

POPULAR OBJECTIONS TO THE RECONCILIATION OF ALL THINGS

by

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POPULAR OBJECTIONS TO THE RECONCILIATION OF ALL THINGS PART 1

And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

The verse quoted above is from Colossians 1:20. It proclaims to all that Jesus Christ has made peace (with the Father concerning the sin debt of the human race) through the blood of His cross. The verse then goes on to state that the result of the cross of Christ shall be a reconciliation of **all things in earth and in heaven**. This triumphant passage begins in verse fifteen (Colossians 1:15-20) as Paul is describing Christ...“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” In verse sixteen it goes on to state...“For by Him were **all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth...**” So...the same **all things** that were created by God in Christ will be the same **all things** that shall be reconciled to God through the blood of the cross of Christ.

The word “reconcile” means: 1. to cause (a person) to accept or be resigned to something not desired: *He was reconciled to his fate.* 2. to win over to friendliness; cause to become amicable: *to reconcile hostile persons.* 3. to compose or settle (a quarrel, dispute, etc.). 4. to bring into agreement or harmony; make compatible or consistent: *to reconcile differing statements; to reconcile accounts.* 5. to reconsecrate (a desecrated church, cemetery, etc.). 6. to restore (an excommunicate or penitent) to communion in a church.

Putting all of this together, this passage of Scripture (Colossians 1:15-20) is telling us that God (through the blood of the cross of Christ) shall ultimately cause not only **all people**, but **all things** (visible and invisible) to be made friendly to Him. This will surely include the powers of darkness and even Satan himself (the prince of the power of the air, the **spirit** that now works in the children of disobedience). In complete harmony with this, the author of the Book of Acts has recorded for us the words of Peter, when he stated...“And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until **the times of restitution of all things**, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:20-21) It is here declared that all the holy prophets since the world began have spoken of a restitution (restoration) of all things. Well...case closed...let’s break for lunch...or so you would think.

There are currently, and always have been, “popular objections” to the statements I have made. These objections are attempts from the carnal minds of intellectual and religious men to ignore and explain away **direct statements** in the Scriptures which declare the victorious effort and saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the blood of His cross. In all of their attempts to resist Jesus Christ as the **actual** Savior of the world, they always quote Scripture out of context,

in a perverted and twisted manner, and miss the true meaning and intent of what they quote. They also literalize some of the metaphors of Scripture, to the complete neglect of many other Scriptures, which declare our Jesus as THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD!

It is now **WITH GREAT JOY** that we will **destroy and dismantle these “popular objections”** that have held captive the hearts and minds of many of God’s people, causing them to believe the lie that the blood of the cross of Christ has been defeated, and that the vast majority of the human race will be lost, separated from God, and tortured forever. I have taught on these topics individually in the past, but now in a collective and concise manner they will be organized and brought together for the purpose of exposing the folly of man’s “popular objections” to the reconciliation of all things.

In order to deliver those who are *entrenched* in the belief system that God is going to lose the vast majority of the human race to eternal torture, we must become experts and masters in explaining these *Popular Objections To The Reconciliation Of All Things*.

I call these: **“The Big Ten!”**

Here are ten popular objections to the reconciliation of all things that must be understood in their proper light in order to rightly divide the Word of God and untangle the mess that has been left to us by organized religion and the traditions and doctrines of men.

They are:

I. Matthew 25:46

II. The Unpardonable Sin

III. Everlasting, Eternal, For Ever, Even For Ever And Ever

a. *Olam*

b. *Aion*

c. *Aionios*

IV. The Rich Man & Lazarus

V. Hell

a. *Sheol*

b. Hades

c. Gehenna

d. Tartaroo

VI. Fire

a. Hell Fire

b. Unquenchable Fire

c. The Lake Of Fire

VII. Wrath, Torment, Vengeance, Destruction, Judgment, & Punishment

VIII. Few There Be That Find It

IX. Free Will

X. The Powers Of Darkness

Study these topics until your eyeballs fall out, and until you can see the truth concerning what the Bible actually teaches about these subjects. The world is counting on us to be true Bereans in order that we can teach them the truth so they can be **made free!**

No matter what question or objection anyone may ask in reference to the reconciliation of all things it will fall under one of these ten categories.

This covers it all.

Enjoy your search!

****Warning: If you decide to continue reading from this point on, the following words could be potentially hazardous to your belief in eternal torture. If not avoided, these words could result in death or serious injury to certain doctrines that you currently uphold to be true. Other side effects may include: being liberated from the traditions and doctrines of men, and crossing the great gulf - from the carnal mind to the mind of Christ. Please read and / or proceed at your own risk. The author is not responsible for any revelation truth that may accompany the reading of this teaching. All praise, glory, and honor belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the event that you experience revelation truth, please call on the name of the Lord immediately***

to ensure what you have received is accurate. If the situation persists, please rejoice with “joy unspeakable and full of glory”, in that you have been delivered from the greatest lie ever told.

***Note:** The passage above (while it may contain a hint of sarcasm) is not meant to be disrespectful in any way. It is not sarcasm just for the sake of sarcasm, but rather, it is meant to get the reader’s attention and bring to the surface the suppressed issue of eternal torture, which by and large is accepted by most of Christianity without even a second thought as to whether it is the truth or not. If it causes you to think, then it has served its purpose. Elijah used sarcasm when dealing with the priests of Baal (1st Kings 18:21-39), and Jesus constantly used sarcasm when dealing with the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites, wolves, vipers, blind guides, fools, serpents, snakes, and so on. Jesus used sarcasm to dumbfound the religious leaders of His day, leaving them speechless and sending them away in deep thought. That is the purpose of true spiritual sarcasm from the Lord.

OBJECTION #1 / MATTHEW 25:46

Down through the ages, the *trump card* of those who believe and espouse the teaching of eternal torture has always been Matthew 25:46. It is with this single verse of Scripture that they *hang their hat* and justify the preaching of their “multiplied sermons seeking to prove their tradition that the vast majority of God’s human creation will be LOST, finally, irrevocably, and eternally, and not only will they be lost to God forever and ever, but they will be given up to the most sadistic, inhuman, ungodly torments that could be devised by the vilest fiends.” (The previous passage in quotations is a quote from George Hawtin) The verse in question (Matthew 25:46 KJV) states...“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Those who use this verse to support their belief in endless torture make the claim that if the *punishment* spoken of in this verse is of limited duration, then it must follow that the *life* is of limited duration. And so they (those who embrace endless torture) feel it is an open and shut case. Well...not so fast. Here come the “Bereans” to the rescue! There are at least **three witnesses** against the false interjection of “eternal” punishment that many insert into this Scripture as their interpretation of Matthew 25:46. They are: Matthew chapter 25 is a “parable” concerning the judgment of the nations; the Greek word “**aionios**” refers to that which is “of the ages”; and the “**punishment**” (“**kolasis**”) which is spoken of in this verse is a punishment for correction (pruning) and for the *bettering* of the offender.

According to Louis Abbott:

“Matthew 25:31-46 concerns **the judgment of NATIONS**, not individuals. It is to be distinguished from other judgments mentioned in Scripture, such as the judgment of the saints (2 Cor. 5:10-11); the second resurrection, and the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). The judgment of the nations is based upon their treatment of the Lord’s brethren (verse 40). No resurrection of the dead is here, just nations living at the time. To apply verses 41 and 46 to mankind as a whole is an error. Perhaps it should be pointed out at this time that the Fundamentalist Evangelical community at large has made the error of gathering many Scriptures which speak of various judgments which will occur in different ages and assigning them all to “Great White Throne” judgment. This is a serious mistake. Matthew 25:46 speaks nothing of “grace through faith”. We will leave it up to the reader to decide who the “Lord’s brethren” are, but final judgment based upon the receiving of the Life of Christ is not the subject matter of Matthew 25:46 and should not be interjected here. Even if it were, the penalty is “age-during correction” and not “everlasting punishment”.

“An argument was introduced by Augustine, and since his day incessantly repeated, that if *“aionios kolasis”* does not mean “endless punishment”, then there is no security for the believer that *“aionios zoe”* means “endless life”, and that he will enjoy the promise of endless happiness. But Matt. 25:46 shows the **“eonian chastisement” and “eonian life” are of the same duration-lasting during the eons, and when the eons end, as Scripture states they will (1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:26), the time called “eonian” is past and the life called “eonian” is finished, but life continues beyond the eons, as Paul teaches at 1 Cor. 15:26: “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” That is, the last, the final one in order. How will it be destroyed? First Corinthians 15:22 gives the answer: “For as IN ADAM ALL are dying, even so IN CHRIST ALL shall be made alive.” Death is destroyed when ALL have been vivified, or made alive, IN CHRIST. There will then be no more death. Just as life is destroyed by death, so death is destroyed by life. Our present bodies are mortal and corruptible (1 Cor. 15:44-55), but when mankind is made alive IN CHRIST they will be raised immortal and incorruptible.” -end quote- (An Analytical Study Of Words, Louis Abbott)**

The following is a quote from A. P. Adams addressing the Greek word “kolasis” that was translated as “punishment” in Matthew 25:46 (KJV).

According to A. P. Adams:

“The purpose of punishment is not only the protection of society, and the restraint of the offender, but also his reformation; this latter should be the main purpose of punishment; any punishment that is not conducive to this end is wholly unjustifiable, it is simply an attempt to overcome one evil with a greater evil; - **now to talk about endless punishment, is nonsense, as much as it would be to talk of endless correction, or endless reforming.** You might speak of

endless torture, or endless suffering; but endless punishment is not a proper collection of terms at all. I will add that the original word here rendered “punishment” signifies a punishment for the correction and bettering of the individual, hence it could not be endless.” -end quote- (Definitions: Eternal, A. P. Adams)

Notice how this verse reads from The New Testament In Modern Speech. It reads as follows...“And these shall go away into **the Punishment of the Ages**, but the righteous into **the Life of the Ages**.” (Matthew 25:46, Weymouth New Testament)

What is being discussed here is *punishment* and *life* within the ages of time (of or belonging to the ages). As we know, the Bible teaches the ages will come to an end. Since “punishment” (“kolasis”) signifies a punishment for the correction and bettering of the individual, it is impossible for it to be endless. This is a sure word of interpretation due to the **double witness** within the same verse (that “*aionios*” refers to something **belonging to the ages of time**, and that “*kolasis*” most definitely refers to **correction, which by nature cannot be endless**). The key is in knowing that **God’s punishment is for the purpose of correction**, which will naturally mean that when the offender (or nation) is corrected they will be restored to God. The ages were created by God for man to experience Him and to go through changes during this process. Punishment is one of those experiences that takes place during the ages and belongs to the ages. This is why it is always used in conjunction with the Greek word “*aionios*” (of or belonging to the ages).

JUST BECAUSE PUNISHMENT IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CORRECTION AND IS TO BE ADMINISTERED WITHIN THE AGES, AND CORRECTION AND THE AGES WILL COME TO AN END, DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE LIFE OF GOD WILL COME TO AN END. THAT IS NONSENSE! GOD’S LIFE WILL CONTINUE BEYOND THE AGES AS THE SCRIPTURES STATE. WHEN THE LAST ENEMY IS DESTROYED, WHICH IS DEATH (1ST CORINTHIANS 15:26), THERE WILL BE NOTHING LEFT BUT LIFE. AND ALL WILL BE MADE ALIVE IN CHRIST AND GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL (EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE)!

AS WELL, JUST BECAUSE THE LIFE OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS “AIONIOS” (“OF THE AGES”) DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT CANNOT CONTINUE BEYOND THE AGES. IT IS BOTH! GOD’S LIFE IS “OF THE AGES” AND “BEYOND THE AGES”. THE REASON THE PUNISHMENT DOES NOT CONTINUE BEYOND THE AGES IS DUE TO THE FACT IT IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CORRECTION, AND THAT WHEN CORRECTION HAS REACHED ITS END GOAL IT IS NO LONGER NEEDED. THE FACT THAT ALL DEATH, INCLUDING THE SECOND DEATH / THE LAKE OF FIRE, SHALL BE DESTROYED GUARANTEES THAT THERE SHALL BE NOTHING LEFT BUT LIFE AND ALL MADE ALIVE IN CHRIST!

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury... Augustine's *attempt* to paint a picture of eternal torture by using Matthew 25:46 as his *trump card* JUST DOES NOT HOLD WATER! It has been clearly and precisely stated that there are **three specific witnesses** against Augustine's view. Christians who jump into this chapter and quote the last verse of Matthew 25 as evidence for endless torment are doing a tremendous disservice to themselves and others, **not even knowing this passage is a parable concerning the judgment of the nations for their "works".** Matthew 13:34 tells us that Jesus ALWAYS spoke in parables when He spoke to the multitudes - always! Once again, the subject matter of this parable concerns the judgment of nations and is not addressing whether individuals experienced justification by faith upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. May God help us to wake up and may He heal our consciences that have been seared with a hot iron to His love for all. He is not the eternal torturer, but He is the compassionate Father of the Prodigal Son, Who awaits the return of all His children once correction has served its purpose.

We have also shown how the words "aionios" and "kolasis" speak of a **correction** "belonging to the ages" which shall end in restoration and life (all being made alive in Christ). **In essence, Matthew 25:46 is one of the strongest verses in favor of the reconciliation of all things in the dispensation of the fullness of time, due to the fact that the Greek words "aionios" and "kolasis" are linked together in the same verse.** There is really no such thing as "eternal" punishment, since "punishment" is for the purpose of **correction**. How would it be possible to "eternally" *correct* someone? Sooner or later the correction serves its purpose and brings about the desired result.

