



*The Wages of  
Sin*

*by*

*Roeben Shalom*

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## *Introduction*

Uncle Johnny died the other day and went to heaven, but Uncle Jack died and went to hell. How does anyone know for sure who went where? Or we might ask, did anyone go anywhere? Most, in the Christian faith believe that as soon as a person dies they go to their reward: heaven or hell. Many others in the Messianic faith believe that when sinners die they go straight to hell; but they disparage the idea of any righteous person going to heaven...ever. To be fair, let us discuss the atheist's view for a moment—not that we agree with the atheist opinion, but ironically, we are afforded a very interesting insight by it for our own purposes, as we soon shall see.

### *The Problem:*

Robert Ingersoll was born to a Presbyterian minister and ardent abolitionist in upstate Dresden, New York, on August 11, 1833. He died on July 21, 1899. Young Ingersoll initially followed in his father's footsteps, and continued to do so in everything but his religious views. In his mid-twenties, a book that was forever to change the moral landscape of the world was to fall into his hands. That book was entitled, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. It was published in November of 1859, by Charles Darwin. It shook the religious world, placing Darwin's story in the realm of science, and relegated religion to folklore and mythology. The mere novelty of its bold challenge to the Bible took the world by storm. Many, disenchanted with the hypocrisy of religionists, eagerly soaked it up. It set the archeologists searching for the "missing link" between man and animal; something for which they've been searching for the last 150 years or more. They're still at it.

To add to the assault on belief in the Scriptures, in the mid-1800's many northern whites were strongly opposed to the evils of slavery in the southern states. At the same time, there was an influx of European immigrants moving westward under the "protective" shield of the heavily armed American military whose mission was to clear the path ahead of them through the process of elimination. This of course involved the slaughter of the native inhabitants of the land who naturally fought to protect their hunting grounds and way of life from the invading marauders. Most of these inhabitants were willing to share the great bounties of the land but since they were outnumbered and outgunned, they faced annihilation by the land pirates. The only "concession" was for them to be moved onto desert lands and convert to Christianity. Slave owners and land grabbers alike, though opposed to Darwin's philosophy of "survival of the fittest," followed it in practice. They called it their *Manifest Destiny*. And the vast majority of them sanctimoniously filed into their churches on Sunday morning to hear their minister condemn to the eternal flames of hell all the "heathen" Indian tribes, and the African slaves. The great reward of heaven was for the "*Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*." It of course represented a contradiction in terms. What happened to the ideal of seeking for the one lost sheep? Surely the good shepherd

had no thought of *killing* the one lost sheep! His mission was to lay down His own life in the effort to redeem the lost. How is it that the under-shepherds were not of the same mindset as the loving Shepherd of our souls?

Into this perplexing scenario of Christian terrorism leveled against the non-Christian, darker skinned people came Robert Ingersoll, the young self-taught lawyer with the polished gift of oratory skill and a hatred for injustice under the guise of Christianity. It was the doctrine of eternal hell that fueled his anger and drove him to part ways with his parson father. It has been the single most dominant cause of all infidelity and atheism, and Charles Darwin pretended to offer a solution. But was it? The very title of his book says otherwise. Of course, that title has been “abbreviated” now to merely, *Origin of Species*, since the original publication. It was the grand motif behind Adolf Hitler’s evil regime. His ideal was to produce a super race of blond haired, blue-eyed light complected Arians to dominate the “less favoured” races. Because of the serious misconceptions that well-meaning people have had regarding the sacred Scriptures, many social injustices have been perpetrated, and sadly, perpetuated. Many, like Ingersoll, have disavowed the Christian religion and turned themselves over to the clutches of atheism under the guise of scientific, free-thinking liberty from superstition, as they refer now to Christianity, and have thus fallen under the hypnotic spell of the allurements to the philosophy of evolution. But in spite of all its misgivings, the religion of the Hebrew Messiah is the greatest of all blessings ever to be given to the world. We ask, Where are the atheist hospitals, universities, charities, shelters for abused women and children, and food banks? It may be true that atheist professors have invaded the universities, but every one of them had its beginning under the Christian banner.

For those of us who have managed to hold fast to “sound doctrine” (2 Tim 4:3), and pure religion (James 1:27) however, we must not turn a deaf ear to the cries of the one lost sheep, though it may be stranded on the crags of infidelity. Do we just write them off as having brought upon themselves their own calamities, and somehow tell ourselves that everything they have to say is blasphemy? Are we unable to side with them in their anger at the maltreatment of fellow human beings all in the name of Lord? Do we agree with the hellfire and damnation preachers that so easily consign the “heathen” to the eternal flames? Are we so sure of our own position in what we *think* the Bible is saying? Are we too proud in our snug (and smug) successful society of the social “gospel” to reconsider these very valid questions? Isn’t the meaning of gospel “good news”? Do we really believe what we read in the Bible, or are we playing a mysterious Word game? If we are so certain that we are so correct in all our interpretations of Scripture, then such a challenge as follows this sentence will not even be investigated. But bear in mind, dear Reader, this is not written by an evolutionist; and it is not written by an infidel or atheist: this is written by one who believes in and loves the sacred Scripture, and the Author of it. So, if after such a statement as this you are still reading, then let us proceed. Let us examine ourselves to be sure it is *we* who are in the true faith (Hebrews 13:5).

We do many things and believe many things from no other basis than the traditions we were taught from our birth, but when there is a question as to whether those traditional views are supported by Scripture, we must investigate. Do we really believe the Bible? Do we believe that the wages of sin is *death* as it says in Romans 6:23? And are we clear that death, according to the Bible means the cessation of life? Do we believe that when a lost or rebellious person dies, he goes immediately into a lake of fire, there to be tormented throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity with no hope of reprieve, pardon, repentance, or mercy? If we say yes to all of these questions, then I strongly recommend that we read this study.

Imagine a son or a daughter who lived in rebellion against your instruction and the instruction of the Almighty. One night, in a drunken revelry, he or she was shot to death. How would you feel at night thinking of your child of rebellion in the anguish of hell-fire? And to carry this scenario a step further, let us say that you, the parent, eventually died and went to live in the heavenly abode. Amid all the joys of heaven, you were told that you were to be placed in charge of keeping your child alive in order for him to feel the terror of the flames, for just three weeks: *21 days*. As you watched him through the transparent walls of the holy city, writhing in agony, screaming and crying and pleading to you, jumping and running, tripping over other poor souls in the same condition and begging you to at least let him die, could you turn a deaf ear to such pleading and agony...for just 21 days? Could anyone really enjoy the wonders of eternal life in sight and sound of the lost who supposedly cannot die in their eternal state of torment?

Needless to say, we are confronted with some serious matters regarding what shall be the fate of the lost. Rather than bury our head in the sand, and just go along to get along, or take a stand on what we *think* to be the final truth, we need to search for some valid answers to the glaring perplexities surrounding this matter. If indeed, *God is Love*, as we read over and over in the little book of First John; and further, if He is not willing that any should perish (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9), it may be that sincere but misguided ministers have wrongly interpreted the passages that *seem* to offer such a negative picture of our Creator. We need to ask such questions as the following: Do all human beings and fallen angels have immortal souls that cannot die? To ask it in another way, do we possess immortality *already*, with or without repentance and the spiritual rebirth? Consider the following passages of inspired Scripture:

Isaiah 40:25, 26 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth.

Isaiah 46:5 To whom will ye liken me, and make *me* equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

To ask it yet one more way: Is the Almighty *not able* to bring an end to anyone's life if He so chooses? Let us read it in Deuteronomy 32:39 from two different versions: the CEV, and ERV:

Don't you understand? I am the only God; there are no others. I am the one who takes life and gives it again. I punished you with suffering. But now I will heal you, and nothing can stop me!

Now, see that I, and only I, am God! There is no other God! I put people to death, and I let people live. I can hurt people, and I can make them well. No one can save another person from my power!

Isn't He really *the only One* who has immortality intrinsically within His nature? Is it not true that we all live and move and have our being in Him? These are the striking questions that must be and shall be addressed in the following pages. We cannot, in the slightest way, have or promote a misconception of our Father's character, assigning to Him a character of only mercy without justice, or only justice without mercy. Let us see if we cannot find the Truth of this matter.

