to put Him on the same level as Moses and Elijah in the building of three booths or tabernacles. Hence the voice from heaven, telling them 'This is My Son. Listen to Him.' Nowhere does it indicate that Moses and Elijah were resurrected for this purpose.

The appearing of someone's spirit can occur in dreams also, as though they are alive and present, but this does not mean that they have been resurrected or are in any sense spirit beings. Also, a person can be absent in body, yet present in spirit, through the thoughts of others (1 Corinthians 5:3; Romans 8:9b). There is still much to be understood in the natural material realm, let alone the spirit realm. Therefore we must take great care in viewing the whole revelation contained in Scripture, along with the witness of nature.

Philippians 1:20-25

"I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain**. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far (see below); but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me."

Here, Paul is explaining the fact that whether he continues to live or whether he dies as a martyr, Christ will be magnified through him. For Paul, living in his body is to be living Christ, and dying is gain to Christ, through Paul's life or death witness. He does not appear to be saying that dying is gain to himself, for elsewhere he says that dying is like going naked! (2 Corinthians 5:3-4). Verse 23 of this text should read more accurately

'(Yet I am being pressed out of the two, having the desire for the solution and to be together with Christ, for it, rather, is much better.)'
(CV)

Rather than the two choices of living in flesh or dying as a martyr, Paul wanted to be together with Christ at His return. This would solve his predicament at that time of either living or dying. The whole context of this passage needs to be observed.

Luke 23:42-43

In this account, one of the criminals who was crucified next to Jesus asks Him,

"Be reminded of me, Lord, whenever Thou mayest be coming in Thy kingdom."

Jesus replies,

"Verily, to you am I saying today, with Me shall you be in paradise."
(CV)

Jesus was confirming to this man, there and then, that is, today, that he would be granted a place in the coming kingdom due to his repentant attitude. Paul speaks of the '*the third heaven*' and '*paradise*' in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, where he is clearly referring to the actual manifestation of the dwelling place of God, where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The term *paradise* is ultimately referring to the Kingdom of God, however it is manifested.

In the above quote, most versions put the comma *before* the word 'today,' making it read 'today you shall be with Me in paradise.' This is then interpreted as meaning that he was going to heaven on that day to be with Christ, but as punctuation is absent in the Greek text, it is left to the discretion of the translator as to where to put the comma! The early Greek grammar of this text, as well as the clear teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures, indicates that the above quote is more accurate, with the comma placed *after* 'today.' Jesus was telling the man, "Today, right now, on your deathbed, I'm promising you a place in paradise, in My kingdom."

Nowhere in scripture is death seen as being beneficial to the believer, but where this seems to be the case, it is viewing the moment of death as simultaneous with the moment of resurrection, because there is no account of time in death, which is like sleep. After death, our next conscious moment will be in resurrection. And what a Day that will be!

Appendix: The Resurrection Order

In 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, Paul, in a parenthesis, takes us into the future events of the vivification of all humanity, which concludes at the consummation of the Ages. No other passage of scripture takes us this far forward in time. It even seems out of place in this Corinthian letter, and would be more at home in the later revelation contained in Paul's letter of Ephesians. But of course Paul was inspired by God's Spirit to write it just when he did and with good reason.

Paul's whole purpose in this chapter is to establish the truth of the resurrection of the dead, particularly Christ's resurrection, and its universal consequences. This was due to the fact that many were teaching otherwise. But in the middle of the chapter, he gives us this parenthesis:

'(Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, **the Firstfruit** of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. **For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified.**' (v 20-22)

He firstly reveals a fundamental truth (which most Christians ignore or deny), based on the fact that Christ has been roused from among the dead as the Firstfruit, which guarantees the resurrection of the rest. Death came to the whole race through the man, Adam, so that all are dying (that is, all are mortal).

THUS ALSO, IN THE SAME WAY, LIFE WILL COME TO THE WHOLE RACE THROUGH THE MAN, CHRIST JESUS, SO THAT ALL SHALL BE VIVIFIED (that is, become immortal). It's that simple and that clear!

Yet not all shall be vivified or made alive at the same time!

