

AN INDUCTIVE STUDY OF HELL:
A SEARCH FOR LITERALNESS

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The introduction points out that traditionally, Hell has always been referred to as the place of the punishment of the wicked. By the nineteenth century the rebellion against the literality of Hell had mushroomed into a gigantic antforce. Thus the purpose of this paper is to depict the Biblical view of Hell. The writer takes the normal-literal approach. Finally, the paper is based upon an exegetical approach of the writer's own translation of selected Scriptures.

In Chapter 1, the meaning and misconceptions about a literal Hell are discussed. Hell begins in the intermediate state (Luke 16:19-31) and climaxes with the resurrection of the dead when both body and soul/spirit are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:13-15). Furthermore, this chapter also deals with the misconceptions concerning a literal Hell (i.e., Hell is only on this earth, annihilation of the wicked and restoration of the wicked).

According to Chapter 2, the terms ταρταρώσας, ἡ ἄβυσσος and κατώτερος are probably not references to Hell. However, when ἄδης refers to the immaterial part of man and is pictured as a literal place of torment, then Hell is a good translation. Gehenna is the place where the wicked will be punished permanently both body and soul. Therefore, γέεννα means Hell. The τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός will be the final abode and endless punishment of wickedness. Thus, the phrase refers to Hell.

In Chapter 3 the wicked dead before their bodily resurrection are discussed. In the New Testament, ἄδης is the place of punishment for the souls/spirits of the wicked. Individual judgment comes at the moment of death by personal consciousness (Luke 16:19-31). The present active participle ὑπάρχον with the phrase ἐν βασάνοις indicates the wicked in ἄδης are in a habitual condition of torment (Luke 16:23). Thus, the writer believes ἄδης refers to a literal Hell.

Chapter 4 deals with the wicked after their bodily resurrection. The everlasting punishment of the wicked reaches its climax in a literal τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός where all wickedness meets its final doom.

In the final analysis, no other conclusion can be reached than that there is a literal Hell just as there is a literal Heaven. The wicked will continue to suffer in endless punishment from the moment of death in a literal place where not the slightest mercy will be shown.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the strongest and most emphatic words in the English language is the word hell. It has been said that hell has become a conversational byword today. The phrase, "Go to hell," whether used in jest or in a serious way is a common expression. By this one does not mean, "Go to the place of punishment for the wicked after death," although this is how the dictionary defines hell. In the English language,

Hell is the strongest expletive available that carries the idea of ultimate deprivation, devastation, fear, torment, punishment, suffering, and loss. Whether or not the user of the term hell believes in an actual, literal hell is of little or no consequence. There is an inbuilt, inarticulate, yet understood bite in the very word itself.¹

By those who are enemies of Christianity hell has often been a feared and hated doctrine. The well-known agnostic, Colonel R. G. Ingersoll said,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The idea of a hell was born of revenge and brutality on the one side, and cowardice on the other. In my judgment the American people are too brave, too charitable, too generous, too magnanimous to believe in the infamous dogma of an eternal hell. (Applause.) I have no respect for any human being who believes in it. (Applause.) I have no respect for any man who preaches it. (Applause.) I have no respect for the man who will pollute the imagination of childhood with that infamous lie. I have no respect for the man who will add to the sorrows of this world with the frightful dogma. I have no respect for any man who endeavors to put that infinite cloud, that infinite

¹Jon E. Braun, Whatever Happened to Hell? (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979), p. 11.

shadow, over the heart of humanity. I want to be frank with you. I dislike this doctrine, I hate it, I despise it, I defy this doctrine. (Applause.)

An eminent theologian, describing hell, says, "There is no recounting up the million of ages the damned shall suffer. All arithmetic ends here"--and all sense, too! (Laughter.) "They shall have nothing to do in passing away this eternity but to conflict with torments. God shall have no other use or employment for them." These words were said by gentlemen who died Christians, and who are now in the harp business in the world to come.