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## *Table of Contents*

<u><i>Chapter</i></u>	<u><i>Page</i></u>
<u><i>One</i></u> <i>Into The Twilight Zone</i> .....	1
<u><i>Two</i></u> : <i>Ghost Stories</i> .....	7
<u><i>Three</i></u> : <i>But what About the Rich Man and Lazarus?</i> .....	9
<u><i>Four</i></u> : <i>Spirits in Prison</i> .....	11
<u><i>Five</i></u> : <i>What about for Ever and Ever?</i> .....	14
<u><i>Six</i></u> : <i>Absent from the Body; Present with the Lord</i> .....	16
<u><i>Seven</i></u> : <i>What about the Thief on the Cross?</i> .....	18
<u><i>Eight</i></u> : <i>The Spirit goes back to God</i> .....	20
<u><i>Nine</i></u> : <i>Saul and the Witch of Endor</i> .....	22
<u><i>Ten</i></u> : <i>The Annihilation of Satan</i> .....	25
<i>In the Final Analysis</i> .....	27

## Chapter One

### Into The Twilight Zone

Few people are even aware of the attitude they are manifesting in their agenda to promote what they feel is a warning to the non-Christian world. They are equally unaware of the spirit they are attaching to the great Creator of the universe. That is really what this is all about: how do we view and represent the Father's character? One world-renowned minister of a generation back said, "To observe the horrendous agony and pain of the wicked writhing in the eternal flames of hell-fire will only serve to intensify the joys and pleasures of the redeemed in heaven." This poor man may be surprised as to where he will wind up with such a sadistic attitude. Do you suppose that is the way our benevolent Father looks upon the punishment of the lost? Let us read what He says in Ezekiel 33:11 from the ISV:

"Tell them, "As certainly as I'm alive and living," declares Adonay יהוה, "I receive no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Instead, my pleasure is that the wicked repent from their behavior and live. Turn back! Turn back, all of you, from your wicked behavior! Why do you have to die, you house of Israel?"

Back in 1992, I had a most interesting experience. A friend of mine and I were traveling from Tennessee to Texas. I was driving my motor home, and he was driving a two-ton truck I owned. We broke down in Meridian, Mississippi. We found a friendly farmer outside of town that permitted us to park our vehicles on his farm in order to make the needed repairs. I was also pulling a small car behind my motor home, so after everything was situated, we went into town to find an auto parts house. While in the process of doing that, we happened to notice a Sabbath-keeping church which designated itself with four letters. We parked the car and walked up to have a closer look as it was still midweek, and we thought it would be good to have a place to fellowship the coming Sabbath. Neither of us had ever heard of the I. D. M. R. church before. In smaller print on their street sign we read that those letters stood for the *Institute of Divine Metaphysical Research*. I thought that sounds like an interesting name, and we peered through the big window facing the street and beheld a huge chart hanging on the wall behind the pulpit. It was a time-line of history right up to the second coming of the Messiah. We planned to go that following Sabbath.

We arrived on time and took our seats, along with everyone else. Soon a well-dressed gentleman stepped up to the pulpit to express his welcome to the visitors and to introduce another gentleman who bore the title of *Doctor So and So*. I do not remember his name, but he proceeded with a long pointer to explain the chart behind him. He spoke for about 30 to 45 minutes, and then introduced another *Doctor So and So* who would now expound even further upon his dissertation. After that doctor finished speaking, he introduced yet another doctor. As it turned out, nearly everyone in the congregation bore the title of *Doctor*, and they all had something to say. Needless to say, we were there for hours.

Most of their combined speeches centered on the world at large who did not agree with their doctrinal teaching to be destined to eternal hell-fire prepared for the devil and his angels. They went to great lengths to depict the wicked right now smoldering in the flames of hell with the smoke of their torment rising for ever and ever...*and ever*. Of course it was a fear tactic they

had to resort to in order to gain more converts to their way of thinking. My friend, who was in dire need of refinement in the words he chose to express his thoughts, leaned over and whispered in my ear, *“I think they’re trying to scare the hell out of us.”* This uncouth statement, as out of place as it was in that religious setting, nearly evoked a laugh even from my sensitive soul. But thankfully, I managed to muffle it. After another hour or more, I leaned over and whispered to my friend, *“As soon as we have an opportunity, let’s make our exodus out of here.”* To my surprise and dismay, my friend let out a loud burst of laughter, and naturally, all eyes were instantly turned upon the two strangers in the midst of all these learned doctors. As far as they probably thought, we (really, *he*) were laughing at their threatening dissertations.

To our amazement, the last speaker casually pulled out a pack of cigarettes from his coat pocket and lit one while he conveyed his closing thoughts. It reminded me of the old Marlboro Cigarette commercials; only it was bordering more on the equivalence of the *Twilight Zone*. I had never before witnessed a Christian minister smoking from the pulpit: they usually waited to step out on the back porch before lighting up! Pretty soon, one by one, each of the other doctors began lighting up cigarettes and cigars as well. I thought, *these doctors certainly do not seem to be very health conscious!*

Thankfully, before too much longer, the ordeal ended and we quickly rose to our feet in an effort to make a dash for the door. But as fate would have it, no sooner had we reached the door, the entire assemblage had us surrounded. I thought, *“They must be in a hurry to get out of here as well.”* One of the doctors asked me of my impression of the studies that were presented. I chokingly responded, *“They were fine; sure good to meet you all; goodbye.”* But one of them asked, *“Do you not believe there are people right now in hell-fire as we speak?”* I said, *“Well, I think I’m beginning to believe in it more and more with all the smoke filling this room!”* Even in the midst of all that suffocating smoke, my uncouth friend went into a fit of uncontrollable laughter as we stumbled out the door and onto the street, a cloud of smoke trailing behind us as we were choking and gasping for a breath of fresh air. No telling what people thought driving by out on the street!

As can be seen, even if the interpretation of the hell-fire creed be the truth, it thrives in an atmosphere of fear. And what is fear anyway? Fear is **F**alse **E**vidence **A**ltering **R**eality. By this, I am not inferring that the doctrine is totally false, but rather, we should not be afraid of closely examining the doctrine to see if what *ministers* are teaching about it may be false. Aren’t we admonished to “rightly divide the Word of Truth?” What are we to divide it from if not from the words of *untruth*? Some timid souls have even been led to feel that they are blaspheming if they question the popular interpretations set forth by man. But we may rest assured that our wise and benevolent Father doesn’t mind if we ask Him the same question a thousand times. He’ll keep on explaining the answer to us until we get it right. And to get it right is not as hard as some would have us believe. Let us cease with fear and panic attacks—they’re all from the adversary, but he has no power over the sincere soul in pursuit of the truth. So what is the truth about the punishment of the lost and the wicked?

The two extremes as taught in the Christian churches are on this order: A) *“The wicked will writhe in anguish in the eternal fires of hell because their soul is immortal and can never die;”* and the other extreme: B) *“The God of the Bible is a God of love and mercy and grace; while the righteous live in the highest heaven, the lost will be consigned to a lower heaven; He’s too loving to torture anyone.”* Take note that in both these two extremes, the sinner is *alive*. But it says in Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is not eternal life in a lesser heaven, and certainly not in an eternal lake of fire, but rather, the wages of sin is...*death*. Did you ever focus in on that

passage dear Reader? What is consistent about error is its extreme nature. It starts with a truth and then swings that truth far to the right hand or the left. But the truth always lies between the extremes...as we shall see in this case. *Let us pursue this matter.*

To begin with, we must ask ourselves, Do I believe that the wages of sin is death...or not? A lake of fire means nothing to a dead man. And where, in the whole big Bible does it say that the soul of man is *immortal*? In only five places in its entirety is the word immortality even used. Here they are:

Romans 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and **immortality**, eternal life:

1st Corinthians 15:53-4 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on **immortality**. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on **immortality**, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

2nd Timothy 1:10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Yahshua Messiah, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and **immortality** to light through the gospel:

1st Timothy 6:13-16 I charge you--as in the presence of God who gives life to all creatures, and of Messiah Yahshua who at the bar of Pontius Pilate made a noble profession of faith—that you keep **ገገገ**'S commandments stainlessly and without reproach till the Appearing of our Master Yahshua Messiah. For, as its appointed time, this will be brought about by the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses **immortality**, dwelling in unapproachable light, and whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be eternal honour and power! Amen. (Weymouth New Testament).