'**Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. **The last enemy is being abolished: death.**' (v 23-26)**

Paul reveals three classes or groups, wherein all of humanity will be vivified. These three classes are actually represented in type in the three main harvest feasts given to Israel where all males were to appear before Yahweh in Jerusalem:

1. Firstfruits
2. Pentecost and
3. Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-17).

The ultimate purpose revealed here is that Christ will subject all of creation, so that there is no longer any rebellion, that is, His reign perfects the universe, at which time He gives up the kingdom to His God and Father, and subjects Himself, so that ALL is subjected to God, INCLUDING THE SON HIMSELF, so that God may be ALL IN ALL (v 27-28).

The last enemy to be not only subjected but abolished completely is Death, which means ALL must be given immortality, that is, Life. Remember, the Lake of Fire, where all unbelieving humanity shall be, **is the Second Death**. This Death - all Death - will need to be abolished. (See also [Will Death Last Forever?](#))

Death is being abolished in the order that follows:

The Anointed Firstfruit

This can also be translated as *the anointed Firstfruit*. Jesus Christ is The Anointed Firstfruit (the title Christ or Messiah means Anointed One), as Paul had already stated in verse 20, and He rose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits 33 AD. The Greek text in verse 23 does not have the definite article so it can be translated as *anointed Firstfruit*.

In a figurative spiritual sense, this Anointed Firstfruit can also represent the Bride/Body of Christ, the Church (Ecclesia) of God, the Flock of Christ, composed of all believers who have been chosen and called by faith since the birth of humanity. As the Head is, so follows the Body. Even now, we are said to be seated with Christ in the heavenly realms. The Ecclesia is also figuratively referred to as the Overcomers or Conquerors, the Good Figs, the Fruitful Wheat, the Fruitful Branches of the Vine, the Good Fruit Tree, the Good Fish, the Wise Servants, the Wise Virgins, the Temple of God, the Royal Priests.

They are also represented as the 144,000 of the heavenly Israel of God, the faithful celibates who follow the Lamb and who are offered as firstfruits to God from amongst humanity (Revelation 7:3-8; 14:1-5), Christ's chaste virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2), who are sealed by the Spirit of God, who are clean and flawless, and who are identified with the celestial City, New Jerusalem, in the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles of the Lamb.

They are also represented in the 24 Elders who surround the heavenly throne, crowned with golden wreaths, which are the rewards of those who have proven

themselves to be qualified by the Lord to rule as Sons of God with a celestial calling (Revelation 4:4, 10-11; 5:8-10; 1 Peter 5:4; James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

This Anointed Firstfruit resurrection of Christ Jesus as the Head of a New Humanity is figured by the barley harvest at the time of **Passover/Firstfruits** (Leviticus 23:4-14).

Those who are Christ's in His Presence

This is the actual **First Resurrection**, the Resurrection to Life, the Resurrection of the Righteous, the Better Resurrection, the happy Expectation (or blessed hope), which is a special out resurrection that is out from among the rest of the dead, and it comes before everyone else's resurrection, fulfilling the prior-expectancy of believers, the time when we shall be transformed and shall appear like Christ (Revelation 20:4-5; Philippians 3:11, 20-21; Daniel 12:1-2; Luke 14:14; John 5:28-29; Hebrews 11:35, 40; 1 John 3:2-3).

This is when the Sons of God shall be unveiled (or manifested) and shall begin to rule and reign with Christ for the ages to come. This is promised only to the true followers and disciples of Christ, who are Overcomers.

This event shall be accompanied by the snatching away of the surviving living members of the Body of Christ into the air, when we shall be changed into immortality and gathered together with the rest of the Body before Christ pours out His indignation upon the earth. This snatching away is foreshadowed in the snatching away of Enoch and Elijah (Romans 8:19-25; Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11-12) as well as in the ascension of Christ Himself (Acts 1:9-12; Revelation 12:5).

This second stage of the order shall occur at the Return of Christ, His Second Advent and His Unveiling, the ultimate Day of the Lord.