The doctrine of hell is infamous beyond all power to express. I wish there were words that mean enough to express my feelings of loathing on this subject. What harm has it not done? What waste places has it not made? It has planted misery and wretchedness in this world; peoples the future with selfish joys and lurid abysses of eternal flame. But we are getting more sense every day. We begin to despise those monstrous doctrines.¹

These shocking current attitudes toward hell are relatively modern phenomena. For thousands of years the word hell had the most serious connotations. Philo, the Jewish apologist whose writings present a comprehensive understanding of the theological and intellectual life of the Jews of diaspora in Hellenistic Egypt, clearly indicated that the fate of the inhabitants of hell is eternal. No matter what the exact meaning of hell may be, Philo, who lived at the beginning of the Christian Era, enunciated the view generally held by both the orthodox Jews and the Judeo-Christian community of that period. Hell was accepted as endless.²

¹R. G. Ingersoll, Complete Lectures of Col. R. G. Ingersoll (Chicago: J. Regan & Co., n.d.), pp. 48, 57, 59.

²Leslie H. Woodson, Hell and Salvation (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973), p. 43.

More than 650 years ago, Dante, writing in his The Inferno, spoke of the souls he saw and heard in the seventh circle of his multi-layered hell:

I saw many herds of naked souls, who were all lamenting very miserably; and there seemed imposed upon them a diverse law.

Some were lying supine upon the ground; some sitting all crouched up; and others roaming incessantly.

Those that moved about were much more numerous; and those that were lying in torment were fewer, but uttered louder cries of pain.

Over all the great sand, falling slowly, rained dialated flakes of fire, like those of snow in Alps without a wind.

As the flames which Alexander, in those hot regions of India, saw fall upon his host, enlite to the ground;

whereat he with his legions took care to tramp the soil, for the fire was more easily extinguished while alone;

so fell the eternal heat, by which the sand was kindled, like tinder under flint and steel, redoubling the pain.

Ever restless was the dance of miserable hands, now here, now there, shaking off the flesh burning.¹

Not only were the Medieval churchmen in complete agreement with the severity of the doctrine as understood by the early church, but the later reformers also believed it. Both the Protestants and Roman Catholics continued this emphasis until the eighteenth century rebellion which came about in part by the excessive and stringent way in which hell was presented.² Some have accused Jonathan Edwards,

¹Dante Alighieri, The Inferno (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1937), p. 149.

²Woodson, Hell and Salvation, p. 41.

the renowned preacher of the eighteenth century, not only of this excessive use of hell but also of having real satisfaction in knowing the wicked would suffer untold anguish in it. However, a more thorough reading of his works reveals that the driving force of his preaching was a deep respect for the sovereignty of God and the desperate plight of the sinner. No one can deny that for Jonathan Edwards hell was a very serious and real doctrine which he said in no uncertain terms every unconverted person must face.

Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that it will not bear their weight and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight cannot discern them.

The bow of God's wrath is bent and the arrow made ready on the string and justice bends the arrow at your heart and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the pleasure of God, and that of an angry God without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked, his wrath towards you burns like fire, he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours.

It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell; you hang by a slender thread with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it; and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder.

There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will

actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. . . . If we knew that there was one person, and but one in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of the misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of: if we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But alas! Instead of one, how many it is likely will remember this discourse in hell!¹

By the nineteenth century the rebellion against hell had mushroomed into a gigantic antiforce which has intimidated many of the Christians who still believe in the doctrine today. It is significant that only in the last two hundred years has there been any marked resistance to the doctrine of hell.²

Braun gives four basic reasons why hell has been denied by modern critics: the rise of humanistic thought, the doctrine of universalism, higher criticism and the doubting of the accuracy of the Scriptures and the secularization of public education.³

Under the label of humanism, man, created in the image of God was exalted into a position hitherto unknown. With his marvelous capacities and capabilities, man was elevated to new heights. He became the focal point of the universe--everything revolved around man. Humanism did not totally replace God; it displaced Him--"man moves up and in, while God drops down and out."⁴ As a result, the humanistic

¹Jonathan Edwards, The Works of President Edwards, 4 vols. (New York: Leavitt and Allen, n.d.), 4:315-21.

²Woodson, Hell and Salvation, p. 41.

³Braun, Whatever Happened to Hell?, p. 32.

⁴Ibid., p. 35.

theologian must undertake a complete revamping of all orthodox Christian doctrines and in particular the doctrine of eternal punishment. Hell and humanism just could not get along together. Highly exalted man just cannot experience the torments of hell eternally. It is thus presumed that man, the precious creature, cannot possibly do anything bad enough to warrant such punishment. Moreover, the humanists believe that God could not bear "the eternal loss of even one of the marvelous man-creatures."¹ Retributive punishment is thought to be neither necessary nor is man's heart any longer, "more deceitful than all else . . . desperately sick" (Jer 17:9). Therefore, if God punishes man at all, his punishment must be limited to corrective and educational purposes only. From this idea, has come the modern theory that the fear of punishment is not a real deterrent to bad behavior.²

Another factor in the modern decline of hell is universalism. According to this view, there is hope for the wicked beyond the grave. It is a tempting theory to believe there is no serious penalty for the wicked and everything will be straightened out shortly. This is the appeal of universalism. "This hell thing is wrong, needless, peripheral or at least ultimately inconsequential. Everything is going to be fine."³

¹Ibid., p. 36.