For those of you reading this I want you to ask yourself this question and to be honest with yourself...Why would you punish your child? Would you punish him just to inflict pain and satisfy your vindictive thirst for revenge? If so...shame on you. Is our God vindictive, or is He corrective? I think if you spend some time searching the Scriptures, praying, and meditating on the purpose of God's punishment, you will see in your heart that **our God is corrective**. It may take you a while to shed your current belief that God is vindictive, but at least open up your heart to the idea that God's punishment is for the purpose of correction and will end with the result of restoration and reconciliation for all! **Jeremiah 10:24 states...**

O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

OBJECTION #2 / THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

According to Gary Amirault:

“We have all heard of the term “the unpardonable sin”. You will not find this term in the Bible, at least not in the Greek text. Some Bibles, such as the New Open Bible New American Standard puts headers into the text such as “Scribes Commit the Unpardonable Sin”. These headers are not in the Greek text. They have been added by the editors of that particular translation. This is one reason why so-called “study Bibles” often are a detriment rather than a help. The Scofield Reference Bible was among the first to use such techniques. The Pre-trib Rapture teaching was greatly aided by these kinds of additions into Bibles such as Scofields. They clearly “add to the Word of God” as do most “study Bibles.” -end quote- (The Power Of Life And Death In A Greek Four Letter Word - Aion, Gary Amirault)

Now that we have established that the phrase “unpardonable sin” is nowhere to be found in the Bible, and that these words are not Scripturally correct, we are able to properly address what Jesus was actually talking about. The topic at hand is not an “unpardonable sin”, but it is “the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit”. The verses in question that speak of this sin are: Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-29; and Luke 12:10. We will deal with the verses that are to be found in Matthew and Mark, for the simple reason that they contain more detail than Luke 12:10 and give us a full picture of what the sin is as well as the penalty.

Matthew 12:31-32 (King James Version):

³¹Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

³²And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this **world**, neither in the **world** to come.

Matthew 12:31-32 (Rotherham’s Emphasized Version):

³¹Wherefore, I say unto you, All sin and profane speaking, shall be forgiven unto men, - but, the speaking profanely of the Spirit, shall not be forgiven; ³²And, whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, - but, whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this **age**, or the **coming (age)**.

Notice how the King James translators used the word “world” in verse 32. This leaves the impression that there is no forgiveness in this world or the world to come. BUT...this is not correct!

According to Ken Eckerty:

“The problem in this verse is the way the KJV (and other modern versions) have translated the Greek word “aion”. The KJV translates it as “world”, but the more accurate rendition is given to us by Rotherham. The Bible has a specific word for “world” and that is the Greek word “cosmos”. However, Matthew here uses the word “aion” which clearly means a “period of time”. It is not referring to a place (world), but a period of time (age). This is significant. In this particular passage, the King James translators are giving us the impression that there are two worlds - one on earth and the next one, which is in heaven. While we do not argue that there are two realms (heaven and earth), is this really what the text is saying? If we believe their translation, it certainly seems that whatever this sin is, it can never be forgiven - either on earth or in heaven. But this couldn’t be further from the truth of Jesus’ words. Jesus is not speaking of heaven and earth, but two consecutive periods of time. Weymouth’s New Testament translates verse 32 this way:

And whoever shall speak against the Son of Man may obtain forgiveness; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, **neither in this nor the coming age** shall he obtain forgiveness. -end quote- (The “Unpardonable Sin”, Ken Eckerty)

The sin here being spoken of is one to where the Pharisees claimed that Jesus was performing miracles by “Beelzebub” - the prince of evil spirits (Baal-zebub = “lord of the fly”). In essence, they were attributing the work of the Spirit of God to Satan and the powers of darkness. According to Jesus, this is a very serious sin and is referred to as “the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit”. It refers to those who have in some way tasted of the power of God and know better than to go against it, but willfully (and knowingly) resist it, even going to the extreme of calling the Spirit of God an evil spirit (“Beelzebub” - the prince of evil spirits).

Contrary to popular belief, though, the penalty (although very severe) is not an “eternal” penalty. It is a penalty that carries with it “no forgiveness in this **age** or the **age** to come”. This terminology gives us specific information as to the details of the penalty. The penalty of this sin causes a person to be excluded from the opportunity to be raised in the first resurrection and to be a part of the leadership company of believers who will rule the nations during the Tabernacles Age to come. As well, those guilty of this sin will no doubt undergo a long and severe correction in the final age (the dispensation of the fullness of times / The Age Of The Ages). It is in the final age (The Age Of The Ages) that they will have the opportunity to be corrected, restored, and forgiven. We know this is the case (that there is another age beyond the coming age) because Paul spoke of the ages (plural ages) to come in Ephesians 2:7, when he stated...“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in [His] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

The very fact that this sin (the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit) is not to be forgiven in **this age or the age to come** (but Paul speaks of **ages** to come) is a testament to the exceeding riches of God's grace and His kindness. God has a built-in **mercy factor**, in that He has framed the ages in such a way that He is able to administer a "just penalty" for sin, and at the same time still bring the sinner to a place of restoration through correction, causing them to come to the saving knowledge of Christ and Him crucified. This is all made possible by the blood of the cross of Christ, which ensures the eventual salvation of all in the fullness of time.

The verses to be considered next are to be found in Mark 3:28-29. As before, we will take into account how they read from both the King James Version and also Rotherham's Emphasized Version.

Mark 3:28-29 (King James Version):

²⁸Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

²⁹But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost has **never forgiveness**, but is in danger of **eternal damnation**.

Mark 3:28-29 (Rotherham's Emphasized Version):

²⁸Verily, I say unto you - All things shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, - the sins and the profanities wherewithal they shall profane;

²⁹But, whosoever shall revile against the Holy Spirit, has **no forgiveness, unto times age-abiding**, - but is guilty of an **age-abiding sin**:

According to Ken Eckerty:

"Now take a look at the differences here. In verse 29, the KJV says, "never has forgiveness". Amazingly, the King James translators didn't even bother to include the Greek word "aion" in their translation of this verse, which is most assuredly found in the Greek text. Rotherham (and many other literal translations) accurately translates this. Check out any Greek Interlinear to prove if this is correct. The word "aion" is in the Greek text, but is completely omitted by the King James translators. Why is this? Well, either they were imperfect translators (which they were) or they understood that the word "aion" would put a limit on this unforgiveness, which would contradict their strong belief in the doctrine of never-ending punishment. This verse should be translated, "...has no forgiveness unto times age-abiding." Just as in the first passage

we looked at, the unforgiveness spoken of here will only last for two distinct periods or ages “this age” and “the age to come”.

There are two other mistranslations in verse 29. The first is the word “eternal”. The Greek word used is “aionios” which comes directly from the noun “aion”. Like the noun, this adjective simply means “lasting for an indeterminate period of time”. Rotherham translates this as “age-abiding” and Young’s Literal uses the phrase “age-during”. The second inaccuracy is the word “damnation”. Most good Bible versions more accurately translate the Greek word “krisis” to mean “judgment” or “condemnation” not “damnation”. This word “damnation” should not be in our Bibles, period! This was an invention of the dark ages in which fear was used to keep the masses under the authority of the Roman Church. In fact, I believe the KJV is the only modern version today that still uses that word in its pages.” -end quote- (The “Unpardonable Sin”, Ken Eckerty)

While there is so much more that could be said on this topic, as to the nature of the sin and the specific details surrounding the penalty to be associated with it, *suffice it to say* for now that we have exposed the common error to be associated with this sin, in that many refer to it as “unpardonable” accompanied with “eternal” consequences, which is just not the case!

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...We can be confident in knowing that there is no such thing as an “eternally unpardonable sin” with our Heavenly Father. On the other hand, in no way are we trying to insinuate that sin (or this particular sin) is something we want to engage in. This is not a license to sin, but rather, it is the true interpretation of the Scriptures from the original language. Knowing these things will cause us to want to serve God all the more. Just think about your Savior Jesus Christ and how POWERFUL the blood of His cross truly is. He is able to correct and save to the uttermost, **even reaching to those who are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.**

OBJECTION #3 / EVERLASTING, ETERNAL, FOR EVER, EVEN FOR EVER AND EVER

Contrary to what many believe or understand, the Bible is a Book that primarily speaks to us concerning the *ages* of time. It was given to man by God in time and speaks to us about knowing God in time - the *ages* (or *eons*). When it declares the need for wrath, vengeance, judgment, and punishment, it also refers to these attributes that flow out of the love of God, which are corrective in nature, as being part of time and taking place within the confines of time - the *ages*. The key to deciphering all of this is in knowing that there is a difference between time and eternity. “Time” was created by God and has a beginning and an end. “Eternity”, on the other hand, is characterized by **timelessness** that simply **is** and has no beginning and no end.

According to J. Preston Eby:

"I am compelled to state that the Bible says very little by way of a definition of eternity because the Bible is essentially a Book of time and for time. It was written for man who lives in a temporal state and who is not yet a totally eternal being. Only as we enter that *state of being* called eternity...only as HE Who IS ETERNITY becomes "All in All" in us...only as we are spiritually metamorphosized into our eternal condition...only as eternity becomes an absolute reality to us...only then will formerly temporal beings such as we now are truly comprehend and understand eternity and things of an eternal nature. This marvelous work has now begun within our spirit as our spirit has been quickened by His Spirit. I stated that the Bible is relatively silent about what eternity is; that is not to say that human teachings and theology haven't taught us a great deal about eternity, but, alas! Much of it over the past centuries has come from the carnal minds of Babylonish theologians and not from the mind of the Eternal One via the Holy Spirit.

ETERNITY IS A STATE OF ABSOLUTE TIMELESSNESS, not of unending time. Eternity is a STATE OF BEING, resident in the very nature and person of God in which such concepts as past, present, future, before, after, change, transition, growth, decay, etc. do not exist. It is wrong to assert that, when time ends, eternity will begin, because eternity has no beginning. Neither did it end when time began, as so many charts indicate. **Therefore it is very important that we make a clear distinction between ages, which belong to time, and eternity, which is timeless. It is more important still that we, in our study of the Bible, search out diligently those passages which refer to time and those which refer to eternity.** Do you have it yet? Do you see? Time is not part of eternity; eternity is not composed of segments of time. Eternity is not time standing still; it is simply not time at all. Eternity doesn't go on and on and on, *ad infinitum*. Eternity doesn't go anywhere, nor does it do anything. Eternity simply IS. Eternity is part of the very nature and person of God. Eternity transcends beyond our knowing anything having to do with time. It is not time at all. It is just a glorious experience of BEING! Eternity simply IS, just as God simply IS. Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 8:58) - not "Before Abraham was, I WAS." There are not past or future tenses in eternity. There is only one eternal NOW." -end quote- (Eternity, J. Preston Eby)

Notice what J. Preston Eby mentioned (among other things) in the quoted passage above: **"Therefore it is very important that we make a clear distinction between ages, which belong to time, and eternity, which is timeless. It is more important still that we, in our study of the Bible, search out diligently those passages which refer to time and those which refer to eternity."** -end quote-

Eby has set us on the right path, in that we must search out *diligently* those passages which refer to time and those which refer to eternity. In addition to this, though, there is one other thing we must know before we attempt this all-important search. It is this: *Houston, we have a problem!*

My good friend Chris Dantin told me to never give someone a solution without first showing them they have a problem. You see...we cannot really appreciate or even understand the solution we have been given until we can first see that we have a problem that needs a solution. Once we are able to see the problem, then we will attack the problem with the solution that has been given to us and solve the *conundrum* (an intricate and difficult problem).

In simple terms, the problem we are facing is this: **Many modern Bible translations have done a poor job of translating the words “olam”, “aion”, and “aionios”**. This has caused two major problems for those of us who read these translations and try to come away with a clear picture of God’s plan for man. The first problem is that the English words “everlasting”, “eternal”, “for ever”, and “even for ever and ever”, have been used in conjunction with English words like “punishment”, “judgment”, and “destruction”. This faulty translation has left readers with the impression that God is going to endlessly “punish”, “torture”, “destroy”, and “torment” the vast majority of the human race. The second problem that has been created is that the Biblical references in the original languages of the Bible to the five ages mentioned are ***hopelessly clouded*** in most translations.

Yes...the Bible speaks of *at least* five ages. It speaks of past ages (2), this present age (1), and the ages (2) to come. Once we are made aware of this amazing truth, the story of God and His dealings with man takes on a whole new meaning. In Hebrews 1:1-2 (according to the King James Version) it says...“God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the **worlds**...” The word “worlds” in verse two comes from the Greek word “aion”, and should not be translated as “worlds”, but rather, should be translated as “ages”.

Here is how Hebrews 1:2 reads in Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible, which states...“At the end of these days, He has spoken unto us in His Son, - Whom He has appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He has made the **ages**...” Do you see how **big** of a difference that makes when this word “aion” is either mistranslated or properly translated? It makes all the difference in the *world*! This is what is meant when we say...The Biblical references in the original languages of the Bible to the five ages mentioned are ***hopelessly clouded*** in most translations. Well...it is our job as Noble Bereans to *uncloud* what has been *clouded*. And that we shall do...by

uncovering the meaning of three words: “*olam*”, “*aion*”, and “*aionios*”. Isn’t it exciting to know that God has made the **ages**?