As there is a First or Former Resurrection, there is also a Second or Latter Resurrection. This Second Resurrection shall also occur during Christ's Return, followed by the Great White Throne Judgment for all humanity, which is described in Revelation 20:11-15, but this general resurrection is NOT a resurrection to immortality for the majority.

And I perceived a great white throne, and Him Who is sitting upon it, from Whose face earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. **And I perceived the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. And the scrolls were opened.** And another scroll was opened which is the scroll of life.

And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls **in accord with their acts**. And the sea gives up the dead in it, and death and the unseen give up the dead in them. **And they were condemned, each in accord with their acts**. And death and the unseen were cast into the Lake of Fire. **This is the Second Death-the Lake of Fire**. And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the Lake of Fire.

This is the general resurrection of all humanity and all shall be judged in accordance with their acts. All mankind, including Christians, shall be judged at this time. The majority, though, that is, those who did not partake of the First Resurrection, shall be condemned to the Lake of Fire, the Second Death, to serve their sentence under the iron rod of Christ's Justice, which we have already considered in some detail above. Although they will enter the New Earth, they shall not belong to the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God, hence they will not be enjoying the allotment of the celestial kingdom, that is, immortality.

Yet due to God's awesome presence tabernacling with all mankind, death, doom and mourning as we know it now will be no more, as the former things will have passed away, and Satan and his demons will no longer be deceiving mankind either, as they do now (Revelation 20:10 & 21:1-4). Nevertheless, only when Christ's rule is complete and ALL is subjected to Him, will the Consummation arrive.

Yet verse 15 of Revelation 20 implies that some will be found written in the Book of Life, that is, they are considered as belonging to Christ. This group must be composed of the righteous ones amongst humanity from previous ages and administrations that are not a part of the Body of Christ Ecclesia. They shall include all those who have shown faith through righteous acts but who nevertheless were not chosen to belong to the Bride/Body of Christ. This is being indicated in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31-46. All the nations (that is, those who are not spiritual Israel) are judged in accordance with how they treated Christ's brethren. The NT makes it clear that Christ's brethren are His followers and servants, that is, the Ecclesia of Christ. The righteous ones are then given age-abiding life in the kingdom.

In relation to this Second Resurrection, Jesus reveals that the inhabitants of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon, and Nineveh, and also the Queen of Sheba, will be present at the judgment of unbelieving Israel, which will be at the Great White Throne, and those from the past who repented at the preaching of God's servants shall condemn the unfaithful of Israel that witnessed the miracles of Christ because they did not repent and believe in the evidence for Jesus being the Messiah (Matthew 11:21-24 and 12:41-42).

There shall be many from amongst the nations of the world, from throughout history, some who will have never heard of Christ till that Day, who shall be

vivified and given eonian life in the kingdom in the New Creation. They shall be found written in the Book of Life, which is a figurative way of saying that they shall belong to Christ, written on His heart. These are *those who are Christ's in His presence*.

All shall be judged in accordance with their acts on this great Judgment Day.

'...God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts: to those, indeed, who by endurance in good acts are seeking glory and honour and incorruption, **eonian life**; yet to those of faction, and stubborn, indeed, as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice, **indignation and fury, affliction and distress, on every human soul which is effecting evil, both of the Jew first and of the Greek, yet glory and honour and peace to every worker of good, both to the Jew first, and to the Greek...** in the day when God will be judging the hidden things of humanity, according to my evangel, through Jesus Christ.'

(Romans 2:6-10 and 16. See also Matthew 25:31-46)

Concerning the Book or Scroll of Life, see Exodus 32:31-33; Psalm 69:28; Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8 and 21:27.

For further study of these things, see [The First and Second Resurrections and the Judgment Day](#).

This second class is figured by the wheat harvest at Pentecost, which ends the Feast of Weeks, which is also a feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15-22; Exodus 34:22).

Thereafter the Consummation

This third and final class will complete the vivification of all at the consummation of the ages, when the last enemy, Death, shall be completely abolished and ALL those who have been experiencing the Second Death shall be given immortality also, and shall be reconciled to God as Father, so that God may be ALL in ALL (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:19-20). ALL creation shall bow before, and acclaim, Jesus Christ as Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11; Revelation 5:13). Then Christ shall hand over the perfected kingdom to His Father, for He is the Beginning and the Consummation, the First and the Last.