²Ibid., p. 37.

³Ibid., pp. 40-41.

The third factor in the denial of hell by modern man is higher criticism. Biblical higher criticism flourished in the twentieth century in the person of Rudolf Bultmann, perhaps more than anyone else. With his bits and pieces theory concerning the origin of the books of the Bible he altered the contents of the Scripture. According to this theory, the Bible was originally in oral form. Slowly the bits and pieces of oral material were gathered and put into written form. However, by the time they were put into written form and into the Bible, they were historically inaccurate. The Gospels were mostly myths, and those sayings which deal with eternal torment were merely the invention of the early church who edited the text.

Yet even the higher critics have had to admit that the Bible as it actually reads, authentic or not, teaches the eternal punishment of the wicked. Bultmann concedes that as Jesus is presented in the New Testament, "He expects the resurrection of the dead (Mark 12:18-27) and the judgment (Luke 11:31ff). He shares the idea of a fiery hell into which the damned are to be cast (Mark 9:43-48; Matthew 10:28)."

Today, few (if any) even among the most radical critics, question whether the Bible teaches eternal punishment. Rather, they maintain that those sayings in the Bible have no authority, and their authenticity must be rejected because of the manner in which they made their way into the Bible.¹

Finally, Braun believes hell is denied by modern man because of the prevailing philosophy of public education. The foundation of public education is philosophical rationalism which "perpetuates a philosophical framework committed

¹Braun, Whatever Happened to Hell?, pp. 54-55.

to calling all phenomena, ideologies, theories, and doctrines confronted by man's experience to be accountable to human reason."¹ Rationalism must reject hell. Fallen human reason will not and cannot understand or accept hell.²

Yet the hard facts indicate clearly that God-rejecting, hell- and heaven-denying rationalism, bursting in through the door of secular public education has gained a pervasive dominance in our society and thus becomes an incredibly powerful force in hell's demise.³

In contrast, the Bible presents a far more sobering representation of hell. The Scriptures indicate the nature of hell's punishment, but they nevertheless, point out the main purpose of hell is to warn the sinner to flee from the wrath of God by finding in Christ a sure place of refuge.⁴

Thus it is the aim of this paper to depict the Bible's view of hell. The writer believes the best way to approach the subject is by the normal-literal approach just as one would any other subject in the Scriptures. If this is not adhered to, then it is easy to allegorize and speculate concerning things which are not within the limits of the Scripture. Also, this paper will take an exegetical approach of selected Scriptures which are concerned with the subject of hell, paying particular attention to the two Greek words ᾗδης and γέεννα.

¹Ibid., p. 59.

²Ibid., p. 61.

³Ibid., pp. 62-63.

⁴William Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 201.

In the first chapter, the meaning and misconceptions of hell will be analyzed. Then in the second chapter the Greek terms which have been translated hell will be viewed in a general way. Next the writer will deal with selected Scriptures concerning ᾠδης (Chapter III), and then γέεννα in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V will conclude with a brief summary of what the Bible teaches concerning the literalness of hell.

The Scripture which is used in the major points of discussion are the writer's own translations from the third edition of the United Bible Societies' The Greek New Testament.

CHAPTER I

THE MEANING AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF HELL

The Meaning

Webster's dictionary defines hell as:

1a. A place or state of the dead or of the damned: as (1) a place usually under the ground in which the dead continue to exist: netherworld, Hades, Sheol (2) a netherworld in which the damned must suffer everlasting punishment (as by fire) and malevolent beings live under the rule of the devil--called also Gehenna (3) a spiritual state of lasting separation from God or of complete isolation: eternal death. 2a. A place or state of misery, torment or wickedness.¹

According to The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, hell is:

The abode or state of being of evil spirits or souls that are damned to postmortem punishment. Derived from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to conceal" or "to cover," the term hell originally designated the torrid regions of the underworld, though in some regions the underworld is cold and dark . . . a place of eternal damnation for those who have lived a life of sin and who according to the Apostle Paul deny God.²

Traditional View

In the days of Jesus and the period immediately following in the Ancient Church, the idea which surrounded the term was that of "final damnation and unutterable anguish

¹Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, s.v. "Hell."