OLAM

According to C. Gary Reid and Ernest L. Martin:

“The word “*olam*” is derived from the primitive root “*alam*”, meaning to veil from sight, to conceal. An analysis of the passages where “*olam*” appears shows clearly that the word does not express “eternity” or “everlasting” as it has been frequently translated in the King James Version. Rather, it simply expresses a duration, a time during which a person, thing, or state of a thing exists - literally an age of time which has a definite beginning and conclusion. The duration of an age in Scripture is sometimes defined and sometimes undefined. “*Olam*”, including its usage in the singular and plural and with prepositions and negatives, is translated differently in the Old Testament of our English Version. These various translations with their number of occurrences are tabulated below:

“for ever and ever”	24 times
“from everlasting to everlasting”	4 times
“for ever”	251 times
“everlasting”	60 times
“of ancient times” or “of old time”	2 times
“of old” or “ever of old”	16 times
“world without end”	1 time

“never”	16 times
“perpetual”	22 times
“evermore”	15 times
“old” or “ancient”	13 times
“of” or “in old time”	3 times
“always” or “alway”	5 times
“anymore”	2 times
“world”	2 times
“continuance”	1 time
“eternal”	1 time
“lasting”	1 time
“long time”	1 time
“at any time”	1 time
“since the beginning of the world”	1 time
“ever”	4 times

“long”

2 times

Total occurrences of *olam*

**448
times**

The Time Periods for Salvation, Part 1

by C. Gary Reid and Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1975

Typeset and footnoted by David Sielaff, November 2004” -end quote-

The following is an excerpt from: (The Power Of Life And Death In A Greek Four Letter Word - Aion, Gary Amirault)...“While studying this Hebrew word “*olam*”, I came across some quotations from leading scholars which began to give me much understanding. The classical Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies by William Wilson gives as the meaning of “*olam*”, “duration of time which is concealed or hidden”, in other words, an unknown length of time. This unknown length of time could be 3 days and nights as in the case of Jonah, or the length of a man’s life, or as long as the period of time the Aaronic Priesthood was in effect, which was around 1,600 years. Well, that seemed to solve all the problems. This definition took care of all the clear contradictions between the Old and New Testament and got old Jonah out of “hell forever”. From Jonah’s point of view, while he was in the fish, he didn’t know how long he was there since he couldn’t see the sun and moon. (They didn’t invent Timex watches until a few thousand years later.) But while the problem was solved in the Old Testament, it presented some different problems in the New Testament. The Greek equivalent for the Hebrew “*olam*” is the word “*aion*”. We get the English word “*eon*” from this word. It seems that many Bible translators carried the error of mistranslating “*olam*” to the Greek word “*aion*.” -end quote- (Gary Amirault)

This brings us to our next stop on our journey through the ages. We will consider the Greek word “*aion*” next, giving its meaning, and showing how it too has been grossly mistranslated in many leading “selling” English translations. We are now beginning to see...THE PURPOSE OF THE AGES COME TO LIGHT!

AION

According to C. Gary Reid and Ernest L. Martin:

"The noun *"aion"* means "age" or "eon" and is found 128 times in 105 passages of the New Testament. It doubly occurs in 23 of the 105 passages. In its simple form (noun only), it is found 37 times and with prepositions 68. *"Aion"* is translated as follows in the Authorized Version:

<u>Usage</u>	<u>Number of Occurrences</u>	<u>Representative Scripture</u>
Age	2	Ephesians 2:7
Course	1	Ephesians 2:2
World	40	Hebrews 6:5
Ever	72	Jude 13
Never	7	John 11:26
Evermore	4	2 Corinthians 11:31
Eternal	2	1 Timothy 1:17

Here are seven different renderings of the word *"aion"* as it appears in the form of a noun. On the surface, it seems that the translators were confused as to the right meaning of this important word. The word "world" in the English language is used to describe the present arrangement of human life and activity, but it certainly indicates a terminable period. It had a beginning and will have an end. Indeed "world" conveys no duration of time whatever. Yet *"aion"* shows "time" - though the time is always indefinite as to length. It is just like *"olam"* in Hebrew. The usual words in English which best approximate the original meaning of *"aion"* are "age" and "eon" (the latter word is derived from the Greek original itself)." -end quote-

The Time Periods for Salvation, Part 1

by C. Gary Reid and Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1975

Typeset and footnoted by David Sielaff, November 2004

AIONIOS

According to C. Gary Reid and Ernest L. Martin:

“In the translation of the adjective in the King James Version there is not as much variation. “*Aionios*” is rendered into only four English words.

<u>Usage</u>	<u>Number of Occurrences</u>	<u>Representative Scripture</u>
Eternal	42	Titus 3:7
Everlasting	25	2 Thessalonians 1:9
Ever	1	Philemon 15
World	3	Titus 1:2

The adjective form “*aionios*” cannot carry a force or express a duration greater than the “age” of which it speaks. It cannot mean “eternal” or “everlasting”. It literally means “of the age” or “age-long”. **Once these meanings of the Hebrew “*olam*” and the Greek “*aion*” are understood, a flood of light will shine forth to show how God has been using various ages or strategic time periods to perfect His plan of salvation for man.” -end quote-**

The Time Periods for Salvation, Part 1

by C. Gary Reid and Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1975

Typeset and footnoted by David Sielaff, November 2004

The following is an excerpt from: (The Power Of Life And Death In A Greek Four Letter Word - Aion, Gary Amirault)...“There are some who after wrestling with the facts above will admit that the word “*aion*” means “an age”, but they say its adjective “*aionios*” has to mean “eternal” because it is used so often to describe God. Professors in seminaries say these kind of **foolish things**. Anyone with a little bit of sense recognizes that **an adjective cannot have a greater force or meaning than its noun**. “Hourly” cannot mean “yearly”, for example. The adjective gets its force from the noun. If the noun “*aion*” means “age”, then the adjective “*aionios*” has to pertain to “age” and not to something greater than “age”. It cannot therefore correctly represent “eternity”. Just because “*aionios*” is used to describe God Who is “eternal” does not

mean “*aionios*” means “eternal”. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Does that mean He is not the God of the rest of us? Of course, not! God can be the God of **ages** as well as being **eternal**. The very nature of God commands the idea of “eternity”. He doesn’t have to be called “eternal” to make Him “eternal”. That is part of His nature. The Bible has many other ways to express “endlessness” or not being exposed to the corruption of death. “Endlessness” is expressed in the Scriptures by the simple phrase “no end” (Luke 1:33; Dan. 7:14; Isa. 9:7). The thought of permanence is also expressed in Hebrews 7:16, “the power of an endless or indissoluble life”, and in 1 Peter 1:4, “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away.” -end quote- (Gary Amirault)

Once again, as was stated above...**“Once these meanings of the Hebrew “*olam*” and the Greek “*aion*” (along with “*aionios*”) are understood, a flood of light will shine forth to show how God has been using various ages or strategic time periods to perfect His plan of salvation for man.”** Having an understanding of these three words (“*olam*”, “*aion*”, and “*aionios*”) will put to rest the idea that God’s intentions are to “eternally” punish and torture the vast majority of the human race. This study will also clear up the false idea that God’s wrath, vengeance, destruction, judgment, and punishment is *everlasting, eternal, for ever, even for ever and ever*.

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...The information we have presented is undeniable, and is in favor of the fact that God’s dealings with man -- including wrath, vengeance, destruction, judgment, and punishment -- are of a limited duration, i.e., of the ages. There is no way to deny the material that has been presented here, unless the reader chooses to leave the realm of scholarly study and common sense. To be in denial of these facts is to be in denial of the purpose and plan of God, as well as the character and nature of God, which IS LOVE and CORRECTION, and ends in restoration and reconciliation!

OBJECTION #4 / THE RICH MAN & LAZARUS

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS / PART 1

IT IS A PARABLE!

The first and most important thing that we must see concerning the story of The Rich Man and Lazarus is: IT IS A PARABLE! A “parable” is: a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach a spiritual truth, religious principle, or moral lesson.

Matthew 13:34 tells us that **“Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables (figurative language); and without a parable did He not speak unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in PARABLES; I will utter things which**

have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” With this in mind, we can now approach the teachings of Jesus in a proper way. Remember...Jesus always spoke in parables when He opened His mouth in public before the multitudes.

Starting with Luke chapter fifteen Jesus begins to speak a five-part parable. Notice who His audience is. He is speaking to the: publicans, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes. The five parables are:

1. THE LOST SHEEP
2. THE LOST COIN
3. THE TWO LOST SONS (THE PRODIGAL SON)
4. THE UNJUST STEWARD
5. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

The first three parables are spoken to encourage the publicans and sinners concerning God's love for them. The last two parables are spoken to warn the Pharisees and scribes (the religious leaders) of God's disapproval of their self-righteous behavior, which would ultimately lead to the Kingdom of God being stripped from the Jews and given to the Gentiles.

The reason it is so important that we understand that Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables is because of this: **Many people literalize things in Scripture that are to be understood spiritually, or in a metaphoric sense.** This is the MISTAKE that is often made by most concerning the parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus. We must also understand that the meaning of a parable is LOCKED to the mind of human intellect, which is the carnal (fleshly) mind.

1st Corinthians 2:14-16 states...“But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? **But we have the mind of Christ...**”

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS / PART 2

THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

Now that we have established that the story of The Rich Man and Lazarus is a PARABLE, let us seek to understand its true meaning. The meaning of the parable is as follows:

A CERTAIN RICH MAN: This represents the Jewish Nation as a whole (Judah...More specifically: The Priesthood), for they were spiritually rich in the things of God (Romans 3:1, 2...Romans 9:3-5).

CLOTHED IN PURPLE AND LINEN: This statement further clarifies who the Rich Man is, for purple represents royalty, and fine linen represents the priesthood. The Nation of Israel was to be a nation of kings (purple) and priests (linen) before God (Exodus 19:5, 6).

FARED SUMPTUOUSLY EVERY DAY: This once again reaffirms that the Jews were a blessed people, having been given the adoption, glory, covenants, law, service, promises, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came (Romans 9:4-5).

A CERTAIN BEGGAR: This represents the Gentiles (Nations) as a whole, for they were spiritual Beggars concerning the things of God (Ephesians 2:11, 12). The Gentiles (Nations) were referred to as the *Uncircumcision*. They were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

LAZARUS: The name “Lazarus” comes from the Hebrew name “Eleazar”, which means: “WHOM GOD HELPS”. The reason Jesus used the name of “Lazarus” in this parable is for this very reason. The Gentiles (Nations) are those WHOM GOD HAS HELPED.

AT HIS GATE...FULL OF SORES...FED WITH CRUMBS...THE DOGS LICKED HIS SORES: These phrases all point to a description of the Gentiles (Nations), and how they were viewed by the Nation of Israel during the time that Jesus walked the earth. The Gentiles (Nations) were referred to as “dogs”, and were considered to be uncircumcised filth by the Jews (Matthew 15:21-28...Mark 7:25-30).

THE BEGGAR DIED: This represents a **change** in the Beggar’s condition. The Gentiles (Nations) died to their old condition of a Beggar, and would now be included and brought into the blessings of God (Ephesians 2:13-22).

ABRAHAM’S BOSOM: “Abraham’s Bosom” is NOT a physical location. The term represents a place of **spiritual favor and honor**. The Gentiles (Nations) were now given the opportunity to become the children of Abraham. This represented the death of their Beggar status.

THE RICH MAN DIED, AND WAS BURIED: This represents a change in the Rich Man's condition. It signifies the death of Judaism (their religion). We must see that the Rich Man and Lazarus **changed places**. The Rich Man became a Beggar, and the Beggar became a Rich Man. Jesus took the Kingdom from the Jews (the Rich Man) and gave it to the Gentiles (Lazarus...the Beggar...the dogs). (Matthew 21:33-43...Matthew 8:12...Matthew 23:13-39...Mark 12:1-12...Acts 13:46, 47...Luke 13:28, 29).

IN HELL: The English word "hell" (used here) comes from the Greek word "Hades". The word "Hades" simply means: **"the grave, or the place of the dead"**. It carries with it the idea or meaning of **"un-perception"**. The Rich Man, along with his religion (Judaism), was now to be buried, finding himself in a place of un-perception, which refers to not being able to "see" (understand) or grasp the Kingdom of God (John 3:3).

LIFTED UP HIS EYES...IN TORMENTS...SEES ABRAHAM AFAR OFF...LAZARUS IN HIS BOSOM: This represents the Jews suffering the punishment of their sins, in the destruction of their city (70-73 A.D.) and temple, and the sore calamities which have befallen on them ever since. As we now know, the Jews have been through torment for the last 2,000 years due to the rejection of their Messiah. Their religion is dead, and they are currently in un-perception (outer darkness). The Rich Man now sees that Abraham (their spiritual roots) is afar off (cut off), and that Lazarus (the Gentiles / Nations) is in his bosom (a place of favor with God).

FATHER ABRAHAM...MERCY ON ME...SEND LAZARUS...DIP HIS FINGER IN WATER...COOL MY TONGUE...I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME: This is all metaphoric language to show the change of positions and current conditions of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The Jews are now tormented in the flame of having rejected their Messiah. The Rich Man (the Jews) is now asking Lazarus to come and help (comfort) him, whereas before he wanted nothing to do with him, even referring to him as a dog.

THERE IS A GREAT GULF: The great gulf is explained by the apostle Paul in Romans 11:25-36. It is simply this: GOD BLINDED ISRAEL IN PART, UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES (NATIONS) BE COME IN. Until then, the Rich Man cannot pass from where he is (his condition) to where Lazarus is (his condition), and Lazarus cannot pass from where he is to where the Rich Man is.