Whereas we seek for eternal life from our starting point (that is when we are spiritually born anew), it will only be a gift granted us, but by this final passage we see that the only One who inherently possesses immortality (one who never had a beginning and will never end) is the Almighty Creator. Though we were created in His likeness and image, we are not little gods possessing immortality. If we are faithful and endure unto the end (Mat 24:13), we too can be granted this wonderful *gift* of eternal life; in fact, that is the very thing heaven is working hard to accomplish on our behalf! As we have mentioned from Rom 6:23, “*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of Yahweh is eternal life.*” A contrast is made between the reward of the righteous and the reward of the wicked: one receives eternal life, and the other, eternal death.

Some have said, “*Oh, death only means separation from God.*” When the Creator told Adam, “*In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die,*” did He really mean, “You will surely be separated from Me...but you will not *surely* die!” If the reader can quickly see that that is exactly what He did *not* say, then who was it that said, “sinners won’t *surely* die; they’ll just be separated from God.”? Let us see:

Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

As we might have guessed, it was Hasatan, through the medium of the serpent, who was the first to tell that lie. We do all agree that Hasatan is a liar, don’t we? The Almighty said, “Sinners *will* surely die,” and Hasatan said, “Sinners *won’t* surely die.” Whom do you choose to believe dear Friend? If you believe your Creator’s words, then you cannot believe the wages of sin is eternal life in a lake of fire. And everything that you may have been taught in your Sunday School class, or seminary, or Vacation Bible School, or anywhere else, must first measure up to the



Words of our Creator. Then every text that may seem to contradict that Word will surely be shown to in fact, uphold His everlasting Truth. But death means death, and a funeral is where we learn the reality of that fact. Let us now examine some of these *apparent* contradictions, and consider what they can only possibly mean.

Matthew 25:41, 46 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Are the devil and his angels right now in the everlasting fire? The text says it is *prepared* for the devil and his angels. It is in preparation. When one is preparing a meal, has it already been eaten? When it is finally prepared, is it always time to eat right then and there? Or, like a Thanksgiving meal, might it be prepared the day before? I have often thought, If everyone were as respectful of the holy Sabbath day of the fourth commandment as they obviously are of Thanksgiving, they would not be cooking on that 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, but the day before. That is why it is called the preparation day: that all the meals may be prepared on the day before the Sabbath arrives (see Exo 16:23). Let us now examine this Greek word from whence the English word *prepared* comes from. Using Strong's Exhaustive Concordance:

G2090 ἑτοιμάζω *hetoimazō het-oy-mad'-zo* From G2092; to *prepare*: - prepare, provide, make ready.

With this definition in mind, we see there were three terms the translators could have chosen: *to prepare*; *to provide*; and *to make ready*. From the 1898 *Young's Literal Translation* we read for Matthew 25:41,

Then shall he say also to those on the left hand, Go ye from me, the cursed, to the fire, the age-during, that hath been prepared for the Devil and his messengers; (*Young's Literal Translation*).

Please consider, If Hasatan and his fallen angels are the demons gone out into the world, how can they be right now in a lake of fire? There is no devil walking around in the flames of hell with a pitchfork poking people. They are the demonic forces cast out of heaven *upon the earth*. Please observe:

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

It is therefore evident that the everlasting fire is *provided* for the devil and his fallen angels. They are not there right now. But what of our other text under consideration, Matthew 25:46? Does it not confirm that the fire prepared for the devil, and shared by the wicked, is *eternal*? One will observe that the passage does not say the fire is eternal. It does say that the righteous go away *into life eternal*, but notice, the phrase for the time element for the wicked is *everlasting*. Let us examine the word *ever* for a few moments. When used in the context of everlasting, our first impression (especially if that is what we were taught all our lives), is that it means eternal, just like the reward of the righteous. Eternal life in a lake of fire is still eternal *life* (no matter if we call it death or not), and immortality is given only to the righteous...not the sinner. Do the *Everglades* go all the way up into New York City, or Canada? Or are they pretty much confined to Florida? Are the *Evergreens* green for all eternity, or ever how long they live? Does *Everlasting* really mean eternal, or ever how long something may last? Contrary to the

devil's word, sinners *surely* do die. They do not live eternally...*anywhere*. Some have even said that "*Satan and his evil angels are immortal!*" but as we say here in Texas: "*Mighty big talk; mighty little proof.*" Friend, do you believe the Bible that unequivocally declares that Yahweh *alone* has immortality, and He can grant that to whomsoever He will, and it is only the righteous to whom He wills? No, the wicked certainly are not immortal, and they are by no means granted eternal life...*anywhere*...including the devil himself! He is *subject* to the will of Yahweh! It is not *impossible* for the Almighty to destroy the devil. When we come to realize the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh, and that all His creation shall do as He says, then the confusion vanishes away. If you're not afraid of evidence, stay on the ship. Let us look closer at Matthew 25:46. Yahshua did not say anywhere that the wicked would suffer everlasting punishing. He said everlasting punishment. Are they the same? We might as well go ahead and ask it: What is the punishment for sin? We find the straightforward answer in 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:8, 9:

He will take revenge on those who refuse to acknowledge God and on those who refuse to respond to the Good News about our Master Yahshua. They will pay the penalty by being destroyed forever, by being separated from the Master's presence and from his glorious power. (GWV).

What is the most famous verse of the Bible? Doesn't John 3:16 clearly state that the fate of the wicked will be eternal destruction? How could we have gotten so far off track in this most important matter? Do we not realize this involves the character of the Creator? Let us examine this famous text with a scrutinizing eye, and not be afraid to accept the Messiah's faithful words spoken to a sincere soul who came to him seeking the truth. *What does perish mean?*

G622 ἀπόλλυμι apollumi *ap-ol'-loo-mee* From G575 and the base of G3639; to *destroy* fully (reflexively to *perish*, or *lose*), literally or figuratively: - destroy, die, lose, mar, perish.

Should we dispute the Saviour's words? He is comparing the eternal life of the righteous to the eternal death of the wicked! The same John calls it the second (final) death (Revelation 21:8).

Matthew 3:10-12 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

In all three of these verses, fire is mentioned. The Messiah is always comparing the righteous with the wicked: the good and the bad trees; the wheat and the tares. He says the bad trees are cut down and cast into the fire; the wheat is gathered into the barn while the chaff is *burned up* with unquenchable fire. Does unquenchable mean eternal? Or does it merely mean it cannot be put out? And doesn't *burned up* mean destroyed; *perished*? Let us think this through: if verses ten and twelve are making a comparison between the righteous and the wicked, could verse 11 somehow fail to portray the same comparison? I think not. He baptizes the righteous with the Holy Spirit who destroys the sin from the righteous, and He baptizes the wicked with fire which destroys the sin *with* the sinner; and He'll do it in a fire that cannot be put out. Does that mean it won't eventually be burned out as all fires do when their fuel source has *perished*?

Lamentations 4:6 My nation was punished worse than the people of Sodom, whose city was destroyed in a flash without the help of human hands. (CEV).

What was the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah? Let us read about it. Genesis 19:24:

יְהוָה rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from יְהוָה out of heaven;

Jude 1:5-7 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that יְהוָה, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

In reference to the destruction of the wicked, this is the only place in the whole big Bible where the word *eternal* is ever used. It says the fire is eternal but the cities were destroyed. Are Sodom and Gomorrah still burning today? Let us bear in mind that it was not only the people who were destroyed, but the very cities as well. We make mention of this to demonstrate that just as the buildings were destroyed, so were the people, and they are set forth for an example of those who will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. The example is that they were all *destroyed*. *Destruction* was their everlasting punishment. They lived however long they lasted, and then they perished; that was their everlasting punishment. What is meant by eternal fire? Ultimately, we must know that it is the eternal Yahweh who is the consuming fire, as we read in Hebrews 12:29: “*For our Elohyim is a consuming fire.*”

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:4-6 For if יְהוָה spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

Both Jude and Peter declare that the destruction of the wicked in times past is set forth for an example to us in the future, and Peter outright states that those wicked cities were reduced to *ashes!* If we could ask Peter and Jude in our time, “Do you believe Sodom and Gomorrah are still burning today like most ministers say?” They’d respond, “*Of course not: they were reduced to ashes centuries ago!*”

1st Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Malachi 4:1-3 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith יְהוָה of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith יְהוָה of hosts.