²The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v. "Hell."

for the wicked. When Jesus used the term, it was always in that sense."¹

Of all the more traditional concepts relating to the doctrine of hell, everlasting punishment of the wicked has always been included. Gibbon insisted that one of the major reasons for the growth of the ancient church was her belief in endless torment for those outside her fellowship.²

Another important concept in the doctrine of hell or the place of everlasting punishment is that there are different degrees of punishment. For some of the wicked their conscious existence in hell will be more tolerable than others (Matt 11:22-24). According to Luke 12:47-48, Jesus again speaking of eschatological judgment says those having known the way but having not walked in it, will be severely beaten, while those who having not known the way will receive a lighter punishment. Romans 2:12-16 indicates that those who sinned without the law will perish without the law; those who sinned under the law will be judged by the law. Moreover, Hebrews 10:29 speaks of sorer punishment for those who have trodden underfoot the Son of God than for those who have set at naught the law of Moses.³

¹Woodson, Hell and Salvation, p. 22.

²Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 7 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), 2:142.

³Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, pp. 95-96.

Writer's View

At this point, the writer's view is appropriate. According to the Bible, hell is the place of everlasting punishment for the wicked (Matt 25:46), who are in conscious existence (Luke 16:23-24) in a state of torment (Luke 16:24-25). The punishments are of different degrees, some being more tolerable than others as seen in Matthew's judgment scene (Matt 11:22, 28).

It is a fire of everlasting duration which was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). This must be a reference to hell as the judgment takes place at the end of history. Jesus is talking about an everlasting fire which is a term used exclusively concerning Gehenna (Mark 9:43-48) and the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:10).

It begins in the intermediate state (Luke 16:19-31) and climaxes with the resurrection of the wicked dead when both body and soul/spirit are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:13-15). Moreover, the Lake of Fire and Gehenna are either synonymous or very similar as both body and soul/spirit are cast into it/them (Matt 10:28; Rev 20:5-15). Prior to the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20, the souls/spirits of the wicked dead are conscious (Luke 16), while the bodies await in the graves to be resurrected (Rev 20).

Therefore, if the soul/spirit is already in conscious existence (Luke 16), Revelation 20 must denote the resurrection of the body which will then along with the

soul/spirit of the wicked be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire. Also, both the Matthew and Revelation passages must be concerned with the eschatological judgment when both body and soul/spirit of the wicked will be judged. Thus both γέεννα and the λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς speak of future judgment. It appears that either γέεννα and the λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς are the same or similar. It is unlikely that γέεννα and λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς would coexist.

Finally, the writer believes that the everlasting punishment for the wicked must necessarily begin immediately following death for the judgment for the wicked comes after death, as seen in Luke 16, while the final judgment of both body and soul/spirit takes place at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Misconceptions

Hell On Earth

Those who believe that hell is on this earth agree that there must be some form of negative consequence for sin because justice demands some retribution for evil. However, they believe those consequences are specifically a this-life affair. The possibility of eternal punishment in a future existence is either dismissed as highly improbable or ignored because it does not seem logical.¹

¹Braun, Whatever Happened to Hell?, pp. 12-13.

Figure of speech

Hell is seen as a condition that deviates from the purpose for which one is conditioned. It is any place of disorder, chaos or unrest as it affects one's life. This belief reduces hell to nothing more than a figure of speech, meaning a poorly organized life. "A person's life sort of shifts into hell every time there is an out of order sign on some aspect of life. But of course, if things are gotten together hell ceases."¹

Eternal remorse

Another related view relegates hell to the remorse of a life of failure. "Hell isn't merely paved with good intentions; it is walled and roofed with them."² Eternal regrets for a life which was lived in vain, remorse for evil deeds and a loathing of oneself for not using the opportunities to do good--this is hell.³

Hard life

The reference to one's hard lot in life as "going through hell" is so common that modern man is satisfied with the assumption that hell is nothing more. Hell is equated with being forced to live in poverty or squalor, struggling through war, or living with a bad marriage partner.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 13-14.

²Woodson, Hell and Salvation, p. 30.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 30-31.