SEND HIM TO MY FATHER'S HOUSE...I HAVE FIVE BRETHREN...LEST THEY ALSO COME TO THIS PLACE OF TORMENT: This represents that the Jew learns mercy and compassion after his season of torment. The terminology "five brethren" gives us another undeniable clue as to the meaning of this parable. Modern day Israel, at the time of Jesus, was referred to as Judah. (**Note:** After Solomon died, his Kingdom fell apart - Judah in the South and Israel in the North. What was a strong and united empire broke in two. God divorced Himself from Israel {the

Northern Kingdom} in 745 B.C., causing them to be invaded by the Assyrian Empire and deported to the region of Nineveh.) God would later divorce Himself from Judah (the Southern Kingdom) in 70-73 A.D., causing them to be invaded by the Roman Army. This resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem. In this parable, Jesus was speaking to Judah (the Southern Kingdom). He was actually warning them of their destruction that was about to come if they did not repent. It is **extremely interesting** to note that Judah (in the Old Testament) had **FIVE FULL-BLOODED BROTHERS!** They were: **Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, and Zebulun**. The words “five brethren”, used by Jesus, were a direct clue as to the identity of the Rich Man.

MOSES AND THE PROPHETS: This represents the law and the prophets, which could also be said to represent the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus said...Let them hear them!

IF ONE WENT TO THEM FROM THE DEAD, THEY WILL REPENT: Jesus here alluded to HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION from the dead, knowing that even though He would rise from the dead, yet would the Jews (as a whole) still not believe and repent.

***NOTE:** Notice how that the Rich Man referred to Abraham as Father, and how that Abraham referred to him as son. This further clarifies the identity of the Rich Man.

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...Now that we have had our minds renewed (concerning this parable) to the mind of Christ, being brought to a proper understanding of this parable, we can discard the foolish ideas of the traditions and doctrines of men (concerning this parable), which state that this story is about eternal torture in hell. **THAT IS NOT CORRECT!** It is simply a parable which talks about...THE JEWS AND GENTILES!

OBJECTION #5 / HELL - SHEOL, HADES, GEHENNA, & TARTAROO

SHEOL

According to J. W. Hanson:

“That the Hebrew “**Sheol**” never designates a place of punishment in a future state of existence, we have the testimony of the most learned of scholars, even among the so-called orthodox. We quote the testimony of a few:

Rev. Dr. Whitby: “**Sheol** throughout the Old Testament, signifies not a place of punishment for the souls of bad men only, but the grave, or place of death.”

Dr. Chapman: “**Sheol**, in itself considered has no connection with future punishment.”

Dr. Allen: “The term “**Sheol**” itself, does not seem to mean anything more than the state of the dead in their dark abode.”

Dr. Firdairn, of the College of Glasgow: “Beyond doubt, “**Sheol**”, like “**Hades**”, was regarded as the abode after death, alike of the good and the bad.”

Edward Leigh, who says Horne’s, “Introduction”, was “one of the most learned understanding of the original languages of the Scriptures”, observes that “all learned Hebrew scholars know the Hebrews have no proper word for “**hell**”, as we take **hell**.”

Prof. Stuart: “There can be no reasonable doubt that “**Sheol**” does most generally mean the underworld, the grave or sepulchre, the world of the dead. It is very clear that there are many passages where no other meaning can reasonably be assigned to it. Accordingly, our English translators have rendered the word “**Sheol**” grave in thirty instances out of the whole sixty-four instances in which it occurs.”

Dr. Thayer in his Theology of Universalism quotes as follows: Dr. Whitby says that “**hell**” “throughout the Old Testament signifies the grave only or the place of death.” -end quote- (The Bible Hell, J. W. Hanson)

Well...There you have it! The word “**Sheol**” means: **the grave, or the place of the dead**. In no way does it denote a place of punishment, torment, or torture. The idea that “**Sheol**” signified a place of punishment entered in through pagan mythology. We are now on our way to understanding the “**hell**” of the Bible. Our next stop on our journey through “**hell**” will be to look at and dissect the Greek word “**Hades**”. We will see that “**Hades**” is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word “**Sheol**”. It is the New Testament word that signifies the grave, or the place of the dead.

HADES

According to J. W. Hanson:

“The Greek Septuagint, which our Lord used when He read or quoted from the Old Testament, gives “**Hades**” as the exact equivalent of the Hebrew “**Sheol**”, and when the Savior, or His apostles, use the word, they must mean the same as it meant in the Old Testament. When “**Hades**” is used in the New Testament, we must understand it just as we do (“**Sheol**” or “**Hades**”) in the Old Testament.

Dr. Campbell well says: “In my judgment, it ought never in Scripture to be rendered “**hell**”, at least, in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians. In the Old

Testament, the corresponding word is “**Sheol**”, which signifies the state of the dead in general without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery. In translating that word, the seventy have almost invariably used “**Hades**”. It is very plain, that neither in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, nor in the New, does the word “**Hades**” convey the meaning which the present English word “**hell**”, in the Christian usage, always conveys to our minds.”

Le Clere affirms that “neither “**Hades**” nor “**Sheol**” ever signifies in the Sacred Scripture the abode of evil spirits, but only the sepulchre, or the state of the dead.” -end quote- (The Bible Hell, J. W. Hanson)

According to J. W. Hanson:

“That “**Hades**” is the kingdom of death, and not a place of torment, after death, is evident from the language of Acts 2:27, “You will not leave My soul in **hell**: neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.” Verse 31: “His soul was not left in “**hell**”, neither His flesh did see corruption,” that is His spirit did not remain in the state of the dead, until His body decayed. No one supposes that Jesus went to a realm of torment when He died. Jacob wished to go down to “**Hades**” to his son mourning, so Jesus went to “**Hades**”, the under-world, the grave. The Apostle’s Creed conveys the same idea, when it speaks of Jesus as descending into “**hell**”. He died, but His soul was not left in the realms of death, is the meaning.” -end quote- (The Bible Hell, J. W. Hanson)

1st Corinthians 15:55 tells us that “**hell**” (“**Hades**”) will be destroyed. It states...“O death, where is your sting? O grave (“**Hades**”, “**hell**”) where is your victory?” So we can see that “**hell**” (“**Sheol**”, “**Hades**”) is the grave, or the place of the dead. We can also now see that “**hell**” (“**Sheol**”, “**Hades**”) is not to endure forever, but is destined to be destroyed. This is also in harmony with Revelation 20:13-14, which tells us that death and “**hell**” (“**Hades**”) shall be consumed by the fire of God. This is speaking of the purifying fire of God. AWESOME! O “**HELL**” (“**HADES**”, GRAVE), WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY?

GEHENNA / PART 1

(Hope For All Generations And Nations, Gary Amirault)

“Israel, during one part of its history, began to mix the worship of Yahweh with some of the customs of the pagan nations around them. They molded a statue which was half man and half bull. They called this god, MLK. (The original Hebrew had no vowels. One had to put in the vowels from memory.) Some scholars render these three consonants Molock or Molech, others

believed it was the word Melech, which means “king” in Hebrew. The latter view would mean that Israel had made an image of Yahweh (their king) in the image of being half man and half animal. Either way, they felt they had *not* abandoned the worship of Yahweh. They felt this new practice was harmonious with the other religious traditions of the Hebrew faith. Regardless of whether he was called Moloch, Molech or Melech, the Israelites took their own babies and placed them in the hands of this statue. Beneath the hands was a pot under which was a very hot fire. The child would fall out of the hands of MLK into the burning pot. As the child screamed with pain, the adults would go into a sexual frenzy as the sounds of the burning children mixed with the beating of drums. MLK was a fertility god. In other Jewish rites, the Jews were commanded to offer up the first-fruits of a harvest unto Yahweh that He might bless the rest of the harvest. The Israelites extended this practice by offering up some of their children as a burnt-offering. Yahweh told Jeremiah the prophet He was going to destroy the city in which they were committing these horrible acts. The location where these rites were performed was in the **Valley of the Son of Hinnom** (also called **Tophet** in the Bible) right outside the Southwest wall of **Jerusalem!**

When speaking of Israel burning their own children, Yahweh said that such a thing never entered His mind. ***If God prepared a place in which He was going to torture billions of the human beings He created, how could He say it never entered His mind. Obviously, God never intended, nor ever will eternally burn and torture the men and women He created!*** This cruel teaching came from the same place from which Israel got the idea of burning their own children, that is, from a mind which was not subject to the true God; from a depraved mind.

When Jesus in the New Testament used the word which has been incorrectly translated “hell” in most Christian Bibles, the place He was referring to was **this valley** in which *Israel* burned their own children, not God. The place called “**Gehenna**” (translated “hell”) was the Greek form of the Hebrew “**Ge Hinnom**”. **This valley** became a disgraceful reminder to Israel of what their forefathers did. **It became the city dump. Jesus warned the very generation in which He lived that if they did not repent, they would find themselves thrown into this valley of garbage which burned night and day.** To tell a Jew something like this was the absolute worst of insult. It meant that their lives were worthless.

A Jew’s honor was very important to him, especially at his death. It was not uncommon to hire professional mourners at one’s funeral. Imagine paying someone to cry tears at your funeral. This is an example of how vain God’s own people were during Jesus’ physical presence on earth. Jesus told some of the most religious people of His day, their lives were only fit to be thrown into **the city dump!** What an insult! *And* what a prophecy! The very people who heard these words would find their bodies thrown over the Southwest wall of Jerusalem during the

siege against the city in 70AD. Because they did not follow Christ and participated in His crucifixion, their lives truly did become worthless.” -end quote- (Gary Amirault)

Now that we are educated as to the literal history and meaning of **“Gehenna”**, understanding that **it is a place on this earth**, let us take a look at **what this literal valley represents spiritually and metaphorically**. FIRST THE NATURAL, THEN THE SPIRITUAL!

GEHENNA / PART 2

According to J. Preston Eby:

“In the New Testament there appears the word **“GEHENNA”** referring to the **“Valley of Hinnom”**, or **“Gehenna”**, which was **the city dump outside the walls of Jerusalem**, a place of constant burning of refuse. It is interesting to note that those who are pictured as going into **“Gehenna”** are, without exception, not the sinners of the world, but the **SINNERS AMONG GOD’S PEOPLE**. How precise the type! **“Gehenna”** was **the city dump of Jerusalem**, the Holy City, where every unclean and unnecessary thing was burned and consumed. The antitypical **“Gehenna”** to which our Lord alluded in His teaching is the process of **PURIFICATION** by which every unclean and unnecessary thing in the lives of His Holy People is purged and consumed by the fires of His judgment. “The Lord Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to **HIS TEMPLE**...but who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? for He is like a **REFINER’S FIRE**, and like fuller’s soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall **PURIFY** the sons of Levi (the Priesthood), and **PURGE** them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mal. 3:1-3). **“Gehenna”** stands as a type of the place or process of the **PURIFICATION OF GOD’S PEOPLE**. It is referred to in the Old Testament by the name of **“Tophet”**, located in the **“Valley of Hinnom”**, a place where many sacrifices were made and dead bodies consumed.” -end quote- (Hell, J. Preston Eby)

The idea of God’s people being purified in and through fire is also to be found in the apostle Paul’s writings. 1st Corinthians 3:12-15 states...“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

This is obviously speaking of a spiritual fire, of which **GOD IS!** Remember...**GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE** (Hebrews 12:29)...Now we can begin to see that Jesus pointed to the literal fire of **“Gehenna”**, which did consume literal refuse, to teach us about **the spiritual fire of God**.

He used "**Gehenna**" to *typify, symbolize, and portray* what the fire of God was like. HE USED "**GEHENNA**" AS A METAPHOR!

The fire of God is His judgment in our lives that consumes the refuse in us, which is WOOD, HAY, AND STUBBLE! God's fire is for PURIFICATION, **NOT ETERNAL TORTURE!** Nothing was tortured in "**Gehenna**", only consumed and **changed into another form**. Can you now begin to see your FIERY TRIALS as the process in which God is consuming your carnality and CHANGING YOU INTO THE VERY IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD? As you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are being consumed by the Holy Ghost and FIRE, being changed from glory to glory. This is what "**Gehenna**" represents. It speaks of the ALL-CONSUMING FIRE OF GOD! THANK GOD FOR THE FIRE OF "**GEHENNA**"!

