

Is Universal Salvation Explicitly Taught in the New Testament?

Part 4: Eternal Punishment & Destruction

By

Gerry Watts

February 2015

One of the most difficult texts in the NT for Christians to deal with, particularly if you are a Universalist, is the “eternal punishment” verse of Matthew 25:46 (coupled with verse 41). As I wrote in the endnotes of Part 3 of this series:

“It is evident that the parallel passage(s) to Mark 9:42-48 found in Matthew’s gospel (5:29-30 & 18:8-9) equate ‘Gehenna’ with ‘*the eternal (or age-abiding) fire.*’ As we shall see, Matthew 25:41 & 46 identifies this ‘*eternal fire*’ as being the ‘*eternal punishment*’ for all those who do not inherit the Life of the kingdom of God. It also reveals that it is a *spiritual fire* as it was originally prepared for the rebellious spirit beings of the kingdom of darkness (i.e. ‘the ‘devil’ and his angels’). The apostle Paul describes this judgment & punishment as ‘*eternal destruction*’ in 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9. The vision of Revelation calls it ‘*the Second Death*’ (20:14; 21:8). Hence, this could be illustrated in the following equation: **Gehenna = eternal fire = unquenchable fire = Lake of Fire = Second Death = eternal punishment = eternal destruction.**”

Kolasis: Punishment or Chastening?

As we shall see shortly, the fundamental issue here in trying to arrive at an accurate understanding of this subject is not so much about etymology and semantics, though word origins and meanings are obviously important and helpful, it has more to do with word usage in the NT; that is, how did the writers of the NT use specific words and phrases, and in what context? Merely arguing over Greek grammar and syntax (as some scholars and theologians do) will not necessarily help us to interpret the NT in an accurate manner. Accurate interpretation & exegesis is always about context and word *usage* rather than strict meaning (along with noting the literary genre as well). Also, as difficult as this subject may be, we must try to be biblically objective in our reasoning and beliefs, rather than allowing an emotional, subjective analysis of the topic.

Previously, when I was an evangelical Universalist, I accepted a popular concept among Universalists that the ‘punishment’ that Jesus referred to in Matthew 25:46 (the Greek noun *kolasis*; also used in 1 John 4:18) was corrective *chastening* (that is, disciplinary) rather than final *punishment* (that is, penal, to satisfy justice). Hence, I believed that the phrase usually rendered as “*eternal punishment*” should be understood as meaning ‘age-abiding chastening’; that is, to be understood as describing a temporary period in the future that involves corrective chastening or punishment that will eventually result in the salvation of those undergoing it. I eventually discovered that this translation and interpretation will not hold up to scrutiny.

As Vine's Expository Dictionary notes (under *Punishment*, 3. *kolasis* & 5. *timōria*),

"The distinction, sometimes suggested, between No. 3 as being disciplinary, with special reference to the sufferer, and No. 5, as being penal, with reference to the satisfaction of him who inflicts it, cannot be maintained in the Koinē Greek of NT times."

On the other hand, Edward Fudge in his very thorough and detailed work *The Fire That Consumes* says the following concerning the "punishment" of Matthew 25:46.

"The adjective "eternal" here modifies the noun "punishment." The meaning of "punishment" (*kolasis*) is disputed with no signs of eventual resolution. Moulton-Milligan say that "cut short" seems to have been the original sense of the cognate verb, with "pruning" or "cutting down" a derived but familiar meaning in the time of Jesus... Perhaps the best definition of "punishment" in this chapter under consideration **is not based on etymology at all but on biblical usage** and sanctified common sense. As to usage, the Septuagint uses *kolasis* to describe the Egyptians' plagues (Wis 11:13; 16:2, 24) but also to describe their deaths in the Red Sea (Wis 19:4). It refers to punishment by death in 2 Macc 4:38 (involving the execution of a murderer), and in 4 Macc 8:9 (concerning a martyr who is tortured to death)." (pp. 137-138, Third Edition 2011, bold emphasis mine)

Going by the Septuagint's use of *kolasis* (as described by Fudge above), this 'punishment' can refer to either pain without death, or pain that accompanies death; or both. As we shall see, this appears to be the way Jesus used *kolasis* also (or Matthew who recorded His words).