## Chapter Two

### Ghost Stories

The natural immortality of the soul doctrine has been instrumental in distorting the truth about the punishment of the wicked. But the passages we have thus far examined teach a much different story. How did we overlook all these texts that confirm the Word of the Almighty, that indeed, sinners surely do die? The text above in Malachi says the fires of the final day will leave neither root nor branches. Just as our Saviour is the root stock, or the vine of the righteous, and they are the branches, in like manner, Satan is the root stock of the wicked branches, and the text declares that neither shall be able to survive the flame; they shall be turned into ashes. Ashes are the semi-solid residual that is left from whatever is consumed in a fire. This of course means that real, living people had been cast into the lake of fire in order to be reduced to ashes. Again, there will be no so-called immortal, disembodied spirit-beings cast into the lake of fire. That is a mythological lie from the Dark Ages. Here is the proof:

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

*Did someone say the soul cannot be killed?* Hitler was able to kill the natural bodies of people, but he could not touch their soul: that is, their personality; their inner being, their hope of eternal life. Both body and personality comprise the soul. Adam, before the divine breath of life was breathed into him, was a lifeless mud sculpture lying on the ground.

Genesis 2:7 And  $\text{אֱלֹהִים}$  Elohyim formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Man did not acquire a living soul; he *became* a living soul. “*Old King Cole was a merry old soul; a merry old soul was he.*” Matthew 10:28 above verily states that the soul can and will be destroyed in hell. The word soul here is from the Greek *psuche* (pronounced *sukay*), and is translated in dozens of other places in the New Testament as merely life. So, whereas man can destroy physical life, he cannot destroy eternal life: only the Creator is able to do that. And He will for all those who refuse to repent. But we must ever bear in mind that in His great heart of love and tender mercy, He pleads with His straying children to return unto Him with a heart of repentance. Only under that condition can a soul have eternal life.

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9:  $\text{יהוה}$  is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Once again we encounter the descriptive word *perish* used in reference to all who refuse to repent of their sins. They must perish; Yahweh cannot afford another rebellion in the kingdom of heaven. The price for our redemption was too great, and He has promised that the affliction of sin shall never happen again in the peaceful abode of the earth made new; indeed throughout the entire universe. But let us prove further that there will be no disembodied “spirit-beings” in the lake of fire at the end of the age. The devil knows that if we know only *human beings* will be cast into the lake of fire, his charade is over, because human beings will perish for sure, and we

already know that. The truth is, even he and all his evil angels will also perish in that final conflagration, as we shall soon discover. Take note of the following passage:

Mark 9:43-44 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Do worms have immortal souls that can never die? The very question sounds absurd, because it is. So what did our Saviour mean by the mysterious phrase, “*where their worm dieth not?*” Where is the lake of fire known as hell? This word hell is Gehenna which is merely the Valley of Hinnom just outside the city of Jerusalem. It was the ancient trash dump. Carcasses of dead animals were thrown into that ever smoldering fire, and what the fire didn’t consume, the worms finished off—it was a place of complete destruction. People falsely assume from the phrase “unquenchable fire” that sinners will live for all eternity in it. Let us however compare Scripture with Scripture. Take note of some other examples of unquenchable fire.

Jeremiah 17:27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 36:19-21 And they burnt the house of Elohyim, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of יהוה by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: *for* as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

In these verses above, we find that Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem *with unquenchable fire*, and it surely came to pass. We all surely realize that Jerusalem is not still burning. And as far as these worms not dying, we might remind ourselves that worms feed on carcasses, not disembodied spirit-beings. What is a carcass? It is a dead body.

Isaiah 66:24 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.

Fire and worms represent total annihilation. So as we have read with our eyes that the wicked perish, are destroyed, turned to ashes, there is little room left for the misrepresentation of the Almighty’s character that He will torture the wicked throughout eternity. The wages of sin is death: cessation of life. The doctrine of eternal torment is the child of Roman Catholicism, and she does not try to hide that fact. It has driven more people to atheism than any other falsehood! Yahweh destroys the incorrigible, unrepentant sinners: He does not torture them. He takes no delight in their death. The Saviour said in Matthew 5:30 that the “*whole body*” will be cast into hell. This does away with the catholic mythology of immortal spirit-beings suffering throughout eternity in a lake of fire that will never burn itself out. It will burn itself out.

Durante Alighieri, better known as Dante, (1265–1321) was an Italian poet of the Dark Ages. His greatest work, the *The Divine Comedy*, dramatized the Biblical passages that spoke of the punishment of the lost from which the doctrine of purgatory was born, and eternal torment. This pernicious teaching held the illiterate masses in bondage of fear to the Roman Church, and angered Martin Luther to the point of protest, from which the Protestant Movement began. It appears that another protest is due, this time against Protestant misconceptions.

## Chapter Three

### But what About the Rich Man and Lazarus?

Matthew 13:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

Mark 4:34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Do we believe the inspired words written above? Yahshua had no other choice than to instruct the people through analogous stories that taught divine principles. He was able in a greater degree, to teach his disciples more directly as they were more open to the straight truth than the self-righteous religionists of the day. Is the story of Lazarus a parable, or are we to understand that it is not parabolic at all...in spite of the above passages?

Luke 16:22-31 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Some contend that because Lazarus is named in this parable, it cannot be a parable, and therefore has to be literal. Let us see if such an argument is tenable. Is Abraham's bosom where the righteous will spend eternity? Or is it meant to be parabolic? And doesn't it say in Matthew 24:31 that the angels gather the saints at the second coming of Yahshua...*at the end of the age*, and not when they die?

The parable says that the rich man died and was buried. How did his *body* get into the lake of fire immediately at death instead of after the millennium as it says in Revelation 20:7-15? And by the way, will saints and sinners be able to converse with one another across this gulf? Would a finger dipped in water be enough to quench anyone's thirst in a lake of fire? Wouldn't they request a few gallons at least? Come now, let us reason together. Let us think this allegory through. In but a few days, Messiah would raise Lazarus from the dead. Was this great miracle enough to convince the proud and arrogant religious leaders of anything at that time? Do you remember the ultimate request of the rich man? He prayed since none of his other requests could be met, that Father Abraham would send Lazarus to his five brethren to warn them of the final fate of the wicked in the lake of fire. It will be found that the grand theme of the parable is right here in these final statements between Abraham and the poor rich man. What a blessing that the

master Teacher laid it out so clearly for us. It is to the rich man's credit that he finally showed concern for someone else, but how did Abraham respond?

Luke 16:29-31 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

And so it is today. Our Saviour said *He came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets* (Matthew 5:17, 18). He did not change His last will and testament upon His death and resurrection. Though He miraculously rose from the dead, people still refuse to hear the Torah of the prophet Moses, along with the rest of the so-called "Old" Testament prophets. Many people are only following their blind guide ministers, the foolish virgins who have the lamp but lack the oil of the Holy Spirit to make the lamps come to life. Modern ministers, though at sword's points on trivial matters, all have this one thing in common: they say, "*Jesus abolished the law at His death and gave us a 'new' law: a New last will and Testament.*" Take note of the following New Testament admonition as found in Hebrews 9:16, 17; and Gal. 3:15 from three different versions:

For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Galatians 3:15: Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. (KJV).

Brothers and Sisters, let me use an example from everyday life. No one can cancel a person's will or add conditions to it once that will is put into effect. (God's Word Version).

My friends, I will use an everyday example to explain what I mean. Once someone agrees to something, no one else can change or cancel the agreement. (Contemporary English Version).

According to the above counsel, nothing by any means changed in the Messiah's last Will and Testament through his death. Quite to the contrary! His sacrificial death *confirmed* His last Will and Testament. The Law therefore stands. But what is a parable? Is it fiction? Not at all. A parable is an inspired allegory that conveys a moral principle. All the elements of Lazarus and the rich man will surely come to pass in their time, but they are not going on right now. The punishment of the wicked occurs at the end of the age, not at death. The reward of the righteous will not occur until the moment Messiah returns to reward everyone according to their obedience to His commandments.