TARTAROO

According to J. Preston Eby:

"Next we consider the Greek word "**TARTAROO**" - the English form is "**Tartarus**". The passage where this word is found is II Pet. 2:4..."God spared not the angels (messengers) that sinned, but cast them down to "**hell**" ("**Tartarus**"), and delivered them into *chains of darkness* to be *reserved unto judgment*." Jude also presents the same truth without mentioning the name as he writes, "And those angels (messengers) who kept not their first position of power and authority, but left their habitation, He has kept *in chains under thick darkness*, for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). **The whole thought is of a restraint, a confinement, a prison, a condition in which apostates are held for a specific period of time, in the same manner as prisoners are often held in jail awaiting the day of trial.** "**Tartarus**" is not the judgment itself, but a state or condition in which persons are inescapably held over unto a day of judgment." -end quote- (Hell, J. Preston Eby)

According to J. W. Hanson:

"Peter alludes to the subject just as though it were well-known and understood by his correspondents. "If the angels that sinned." - what angels? "were cast down to "**Tartarus**", where is the story related? Not in the Bible, but in a book well-known at the time, called the **Book of Enoch**. It was written some time before the Christian Era, and is often quoted by the Christian fathers. But no one can fail to see that the apostle employs the legend from the **Book of Enoch** to illustrate and enforce his doctrine of retribution. As though he had said: "If, as is believed by some, God spared not the angels that sinned, do not let us who sin, mortal men, expect to escape." If this view is denied, there is no escape from the gross doctrine of "**Tartarus**" as taught by the pagans and that, too, on the testimony of a solitary sentence of

Scripture! But whatever may be the intent of the words, they do not teach endless torment, for the chains referred to only last unto the judgment.” -end quote- (The Bible Hell, J. W. Hanson)

It is believed by many that Peter and Jude were referring to sinning messengers in the days of Noah. These sinning messengers were referred to as “the sons of God” who took “the daughters of men” as wives and produced children by them (Genesis 6:2). As to the nature of these angels (messengers), there are many different thoughts and opinions. Some believe that the flood in Noah’s day was brought on and designed by God for the very purpose of thwarting these fallen angels (messengers) in their design.

The important point to see though is that “**Tartarus**” does in no way teach endless torment, for the chains referred to only last **unto the judgment**. It is to be seen as a state or condition in which persons are held over unto a day of judgment for the purpose of correction. The Lord knows how to reserve...THE UNJUST UNTO THE DAY OF JUDGMENT!

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...

According to J. W. Hanson:

“Canon Farrar truthfully says, in his “Eternal Hope”: “And, finally, the word rendered “**hell**” is in one place the Greek word “**Tartarus**”, borrowed as a word for the prison of evil spirits not after but before the resurrection. It is in ten places “**Hades**”, which simply means the world beyond the grave, and it is twelve places “**Gehenna**”, which means primarily, the “**Valley of Hinnom**” outside of Jerusalem in which after it had been polluted by Moloch worship, corpses were flung and fires were lit; and, secondly, it is a metaphor not of final and hopeless but of that purifying and corrective punishment which as we all believe does await impenitent sin both here and beyond the grave. But be it solemnly observed, the Jews to whom and in whose metaphorical sense the word was used by our blessed Lord, never did, either then or at any other period attach to that word “**Gehenna**”, which He used, that meaning of endless torment which we have been taught to apply to “**hell**”. To them and therefore on the lips of our blessed Savior Who addressed it to them, it means not a material and everlasting fire, but an intermediate, a metaphorical and a terminal retribution.” -end quote- (The Bible Hell, J. W. Hanson)

After evaluating the **FACTS**, we can now see that “**Sheol**”, “**Hades**”, and “**Tartaroo**” speak of literal death (the grave or place of the dead) or the consequences of sin, and “**Gehenna**” was the city dump used in a metaphoric way by our Lord to explain the consuming fire of God.

POPULAR OBJECTIONS TO THE RECONCILIATION OF ALL THINGS PART 2

OBJECTION #6 / FIRE

When discussing the reconciliation of all things with those who are opposed to or in denial of this great truth, one of the main objections used by eternal torture supporters is that the Bible speaks of **fire**, and more specifically: **“hell fire”**, **“unquenchable fire”**, and **“the lake of fire”**. **“Hell fire”**, **“unquenchable fire”**, and **“the lake of fire”** are often used by many in Evangelical Christianity to strike fear in the hearts of their listeners. The three categories of **“fire”** just mentioned are almost always spoken of in a *literal* sense, and there is little to no explanation of the meaning and purpose of **“fire”** spoken of as it relates to how this word is used throughout the Scriptures. Most claim that the **“fire”** spoken of in these instances is a *literal “fire”* that is designed to do nothing more than to torture and inflict pain on individuals, and of course they will say that this condition is to last *for all eternity*. Have you ever **really** stopped and thought about that for a moment? Can you imagine burning someone in a *literal “fire”* forever, with no other purpose in mind than to inflict endless and senseless torture? **Wow...that is insane!**

Do we condone this type of behavior as humans in our societies? How would someone be treated or handled if they were to burn someone alive in *literal “fire”*? Would this not be a crime and treated accordingly, being condemned by our law enforcement and judicial systems? Surely this type of behavior is vile, to say the least! There must be a meaning and purpose that we are missing when (and if) we speak of **“hell fire”**, **“unquenchable fire”**, and **“the lake of fire”**, and make no mention of the spiritual quality and purpose of this **“fire”**.

According to Dr. Harold Lovelace:

“Check again in your Concordance, and you will find verses that read **“Holy Ghost and fire”**, **“hell fire”**, **“unquenchable fire”**, **“ministers a flame of fire”**, **“fiery indignation”**, **“God is a consuming fire”**, **“lake of fire and brimstone”**, and **“the overcomers stand on a sea of glass mingled with fire”**. These terms are all from the same Greek word #4442, “pur”. **Therefore it is the same fire in all these places**. Now notice that in Mark 14:54 when Peter warmed himself by a **“fire”**, it is a different Greek word.” -end quote- ([Read And Search God’s Plan](#), Dr. Harold Lovelace)

According to J. Preston Eby:

“The word **“BURN”** means combustion, or to consume. To **“consume”** does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation in the absolute sense. When **“fire”** consumes a log in your fireplace it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely *changes their form*. **“Combustion”** is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example: a tree might be cut down, sawed into fire wood, and burned.

When the wood is burning the heat causes the chemicals of which the wood is composed to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree is no longer identified as the form of a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply CHANGED into a DIFFERENT FORM and exists in its new form within the atmosphere as water, carbon dioxide, etc. **Thus, to “burn”, means to CHANGE.** Furthermore, it is interesting to note that “fire” does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes “goes up in smoke”, to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a “fire”, before long the water will take on the property of the “fire” and will begin to go up in steam. **To “burn” means to CHANGE, and the change is always UPWARD in its motion.** “FIRE” is the heat and light that you feel and see when something burns. It takes heat to start a “fire”, but once the “fire” is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, “fire” is really HEAT and LIGHT.”
-end quote- (The Lake Of Fire, J. Preston Eby)

With this in mind, we are now able to see the purpose of God’s consuming “fire” in our lives. This spiritual “fire” (that comes from God) is for the purpose of consuming and destroying the man of sin that is within us. God’s “fire” works (within us) to consume our wood, hay, and stubble. He burns up our old nature (the propensity within us to sin) by the brightness of His coming (presence). In turn, HIS “FIRE” CHANGES US FROM ONE FORM TO ANOTHER. The more we begin to understand the purpose of God’s “fire”, the less we fear it.

HELL FIRE

In Matthew 18:9 (according to the King James Version) the words “hell fire” are used. This has caused many to teach and support an *eternal* “hell fire” doctrine. Is this the correct rendering of this verse from the original language? Well...let’s take a look. Listed below are a few examples of how this verse should be translated.

Matthew 18:9 (Weymouth New Testament):

⁹And if your eye is causing you to fall into sin, tear it out and away with it; it is better for you to enter into Life with only one eye, than to remain in possession of two eyes but be thrown into the **Gehenna** of fire.

Matthew 18:9 (Young’s Literal Translation):

⁹And if thine eye doth cause thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast from thee; it is good for thee one-eyed to enter into the life, rather than having two eyes to be cast to the **gehenna** of the fire.

Matthew 18:9 (The Emphasized Bible):

⁹And, if, thine eye, causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: It is, seemly, for thee, one-eyed, into life, to enter, rather than, having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery **gehenna**.

Matthew 18:9 (The Concordant Version):

⁹And if your eye is snaring you, wrench it out and cast it from you. Is it ideal for you to be entering into life one-eyed, or, having two eyes, to be cast into the **Gehenna** of fire?

According to J. W. Hanson:

“**Gehenna**” was a well-known locality near Jerusalem, and ought no more to be translated “**hell**”, than should Sodom or Gomorrah. See Josh. 15:8; II Kings 17:10; II Chron. 28:3; Jer. 7:31, 32; 19:2.

“**Gehenna**” is never employed in the Old Testament to mean anything else than the place with which every Jew was familiar.

The word should have been left untranslated as it is in some versions, and it would not be misunderstood. It was not misunderstood by the Jews to whom Jesus addressed it. Walter Balfour well says: “What meaning would the Jews who were familiar with this word, and knew it to signify the “**Valley of Hinnom**”, be likely to attach to it when they heard it used by our Lord? Would they, contrary to all former usage, transfer its meaning from a place with whose locality and history they had been familiar from their infancy, to a place of misery in another world? This conclusion is certainly inadmissible. By what rule of interpretation, then, can we arrive at the conclusion that this word means a place of misery and death?” -end quote- (The Bible Hell, J. W. Hanson)

In just a short amount of time (with a little bit of research and study) we have put to rest the idea that the words “**hell**” and “**fire**” were spoken together by Jesus or anyone else for that matter. The words in question are “**Gehenna**” and “**fire**”. Since we have already covered the topic of “**Gehenna**” in a previous objection, we will not say much at this time, except to reiterate that Jesus used the *literal* “**Gehenna**” of His day to warn the Jews of their destruction in 70-73 A.D., and to be a *metaphor* for the purifying “**fire**” of God which purges the garbage (or wood, hay, and stubble - carnality) in our lives. Once again, the spiritual aspect of this “**fire**” most assuredly speaks of purification, which eventually leads to correction and a change into the image of God.

UNQUENCHABLE FIRE

According to Lloyd Ellefson:

"In Mark 9:43-44, Jesus states..."than having your two hands, to go into **Gehenna**, into the **unquenchable fire**, where their **worm does not die**, and **the fire is not quenched**." An "**unquenchable fire**" is not an eternal "**fire**"; it is a "**fire**" which cannot be put out. It will continue to burn until it has accomplished its purpose. This "**fire**" will do the work it was sent to do! Jer. 17:27 says that God will kindle a "**fire**" in the gates of Jerusalem which will devour the palaces and "**it shall not be quenched**". However, we know it is not burning in Jerusalem at the present time. It has done its work." -end quote- (Fire: Natural And Spiritual, Lloyd Ellefson)

According to Otis Skinner:

"Unquenchable fire. This term is thus used by Jeremiah - "But if you will not hearken unto me...then will I kindle a **fire** in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and **it shall not be quenched**." - (Jer. 17:27) Here we have the phrase - "**not be quenched**". But the "**fire**" to which it refers ceased to burn when the temple at Jerusalem was consumed. **The term, therefore, does not imply endless burning.**

Worm dies not. Isaiah thus uses this expression - "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me; for **their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched**; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." - (Isa. 66:24) Here the prophet alludes to the "**worms**" which preyed upon the **dead carcasses** that were **left unburied in the "Valley of Hinnom"**, when Jerusalem was destroyed. Those "**worms**" were not more than any of our own day; and were said to die not, because "**worms**" were always preying there. **The expression, therefore, does not denote endless suffering.**" -end quote- (The Doctrine Of Endless Misery Not Taught In The Bible, Otis Skinner)

As we can see, "**unquenchable fire**" (whether in the natural or the spiritual) does not denote *endless "fire"*, but rather, it speaks of a "**fire**" which **CANNOT BE PUT OUT "UNTIL" IT HAS ACCOMPLISHED ITS PURPOSE!** This is the consuming "**fire**" of God. His "**fire**" is "**UNQUENCHABLE**". The next time you find yourself in the midst of a "**fiery**" trial, please understand that your trial is the very "**unquenchable fire**" of Almighty God. It cannot and will not be put out "until" it has served its purifying purpose. Thank God for His ..."**UNQUENCHABLE FIRE**"!

THE LAKE OF FIRE

According to J. Preston Eby:

"In my study of the **"lake that burns with fire and brimstone"** I was very much helped and impressed by the understanding given by Charles Pridgeon and I would like to quote from his scholarly work on the subject of **"BRIMSTONE"**. He says: "The **Lake of Fire and Brimstone** signifies a **"fire"** burning with **"brimstone"**; the word **"brimstone"** or **"sulphur"** defines the character of the **"fire"**. The Greek word **"THEION"** translated **"brimstone"** is exactly the same word **"THEION"** which means **"divine"**. **"Sulphur"** was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's *Iliad* (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with **"fire and brimstone"**. The verb derived from **"THEION"** is **"THEIOO"**, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See Liddell and Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1897 Edition). **To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a "lake of fire and brimstone" would mean a "lake of divine purification"**. The idea of judgment need not be excluded. **Divine purification** and **divine consecration** are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it." -end of Charles Pridgeon quote-

Continuation of quote from J. Preston Eby:

"I realize that the above thoughts define the subject very briefly, but let us summarize the meanings thus: **"BURN"** means combustion; to change the form of. **"FIRE"** means heat and light. **"BRIMSTONE"** means divine. Putting these three together can we not see that **"the lake burning with fire and brimstone"** is, actually, **DIVINE HEAT AND LIGHT PRODUCING A CHANGE!** Is such a process *eternal*? All the laws of nature shout that it is not! More than 2,500 years ago the Holy Spirit warned the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem that God would kindle a fire at Jerusalem's gates which would devour her palaces. "But if you will not hearken unto Me...then will I kindle a **"fire"** in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall **"not he quenched"** (Jer. 17:27). Did not God say this **"fire shall NOT BE QUENCHED?"** This prophecy was fulfilled and the fire did occur a few years later and it did destroy all the houses of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:13). Since God said no person or thing would **"quench this fire"**, did that mean that it would *burn for ever*? Since it accomplished the work it was sent to do, and since it is NOT BURNING TODAY, it obviously went out *by itself* after accomplishing its purpose! **"Unquenchable fire" is not eternal fire - it is simply "fire" that cannot be put out until it has consumed or changed everything it is possible for it to change! It then simply goes out, for there is nothing more to burn.** Yet I hear the preachers ranting and raving about poor souls being cast into **"hell fire"** where **"their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched"** and this, we are told, means eternal, unending torment. How foolish, illogical,

and *deceptive*! Such a view contradicts the plain meaning of the term “**unquenchable**” and its use in the Word of God.