This third and final class is figured by the grape harvest at the feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering (Leviticus 23:33-36, 39-43). It is also figured by the Jubilee Festival in which all debts were cancelled and slaves were set free (Leviticus 25:8-13, 54).

'For in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him **to reconcile all to Him**, (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, **whether those on earth or those in the heavens'**

(Colossians 1:19-20)

'The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects **ALL** under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that **ALL** is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him (God) Who subjects **ALL** to Him (Christ). Now, whenever **ALL** may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects **ALL** to Him, that God may be **ALL IN ALL'**

(1 Corinthians 15:25-28)

Appendix: Fury, Punishment and Torments – A Correct Understanding

There are a number of scriptures in the New Testament that are greatly misunderstood and misused, and these are often used to support the doctrine of Eternal Hell or Torment. In most modern bibles these texts do appear to teach that God will torture and torment unbelievers in fire 'forever and ever,' suggesting that God will remain angry 'forever and ever.' This is very frightening and disturbing.....and very sickening! This completely contradicts the message of Christ, which is one of love, forgiveness, reconciliation, grace, mercy and peace. Anyone with an inkling of love in their hearts and sanity in their minds cannot help but be repulsed by this doctrine, and burdened in their spirit and soul. But is this really the correct way of understanding these texts? I would say absolutely not!

The above article has given enough information to show that *hell* is not a scriptural word, and that the true meaning of 'the eonian or age-abiding fire,' the Lake of Fire, is not the traditional Hell. There are also a number of articles on this site which show that the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, and *forever and ever* are not accurate translations of the original Greek words. The basic thought behind such words as *eon* and *eonian* is **indefinite time** or **age-abiding**.

But what about the texts that talk of punishment, judgment, God's indignation and fury, and torment? These subjects have been touched upon in the above article, but let us take a slightly more detailed look at some of the key texts that talk of these

things. If the following facts are observed and searched out, then the subject of Punishment and Torments will find its correct place in our thinking.

It is clearly evident that God is a God of justice and righteousness, and He will never go against His own Law, for God never changes. Jesus Christ is the same One yesterday, today and for the ages also (or for time indefinite) (Hebrews 13:8). It is also evident from Scripture that there is a place for God's vengeance to be made manifest, for He hates all wickedness and lawlessness, and all wrongs need to be put right. But we must remember that His throne of judgment is a white throne. He is a just and righteous Judge Who is also Love and Light. His Love for us ALL has already been expressed through the ministry and Sacrifice of His Son.

Therefore, any destruction and anger of God upon humans must ultimately have a loving remedial effect in the New Creation, for He has the heart of a perfect Father, and all of humanity are His children whom He loves very much. He cannot remain angry 'forever,' and His heart will not be satisfied until every one of His stubborn children have been brought back into His loving arms.

So the important, fundamental issue facing Christianity today is that of correctly understanding this subject of God's fury, punishment and judgment, especially in relation to torments and fire. The misunderstanding of it has caused untold hurt and confusion down the centuries due to the doctrine of Eternal Hell being introduced in the later centuries, particularly via Augustine. (For further study of early church history in this matter, see under **Some Interesting Articles** on the [Other Links](#) page).

Let us begin with the subject of punishment and chastening.

Age-abiding Chastening

Throughout the New Testament, in the original Greek, punishment during the ages to come (that is, age-abiding or 'everlasting' punishment) is never actually mentioned. In the Greek, the word *timoria* is describing **punishment**, that which is penal suffering to satisfy justice. But the Greek word *kolasis* (also *kolazo*) is describing **chastening or discipline** with a view to correction. Hence it is remedial and has a restorative end in view. As mentioned in the above article, this is the meaning of Matthew 25:41 & 46.