Revelation 22:12-14 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed *are* they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

## Chapter Four

### Spirits in Prison

To add to the unnecessary confusion, some have misapplied Yahshua's term "*heart of the earth*" (Mat 12:40). Some believe the heart of the earth is literally the molten center of our globe wherein wicked people are right now being tortured! They think that when Yahshua was in the grave, he somehow was conscious and even doing some preaching down there! Could that be a possibility in view of all that we have thus far discovered? Are people conscious in death? Many who have been pronounced "clinically dead" tell of various visions of seeing a light at the end of a tunnel or state of darkness. The longest of these "deaths" was about 45 minutes, and they were revived. Lazarus was *fully* dead for four days but he tells of no visions or consciousness in death.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:18-20 For Messiah also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to יָדָוּת, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of יָדָוּת waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

By the above text, some folks say, "*Yahshua checked into hell just before sundown,*" as though it were a hotel; perhaps the Hotthell Hotel. Did Yahshua believe in purgatory? Let us take some time to analyze this strange passage using Scripture to interpret Scripture. Doesn't Scripture teach that the judgment is at the end of world? Beyond doubt, Peter is referring to Messiah's sacrificial death and His resurrection by the Holy Spirit. It was by the Spirit that He preached that warning message to Noah's antediluvian world. Did He give those disobedient people a second chance? Not one of the people Messiah raised from the dead said a word about going to heaven or hell. Not one of them believed in purgatory. They believed the Scriptures that say they simply go into a deep state of unconsciousness in death. None of them believed in the so-called inherent immortality of the soul. Neither did the Messiah. Was He awake in a state of consciousness in the grave? Do we not read in the Scriptures that when a person dies, whether good or evil, they are in their deepest state of *unconsciousness*? As we have seen, neither good people nor bad people go *anywhere* at death; they merely sleep in their graves until the resurrection, some at the beginning of the millennium, and many at the end.

Let us continue to examine Peter's brief statement of 3:18-20. He gives the actual time when our Lord, through the Holy Spirit, went and preached to "the souls in prison." Like the phrase *heart of the earth*, we are not at liberty to assign a private interpretation to this phrase. What did Peter mean by *souls in prison*? As is always the case, we may find the Scriptural definition if we will but apply ourselves and search diligently for it. Take note of the following passages:

Psalm 142:5-7 I cried unto thee, O יְהוָה: I said, Thou *art* my refuge *and* my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.



Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of Adonay יהוה upon me; because יהוה hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*;

In the above passages, David was hiding in a cave from King Saul: he was not dead. He used the phrase *prison* allegorically. Messiah preached deliverance to the living souls who were bound in the prison house of sin. He did this by the power of the Holy Spirit: the same Holy Spirit through which all the prophets, including Noah declared their messages.

Numbers 11:29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would Elohyim that all יהוה's people were prophets, *and* that יהוה would put his Spirit upon them!

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of Elohyim spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

This same apostle Peter, who evidently understood the ministration of the Holy Spirit upon the prophets of all time, is the one who wrote that the message of the Messiah to the spirits in prison, was being preached to those who were *once* alive *while* the ark was being built *in the days of* Noah. Peter's theme is the destruction of the wicked versus the mercy of Yahshua, and he focuses on the days of Noah in both his letters. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:5, he states outright that it was Noah who was the preacher of righteousness. This Spirit-filled prophet preached for 120 years to the world whose only response to that preaching was mockery and derision and rejection. Did Yahshua deem them worthy of a second chance and go to them from the grave?

Just as the three days and nights are a specific element of time, so do we find the specific element of time *explained* by Peter in his first writing (3:18-20). He did not say that Yahshua went to the wicked spirits while in the grave with His message of salvation, offering rebels a second chance; but rather that offer was made *in the very days of* Noah, *while* he was building the ark. Millions have misinterpreted Peter's vision (Acts 10) as a pretext for eating unclean meats, even though in that vision he *explained* that he was referring to people (10:28-9). In like manner, even though Peter *explained* the time element of his statement regarding Yahshua, in that He was actually preaching by the power of the Holy Spirit through the prophet Noah, so many hold fast to their private interpretation, and make Peter's statement conform to that interpretation rather than *they* conform to *his* explanation.

Some are under the impression that we all have immortal souls because we were created in the likeness and image of the eternal One. But it says in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:16, that Yahweh *alone* has immortality; and according to 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:53, we find it is only the righteous who receive *the gift of immortality* when the Messiah returns. No one has an immortal soul, not even Hasatan and his fallen angels. According to the well-known passage of John 3:16, all sinners shall *perish*. Perish means, to be consumed: not to be continued. Do we teach our little children to commit that verse to memory and then tell them that perish doesn't really mean perish? Do we teach them that sinners won't surely die; that they'll live eternally in a fiery hell in the molten center of the earth? Surely we all know that dead people don't feel the heat of a fire.

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Yahshua said that *the soul* can be destroyed. Will the soul of sinners truly be destroyed, or did He actually mean, tortured for all eternity in the molten center of the earth...but not *surely*

destroyed! Let us think this through: if indeed, the soul can be destroyed, and Yahweh alone has immortality, then there is no option left for us to believe the father of lies, that we all have immortal souls as well: immortal souls that cannot be destroyed, nor perish.

Isaiah 66:24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases 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.

What is a carcass? The Hebrew word is *pehger* פֶּגֶר; it means a corpse: a dead body. This text doesn't say their immortal soul will not die, it says their worms won't die. Worms don't have immortal souls. There is no mention of an eternal fire, but rather a fire that cannot be put out, it is unquenchable. Even worms cannot live in the fire; they feed on the remainder of what the fire did not consume. This is a graphic picture of absolute destruction. Though it cannot be put out, or quenched, the fire of annihilation, when it has done its work of consuming the wicked, will burn itself out.

Psalm 68:2 As smoke is driven away, *so drive them away*: as wax melteth before the fire, *so let the wicked perish* at the presence of Elohyim.

Malachi 4:1, 3 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith יְהוָה of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith יְהוָה of hosts.

Isa 47:14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: *there shall not be* a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to sit before it.

Ecclesiastes 9:5,6 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.

Nahum 1:9 What do ye imagine against יְהוָה? He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.

In the above passages of Scripture, we clearly see that only the living are in a state of consciousness. It is malicious to imagine the merciful Yahweh keeping human beings alive in a state of torment because of the passages that describe the anguish of those who will come to the sad realization that for a brief life of sinful pleasure, or stubborn refusal of Yahweh's offer to save them, they will perish. Affliction will come to an end; though there will be a little season of time that the Gehenna fires will do their final work of annihilation, it will come to an end, and for that, we can all be thankful.

## Chapter Five

### What about for Ever and Ever?

Revelation 14:9-11 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of Elohim, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

The Bible uses the word combination *for+ever* nearly five dozen times...in reference to things that have already come to an end. Never once in the whole big Bible are these two words joined as in *forever*. Of course, some modern versions have errantly done so, but the KJV that endeavored to hold fast to the majority of the original manuscripts kept the two words separate. Religious writers today join these two words (forever) to give the thought that forever means eternal. But like the word everlasting, the two words *for* and *ever* merely mean *for however long* something may last. The Biblical phrase “for ever **and** ever” is an added emphasis to denote the unending duration of the destruction: it is *the smoke* that ascends up for ever and ever by the way. Never once does the Scripture say that sinners live *eternally* in the lake of fire. As we know, dead people cannot be tormented. Having no rest day nor night can mean one of two things, or both: A) Some sinners will suffer longer than a few minutes or hours, depending on the amount of sin they practiced; & B) Those who receive the mark of the beast have *no rest day*: they have abandoned the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and they have no rest night...that precedes the holy Sabbath. We are not at liberty to give a private interpretation to the plain testimony of the Scriptures to imply that for ever and ever means eternal. Note the following warning:

Revelation 22:18, 19 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, יהוה shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, יהוה shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

In regard to for ever not meaning eternal, let us now observe a few examples.

Jonah 1:17 Now יהוה had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Here we find the amazing story of the prophet Jonah, the very first man to have ever ridden in a submarine, and his journey comprised nearly a thousand miles back across the Mediterranean Sea! The Messiah used this very incident as the solitary sign of His messiahship. (See Matthew 12:38-40). So how long was Jonah in the whale? Was he there for ever?

Jonah 2:5, 6 The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O יהוה my Elohim.

Yes, Jonah was in the belly of the whale...for ever. But is Jonah still in the whale? We know he's not; in fact, we know he was there for only three days and nights, but the Scriptures say for ever. Since the Scripture won't change, it will probably have to be our misunderstanding that will have to change. How long was Samuel to abide in the temple? For ever?

1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 1:22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide forever.

How long would for ever be for Samuel?