Universalism or Restoration

According to this theory all men will finally be saved and ultimately no one will be lost. Those who advocate this point of view believe that punishment is remedial. Since God's nature is love, the mercy of the Lord is not satisfied with either partial salvation (annihilation) or everlasting punishment.¹

Brief history and belief of universalism

The time will come when all sinful creatures whether men or angels, will be purged from all corruption and restored to the image and favor of God. Other universalists rest their hope of the ultimate salvation of all men on the efficacy of the death of Christ. They infer that if He died for all, all will be saved.²

Although other Scriptures are used to support the idea of the ultimate salvation of all men, the universalists appeal to the following six basic passages:

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (John 12:32).

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life (Rom 5:18).

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the

¹Ibid., p. 55.

²Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), 3:727-28.

mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:20-21).

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him (Eph 1:9-10).

For as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:22-28).

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:9-11).

The first great advocate of this theory was Origen, who believed that fire is purifying and quoted Malachi 3:2-3 to prove this point to the pagan Celsus. Origen even extended the hope of redemption to the rebel angels and Satan.¹

Another defender of this theory was Gregory of Nyssa, who believed that the punishment of the wicked is

¹Woodson, Hell and Salvation, p. 55.

always remedial and illustrated this by comparing hell to a surgeon's knife which even though it is painful is corrective. However, it was not until the seventeenth century that the concept of universalism became prominent again. Then in the eighteenth century, William Law and Tennyson were influenced by universalism as was Friedrich Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century. More recently, Karl Barth believed that "all men are elect and redeemed in Christ and need only to know this first hand."¹ Emil Brunner rejected Barthian universalism, but held to the view that there is a second chance for those who do not accept Christ in this life. They will be given an opportunity in the world to come.²

Universalism answered

Leslie Weatherhead reasoned that: "The Good Shepherd at last will bring every soul into the fold, for he himself gave men the picture of the Good Shepherd not content with 99 percent of successes, but seeking the lost sheep until he finds it."³

However, what Weatherhead misunderstood was that not all people are among the sheep; Jesus was referring to those who were already in the sheepfold of God (John 10). The sheep that strayed was one of the Shepherd's own which "bore

¹Ibid., pp. 55-56.

²Ibid., p. 56.

³Ibid., p. 59.

the brand of its master."¹ In the judgment scene of Matthew 25, all the sheep are saved but the goats are lost.²

Actual attempts by universalists to explain the meaning of Matthew 25:41, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," are rare. The most common method is to dismiss the verse, as Schleiermacher did by saying it is figurative. On the other hand, universalists are especially attracted to some of Paul's writings, such as Romans 5:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:22ff. However, when Paul says, "the free gift came upon all men unto justification" (Rom 5:18), universalists sever this from the preceding verse in which the "all" are clearly described as those who have received the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. Further, when Paul affirms that "in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22), no notice is taken of the fact mentioned in the following verse, that not all men are "in Christ." The clause, "they that are Christ's at his coming," implies that there are some who are not "Christ's at his coming."³

Annihilation or Conditional Immortality

According to this theory, the punishment of the wicked is the extinction of existence. Few of its adherents advocate strict annihilation of the substance of the body

¹Woodson, Hell and Salvation, p. 59.

²Ibid.

³William G. T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), 2:674.

and soul. Some of the defenders believe in conditional immortality which contends that "the soul is not naturally immortal."¹ It can be immortal only through redemption in Christ. Those who are not redeemed lose all consciousness at physical death, and this is the spiritual death mentioned in the Scripture. Just as the death of the body is the extinction of sensation, so the death of the soul/spirit is the extinction of consciousness.²

Brief history and beliefs of annihilation

Conditional immortality or the annihilation of the wicked has never been a widely held view of hell. This may be due partly to the fact that most people who give serious consideration to the doctrine of hell either accept the orthodox-traditional view of everlasting punishment of the wicked or reject the entire doctrine and believe no one will be lost. In regard to hell, it has been and is almost always an either/or position, leaving no room for any kind of eternal discontinuance.³

Despite this there have always been small groups and individuals who have held to the doctrine of annihilation; the most prominent groups are the Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. This belief arose as early as the second century. Justin Martyr believed that "souls both die

¹Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 2:690.

²Ibid.