"Go from Me, you cursed, into the eonian fire..." (25:41)

"And these shall be coming away into eonian chastening..." (25:46)

In regard to the judging of the Second Death in the New Creation, which is the eonian fire, only the word for chastening is used. A number of the early Church Fathers recognised the distinction between these two Greek words, *timoria* and *kolasis*, and this was also the way the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato distinguished them. The Spirit of God has used these words in the same way in Scripture.

Once it is understood that the Second Death of Revelation, metaphorically called the Lake of Fire and Gehenna, is a faded metaphor for age-abiding chastening in mortal bodies, then passages like Hebrews 9:27-28 are without difficulty and contradiction. This text states that '*it is reserved for the men to be dying once, then after this the judging.*' This is used to show that Christ died only once to pay the price of sin, and He will appear a second time to save and to judge.

Although the context in Hebrews appears to be referring to the Levitical priests (and it doesn't actually say 'to be dying once only'), nevertheless, it is a fact that we all enter life to eventually die only once. This does not include resuscitation or temporary resurrection, but the complete entering into the death state. Once we're truly gone from this earth, only judgment awaits us all. The mentioning of the Second Death in Revelation is not a contradiction of this text, for men will no longer die in the sense we know it today, for there will no longer be any doom or destruction.

The vast majority of texts that talk about **destruction** (Greek *apoleia*) and **perishing** (Greek *apollumi*) are related to the Old Creation. Nevertheless, those in this 'Lake' will be experiencing age-abiding Death as opposed to age-abiding Life. It is a figure of contrasts. Eventually, death in all its forms will be abolished altogether by giving everyone Life (1 Corinthians 15:25-26).

Torment

In relation to this is the subject of God's indignation (or wrath) and fury. It will be seen that the subject of torment and chastening is intimately related to God's indignation and fury.

The Greek words *basanos*, *basanismos*, *basanizo* and *basanistes* are used in the NT for torment, torments or tormentor. Both the CLNT Keyword Concordance and Strong's Concordance state that the root word for torment, *basanos*, literally means a touchstone. This is a special stone that was used to test gold and silver for impurities or alloys. This word later became used to indicate testing by torture, whatever the method. A jailer became known as a tormentor for this reason. Yet take note of the fact that the purifying of gold and silver through fire is intimately connected to the idea of a touchstone which tests the metals for impurity. This thought is being expressed by Paul in the following text.

"Now if anyone is building on this foundation gold and silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, **each one's work will become apparent**, for the Day will make it evident, for **it is being revealed by fire**. And the fire, it will be testing each one's work - what kind it is."

(1 Corinthians 3:12-13)

So, the basic meaning of these Greek words, correctly translated as **torment**, is testing by ordeal, which involves suffering and affliction and hardship. This can be related to the spirit, the soul, or/and the body. Torment can be spiritual, mental, emotional or physical or all of these together. This fact is borne out by the NT. Let us look at a few texts that confirms this.

Matthew 4:24 says that Jesus healed people with "...various diseases and pressing torments..." The NIV says, "...various diseases, those suffering severe pain..." There are a number of other instances where the word *torments* is linked to pain and physical illness (Matthew 8:6; Revelation 9:5).

There can be torment of spirit and soul, as in the case of Lot who was tormented at all the lawlessness he was witnessing around him (2 Peter 2:8), and as with unbelievers who are tormented by the Spirit of God through the proclamation of truth (Revelation 11:10).

In the instance when Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee during a storm, Matthew 14:24 says that the boat that the disciples were in was 'being tormented by the billows' (NIV says, 'buffeted by the waves'), and Mark 6:48 says that the disciples were 'tormented in rowing' (NIV says, 'straining at the oars'). So in this instance even the boat was being tormented, as well as the disciples who were in it. This was due to the wind and waves caused by the storm. Simply put, it was giving them a hard time, spiritually, physically and emotionally, and the boat was getting a bashing too.

In the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant in Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus said that the unmerciful and unforgiving servant was angrily turned over to the jailers by his master until he should pay back all he owed. He went on to say, 'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.' (verses 34-35 NIV).