The view that I used to hold is not easily dismissed though because the Greek noun *kolasis* and verb *kolazein* can actually mean "pruning, cutting off", at least in a horticultural context, which can then be used to refer to "chastening." And even though the Greek adjective *aionion*, commonly translated as "eternal", can refer to limited periods of time in certain contexts, as has been shown in Part 2 of this series, *the way this word is used throughout the NT strongly indicates that that which is "eternal" is that which relates to God's kingdom and world, i.e. that which goes beyond the temporary things of this world and relates to the messianic kingdom age.*¹

This particular view of "eternal punishment" becoming "a period of pruning" was recently popularised by Rob Bell in his book *Love Wins*. As I researched this topic I came across an article by Dr Larry Perkins of Northwest Baptist Seminary.² In this paper he specifically addresses Rob Bell's exegesis and lexical interpretation of Matthew 25:46, while also considering the other related texts Acts 4:21, 2 Peter 2:9 & 1 John 4:18, and he reveals some interesting historical material in the process. Dr Perkins concludes,

*"...The claim that Matthew's use of *kolasis* in 25:46 describes a temporary punishment that is designed to be corrective, i.e. a kind of pruning to stimulate a more appropriate response, does not seem to be borne out by the evidence of usage in the century before and after Jesus, given the context of Jesus' teaching in that section of Matthew's Gospel. The noun and verb both are used to describe divine punishments meted in accord with God's judicial sense and in response to human impiety, both in this life and in the life to come... In my view Bell's attempt to **exegete** this phrase and its **context** in Matthew 25 do not take into account the evidence of current **usage** in*

*Jesus' or Matthew's day, nor the sense of the **context** and thus does not convince."*
(pp. 4-5; emphasis mine)

I totally agree with Dr Perkins conclusion here. I also agree with Edward Fudge in the earlier quote above that etymology (the study of word origins & meaning) is not going to solve the issue by itself, and that it has more to do with biblical usage of specific words and phrases, i.e. correct interpretation of biblical teaching noting context and usage. As stated above, accurate interpretation & exegesis is always about *context* and word *usage* (along with noting literary genre as well), rather than strict concordant word meanings.

Mosaic Punishment

The verb form of *kolasis* also appears in Acts 4:21, which is a really important text for our present subject. It is evident to me that the "punishment" under consideration here has to do with the major punishments as specified in the Law of Moses, i.e. flogging or stoning. Let me explain this a little as I think this gives us the key to unlock the door on this subject.

In this section of Acts 4, the apostles Peter and John had been brought before the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, for proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. Apart from giving them a warning, the Jewish leaders could not decide how to "punish" them for fear of the people, so they let them go (see Acts 4:1-22). Now some time after this, the apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin again and the Jewish leaders were so angry at what the apostles had to say to them that they wanted to execute them, i.e. stone them to death. Nevertheless they were subsequently persuaded against this action by the speech of Gamaliel and instead had the apostles flogged or scourged (cf. Acts 5:33, 40-41).

This incident strongly indicates that the "punishment" that the Sanhedrin couldn't decide upon earlier (in Acts 4) was either flogging or execution, in accordance with the Law.

The Law of Yahweh, as given through Moses, stipulated two major forms of punishment to be given to lawbreakers:

- a) A beating with a rod or a whip, which was administered before the judge as graded punishment depending on the sin or crime committed, which became known as the 40 lashes minus 1 (Deuteronomy 25:1-3; 2 Corinthians 11:24-25); and
- b) Death by stoning, i.e. capital punishment (e.g. Deuteronomy 17:2-7).

There were lesser punishments such as making restitution through payment, sometimes involving being sold into slavery, but the two major punishments inflicted upon the body were flogging and stoning. These punishments of flogging & death (execution by various means) was also echoed in the somewhat harsher punishments of the Gentile nations elsewhere in the world, such punishments having been used for millennia until quite recently (at least as this pertains to the western nations).³

Hence, this use of the verb form of *kolasis* in Acts 4:21 strongly suggests that this refers to judicial punishment, whether scourging (or beating), or death by

execution. Hence, Jesus' reference to 'punishment' (*kolasis*) in Matthew 25:46 has to do with judicial punishment that is 'eternal' or 'age-abiding' (i.e. related to the messianic age to come). This is confirmed through other aspects of NT teaching, as I will attempt to show below.