Suppose a few filthy, vile men and a few immoral women from some house of prostitution were *forced to sit* in the midst of a large congregation of singing, shouting, worshipping saints. *This certainly would be torment to most of them.* They would be tortured in the “**flames**” of the blazing glory of God in that place! If they were not held in their seats *by force*, most of them would rush out of there. I have been in meetings where I witnessed three responses to the glorious manifestation of the Lord’s presence. First, the saints who loved the Lord rejoiced and adoringly worshipped. Some who were not Christians, but whose hearts were tender toward the Lord, came under deep conviction and, weeping and broken, gave themselves into the loving hands of Jesus. But others, filled with self, haters of righteousness, I have seen jump up and literally *run* out of a meeting - **TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB**! Sure, they would rush, even run to get away from the convicting power of the Holy Ghost! I have seen it, and so have you. **To the unsaved, HIS GLORY is a “LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE” - divine, cleansing, purging, purifying, consuming “fire”!** In ages yet unborn God shall expose ALL MEN to the sweet abiding presence of the Lamb. They will come under such severe processings, under such profound conviction that they will be tormented and have no rest day or night until they finally yield. And when they do, many fountains of tears will flow with weeping, praying, and calling upon the Lord.” -end quote- (The Lake Of Fire, J. Preston Eby)

As we can see, the words “**lake of fire and brimstone**” mean: **DIVINE PURIFICATION**! Daniel saw it as a stream and John saw it as a lake. Can we now see that the words “**lake of fire and brimstone**” are to be understood symbolically, portraying a “**spiritual fire**” that is by nature corrective, and for the purpose of purification? This “**lake of fire**” speaks of God Himself and His ministers, for our “**God IS a consuming fire**”, making “**His ministers a flaming fire**” (Hebrews 12:29 and Psalm 104:4).

This experience of purification is to be for a period of time. IT IS NOT FOREVER! This can be discovered by studying the words “**olam**”, “**aion**”, and “**aionios**”, which words do show that God’s judgments are “**of the ages**”, but not to continue past the ages, for the ages shall come to an end, and God shall be ALL IN ALL! **OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE! THANK GOD FOR HIS GLORIOUS LAKE OF FIRE!**

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...It has been brought to your attention in an undeniable fashion how that the terms “hell fire”, “unquenchable fire”, and “lake of fire” have been misunderstood by many to represent a literal fire for the purpose of eternal torture. This interpretation of “fire” misses the mark of the character and nature of God along with its true meaning of purification. Remember...These terms are all from the same Greek word #4442,

“pur”. It is without a doubt that **“fire”** (in these instances) is for the purpose of **purging**, **purifying**, **cleansing**, and has a redemptive quality. Let us not forget that we are baptized in the Holy Ghost and **“fire”**; God is a consuming **“fire”**; we go through **“fiery”** trials; God makes His ministers a **“flaming fire”**, and Paul spoke of some believers being saved by **“fire”** (1st Corinthians 3:15). **“Fire”** is actually our friend and is good for us. All must go through the **“fire”**. Even Jesus was excited about **“fire”** in His day and wished all men were already going through the process, when He stated...“I have come to bring **“fire”** on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49 New International Version)

OBJECTION #7 / WRATH, TORMENT, VENGEANCE, DESTRUCTION, JUDGMENT, & PUNISHMENT

1st John 4:8 declares that GOD IS LOVE! This gives us the very explanation of God - His essence, character, and nature. It actually defines Him in three words. It is not that God merely has love, or that He is just loving (or loves), but He IS love. The word “love” (that God IS) comes from the Greek word “agape” and is meant to portray UNCONDITIONAL LOVE. This type of love is unconditional, all giving, and always seeks to do what is best for the recipient, never expecting anything in return. “Agape” (God) cannot fail, will not fail, and never fails! Just read 1st Corinthians chapter thirteen. God’s love (character and nature) has never failed, does not fail, and will never fail (whether now or in the ages to come) to reach every individual who has ever been born. Man and his poor puny *will* (limited ability under God’s sovereignty to make choices) is and will be no match for the ferocious (extremely intense) love of Almighty God! All will bend the knee! All will confess with their lips! All will know Him...from the least to the greatest! Why...? **Because God is love, and love never fails! Be sure to let this soak in for a minute. LOVE (GOD) NEVER FAILS...NEVER...AT ANY TIME!**

Having said all of this, how then are we to understand **“wrath”**, **“torment”**, **“vengeance”**, **“destruction”**, **“judgment”** (also rendered as **“damnation”** in certain spots), and **“punishment”**? Well...there is only one possible way to understand these terms, and it is this: These extreme attributes that flow out of God’s love are examples of his **red hot and passionate love**, and are designed to bring forth correction, restoration, and reconciliation at all cost. These attributes do not define God, but they flow out of Who He IS. For example, while it is true that God will administer **wrath**, it would not be right to say that God *is* **wrath**. And this also holds true for the other attributes mentioned. Remember...God IS love! Out of His love flows **“wrath”**, **“torment”**, **“vengeance”**, **“destruction”**, **“judgment”**, and **“punishment”**. Once again, these attributes that flow out of His love are for the purpose of correction, restoration, and reconciliation at all cost, and they are limited in their duration (“aionios” - of the ages). Let us now delve into each of these attributes, for the Scriptures confirm and support the statements that have been made.

WRATH

According to Elwin Roach:

"The English word **"wrath"** comes from the Greek word **"orge"** (pronounced...or-gay). Strong's Exhaustive Concordance tells us that **"ORGE"** means: *desire, (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind), i.e. (by analogy) violent passion...* If we follow the word to its derivatives we find that it is akin to **"airo"**, which implies a deliverance from sin, and is comparable to **"ornis"**, which means **"a bird"** (as rising in the air). **"Orge"** is active. **"Orge"** reaches out and accomplishes its burning desire. The passion (**"orge"** / **"wrath"**) we see in the Scriptures is usually in the context of heated determination. **"Wrath"** in the Biblical sense is not a condition of rage, as the word implies in the English, but is generally associated with adamant punishment toward those in rebellion; yet it does not end with punishment alone. We see that it ends in deliverance, especially at the judgment of the Last Death, the Lake of Fire. The passion of Christ, the **"wrath"** of the Lamb, is no doubt grievous to the carnal man, for it means the end of his lustful, self-indulging life. It is similar to a father's **"wrath"** when he punishes his rebellious son. It is not enjoyable to either of the two; yet it is done with understanding and in love, knowing the pain is but for a season and very necessary for the spirit of rebellion to be broken. This is in all of God's judgments toward His fallen creation." -end quote- (Hell & The Lake Of Fire, Elwin R. Roach)

It is now plain to see what is meant by the **"WRATH"** OF GOD. IT IS THE VERY PASSIONATE LOVE OF OUR FATHER! In essence, this love says...I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH TO LEAVE YOU IN YOUR CONDITION! I WILL CORRECT YOU BECAUSE I LOVE YOU!

As was stated earlier, **"wrath"** is the passionate love of God. It is His stored up desire and passion to see all of His creation set free. This is to be understood in the same sense of a man's passionate love for his bride. How would he react if his bride were to be wooed into the arms of another lover? He would go after his unfaithful bride in order to win her back again. In essence, he would unleash his **"wrath"** upon his bride. This **"wrath"** would not be to destroy her, but rather to bring her back in union with her true love. The man would pour out his passionate love in an effort to gain back his lover. He would exhaust all necessary means to draw her into his loving arms. HE WOULD STOP AT NOTHING, UNTIL SHE COULD FINALLY SEE HIS UNCONDITIONAL AND UNFAILING LOVE! After being a witness to this, the bride would voluntarily return to her one and only love. HOW COULD SHE RESIST SUCH FORGIVENESS, PASSION, DETERMINATION, AND LOVE?

There is no doubt that the Bible speaks of the “**wrath**” of God. The GOOD NEWS is that there is a purpose for the *WINEPRESS OF THE FIERCENESS AND “WRATH” OF ALMIGHTY GOD!* It is for the purpose of correction! It is His...DETERMINED, PASSIONATE LOVE!

It is also interesting to note...that from the Greek word “**orge**” (“**wrath**”), we get our English word “**orgasm**”. This ought to tell us that this term has to do with **passionate love**...would you think?

Another point of interest is how “**wrath**” is spoken of in the book of Revelation as being “**finished**” or “coming to an end”. In Revelation 15:1 it speaks of...“the seven last plagues; for in them is **filled up** the **wrath** of God.” The words “filled up” in this verse come from the Greek word “*teleo*” and mean to “end” or “finish”. The Greek word “*teleo*” is the same word used when Jesus was on the cross and said (John 19:30)...It is **finished**! So...The “**wrath**” of God will be **finished** and **come to an end**. It is not eternal. Hallelujah! Praise God!

If all of this information was not enough to properly understand the “**wrath**” of God (its purpose, and that it will come to an end), Isaiah 57:16 is the icing on the cake. It states...“For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always “**wroth**” (Old Testament word for “**wrath**”): for the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls which I have made.” As a matter of fact, the next few verses after this speak of healing, restoration, and comfort. God is here telling us that His “**wroth**” (“**wrath**”) is so powerful that the spirit and soul of man could not handle it forever. It says...the spirit and soul would fail (be overwhelmed). No one would be able to handle *eternal* “**wrath**”. The very thought of it is ridiculous!

In no way are we attempting to paint a picture of God’s “**wrath**” as though it will be a *picnic in the park*. But you can rest assured that “**wrath**” (as extreme as it may be) is God’s determined and passionate love that will not let the sinner go and will result in all coming to the saving knowledge of the blood of the cross of Christ...Amen!

TORMENT

Revelation 14:10 states...“and he shall be **tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

This is quite an interesting Scripture. Let us look at some of the key words in this verse and their meanings. The words “**fire and brimstone**” clearly speak of **DIVINE PURIFICATION**. This “**fire**” (which is a spiritual “**fire**”) is the “**fire**” of God Himself. Its purpose is to consume wood, hay, and stubble (the carnality in man). Remember...GOD IS A CONSUMING “**FIRE**”!

According to Louis Abbott:

"There is an interesting rock used in Biblical days to test the quality of precious metals called a **"touchstone"**. It is quite unfortunate that most translations following the King James tradition have hidden the Biblical references to this stone from us. The King James Bible Concordances have also hidden its meaning. Using the Strong's or Young's Concordances, when looking up the English word **"torment"**, we discover that the noun for one of these Greek words is **basanoj** **"basanos"**, Strong's number 931. Strong's number 928 **"torture"**, and 929 **"torment"** are derivatives of this noun, **"basanos"**, which Strong's Concordance says is a **"touchstone"**. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 5th Edition, tells us that a **"touchstone"** is "1. A black siliceous stone allied to flint; - used to test the purity of gold and silver by the streak left on the stone when rubbed by the metal. 2. Any test or criterion by which to try a thing's quality." Those of us who dig deep enough will discover why the early believers did not see the **"lake of fire"** as a place of **"eternal torment"**. They knew that the wording in this passage referred to a place of **divine testing** and not a place of **"eternal torment"**. The Greek word for **"sulfur"** is *qeiou* **"theeion"** which is akin to **"theos"**, which means god. **"Sulfur"** (**"brimstone"**) was used to purify temples in ancient days. It was also used for healing purposes. The fact that this passage of Scripture speaks of **"day and night"** proves that **"aionas ton aionon"** in this passage should not have been translated **"forever and ever"**. Divine **"fire"** will test the works of men and angels." -end quote- (An Analytical Study Of Words, Louis Abbott)

We are now able to see that the word **"torment"** means *testing*. (A stone used to test the purity of gold.) Remember...Gold is symbolic of divinity, or that which is divine (God-like). The words **"tormented"** and **"lake of fire and brimstone"** clearly speak of a severe time of testing. This testing is for the purpose of purifying the person. The goal of God is to burn up the carnal nature in man, bringing him to the place where he is possessed by the divine nature. Notice where the testing is taking place...IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB! THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD IS A PURIFYING **"LAKE OF FIRE"**! This **"torment"** (severe testing), although severe, is not to **"torture"** the person forever, but rather, it is to correct, purify, and restore the person. It is to bring him to the place where he can embrace...THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB!

VENGEANCE

Romans 12:19 states..."Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto **wrath**: for it is written, **Vengeance** is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord." Sounds pretty bad, doesn't it? All **"judgment"**, **"punishment"**, **"wrath"**, **"fire"**, and **"vengeance"** Scriptures sound bad to the carnal mind. When we think of these terms, we think of God inflicting punishment, pain, injury, suffering, and loss for the purpose of vindication, satisfaction, and malicious retaliation. THIS TYPE OF THINKING IS NOT CORRECT! THIS IS THE WAY THAT THE CARNAL MIND

PERCEIVES GOD AND HIS DEALINGS WITH MAN. COME OUT from this Babylonian mindset that paints a picture of God as an angry torture-hungry monster. GOD IS OUR FATHER! HE LOVES US! THAT IS WHY “**VENGEANCE**” BELONGS ONLY UNTO HIM! HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO ADMINISTER IT IN A JUST WAY! If “**vengeance**” was left up to man, we would all be in BIG TROUBLE. We are mean, vindictive, malicious, and always on the lookout for retaliation. God, Who is our Father, is not like that.