³Woodson, Hell and Salvation, p. 49.

and are punished."¹ Tatian said the "ungenerate soul tends downward towards matter and dies with flesh."² Irenaeus suggested that the ones who refuse God destroy their chances of eternal existence.³

Those who have advocated this position and whose teachings have influenced the modern world include Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Franz Delitzsch, Henry Drummond and Robert Dale. Another who believed that extinction was the reward of the unredeemed was Paul Tillich.⁴ This modern theologian clarified his view in this manner:

Eternity as a quality of the divine life cannot be attributed to a being which as condemned is separated from the divine life. Where the divine love ends, being ends; condemnation can only mean that the creature is left to the non-being it has chosen. The symbol "eternal death" is more expressive when interpreted as self-exclusion from eternal life and consequently from being.⁵

According to some annihilationists, punishment will endure for a period depending upon the degree of evil done by the wicked and then cease. If the created order is to become fully God's in the age to come, evil and its penalty must be eradicated from that new world. Every enemy of God's and righteousness must be totally and finally destroyed if God is to be victorious. Evil cannot be permitted

¹Ibid., p. 50.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 38.

⁵Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 2:284.

to continue to exist even in the state of punishment because its very existence would negate God's full and complete victory over all that have opposed Him. Often a distinction is made between the consequences of sin, which are endless and the suffering which terminates at some point beyond death.¹

There are also annihilationists who believe that:

Extinction is the result of the disintegrating effect of sin gradually worked out in the life of the evil doer. Man by his wickedness eventually destroys himself until there is nothing left to live.²

Some believe that during the intermediate state, the time between the moment of death and the bodily resurrection, there will be a second probation period. They confine the after-death opportunity to be saved to the intermediate state. However, this is not true of all who believe in a second probation period. For example, the Russellites believe that those who have died have gone out of existence at death, but will be recreated. They will reappear at the end of history with the very same thoughts in their heads and the very same words in their mouths that were there at the moment of dissolution. When the millennium comes, they will receive a second chance to be saved. But whether one believes in a second chance to be saved during the intermediate state or at the time of the resurrection, in either case, the belief is that after death there will still be another opportunity to be saved. All stress the belief that

¹Woodson, Hell and Salvation, pp. 50-51.

²Ibid., p. 51.

the fairness of God demands that He gives men a chance to be saved from death. Those who believe the second chance will occur during the intermediate state, generally appeal to 1 Peter 3:18-19 and 1 Peter 4:6, which are interpreted to mean that Christ, in the period between His death and resurrection, went to the underworld and extended the invitation of salvation to the souls/spirits of the lost. Moreover, those who believe in the second opportunity to be saved at the close of history, apply Scriptural passages regarding the restoration of Israel to the future restoration and probation of men in general. They believe that this second chance will give men the opportunity to make good use of their past experiences. However, should they choose to live in sin, their punishment will be annihilation.¹

As a result, annihilationists believe those passages, where ἀπόλλυμι is used in connection with the punishment of the wicked, refer to the extinction of being. Further, they believe the phrase αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων merely means age-long and not forever. At this point, the writer believes this is all that needs to be said concerning ἀπόλλυμι and αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. These two Greek concepts will be discussed in a later chapter under the appropriate Scripture.

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, pp. 105-06.

Annihilationism answered

Secular logic

The major problem for annihilationists is trying to explain how extinction can be punishment to those whose consciousness is extinct. How does one know he is being punished when there is no conscious being to experience the punishment?¹

Thus even secular logic rejects the idea of annihilation. Not only is heaven unreal if hell is unreal, but it is also irrelevant. If the reality or unreality of heaven is all that is involved in the question of a future life, then according to secular logic, it is no issue at all. For what difference would belief in heaven make? The most obvious answer would be that it gives comfort in the face of death. But comfort against what? For what difference would heaven make if annihilation is the alternative? If the alternative to heaven is annihilation, one would not know what he is missing. Therefore, heaven is irrelevant if annihilation is the alternative to heaven. As to the prospects of one's own annihilation or survival, it is appealing to believe that those whom he has loved and lost will once again enjoy his fellowship in the life to come. But again, if annihilation is the only alternative, one will not know what he is missing if this should be the case.²

¹Braun, Whatever Happened to Hell?, pp. 49-50.

²M. Colin Grant, "The Secular Logic of Eternal Life," Encounter 41 (Autumn 1980):348-49.

The Bible

It must be said that the annihilationist's interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-19 is indeed "a very precarious exegesis of a most difficult passage."¹ Even if the interpretation that Christ extended the invitation of salvation to the wicked in the underworld were true, it still would not prove the second-chance theory unless it is assumed that missionary activity is still continually going on in the realm of the wicked dead. It would also be difficult to see why, passing by multitudes of other lost souls, Christ would have selected for His mission work those souls/spirits, namely, the antediluvians, who while still alive on this earth had the opportunity to repent (Gen 6:3; Heb 11:7).