The whole context of this parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25 is the royal appearing of Christ to establish the kingdom of God in heavenly glory, and to subsequently sit as King & Judge to pronounce God's verdict of either 'eternal life' in the kingdom for 'the sheep'; or 'eternal punishment' in the 'eternal fire' for the 'goats'. This is a worldwide, universal judgment scene comprising of all nations, one that has eternal consequences. Elsewhere in his teaching, in relation to this impending Judgment Day, Jesus referred metaphorically to the punishments of whipping and, ultimately, death; also revealing that this judgment would occur (or begin) at his Return or Parousia (i.e. his royal Second Appearing).

Some classic examples of this can be found in Luke 12:45-48 and Matthew 10:28. Both of these passages, coupled with Matthew 25:41 & 46 (not to mention many other texts) I think proves quite conclusively that the "eternal punishment" of the unsaved includes the spiritual equivalent of judicial graded punishment before the Judge, as He deems fit, followed by eternal death by consuming fire, i.e. the capital punishment of the Second Death, eternal destruction (or perishing) in the eternal fire (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10).

Of course, this kind of 'punishment' language (whether understood literally or figuratively) appears quite foreign to those of us in the modern western nations whose governments have adopted a somewhat soft approach to punishment in more recent times. It wasn't that long ago that most nations were still applying these kinds of severe punishments for lawbreakers. Nevertheless, for those who take Jesus' words seriously and believe that God is righteous, just and holy, these "punishment" verses cannot be ignored. Now what about the texts that speak of graded punishment?

Graded Punishment, Not Endless Punishment

Let us unpack this a little by considering these key texts along with a few others and tying them together. Let us begin with the clearest one in Luke 12.

⁴⁵ But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁶ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. **He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.**

⁴⁷ "The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants **will be beaten with many blows** (*Gk. 'lashes'*).

⁴⁸ But the one who does not know **and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows** (*Gk. 'lashes'*). From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Luke 12:45-48 NIV

In this parable of the Servant(s), Jesus was making it very clear that those who claimed to be his servants, particularly those in positions of leadership who had authority over others, would be judged most severely if they knowingly disobeyed his words and had not prepared themselves for his return.⁴ In the judgment, following the master's return, the disobedient hypocritical servants would receive the same sentence as the unbelievers (verse 46). This indicates, in accordance with the rest of Jesus' teaching, that these 'hypocrites' and 'unbelievers' would not be granted eternal life but rather eternal death or destruction instead, i.e. eternal punishment (e.g. Galatians 6:7-9; Romans 2:5-10, 16).

Nevertheless, the punishment that Jesus was alluding to in this parable was that of the lashes or scourging of a whip, which would 'cut to pieces' the one undergoing the punishment or beating. The graded punishment would be applied in accordance with the just decision of the Judge (i.e. God) in accordance with the relative knowledge or ignorance of the one receiving the punishment (verses 47-48). In other words, for those servants with greater knowledge and understanding there is greater accountability before the Master, Christ, particularly for those who, as disobedient servants, become religious hypocrites and workers of lawlessness.

Hence, according to this parable, those who are not truly God's servants (having been exposed by their works) will be punished in the same way as unbelievers through a process of graded punishment (figured as "many lashes" or "few lashes") ultimately leading to the Second Death (i.e. the ultimate punishment of eternal destruction – Romans 6:21, 23; 8:13; Revelation 2:11; 20:12-15; 21:8). Jesus pronounced these warnings of judgment as being especially severe upon religious hypocrisy and wickedness (cf. Luke 20:47; Matthew 12:36-37; James 3:1).

There are a number of other NT texts that support the idea of graded punishment for the unsaved, and graded rewards for the saved, as each of us will be judged in accordance with our acts (e.g. Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:5-10, 16; Revelation 20:11-15). Jesus also taught that the Day of Judgment would be more bearable for some than others, again indicating graded punishment; a punishment with more or less severity depending on one's acts (e.g. Matthew 11:22-24).

Even for saved believers who are the true disciples and servants of Christ, each will receive his or her due in accordance with one's actions in this life, whether good or bad, and this could lead to a loss of rewards or, more literally, not getting full wages for good service (e.g. 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-14; 2 John 8; Revelation 3:11).