According to Ray Prinzing:

“The word “**vengeance**” literally speaks of that action which is out of righteousness, out of that which is just, and for the purpose of bringing everything else into alignment with that which is just. Only a just action can produce justice. Two wrongs never make a right.” -end quote- (Redemption, Ray Prinzing)

“**VENGEANCE**” IS A GOOD THING! IT IS A VERY GOOD THING! Only God has the power, wisdom, and love to bring it about in a just way. The Lord, through the manifested sons of God, shall declare the DAY OF THE “**VENGEANCE**” OF OUR GOD; to comfort all that mourn (Isaiah 61:2). Our God, Who is just, will not fail to repay every wrong, and to reward every right, while at the same time correcting, chastening, and restoring ALL THINGS AND ALL PEOPLE UNTO HIMSELF! VENGEANCE IS HIS...THANK GOD!

DESTRUCTION

1st Corinthians 3:17 states...“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God **destroy**; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” The word “**destroy**” means: to waste, ruin, shrivel, wither, defile, to reduce a thing to useless fragments, and to extinguish. Now let us seek to understand what is meant when the Bible speaks of “**destruction**”, for the real question is, what is it that is going to be “**destroyed**” (as far as man is concerned)?

You must put on the mind of Christ to be able to grasp Bible terminology. The “**destruction**” that is going to take place in man is to be understood in a spiritual sense. Here is a quote from *S. Ambrose of Milan* (390 A.D.) concerning the topic of “**destruction**”.

“What then, hinders our believing that he who is beaten small as the **dust is not annihilated**, BUT IS CHANGED FOR THE BETTER: so that instead of an earthy man, he is made a spiritual man, and our believing that he who is “**destroyed**”, is so “**destroyed**” that ALL TAINT IS REMOVED, and there remains what is pure and clean.” -end quote-

This topic of “**destruction**” is further clarified in 1st Corinthians 5:5, that states...“to deliver such a one unto Satan FOR THE **DESTRUCTION** OF THE FLESH, THAT THE SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD.”

Now we can see that God wants our flesh (carnality) to be “**destroyed**”. That which is to be “**destroyed**” is NOT THE PERSON, but the flesh, the carnal mind, and the sin nature which separates us from the knowledge of God. God “**destroys**” the propensity within the sinner to sin, but He does not “**destroy**” the person himself. He “**destroys**” the wickedness in the wicked person, which in turn destroys the wicked. You could also say that God “**destroys**” the desire of the wicked, which in turn “**destroys**” His enemies, not that they cease to exist, BUT THAT THEY CEASE TO BE HIS ENEMIES!!!

So what is the result of the “**destruction**” of the flesh? The result is THAT THE SPIRIT WILL BE SAVED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD! HALLELUJAH!

We must ALL have the man of sin in us “**DESTROYED**” by the brightness of His coming (presence). God must “**destroy**”, burn up, and consume the wood, hay, and stubble within man. This causes the gold, silver, and precious stones of the Spirit of God to be PURIFIED within us, making us partakers of the divine nature. Thank God for the...DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH!

JUDGMENT

According to Ray Prinzing:

“Man has long viewed God’s “**judgments**” as a vindictive action prompted by a motive for revenge and supported by a tumultuous “**wrath**” that must be pacified. NOT SO! Such is a gross caricature of our God! His mercy and grace are superabundant, and though He finds it necessary to chasten, His wisdom and righteousness produce a just and pure chastisement conditioned to correct the situation, and thus bring forth a creature improved by the process.”
-end quote- (Redemption, Ray Prinzing)

We must understand that all of God’s “**judgments**” ARE CORRECTIVE IN NATURE! Hear it again! GOD’S “**JUDGMENTS**” ARE FOR THE PURPOSE OF CORRECTION! Jeremiah 10:24 states...“O Lord, CORRECT ME, BUT WITH **JUDGMENT**; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing (lest You diminish me).” As you can see, “**judgment**” brings about correction, and correction is the result of “**judgment**”. They go hand in hand. The Hebrew word for correct is “**yasar**”, and has also been translated as - to instruct, to chasten, be taught, and be reformed. The Greek word is “**paideuo**”, and includes the thought of child-training, involving the whole process of discipline which girds us up to the right way.

The purpose of God's "**judgments**", which are corrective, must always be seen in this light. If they were corrective in the past, and are corrective now, then they will be corrective in the ages to come. Remember...When God's "**judgments**" are in the earth, **the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness** (Isaiah 26:9). Read 1st Chronicles 16:13-36 and Psalm 72. These passages of Scripture declare that the whole creation is longing for the "**judgment**" of God. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, the Lord reigns! HIS "**JUDGMENTS**" ARE IN ALL THE EARTH!

PUNISHMENT

The following is a quote from A. P. Adams addressing the Greek word "kolasis" that was translated as "punishment" in Matthew 25:46 (KJV).

According to A. P. Adams:

"The purpose of "**punishment**" is not only the protection of society, and the restraint of the offender, but also his reformation; this latter should be the main purpose of "**punishment**"; any "**punishment**" that is not conducive to this end is wholly unjustifiable, it is simply an attempt to overcome one evil with a greater evil; - **now to talk about *endless* "punishment", is nonsense, as much as it would be to talk of endless correction, or endless reforming.** You might speak of endless torture, or endless suffering; but *endless* "**punishment**" is not a proper collection of terms at all. I will add that the original word here rendered "**punishment**" signifies a "**punishment**" for the correction and bettering of the individual, hence it could not be *endless*." -end quote- (Definitions: Eternal, A. P. Adams)

Notice how this verse reads from The New Testament In Modern Speech. It reads as follows..."And these shall go away into **the Punishment of the Ages**, but the righteous into **the Life of the Ages**." (Matthew 25:46, Weymouth New Testament)

What is being discussed here is "**punishment**" and *life* within the ages of time (of or belonging to the ages). As we know, the Bible teaches the ages will come to an end. Since "**punishment**" ("kolasis") signifies a "**punishment**" for the correction and bettering of the individual, it is impossible for it to be *endless*. This is a sure word of interpretation due to the **double witness** within the same verse (that "**aionios**" refers to something **belonging to the ages of time**, and that "**kolasis**" most definitely refers to **correction, which by nature cannot be *endless***). The key is in knowing that **God's "punishment" is for the purpose of correction**, which will naturally mean that when the offender (or nation) is corrected they will be restored to God. The ages were created by God for man to experience Him and to go through changes during this process. "**Punishment**" is one of those experiences that takes place during the ages and belongs to the

ages. This is why it is always used in conjunction with the Greek word “aionios” (of or belonging to the ages).

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...We have been extremely careful and diligent (in painstaking fashion) to show that even the most extreme attributes of God (such as “**wrath**”, “**torment**”, “**vengeance**”, “**destruction**”, “**judgment**”, and “**punishment**”) flow out of the love of God and are for the purpose of correction! What else can be said, except to rejoice in the fact that our God’s love and power shall be displayed in an unlimited fashion, and shall be demonstrated in such a way as to make even the most wicked of the wicked ultimately melt in the presence of the Lamb, embracing the inescapable love of God!

OBJECTION #8 / FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT

Matthew 7:13-14 states...“Enter in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gait, and **narrow is the way**, which leads unto life, and **few there be that find it.**” We have just quoted one of the most popular verses in the Bible. Now...Let us talk about what it means. Let us rightly divide this all-important passage of Scripture.

This passage of Scripture refers to the “**REMNANT**” (the “**overcomers**”, the “**firstfruits company**”, the “**body of Christ**”, the “**barley company**”). It would do us well to remember, and to take note of, that there are Scriptures that refer to:

1. OVERCOMERS

2. THE CHURCH IN GENERAL

3. UNBELIEVERS

This happens to be a passage that talks about the “**overcomers**” (“**the few there be that find life**” in this present age). The subject matter of this passage is not, “flying off to heaven, or busting hell wide open after you die.” As a matter of fact, Jesus spent very little time talking about what happens to man after physical death. His subject matter was always pertaining to THE KINGDOM OF GOD, WHICH HE DID SPEAK OF AS A PRESENT DAY REALITY, WAITING TO BE EXPERIENCED BY THOSE WHO WERE HUNGRY FOR GOD. Remember...The Kingdom of God is not a physical location that we are going to fly away to in the sweet by-and-by, but is defined as:

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS

2. PEACE

3. JOY...IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

This means that there are “**few**” who understand the Kingdom of God in this present age. There are “**few**” who SEE (PERCEIVE) the Kingdom of God. There are “**few**” who enter into this “**narrow way**” of the life of Christ, WHICH ENTAILS HAVING YOUR FLESH (YOUR CORRUPT NATURE, CARNAL MIND, WOOD, HAY, AND STUBBLE) DEALT WITH BY THE CONSUMING “**FIRE**” OF GOD! YES...IT IS A “**NARROW WAY**”, AND “**FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT**”!

There is only a “**remnant**” of people being dealt with in this present age, but the GOOD NEWS is, that **there are at least two more ages to come**, which will include the gathering in of THE CHURCH IN GENERAL AND THE UNBELIEVERS! (Read Ephesians 2:7.) Those who do not enter into this “**narrow way**” now are headed for destruction (loss / ruin).

Those who are in “**the narrow way now**” have already entered the PROCESS of the “**destruction of the flesh**”. In essence, the “**destruction of the flesh**” is a good thing. With that being said though, IT IS BETTER to enter into the “**narrow way**” NOW, than having to suffer loss, being saved; yet so as by “**fire**” (1st Corinthians 3:15). As well, the unbeliever must go through the purifying “**fire**” of God, for our Father will leave nothing undone. For those who have the ears to hear, the Spirit calls for you to come into the “**narrow way**” of the Lord Jesus Christ NOW! But let us rest assured that ALL WILL EVENTUALLY COME TO THE FATHER, FOR JESUS ASSURED US THAT HE WOULD **DRAW (DRAG)** ALL MEN UNTO HIMSELF! PRAISE GOD FOR THE “**NARROW WAY**”!

The Barley Harvest (“**few there be that find it**”) represents the first part of God’s harvest. Those in this first harvest are referred to in Scripture as “overcomers”. The gathering in of the **nations** is actually a *result* of the Barley Harvest. It is in and through the manifestation of the sons of God that all nations will come to know the Lord and serve Him. These “overcomers” shall come forth in the first resurrection to rule and reign on the earth under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Wheat Harvest represents “the church in general”. It speaks of those who were justified by faith, but either did not go through or submit to the sanctification process of the Lord. They are believers, but are in need of further correction in order to be fully sanctified and put on the divine nature and character of their Heavenly Father. There still remains **iniquity (lawlessness)** in their lives that must be purged by the fire (the fiery law) of God. Those who are part of the Wheat Harvest shall be brought forth in the second resurrection to be saved “*yet so as through fire*” (1 Cor. 3:15).

The Grape Harvest represents “the unbelievers”. It speaks of those who have neither been justified nor sanctified. They shall go through God’s wrath, judgment, and the lake of fire for the purpose of correction.

The Good News to be associated with all of this is that these three harvests represent and guarantee the salvation of all in the fullness of time. As far as God is concerned, salvation for all is not “if”, but “when”. Let us call to remembrance what Paul told us in 1st Corinthians 15:22-23, which states...

²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each in his own order [tagma, “squadron”].

Here are some excerpts and quotes from the writings of Dr. Stephen Jones to support the things which have been stated. The quotes were taken from his writings entitled “Creation’s Jubilee” and “The Restoration Of All Things”. They are from various spots throughout these written works.

According to Dr. Stephen Jones:

“If we were to study the passages in the Bible where barley is mentioned, we would find much valuable information about the first resurrection and the character and calling of those who qualify for it. The fact that barley matures early tells us that the “barley firstfruits” are the first people to mature spiritually to bring forth the fruits of the kingdom that God requires. Barley also can survive drought, heat, and cold much more easily than can wheat.

The Church in general will be raised in the second resurrection. Jesus calls them “the just” who receive Life at the same time “the unjust” are judged at the beginning of that final age in the lake of fire. In either case, the fire that judges is the same fire poured out on Pentecost. God’s judgment is designed to *“thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn”* (Matthew 3:12).

The baptism of fire upon the wheat (Church) is both good and bad. It represents a purification process, which is judgment upon sin in order to bless the individual. When God works to refine or purify someone, it is not a pleasant experience. No judgment is. But those who understand the mind and purpose of God will readily submit to His fire, knowing that God is working all things out for their good.

Finally, a Biblical study of the grape harvest, with the treading of the grapes in the winepresses, tells us the fate of the unbelievers. The winepress depicts God’s wrath, judgment, and the lake of fire.

The purpose of the grain harvests of spring (barley and wheat) is to provide bread for God's great communion table. The purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles with its celebration of the winepress is to provide the wine for God's table. Without this wine, His communion table would have only bread and would be incomplete. God will have His wine, but it must come by means of the winepress, which speaks of the judgments of God.

God harvests His barley, wheat, and grapes in different manners, even as nature teaches us. The chaff from the barley falls away very easily, so barley is said to be *winnowed*. That is, the action of the wind itself (by means of fans) are sufficient to get rid of the chaff. This speaks of the barley company, who so quickly respond to the wind of the Spirit.