1 Peter 4:5-6 makes it plain that

the dead to whom the gospel is preached are those who when Jesus comes to judge will already have died. The text does not mean that the gospel is preached to men while they are in the state of death, the intermediate state.²

In addition, those who believe the second opportunity occurs in the millennium misuse passages concerning the restoration of Israel to support their view. The leap from Israel's restoration to a future probation for the wicked is so gigantic and so exegetically unsound that no further comment is necessary. After death, comes judgment, not future probation and then annihilation (Heb 9:27). The Scriptures

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 107.

²Ibid.

admonish men that now is the day of salvation, not some future date, whether it be in the intermediate state or at the close of history (Ps 95:7-8; 2 Cor 6:2).¹

Summary

There is little question that the proponents of a hell, which embraces the terrors of a punishment of the wicked that are everlasting, are Biblical. Some may contend that the Bible suggests other possible interpretations, but one must admit, in the final analysis, that the doctrine of everlasting punishment is indeed Biblical.

The common doctrine is that the conscious existence of the soul after the death of the body is unending; that there is no repentance or reformation in the future world; that those who depart this life unreconciled to God, remain forever sinful and miserable.²

¹Ibid.

²Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3:869.

CHAPTER II

AN OVERVIEW OF THE VARIOUS DESIGNATIONS FOR HELL

Since there is more than one Greek word translated hell in the New Testament, a clarification of terms is needed. Those which will not help in the understanding of the literalness of hell will not be discussed any further than the confines of this chapter. Further, the Bible also mentions other terms, such as the furnace of fire (Matt 13:42), everlasting fire (Matt 25:41), and the lake of fire (Rev 20:14). These are discussed in chapters one and four as being either similar or synonymous.

Cast into Tartarus

The first aorist participle, ταρταρώσας, occurs only in 2 Peter 2:4. However, it was a well-known concept in extra-Biblical Greek, such as in the writings of Homer and the classical authors. In Greek mythology, Tartarus (noun form of the word) was a murky abyss below Hades. It was the place to which Titans, who were a pre-Olympian dynasty of gods, were banished.¹ A compound form of the same word was

¹James L. Boyer, "Notes on 2 Peter and Jude" (Syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, 1977), p. 19.

used of Zeus inflicting punishment upon Cronos.¹ In this connection, Lenski believes Peter uses ταρταρώσας because his readers were converted pagans.² However, in the Peter passage, it is used of the rebellious angels who were being punished by God.³

For if God spared not angels, when sinning, but casting them with chains of blackness into Tartarus, delivered them as being kept unto judgment (2 Pet 2:4).

This passage being with a first class condition, εἰ γάρ, however, the actual apodosis does not occur until verse 9, οἶδεν κύριος, which takes its meaning from verse 8. Verse 8 speaks first of Lot's rescue and then of the punishment of the wicked. The absence of the article with ἀγγέλων puts a stronger emphasis on angels: "even angels when they sinned were not spared."⁴

The aorist participle, ἁμαρτησάντων, is probably an adverb of time--although the attributive is possible. As such it would point to a particular occasion when the angels sinned.⁵

¹E. H. Plumptre, The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, ed. J. J. S. Perowne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1883), p. 179.

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), p. 310.

³Ibid.

⁴Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 120.

⁵Boyer, "Notes on 2 Peter and Jude," p. 19.

Meyer believes ταρταρώ is not to be equated with either ἄδης or γέεννα but is used to designate a place of preliminary custody. Also he believes the aorist active indicative, παρέδωκεν, implies the idea of punishment in regards to angels.¹

However, Lenski maintains that the English translation of ταρταρώσας, "cast them down to hell," is entirely correct. Moreover, "Hades and Gehenna are hell, the place of all the damned, which (also) is Tartarus, a term which any Greek would understand in this sense."²

It is the writer's belief that Lenski's conclusion is unwarranted. The passage specifies that it is angels who are cast into Tartarus and also specifies the time: "when they sinned." In addition, this passage says nothing about the everlasting punishment of the wicked. Peter uses the verb ταρταρώσας as

appropriate to the place where superhuman beings (angels) are kept for judgment. It is important to note that these angels are locked up in a place (Tartarus), in chains unto judgment. Therefore, they cannot be understood to embrace all angels who fell with Satan, for many of these obviously are still loose and active.³

As far as the text goes, it indicates a difference of some kind between the angels who are thus imprisoned,

¹Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude, 11 vols., ed. John E. Huther, trans. J. Gloag, D. B. Croom, Clark H. Iren (Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1979), 10:406.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude, p. 310.