That is to say, God's true people can still forfeit 'the prize' of God's best for them and suffer loss, while still being given eternal life (Philippians 3:12-16; Galatians 6:7-10; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Corinthians 3:14-15). Even for believers in the kingdom of heaven there are indications that there are gradations of blessings, rewards and positions of authority depending on how obedient and faithful one has been as a servant of God and of Christ, for God is just (Matthew 5:19-20; Luke 19:11-27). Ultimately, we shall reap what we sow, whether we sow to the Spirit and reap eternal life, or sow to the flesh and reap destruction (cf. Galatians 6:7-10).

Eternal Destruction, Loss & Ruin

²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. **Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy** (Greek *'apollumi'*) **both soul and body in hell** (Greek *'Gehenna'*).

Matthew 10:28 NIV

These words of Jesus in this text can cause a lot of difficulties for both Universalists and Traditionalists (i.e. those who believe in unending conscious torment). It is one of the clearest texts in the NT that supports the view that the unsaved will be repaid with the divine justice for the wages of sin – that is, the destruction of body and soul in the eternal fire of the Second Death. Only true followers of the one God, Yahweh, and his son Christ Jesus are promised salvation from this Death, resulting in the gift of immortality and eternal life.

The Greek word *apollumi* is the most common word in the NT used for “destroy” or “perish”, while the related word *apoleia* is most often used for “destruction”. In some contexts, *apollumi* can be translated as “lose” or “lost”, but in the vast majority of places where it is used in the NT it essentially describes that which is ruined, wasted, destroyed, has perished, been made useless. In many instances it refers to human death.

Edward Fudge had this to say on the topic:

“Traditionalist writers so often make the point that “perish” (*apollymi*) is used of ruined wineskins (Matthew 9:17) and spoiled food (John 6:12) that casual readers tend to go away thinking the word’s primary meaning must be very mild indeed. Most often *apollymi* refers to actual *death*. It appears ninety-two times in the New Testament, thirteen times in Paul’s letters... Not surprisingly, this verb *apollymi* stands in contrast with enduring, eternal life... In view of its most frequent usage throughout the New Testament, there is every good reason to understand *apollymi* in its most natural sense when it describes the final fate of the wicked.”

(*The Fire That Consumes*, Third Edition, 2011, p. 209)

In Matthew 10:28, quoted above, Jesus was warning his disciples not to be afraid of fellow humans who can kill the body (i.e. through physical death) but cannot kill the soul (i.e. the inward spiritual life or essence), but instead they should fear the One (i.e. God) who has the power and authority to destroy both body and soul in the eternal fire (i.e. Gehenna, often translated “hell”). Jesus was stating very clearly that the destruction of body and soul through the judgment of God would be the eternal equivalent of being killed or suffering death in this life. When we usually speak of someone having been destroyed or having perished (however this ‘destruction’ or ‘perishing’ might’ve occurred) we usually mean that they have died and are no longer around, the body having decayed naturally or having otherwise been violently destroyed so the body is no more.

A number of similar texts in Paul’s writings highlight the same meaning, as, for example, Philippians 1:28 and 3:19. Edward Fudge had this to say about Philippians 1:28:

“Destruction” here is *apoleia*, from *apollymi*... *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* defines *apoleia* as “destruction, waste, annihilation.” Paul, imitating Jesus himself, points believers to God, who is able to “save” and to “destroy” (Matthew 10:28; James 4:12).”

(*The Fire That Consumes*, Third Edition, 2011, p. 212)

Another important Greek word that is commonly translated “destruction” or “complete ruin” in the NT is *olethros*. Other forms of this word occur in Acts 3:23, Hebrews 11:28 and 1 Corinthians 10:10, but only Paul uses *olethros* in the NT in four places (1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:9 and 1 Timothy 6:9). This is the word that he uses in the Thessalonian text that speaks of “eternal destruction”.

⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ **They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of his might ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 NIV

It is very interesting to note how the Concordant Literal New Testament (which is produced by the Concordant Publishing Concern, who are, ironically, a Universalist organisation) translates this passage.