To remove the chaff from the wheat requires threshing. This is a more severe action, but it does the job. It depicts the fact that the Church will be harvested by means of judgment, or tribulation. The Latin word, *tribulum*, is a threshing instrument.

Finally, to obtain the juice the grapes must be trodden under foot. Grapes do not have chaff, but they do have "flesh" that must be pressed severely in order to obtain the wine. This represents the most severe form of judgment upon the unbelievers. Yet the result is that God obtains wine for His communion table." -end quote- (Creation's Jubilee, Dr. Stephen Jones)

According to Dr. Stephen Jones:

"There is more than one resurrection coming. The first "squadron" will be those who are called to rule and reign with Him (Rev. 20:4-6). The second group will be those believers who are raised along with all the unbelievers (John 5:28, 29; Luke 12:46) at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-13). This second group of believers will miss the first resurrection and will not reign with Christ during the thousand years in the Tabernacles Age to come. Nonetheless, they will certainly be "*saved yet so as through fire*" (1 Cor. 3:15). Jesus made it clear in Luke 12:46-49 that those servants of God who mistreated others would receive a "flogging" before being given their reward.

The third group will be the unbelievers themselves, after their time of judgment has been completed, for there will be a Jubilee at the end of time according to the law, wherein all of creation will be set free in the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21)." -end quote- (The Restoration Of All Things, Dr. Stephen Jones)

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...There is no false teaching that cannot be exposed by simply rightly dividing the Word of God. If we say..."few there be that find it" refers to only some being saved as opposed to the rest being lost forever, that is just not Scripturally correct. As we apply ourselves to understand the Feasts of the Lord we will see that God's three

harvests of souls will include all in the fullness of time - “overcomers”, “the church in general”, and “unbelievers”.

OBJECTION #9 / *FREE WILL*

Since this article is about the balanced view of God’s *sovereignty* and man’s *authority*, it is at this time we will discuss *authority* in relation to the term and so-called belief of “**free will**” and offer some concluding remarks. Here are a few words from Dr. Stephen Jones from his article entitled, “How To Believe In God’s Sovereignty Without Being A Fatalist”...

“Man’s *authority* is NOT the same as “**free will**”, although many have confused the two and have tried to prove “**free will**” by pointing to Scriptures that establish man’s *authority*. Only *sovereignty* has “**free will**”. *Authority* is limited. It is my hope and purpose to bring people to a closer balance in understanding how God’s *sovereignty* and man’s *authority* operate at the same time. This, in turn, could help resolve some of the long-standing doctrinal disputes between the two sides, as well as help people get a clearer perspective of God’s ability to accomplish His purposes for the earth - and for each person as an individual...

“The quick answer is that *man’s authority ends where God’s sovereignty begins*. Man has the *authority* to reject God **for a time**, but ultimately, God’s *sovereign will* is going to be fulfilled. Man can reject God and receive judgment, but God’s judgment itself will correct his fleshly disposition so that he genuinely submits to Jesus Christ...

“We have shown this in other writings, summarized best in the short booklet, If God Could Save Everyone - Would He? There we show that man has *authority* over his own “land” that God has given him as his inheritance; but God yet retains *sovereignty* over him by right of creation. The *authority* that God has given man is limited. Man does not have the ability to sell himself to the devil (or to the flesh) for ever. He can do so only within the parameters of time.” -end quote- (How To Believe In God’s Sovereignty Without Being A Fatalist, Dr. Stephen Jones)

For example, let us consider the story of Jonah...

God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry against it for its wickedness. Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He found a ship going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and ran from the presence of the Lord (so he thought). In simple terms, God asked Jonah to do something, and Jonah said NO! He made a choice to disobey and reject God. Later in the story...“THE LORD SENT OUT A GREAT WIND INTO THE SEA, AND THERE WAS A MIGHTY TEMPEST IN THE SEA, SO THAT THE SHIP WAS LIKE TO BE BROKEN.” (Jonah 1:4) In the midst of the storm Jonah asks the men on the ship to throw him overboard into the sea. So...they threw Jonah into the sea and the storm stopped. Not only this, but...“the Lord had prepared a *great*

*fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” (Jonah 1:17) How interesting to find out next...**THEN JONAH PRAYED!!!** I wonder what it was that caused Jonah to pray??? Do you think it might have had something to do with that great big ol’ fish that God had prepared for him???*

After God got done dealing with Jonah and asked him to go to Nineveh again...Jonah said...“No problem Lord...I’m your man!” **This time Jonah made a choice to obey the Lord.** *Do you think it might have had something to do with that storm and that great fish???* I think so!!!

Folks...This is really not that complicated. Jonah initially made a choice to run from the Lord, and then he made a choice to obey the Lord. BUT....in between all of this there was a storm and a *great big fish*! **If you were to take the storm and the great fish out of the equation, Jonah would not have obeyed the Lord!** So...what does all of this mean?

Yes...there are people who are running from the Lord now and who are headed to Tarshish (spiritually speaking). BUT...God has prepared a *storm* and a *great fish* for them down the line to *swallow them up* called...“*the lake of fire*” (God’s storm and great fish for all of mankind). I can promise you this...When unbelievers find themselves in the “lake of fire”...**THEN THEY WILL PRAY!!!** It is no different than the story of Jonah. God will correct them and purify them that they will be able to submit to and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for justification, sanctification, and glorification. He will ask them again (like in the case of Jonah)...BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST...and they will say just like Jonah...“YES...I’m your man!”

It is not hard for God to cause adverse circumstances that will enable us to change our will and make the right choice. **We must stop making an idol out of the “will” of man.** It is not sovereign over God. Yes...we are able to make choices, but God in His sovereignty has the last say, and is able to show us what the right choice is to make. **He loves us too much** to leave us for *all eternity* in the consequences of a bad choice. He just will not let it happen! **Plus...WE ARE HIS PROPERTY, AND WE HAVE BEEN BOUGHT WITH A PRICE. HE IS GOING TO GET EVERYTHING HE PAID FOR - THE HUMAN RACE!**

In conclusion, the Biblical facts of the matter are simply this:

God is *sovereign*, but does not force and manipulate our every thought and action, even though He is able to do so. He does at times override our *will*, but not all the time because He wants to teach us how to receive, handle, and use *power, authority, responsibility, accountability, stewardship*, and *choices*. On the other hand, man has *authority* and a *will*, but both are limited. They are not unlimited and totally “*free*” and to be seen as *sovereign* over God. And THANK GOD that He has not given us an unlimited amount of *authority* and “*free will*” in our present

state with which we would run the risk of consigning ourselves for ever to a lost condition. Remember...we are the property of God. He will not let this happen. God has the final say.

According to John Gavazzoni:

“Now some, completely indoctrinated by the dumbed-down notion of “free will”, upon being confronted with what I’ve just shared, without any depth of thought at all, would accuse me of making man out to be a mere robot. But, I ask, if God has a “free will”, and brings man into participation with that will, how can freedom be defined as robotic? Freedom by definition, involves not being controlled by another. The relationship of God’s will to us, is not one of making us do something against our will, but by bringing our will into union with His. This is not coercion, this is causation, and it is causation by the force of love which ultimately worked by God leaving us to ourselves to do what we would do left to ourselves; which was to crucify His Son, and then to love such enemies back to Himself by the power of forgiving love.” -end quote- (Free Will, John Gavazzoni)

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...It is as simple as that! This matter is not as complicated as many have made it out to be. God is in control of everything, but gives man an opportunity to experience a measure of His *power* and *authority* and how to use it in the proper way. Those who *pass the test* will be the ones to pull the King’s Carriage (so to speak) and usher in the manifestation of the sons of God at the appointed time. They will then be a vessel of God’s *authority* in the fullness and rule the nations, teaching them the righteousness of God until every knee bows to Jesus Christ and every tongue confesses Him as Lord of all to the glory of God the Father!

OBJECTION #10 / THE POWERS OF DARKNESS

Question:

Does the reconciliation of all things include the powers of darkness?

Answer:

YES...OF COURSE IT DOES! It is the reconciliation of ALL THINGS!

Colossians 1:16-20 is an incredible passage of Scripture that explains to us in great detail that there is to be a reconciliation of all things. This reconciliation of all things is a direct result of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. PRAISE GOD...That is a powerful cross! Thank God for the cross (the atonement) of the Lord Jesus Christ! Colossians 1:16-20 states...“**For by Him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be

thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; And, **having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself;** by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

As well, Ephesians 3:9-11 sheds light on this subject. It states..."And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in **God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ:** To the intent that now unto **the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,** According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Many people have no understanding at all that GOD IS SOVEREIGN, and that God is responsible for having created ALL THINGS, INCLUDING "**SATAN AND THE POWERS OF DARKNESS**". In our daily Christian walk we find ourselves fighting against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Well...THE SCRIPTURES HAVE JUST TOLD US THAT GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING CREATED THESE "**FORCES OF DARKNESS**". "**Principalities and Powers**" are created and used by God, according to the eternal purpose (the purpose of the ages) which He purposed in Christ Jesus. They are used to shape and mold the sons and daughters of God into the very image of God. They are merely a tool in God's tool box. HOW CAN THIS BE?

In order for God to bring about His purpose of the ages there had to be **opposition** and obstacles for His children to overcome. God created "**the powers of darkness**" (including Satan - the prince of the power of the air - the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience), giving His children something to overcome. We must understand that God wanted overcomers. In order for there to be overcomers there had to be something to overcome. So...God made sure to it that there would be things to overcome. When the purpose of God is completed (at the end of the ages) there will be no more need for "**the powers of darkness**", at which time these powers, WHICH GOD CREATED...SHALL BE PUT BACK IN THE TOOL BOX AND RECONCILED (MADE FRIENDLY) UNTO HIM!

Ladies And Gentlemen Of The Jury...We will now turn our attention to the words of J. Preston Eby as we consider this topic of "**the powers of darkness**"...

According to J. Preston Eby:

“The message is clear - we now wrestle against wicked spirits, not only on earth, but in the heavenly sphere. That this conflict is real, none can deny. But what shall be the end of these wicked spirits, these principalities and powers in heavenly places? “Eternal torment in hell fire!” you say. That there is much **“hell”** and **“torment”** ahead for these wicked ones I have no doubt. But when the ages have run their course, when the Sons of God have finished their ministry of reconciliation, when all the purposes of God have been consummated, brought to expected end, what then? The testimony of God stands sure: “For by Him were **ALL THINGS created**, that are IN HEAVEN, and that are IN EARTH, visible and INVISIBLE, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or PRINCIPALITIES, or POWERS: ALL THINGS were created by Him and FOR HIM: and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to **RECONCILE ALL THINGS unto Himself**; by Him, I say, whether they be THINGS IN EARTH, or THINGS IN HEAVEN” (Col. 1:16, 20).

You may say - “I do not believe it! I do not, I cannot believe that Jesus died to reconcile **“wicked, foul, hostile, filthy spirits”** in the heavenly realms unto God!” Tell it not to me, my brother, my sister, tell it to the Holy Spirit for it is He, and none other, who inspired those awesome words. All your letters of protestation addressed to me will be thrown in the trash, for I possess no power to change even one jot or tittle of Holy Writ. When God declares that **the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ avails to reconcile “principalities and powers” IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH**, I have absolutely no ability to do anything about it. God will do what He says He will do whether or not you or I like it, and whether or not we believe it. Your unbelief will not make the grace and power of God of none effect. God will finish His UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION either *through you*, precious friend of mine, or *in spite of you*.”
-end quote- (Reconciliation In The Heavens, J. Preston Eby)

CONCLUSION

Many also reject the reconciliation of all things on the grounds that it diminishes the atonement or makes it worthless (so they say). They go on to ask the question...“If all will be saved, then why did Jesus die?” That, my friend, shows two things: We have not understood why Jesus died, and we have not understood that the reconciliation of all things in no way diminishes the atonement, but rather, it glorifies the blood of the cross of Christ much greater than the false teaching of eternal torture. First and foremost, Jesus died to save us from a condition (sin - the sin nature, which produces the carnal mind), not an after-death physical location. Second, which glorifies the cross of Christ more....some being saved, or ALL being saved? I think we can figure that one out with just a *smidge* of reasoning and meditation.

To ask...*why did Jesus die* in light of all being saved in the end, would be like asking a firefighter who knew he was able to go into a burning house and save all who were trapped...“Why go into

the house if all will be saved.” That is absurd...ridiculous. We know why...TO SAVE ALL WHO ARE IN THE HOUSE! Why did Jesus die then...well...TO SAVE ALL! HE DIED TO SAVE THE WORLD! ALL WILL BE SAVED BECAUSE HE DIED! It is not rocket science folks! It is not a matter of *if*, but *when*. All will be awakened to have faith and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, every man in his own order. Once these popular objections are brought to your attention, exposed for their inaccuracy, and dismantled by the Spirit and truth of the Scriptures, you will have no choice but to believe in the reconciliation of all things...BECAUSE IT IS THE TRUTH!

If all will not be saved in the end it can only bring us to two possible conclusions: God cannot save all, or God does not want to save all - He either can't or He won't. This would leave us with a God Who is either weak or cruel. As a son of the living God, I am here to tell you THAT OUR GOD IS NOT WEAK OR CRUEL...HE IS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD! **PLEASE** open up your heart to the things which have been unlocked to you in an undeniable and indisputable manner, through the avenues of **The Holy Scriptures, Word Meanings, and Revelation Truth**. May God give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him!