1 Samuel 1:27, 28 For this child I prayed; and יהוה hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to יהוה; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to יהוה. And he worshipped יהוה there.

The answer is, *as long as he liveth*. And what of the destruction of Edom?

Isaiah 34:6-10) The sword of יהוה is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for יהוה hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For *it is* the day of יהוה's vengeance, *and* the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Archeologists confirm to this day that the region of Edom is still uninhabited with over 30 cities left in ruins. But is a fire still burning throughout the land of Edom? Is the smoke from those destroyed cities still going up? The prophecy said it would do so for ever! The same archeologists confirm there is no smoke rising from those ruins today...nor for the last 100 years or more, since they first discovered those ruins. Obviously, the Biblical phrase for ever, means for however long something may last. And while none pass through it as a regular route, some Bedouin shepherds are known to house their sheep there in the ruins from time to time. This scene of utter destruction against Edom, the land of Esau, is the very language from which John on the Isle of Patmos borrowed in order to depict the utter destruction of modern Babylon, and all who receive the mark of the beast.

We could fill up quite a few more pages presenting example upon example of how the Scriptural term *for ever* refers to things that have long since come to an end. But I think we have given enough. There is no Gehenna Lake of Fire going on right now dear Friends. The record is clear from Revelation 20:7-10, & v. 14 that the lake of fire is *after* the 1,000 year reign of Yahshua in heaven, and not a moment before. That is when the rich man of Messiah's parable in Luke 16 will meet its fulfillment; that is when Lazarus shall go to his heavenly reward; that is when the angels shall gather the final harvest into the heavenly garner. That is when sin and sinners...including Hasatan and his fallen angels shall be *destroyed* in the lake of fire *right here on planet earth* as it plainly declares in Proverbs 11:31. Hell, therefore, is not in some ambiguous, ethereal place: the parable of Luke 16 reveals that it will be in the same place wherein the righteous are recompensed—which is right here on the earth. (Isaiah 65:17-25).

## Chapter Six

### *Absent from the Body; Present with the Lord?*

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:6-8 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from  $\eta\eta\eta$ : (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with  $\eta\eta\eta$ .

This passage, of course, is the great “champion” of the immortal soul concept; but let us analyze this equivocal passage to see which side the champion is fighting on: for us, *or for them*. It would do us well to recall Peter’s comment on the writings of Paul: “*hard to be understood*.” Is this an exception? Is this an easy one to be understood? Rather than endeavor to comprehend this passage by what we have been taught in our Sunday-school class, or theological seminary, why don’t we just let the Bible interpret itself this time? Why don’t we just compare Scripture with Scripture? We’ve found thus far that when a person dies, they go into the deepest sleep they ever enjoyed, awaiting the resurrection day. To begin with, why don’t we let Paul interpret Paul? Did he really intend for us to understand by his statement that as soon as a person dies, they go to their eternal reward? Let us see.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed.

Not a soul on earth would construe this verse to mean that Paul had died; *at least we hope no one would seek such a vain interpretation*. The above passage is to the same believers only about a year before his second letter that we are examining.

Colossians 2:4, 5 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Messiah.

Paul warns us to beware of those who would deceive us with tantalizing words. He told the folks in his letter that even though he was absent in the body, yet he was present with them in the spirit. This is the same language that he used in our opening text. Evidently Paul would not be in agreement with the contemporary Christian interpretation of his words. It is doubtful that even ministers today would try to convince us that Paul had died (absent in the flesh) in order to be present (with the Colossians) in the spirit. So let us scrutinize the passage that seems to be causing so much ado.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:1-7 For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of Elohim, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is*  $\eta\eta\eta$ , who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from  $\eta\eta\eta$ : (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

This passage is doing the same thing as the one in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:44—comparing this earthly life to the heavenly. He refers to our physical body as “an early house.” To be “*dissolved*” is to be merely in the state of death wherein the worms dissolve the physical body in the grave. But if we are blessed with eternal life, we are assured of a glorified body in the heavens: that is, *being clothed* with a glorified body. To be “found naked” then would be asleep in the grave in neither the earthly house (physical living body), nor the heavenly house (the glorified living body). Paul would prefer to not have to face that unclothed state (in death), but rather to be “clothed upon” in the heavenly body without seeing death; he hopes to be translated, expecting the Messiah’s return in his lifetime... “*that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*” He is saying merely that death is the interim between mortal life and immortal. Let us reread 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:8,

We are confident and prefer to live away from this body and to live with יָהוָה. (GW).

“We have confidence through the Divine promise that when He returns, we’ll (at that time) be absent from this body and be present for ever more with Yahweh.” There is nothing in this passage that states to be absent from the body is to be instantaneously present with Yahweh. Such a concept would cause Paul to contradict himself; please observe:

1<sup>st</sup> Co 15:51-5 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

Paul confesses that death is merely a deep sleep; surely no one would dispute the word of Paul! To be asleep in death is to be *unclothed*, in the language of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, chapter five. He says it will not be until the final trumpet call at Messiah’s return that the sleeping dead shall at that time, be raised incorruptible in the glorified heavenly “house.” That is when mortality shall “put on—be clothed” with immortality, and not a moment before. Think it through: if everyone went straightway to be “with the Lord” when they died, then, at the Messiah’s return, they’d have to “stage” a resurrection by getting back into their graves, listening for the “trumpet of the Lord to sound,” then come forth in their glorified bodies. Such a thought is too absurd to even consider.

So, as we can see, when we investigate this matter (as with every matter), the glorious truth emerges, sending the glorious daydreams of men back into the dust—unclothed. Let us not be so hasty to believe every wind of doctrine at the sleight of men (Ephesians 4:14). We might get blown away...to use a contemporary term.

As it is with Paul’s difficult writings, so is it with the Messiah’s alleged statement to the thief on the cross. Did He really tell that poor man that they would be together that very day in Paradise? We need to get the proverbial magnifying glass out again and get back to our private investigation, so we can avoid a private interpretation. Let us proceed.

## Chapter Seven

### What about the Thief on the Cross?

And he said unto Yahshua, Master, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Yahshua said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

This brief conversation (Luke 23:42, 43) transpired in the late afternoon of Aviv 14. Let the student of Scripture remember that a day ends at sundown, and a new day begins in the twilight glow. We are confronted with another challenge in this statement of Yahshua to the criminal at His side; He seems to have said that as soon as they both were dead, they would instantly be in the Paradise Kingdom. Did the thief even die on that day? If he didn't, he would not have gone to Paradise. Let us see what really happened on that fateful day.

John 19:31-3 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Yahshua, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

What was the purpose of breaking the legs? It was to expedite the death process of those yet alive. Since Yahshua was already dead, there was no need to break His legs. Because the other two were still alive at the closing of the day, they had to break their legs. Their legs supported their weight enabling them to continue breathing; to break the legs therefore, would cause them to slowly suffocate. This of course indicates that the thief had not even died on the same day as Yahshua. Our Redeemer died on Aviv 14 a little before sundown, thus ending that day; and the thief died sometime after sundown in the beginning hour of Aviv 15. Did our Saviour go to Paradise on that day? He told Mary Magdalene three days later that He had not yet returned to His Father in the Paradise kingdom. Let's read it.

John 20:14-17 And having said these things, she turned back and saw Yahshua standing there, and did not know that it was Yahshua. Yahshua said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You carried Him away, tell me where You put Him, and I will take Him away." Yahshua said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). Yahshua said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My Elohim and your Elohim.' "

Where is the Father? Is He in Paradise? Some have conjectured that Paradise is the heart of the earth, which they also think is the grave; but it is all supposition due to the non-existence of the Scriptural evidence. If the Reader is interested in Scriptural evidence regarding the matter of the Heart of the Earth, just request our book, *The Sign of Jonah*. Supposition without evidence is the reason there are currently some 34,000 Christian groups in the world. But there is only one supreme Lord Yahweh; one faith of the holy Torah, and one baptism into Yahshua. Now let us find out where this Paradise Kingdom could possibly be. Let us seek the Scriptural evidence. Let us continue a little while longer to pursue this important matter.

## Where is Paradise?

When the dying thief on the cross requested of Yahshua to remember him when He came into His kingdom, Yahshua promised him on that very day, he would one day surely have a place in the Paradise Kingdom. (Luke 23:43). Where is Paradise? Let us read Revelation 2:7.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of Elohyim.