“...dealing out vengeance to those who are not acquainted with God and those who are not obeying the evangel of our Lord Jesus Christ – who shall incur the justice of **eonian extermination** from the face of the Lord...” (Verses 8-9 CLNT)

They translate *olethros* as “extermination”, which essentially means “annihilation, complete destruction, obliteration.” This does, in fact, fit with the New Testament usage of this word and is not incorrect. This was Paul’s way of describing the “eternal punishment” and “destruction” of the “eternal fire” that Jesus spoke about so often. It is “eternal” or “age-abiding” because it relates to God’s world in the promised messianic age, and it speaks of something that is beyond this world and is ultimately irreversible and final. The core message of the Gospel is that this “destruction” or “perishing” can be avoided through belief in Jesus, of which the glorious consequence of discipleship is the gift of “eternal life” rather than “eternal destruction”.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, **that whoever believes in him shall not perish** but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NIV

Discipline & Corrective Chastening

Now when it comes to the subject of discipline, chastening and corrective punishment, a simple study of the NT will reveal something quite interesting in relation to our present subject. It is important to note that there were Greek words that were used to clearly refer to “discipline” or corrective “chastening”, which were often equated with scourging or punishment. Take, for example, the following texts.

⁵ And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

“My son, do not make light of **the Lord’s discipline**,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
⁶ because **the Lord disciplines** the one he loves,
and he chastens (*lit.* ‘scourges’) everyone he accepts as his son.”

⁷ Endure hardship as **discipline**; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not **disciplined** by their father?

Hebrews 12:5-7 NIV

In general, the NT writers used various forms of the Greek verb *paideuō*, (meaning ‘to discipline or train’; also *paideia* & *paideutes*) to refer to ‘discipline’ ‘training’ or corrective chastening, as in Hebrews 12 quoted above. The writer of Hebrews was revealing the truth that God disciplines those whom He accepts as His sons (& daughters), and this discipline takes the form of training and corrective chastening through various forms of trials and suffering.

Whether we agree with it or not, and whether we like it or not, God uses painful trials to humble us and teach us about His righteousness and holiness, which ultimately leads to peace and life for those who have been trained by such discipline (Hebrews 12:9-11). This principle is also confirmed in the following texts, the first being the words of the resurrected, glorified Jesus in the vision of Revelation, followed by Paul’s explanation of such Divine discipline.

¹⁹ **“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.** So be earnest and repent.”

Revelation 3:19 NIV

³² Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, **we are being disciplined** so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

1 Corinthians 11:32 NIV (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:9)

In this last text, Paul was saying that Christ judges his people in this life *as a means of discipline so that we will not be condemned* with the rest of humanity (i.e. the world) when the Day of Judgment arrives (i.e. the purpose is to avoid the condemnation of the Second Death). Does it really then make any sense for the world to be disciplined or chastened *after* they’ve been condemned at the Judgment so as to ultimately be saved, as many Universalists believe? If so, this view is not explicitly taught in the NT.

Also, in verse 6 of Hebrews 12, the writer quotes from the Septuagint version of Proverbs 3:11-12, which literally reads, “He *scourges* everyone he accepts as a son.” This is a clear reference to *corrective chastening* via punishment of some kind.

In fact, this idea is being conveyed quite explicitly in Luke 23:16 and 22 where *paideuō* is used twice to refer to Jesus’ ‘scourging’ or ‘chastening’ by the Romans. Even Jesus the Son had to endure chastening punishment from His Father, although the reason was not for his own sin or wrongdoing, but for the sake of others. Nevertheless, he still had to learn obedience by what he suffered (cf. Hebrews 2:10; 5:7-10).

So here's the point: why didn't Jesus, or the writer of Matthew's gospel, use a form of *paideuō* to make it abundantly clear that *corrective chastening* was the intended meaning in Matthew 25:46? This would've avoided all ambiguity. But no, *kolasis* is used instead. There must've been very good reason for this. This evidently has to do with "punishment"; a punishment that relates to the messianic age in God's world – hence it is "eternal punishment".

Therefore, let me reiterate for emphasis; this would seem to strongly suggest that the divinely-inspired writer of Matthew's gospel wished us to understand Jesus' words in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats as referring NOT to corrective chastening but rather punishment, otherwise the common word for corrective chastening *paideuō* would've been used instead.