Now the Concordant Version, as well as the KJV, correctly translates *jailer* as *tormentors*. I've heard that some versions even use the word *torture* in this verse. This is not totally incorrect, but torture conjures up all sorts of hideous thoughts. The central idea here is that of the servant having a hard time in prison, which would involve chastisement and beatings, while working off his debt until he had paid back all he owed. He owed a lot of money, so he was going to be tormented for a long time!

This parable is describing something of the future judgment of God in which the unmerciful, unforgiving person shall receive age-abiding chastening in torment under the indignation of God until he has paid for his wicked acts, for we shall all be judged in accordance with our acts, whether good or bad. This is not eternal or everlasting - it will come to an end one day, otherwise it is not just!

A similar picture is being portrayed in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. The judgment of condemnation and chastening is described as a place of torment, agony and fire, yet notice that the fire is affecting the rich man's tongue, that is, his words! This indicates that this is not a literal fire. This is the same as 'the weeping and gnashing of teeth' that Jesus often referred to in relation to the fire of Gehenna. It is the fire of God's Law burning away the dross of the flesh and those who are in it will not escape it until God says so. It will be age-abiding chastening and torment for those who have not accepted Christ's Sacrifice and who remain stubborn to God.

The death and resurrection of Jesus provides for mankind's redemption, but only those who believe in Him can receive their blessing of immortality or 'eternal' life. This is a gift of grace. Yet the majority of mankind will only enter that blessing of spiritual renewal after experiencing the Second Death. Believers, who are Overcomers, on the other hand, shall not be injured by the Second Death (Revelation 2:11).

Even now, believers in Christ, as the sons of God, are experiencing their discipline of the flesh through trials and afflictions, for judgment begins from the house of God (Hebrews 12:4-11; 1 Peter 4:5-6, 16-18; Romans 5:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32).

One of the most graphic texts concerning torment and fire is Revelation 14:9-11. The NIV reads,

"If anyone worships the beast and his image...he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever (*for the ages of the ages*). There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast..."

Again, the focus here is on God's wrath (or indignation) and fury on the wicked, resulting in them having torment and no rest. The figure of fire, smoke (or fumes) and sulphur is used as well, which, as we have learned in the above article, refers to the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death. This is the eonian chastening of fiery torment. Although this is not hideous torture in a literal fire which lasts forever,

nevertheless, this judgment should be eagerly avoided by all mankind, by accepting the Sacrifice of Christ Jesus and becoming a disciple. Yet it is inevitable that the majority will end up experiencing the Second Death, but this is not the traditional eternal Hell - Thank God!

In closing this Appendix, here are some key texts that are describing the final judgment of God through Jesus Christ upon all mankind at the Great White Throne, in which all unbelievers will experience the wrath of God in the Lake of Fire, the Second Death.

Take note that the following key words are all linked to this judgment of condemnation, revealing that they are all declaring something of the same truth: **Eonian Chastening, Eonian Fire, Indignation, Fury, Affliction, Distress, Torment, Pain, Death, Darkness, Weeping, the Cursed, the Stubborn**, etc.

"Yet, in accord with your **hardness and unrepentant heart** you are hoarding for yourself **indignation** in the **day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God,**

Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts:...yet to those of faction, and stubborn, indeed, as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice, **indignation and fury, affliction and distress, on every human soul which is effecting evil...**"

(Romans 2:5-9)

"For the Son of Mankind is about to be coming in the glory of His Father, with His messengers, and then He will be paying each in accord with his practice."

(Matthew 16:27)

"...the lord of that slave will be arriving on a day for which he is not hoping, and in an hour which he knows not, and shall be cutting him asunder (*that is, chastening, as with a whip*), and will be appointing his part with the hypocrites. There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth."

(Matthew 24:50-51; also Luke 12:42-48)

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"...yet he who is stubborn as to the Son shall not be seeing life, but the indignation of God shall be remaining on him."

(John 3:36)

"Go from Me, you cursed, into the eonian fire...And these shall be coming away into eonian chastening, yet the just into eonian life."

(Matthew 25:41 & 46)

"...the Lord...is keeping **the unjust for chastening in the day of judging**..."