By this we learn that wherever Paradise may be, the tree of life is in the midst of it. Of course it is. According to Genesis 2:9, we find that the tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and thus we may reason that there is a link between the Garden of Eden and Paradise. In fact, the Septuagint calls this beautiful garden by the name of Paradise.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of Elohyim and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, there was the tree of life... (Revelation 22:1, 2).

With this added information, we see that the tree of life grows on either side of the River of Life, and this mystical river flows out from the very throne of Elohyim. We may thus far conclude that *Paradise, the tree of life and the river of life* which flows out of the throne, are all in close proximity. The question therefore must be, Where is the throne of Elohyim?

יהוה is in His holy temple; יהוה's throne is in heaven... (Psalm 11:4).

*Paradise and Heaven are one and the same place.* The dying thief did not claim to know where the Messiah's kingdom was. It was our Saviour who named its location. In view of these vital criteria, we may safely conclude that Yahshua promised to one day take the converted thief to heaven...but not on that day of Aviv 14, in 31 AD. Neither of them went there on that day; the converted thief still hasn't gotten there: he is yet sleeping in his grave, which by now his body has disintegrated back into the soil. So what is the problem? The problem is all due to a misplaced comma: a miniscule little comma—so hard to imagine that millions of people have built a religious belief around such a thing as punctuation out of place! Notice what happens when we place the comma in Luke 23:43, after the word *today*:

And Yahshua said unto him, Verily I say unto thee Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise.

Through some forty-five years I have searched for just one version of the Bible that quotes the Messiah correctly, but all in vain. The punctuation is not inspired. No one ever punctuated the Bible until the 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Neither were there were any spaces between words in the koine Greek. How would we read this sentence: ATLASTWEARENOWHERE? One can quickly see how easily the translators could honestly make a few discrepancies. The context tells us the truth as we have demonstrated. Since the thief didn't die that day, and since Yahshua didn't go to Paradise that day, what is there left to say? (on this matter). Not a solitary thing.



## Chapter Eight:

### The Spirit goes back to Elohyim

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto הוה who gave it.

This text, as found in Ecclesiastes 12:7, has been another “stronghold” for all who cling to the so-called immortal soul concept; but as we have done with the other easily misunderstood passages, so must we do with this one. Clearly, a distinction is made between the materialistic body that disintegrates in the grave and the spirit that does not disintegrate. What is this word *spirit* in the Hebrew? Much is hinging on a thorough understanding of this word.

H7307 רוּחַ *roo'-akh* From H7306; *wind*, by resemblance *breath*, that is, a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively *life, anger, weakness*; by extension a *region* of the sky; by resemblance *spirit*, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions).

When Yahweh breathed into man the breath of life, man became a rational being. Life is more than just breath—it has to do with rationality and personality: man became a living *person*. This personality lives on in *our* memory of those loved ones now asleep in their graves. But are *they* conscious in the Paradise Kingdom immediately upon death, like we once may have thought of the thief? That is the question: *To be or not to be; that is the question I ask of thee*. Are they still being? A human being is one who is; that’s what *being* means—we are. Are we still human beings when we are asleep; do we still have personality? Of course we do, but we are not in a state of consciousness until we awake. Sobering thought.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-2 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last Trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

According to this passage, it will not be until the last trumpet sounds that the righteous shall awaken...out of their death slumber. Why this troubles so many is indeed a mystery. Everyone wants their loved ones to go immediately to heaven when they die. Many people dream of going to an island paradise in the South Pacific, but never make the necessary preparations; they never obtain a passport for the entry into a foreign land. What is the passport into Paradise? Many will say, *Jesus*, but the Saviour said, “*You are my friends if you obey my commandments.*” (John 15:14). We need to have *the right* to enter that fair kingdom. But some will say, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*” (Ephesians 2:8). However, grace is the divine power working in us to produce obedience His commandments. Without this grace we cannot obey His divine Law; grace without obedience is disgrace. Without obedience we’ll have no authority over the tree of life; without authority no right to the kingdom. Yahweh’s grace through our Messiah produces the obedience, and then rewards it as if it all had been our own; now that is Amazing Grace!

Revelation 22:14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The passport to the Paradise Kingdom is obedience to the Torah. Yahshua paid the ransom price that enabled us get through the difficult gate; He is the door into the everlasting covenant. But a covenant is not one-sided; we each have our role to play. He commands, and we obey...that is, if we want to have the right to enter His Paradise Kingdom one glad day. But no one will enter there without the passport. It seems that people are more diligent to obey man's ever-changing laws than Yahweh's eternal Laws. Most of man's laws are tedious and grievous; but none of Yahweh's Laws are by any means grievous. (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:3).

Our material, physical body goes back to the dust when we die, and the spirit that goes back to our Maker is essentially our breath, our life. But the person within this body, although in a deep sound sleep until the last trumpet sounds, is faithfully recorded in the books of heaven; and everything that makes up our person, our personality, our spirit, is safe in the mind and heart of Yahweh. And that is precisely what the wise man meant in our opening passage that we are examining. There is not a solitary word in all the big Bible that intimates a conscious entity walking around in Paradise as soon as we die.

Job 14:14-15 If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

Isaiah 38:18-19 For the grave cannot praise thee, death *cannot* celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do* this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, & 10 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Psalm 88:10-12 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? *or* thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

Psalm 6:5 For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

No one is conscious in death. Just as no one knows the day and the hour of Messiah's return, so when a person has died, their sleep is so deep that when they awaken it will seem as though it had been but a twinkling of the eye. We are safe within the arms of a loving Father; we have no need to fear. It is alright to sleep for a while: He will awaken us when it is time to rise again. It doesn't matter if the elements of our physical body disintegrate into dust; He can put us back together again. Just think of the Valley of Dry Bones. When the time is right, He'll call, and we will answer. He wants us to be with Him in His Paradise Kingdom more than we do. We are His unique creation, each one of us; and most of us need eternity to come to maturity...but we need to take a little nap before we'll be ready. It'll be the best sleep we ever had.

## Chapter Nine

### Saul and the Witch of Endor

When Yahweh said in Deuteronomy 30:19, that He sets before us life and death, He presents the two opposite extremes, which are life...and death. Death is not still life in a state of “*separation from God*,” as we have noted. The Word of the Almighty says that sinners *will* surely die, and other voices say sinners “shall *not* surely die.” We surely know that we cannot believe them both. They are saying two opposite things! To believe and teach contradictions only fuels the atheists disparaging claims against Christianity. We would not openly or perhaps knowingly believe in witchcraft. However, in the following passage we have recorded the first and only spiritualistic séance by a clairvoyant. What is our reaction to the ensuing incident?

1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 28:5-13 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of יהוה, יהוה answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by יהוה, saying, As יהוה liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

Let the student of Scripture be astute to catch every detail of this story: it has been written for our instruction upon whom the end of the age has come (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:11). Unless we have utterly deceived ourselves, we are the ones living in that time. We are being tested by everything we believe and teach. How we relate to this story is of utmost importance. Let us continue.

1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 28:14-20 And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and Elohim is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing יהוה is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And יהוה hath done to him, as he spake by me: for יהוה hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of יהוה, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath יהוה done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover יהוה will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: יהוה also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

Amazingly, this séance has been cited as evidence for the life after death doctrine. But we must consider some points that refute such an idea. According to the Torah (Leviticus 20:27), wizards and witches were to be put to death and not permitted to even live in the Promised Land. The Almighty One of Israel was no longer with King Saul nor would He speak to him any longer. His spiritual guide and mentor, Samuel, had died some time before.

In this séance Samuel was supposedly “*brought up*” from the dead. Other expressions, such as “ascending out of the earth,” and “bringing up” are used to describe the calling forth of the sleeping dead. We must remember however, that Samuel represents the *righteous* dead. Are the righteous dead down in the earth? Not according to those who believe in the immortal soul doctrine. They teach that the righteous go straight to heaven, and the wicked straight to hell.

Was it really Samuel as described by her? The witch of Endor described him as “*an old man covered with a mantle.*” Do immortal souls appear in this manner? Do immortal souls have bodies? Was this a resurrection as described in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15? And we must ask, did the Almighty obey the beckoning command of *a witch* to raise Samuel from the dead? If the answer is no to all of these questions as we know it surely is, then we must ask, can Satan raise the dead? Or perhaps we should better ask, can Satan produce an apparition, especially since he knew all the circumstances surrounding this matter?