Summary

In concluding, it is worth noting some technical information concerning the grammar of "eternal punishment" and "eternal destruction". In both of these incidences, in Matthew 25:46 and 2 Thessalonians 1:9, the adjective *aiōnios* ("eternal") modifies a noun of the class that names the result of an action, hence is a result-noun. This also occurs with "eternal judgment" in Hebrews 6:2, "eternal salvation" in Hebrews 5:9, and "eternal redemption" in Hebrews 9:12.

That is to say, these phrases are not describing an eternal process of a particular action, such as eternal judging or eternal punishing or eternal destroying. Instead these phrases are describing the "eternal" results of previous actions by God that relates to the Messianic age & kingdom in the spiritual world. That is, this has to do with things in the unseen realm (or dimension) that are 'everlasting', as opposed to things in this 'seen' world, which are temporary (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

Edward Fudge sums this up well in the following paragraph.

"Finally, when an adjective (including but not limited to *aiōnios*= "eternal") modifies a noun - in this case a result-noun, recognisable by its form, or morphology, the adjective describes the *result* of the action (which is what the noun names), not the action itself (named by the noun's cognate verb), that produced the result. We have seen this in regard to eternal salvation (not an eternal act of saving), eternal redemption (not an eternal process of redeeming), eternal judgment (not an eternal act of judging), eternal destruction (not an eternal process of destroying), and eternal punishment (not an eternal act of punishing). This punishment, more specifically identified as this destruction, will last forever. Those who are punished with everlasting destruction will cease to exist."⁵

This information brings into question the traditional belief that the punishment is an everlasting process of punishing (i.e. eternal conscious torment); as well as questioning the translation and interpretation of Universalists that this "punishment" is really a process of 'chastening' that is limited to a future age (limited in the sense that those undergoing the chastening will be corrected and ultimately saved).

I am convinced that the biblical exegesis presented above (and there is so much more that could be added) points toward the view known as Conditional Immortality or Annihilationism, which believes that the "eternal punishment" is the "eternal destruction" of the Second Death, while allowing for graded punishment in the

process of the just Judging of God, who will judge everyone in accordance with their personal sin-debt; a sin-debt that can only be eradicated through belief and acceptance of the gospel concerning Jesus the Messiah. There is only one way to gain immortality and incorruption, i.e. eternal life, and that life is found in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (cf. John 3:6-7, 16-18, 36; 5:39-40; 6:47, 51; 8:24, 51; 10:27-28; 11:25-26; 12:25-26, 48; 20:31; Acts 4:12).

That is to say, when taken together with our last two studies in this series, we can arrive at the following conclusion concerning the teaching of the NT on this subject:

Gehenna = Eternal Fire = Unquenchable Fire = Lake of Fire = Second Death = Eternal Punishment = Eternal Destruction = to perish and not see Life.

I leave you with the words of Jesus himself.

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that **leads to destruction**, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that **leads to life**, and only a few find it.”

Matthew 7:13-14 NIV

[For further study, see the following texts, which contrasts “destroy” or “perish” (Greek *apollumi*) with “eternal life” or salvation: John 10:28; 12:25; Romans 2:12; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; James 4:12].

Endnotes

¹ See *Table 2: Two Ages/Two Realities/Two Qualities*

² <http://moments.nbseminary.com/archives/114-punishment-kolasis-kolazein-%E2%80%93-eternal-or-otherwise-matthew-2546-acts-421-2-peter-29-1-john-418/>

Also, Dr Perkins review of Rob Bell’s book *Love Wins* - <http://www.nbseminary.ca/love-wins-a-review>

³ In fact, Jesus himself suffered both of these punishments under the Romans when he was scourged and then executed, receiving the fullest judicial punishment for the sake of us all, even though he had committed no sin.

⁴ This parable, along with many others within Jesus’ teaching, had particular relevance to that first century generation who would live to experience the eschatological event of the Day of the Lord, the Return and Parousia of Christ. I think the principal taught here still applies to every generation of the Christian church since 70 AD, with the added difference being that the focus is on the end of one’s life rather than the Day of the Lord itself. No one usually knows the day or hour in which their life on Earth will end, thereby introducing the Day of Judgment on the other side.

⁵ E. W. Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes*, Third Edition 2011, pp.41-42; also 38-40.