(2 Peter 2:9)

"...And, being indignant, his lord gives him up to the tormentors (jailers) till he may pay all he is owing him. Thus shall My heavenly Father also be doing to you, if each one should not be pardoning his brother, from your hearts." (Matthew 18:34-35)

"I am saying to you, 'I don't know you or where you come from! Withdraw from me, all workers of injustice!' There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you are seeing Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out."

(Luke 13:27-28)

"It is ideal for you to be entering into the kingdom of God one-eyed, rather than, having two eyes, to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, where their worm is not deceasing and the fire is not going out. **For everyone will be salted with fire**, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt..."

(Mark 9:42-49)

"...a certain fearful waiting for judging and fiery jealousy, about to be eating the hostile...Mine is vengeance! I will repay! the Lord is saying, and

again, "The Lord will be judging His people." Fearful is it to be falling into the hands of the living God!"
(Hebrews 10:27, 30-31)

"For this you perceive, knowing that no paramour (or male prostitute) at all or unclean or greedy person, who is an idolater, has any enjoyment of the allotment in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one be seducing you with empty words, for because of these things the indignation of God is coming on the sons of stubbornness. Do not, then, become joint partakers with them, for you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord."

(Ephesians 5:5-8)

"Deaden, then, your members that are on the earth: prostitution (*or unlawful sexual acts*), uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry, because of which the indignation of God is coming on the sons of stubbornness - among whom you also once walked, when you lived in these things."

(Colossians 3:5-7)

"Or are you not aware that the unjust shall not be enjoying the allotment of God's kingdom? Be not deceived. Neither paramours, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor catamites, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards; no revilers, no extortioners shall be enjoying the allotment of God's kingdom. And some of you were these, but you are bathed off, but you are hallowed, but you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

"For if God spares not **sinning messengers**, but thrusting them into the gloomy caverns of **Tartarus**, gives them up **to be kept for chastening judging...**"

(2 Peter 2:4)

"Didst Thou come here to torment us before the season?"

(Matthew 8:29; also Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28)

'If anyone is worshipping the wild beast and its image...he, also, is drinking of the wine of the fury of God, blended undiluted in the cup of His indignation, and he shall be tormented in fire and sulphur in the sight of the holy messengers and in the sight of the Lamb. And the fumes of their torment are ascending for the eons of the eons. And they are having no rest day and night, those worshipping the wild beast and its image, and if anyone is getting the emblem of its name.

(Revelation 14:9-11)

"To him who is thirsting I shall be giving of the spring of the water of life gratuitously. He who is conquering shall be enjoying this allotment, and I shall be a God to him and he shall be a son to Me. **Yet the timid, and unbelievers, and the abominable, and murderers, and paramours, and enchanters, and idolaters, and all the false - their part is in the lake burning with fire and sulphur, which is the second death**...Outside (*of the New Jerusalem, the kingdom of God*) are curs, and enchanters, and paramours, and murderers, and idolaters, and everyone fabricating and fondling falsehood."

(Revelation 21:6-8; 22:15)

I hope that a consideration of this subject will encourage us all to be obedient to the Father that we may avoid His chastening judging, for God is now commanding mankind that all everywhere are to repent and turn back to Him, for He has set a Day when He will judge the world in righteousness through the Messiah, Jesus, Whom He raised from the dead (Acts 17:30-31). Only those who truly believe in Him, and follow Christ in accordance with the New Covenant, shall have no fear of chastening, for perfect (or mature) love casts out fear.

"God is love, and he who is remaining in love is remaining in God, and God is remaining in him. In this is love perfected among us, that we may have boldness in the day of judging, seeing that, according as He is, so are we also in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect

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love is casting out fear, for fear has to do with chastening. Now he who is fearing is not perfected in love. We are loving God, for He first loves us. If anyone is saying "I am loving God," and is hating his brother, he is a liar; for he who is not loving his brother whom he has seen can not be loving God Whom he has not seen. And we have this precept from Him, that he who is loving God may be loving his brother also."

(1 John 4:16-21 FT).

All Scripture quotations taken from the Concordant Version unless otherwise stated.

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