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-3 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last Trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

Was it the last trumpet sound when the witch summoned Samuel? We know that does not occur until Messiah returns. The apparition told Saul, “*Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.*” We know that Saul committed suicide the next day. Could it be possible that Saul, whom the Almighty no longer spoke to, a man who consulted witches, and committed suicide, somehow go *to the same place* as the righteous Samuel? We thought the immortal soul doctrine has everyone *in heaven* as soon as they die! Isn't it written, “*To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord*”? Can a witch call someone down...*from heaven*?

The obvious problem one encounters in this enigma is that if it actually was Samuel that the witch had the power to resurrect from the dead, she called him *up* from the grave, not *down* from heaven. He therefore would not have been “present with the Lord,” after all. If, on the other hand, she did not call him up or down, then we can only conclude it was a séance wherein a known witch is speaking with a satanic apparition. For “Samuel” to tell the wicked Saul that he would be with him makes one wonder, where was the righteous Samuel, in heaven, or merely in the obvious unconscious state of death? And lest it be overlooked, *this written account* makes no mention that Saul ever laid eyes on Samuel. How preposterous for Christians to try to “prove” the immortal soul doctrine from a séance! The record is clear that Saul received his information from the witch; he only *perceived* that it was Samuel. Just because a voice spoke to the witch doesn't prove anything at all, except that witches are deceived by the devil and rebellious kings are deceived by witches. Even if the Cabala might say otherwise, our final Word must be the Word of the Almighty. Whoever is guilty of using this story to “prove” anything other than we should never use this story to prove anything, should repent, for notice what the Almighty has to

say about it. The following inspired passage is not a mere human opinion mind you, but comes from the very mind of the Eternal One:

1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 10:13, 14 So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against יהוה, *even* against the word of יהוה, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel* of *one that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire *of it*; And enquired not of יהוה: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

A familiar spirit, according to Strong's is ventriloquism: throwing one's voice, or making one's voice to sound like another's. The above passage states that the reason Saul died, apart from his rebellious spirit against Yahweh, was for asking counsel from a witch: "*therefore he slew him.*" Yahweh has no fellowship with darkness; He will not share a divided throne with anyone...especially an emissary of Satan.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:14-15 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

The truth of this whole issue has to do with the character of our benevolent Father. He will not permit the wicked to go unpunished, for His throne is founded on justice, so there will be a lake of fire. But at the same time, neither will He torture the wicked throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity: His heart is founded on mercy, and the fire will burn out. After maligning our Creator's character with his doctrine of devils, he then intimidates people with the threat that if they so much as make inquiry of this eternal hell-fire doctrine, they are guilty of *blasphemy*! But here is the truth.

Nahum 1:9, 10, 15 What do ye imagine against יהוה? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. For while *they be* folden together *as* thorns, and while they are drunken *as* drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry. Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

We can ask the benevolent Father the same question a thousand times, and He'll keep right on explaining it until we get it right. He correctly divides His Word of Truth from the erroneous ideas of man. He wants us to understand His gracious spirit of loving-kindness. He has given us over and over in His Word the truth of this matter and has even placed it within our hands that we may study it out and come to a sound conclusion. That is the hope of this writing.

## Chapter Ten

### The Annihilation of Satan

Ezekiel 28:11-19 Moreover the word of יהוה came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith Adonay יהוה; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of Elohim; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of Elohim; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of Elohim: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt* thou *be* any more.

Isa 47:14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: *there shall* not *be* a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to sit before it.

Some have held to the idea that this text is referring only to the king of Tyrus, but we must ask, Was the king of Tyrus *created*; was he in the heavenly mountain of Elohim; did he walk up and down in the midst of the stones of fire? No human being ever met such an exalted description. While it may be true that the haughty king of ancient Tyre fits the *type* of character of such self-exaltation, it is more fully an allegory of the proud and arrogant Satan, who is also depicted allegorically as the serpent in the garden (Gen 3:14, 15). Upon one occasion, even Simon Peter became a type of Satan (Mat 16:23). So we cannot limit the literal application of this text to the king of Tyre. Hasatan is even typified as the king of Babylon who is also brought to destruction; but take note that he is finally called by his name before his fall from his exalted position in the heavenly kingdom.

Isaiah 14:12-17) How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of Elohim: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, *Is* this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners?

The above accounts are parabolic; no less figurative than the story of Lazarus, Abraham and the rich man. The remarkable description of the kings of Tyre and Babylon are superhuman. The closing scenes of the great drama of the ages has to do with the fall of spiritual Babylon, whose name means confusion, of which Yahweh is not the Author. He never was, and He never shall be. Let's piece this puzzle together by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Revelation 12:7-10 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our Elohyim, and the power of his Messiah: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our Elohyim day and night.

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

Luke 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Most commentators refuse to consider that this is a reference to Satan, the real, though unseen ruler of all successive world powers. This passage tells the story of the beginning of sin in the universe. It is remarkable that scholars would confine the Ezekiel and Isaiah passages to a merely literal interpretation of those two human kings of antiquity, especially since the universal catastrophe therein predicted has never occurred, and indeed, has to do with the close of the times of the Gentiles and the setting up of the Messiah's Kingdom. It is comparable to the denial of the virgin birth because the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 uses the word *עלמה* (alma), which means a young lass or damsel: a maid. But it also means a virgin in the translation of the word, and is the prophecy declared fulfilled in Matthew 1:22, & 23. The proponents of the non-virgin birth of the Messiah claim that we are giving the Isaiah prophecy our own private interpretation even though Matthew elaborates on the fact that Miriam (Mary) had not been intimate with Joseph.

It is even more remarkable that others completely deny the existence of Hasatan, as though to acknowledge his existence somehow constitutes worship of him. Many atheists admit to the historical personage of Yahshua, but do not worship Him. These deniers of Hasatan thus cannot consider the spiritual application to the allegorical prophecies of the kings of Babylon and Tyre in spite of the dual fact that neither of those human kings met the phenomenal criteria, nor was there a fulfillment of the graphic details of their destruction. They, like the non-virgin birth advocates, must stand in open rejection of the Word of the Almighty that goes into great detail to describe the arch-enemy of our souls. May we consider well the following comparisons of the sacred Scriptures that we may finally discover the truth of this serious matter.

Isaiah 14:13-15 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of Elohyim: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Psalms 48:1, 2 Great *is* *היה*, and greatly to be praised in the city of our Elohyim, *in* the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Genesis 3:4, 5 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For Elohyim doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as elohym, knowing good and evil.

Ezekiel 28:8-9 They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of *them that are* slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I *am* Elohyim? but thou *shalt be* a man, and no elohym, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.

This last passage states clearly that יהוה will slay the subject of these metaphorical prophecies. This word for slay (הרג harag) means to destroy, the same word for perish, or bring to an end. Not even Satan can escape the destroying hand of Yahweh, and he will one day surely meet his just demise.

Ezekiel 28:18, 19 Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Malachi 4:3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith יהוה of hosts.

What does *never* mean? Perhaps we should consult Brother Noah: Noah Webster that is, in his 1828 Dictionary: Not ever; not at any time; at no time. It refers to the past or the future. This man was never at Calcutta; he will never be there.

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### *In the Final Analysis*

If we can see that the kings of Tyrus and Babylon were merely types of Hasatan, and therefore could not possibly meet the fantastic conditions of their prophecies in every detail, then our eyes shall be opened to the final outcome of the adversary and all who follow him. They will come to an end and *never be* (exist) any more. They all will perish and be utterly destroyed. The entire universe will be cleansed of sin and sinners. There will be only peace and harmony. No devil will be Left Behind to mar the joy of the redeemed. He'll be destroyed right here on planet earth in the final conflagration, along with all who have followed him.

We have thus presented the evidence. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we have permitted the Word to be its own interpreter. His Word declares that He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He said that sinners will surely die, and it is the devil, the father of lies who says that sinners do not surely die. Let us not perpetuate the lies of the devil by parroting what others may say. The dire wage of sin is death dear Friend, not eternal life in a torturous fire. May the merciful Father bless you as you consider His Truth. Feel free to write to me at [roebenshalom@gmail.com](mailto:roebenshalom@gmail.com), or [strongholdinthestorm@gmail.com](mailto:strongholdinthestorm@gmail.com).

*In Messiah's never ending love,  
Brother Roeben Shalom.*

שלום