³Boyer, "Notes on 2 Peter and Jude," p. 19.

and the demons who torment and harass men on earth but it would be hazardous to dogmatize with undue definiteness, on the strength of this passing allusion, as to the condition of the inhabitants of the unseen world.¹

Thus this passage is concerned with the imprisonment of a particular group of angels, who at a particular time (when they sinned) were co-signed to Tartarus to await judgment.

The Abyss

Originally ἡ ἀβυσσος was an adjective which meant to be filled up but never completely covered: "unfathomably deep." In later Greek it described "the depths of original time, the primitive ocean, and the world of the dead."²

According to Gebhardt, the expression, τῆς ἀβύσσου is based upon a rabbinical representation which originated from the Old Testament statements found in such verses as Psalm 107:26, גִּרְדוּ תְהוֹמוֹת, "they sink to the abysses," and Isaiah 14:15, אֵל-שְׁאוֹל תִּרְדָּ אֶל-יִרְכַּת־בְּוֹר, "Howbeit unto Sheol you shall be brought down unto the innermost recesses of the pit." This view also maintains that under the earth there is an abyss or bottomless pit with a lake or sea in which brimstone and fire seethe together. From this abyss comes a channel with a mouth after the manner of a cistern--a narrow passage as from a barely visible spring to the surface of the earth. This pit, like an ordinary cistern, can

¹Plumptre, The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, p. 179.

²Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "ἀβυσσος," by Joachim Jeremias.

be opened and closed or sealed. As such the abyss in its signification is a perfect antithesis to heaven.¹ This is the picture the Bible presents, when ἡ ἄβυσσος is the abode of demons in Luke 8:31 and Revelation 9:1, 2; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3.

Phrear is an old word for well or cistern (Luke 14:5; John 4:11f) and it occurs in Revelation 9:1f for the mouth of the abyss which is pictured as a cistern with a narrow orifice at the entrance.²

In the New Testament, ἡ ἄβυσσος occurs ten times. Each time, with the exception of Romans 10:7, it is used in connection with the devil, demons, or the antichrist. When it is used in this way in the book of Revelation, ἡ ἄβυσσος is the scene of demonic activity which comes out of it to plague the earth during the tribulation. One is struck with the methodical way in which ἡ ἄβυσσος is opened for a certain length of time and then sealed when that particular event comes to a close.

Romans 10:7

"Or who will go down into the abyss? that is, to bring up Christ from the dead." When Paul wrote these words, Christ had already risen from the dead. Then to what is Paul referring to by εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον? Robertson believes

¹Gebhardt, Lehrbegriff d. Apok., cited by Friedrich Dusterdieck, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Revelation of John, 11 vols., trans. and ed. Henry E. Jacobs (Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1979), 11:292.

²Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 6 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), 6:361.

ἡ ἄβυσσος refers to Hades/Sheol and uses Acts 2:27, 31 to support his view: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades), . . . He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (hades), neither his flesh did see corruption."¹

However, the context indicates that Paul is referring to Christ's death and resurrection. In verse 9 which follows, as often is the case in the Scriptures, Christ's death and resurrection are mentioned together in regards to salvation: "and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom 10:9). Therefore, the writer believes Lenski is correct in his interpretation that: "there is no reason at this place for a reference to hell or to Christ's descent to hell. The reference is to Christ's resurrection, to his going down into the abyss of death and the grave and his being brought up from the dead in his glorious resurrection."²

Luke 8:31

"And they besought him that he would not order them to go away into the abyss." Swete believes εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον ἀπελθεῖν means a lower depth here than in Romans 10:7. In this passage, τὴν ἄβυσσον, designates the abode for demons.³

¹Ibid., 4:388.

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul to the Romans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 653.

³Henry Barclay Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1907), p. 114.

Another view of the meaning of abyss combines τὴν ἄβυσσον with the word βασανίστης, meaning torment, in Luke 8:28. Thus, arriving at the conclusion "it is the place of eternal torment for the devil and his angels."¹ This is possible theologically, but exegetically the context infers τὴν ἄβυσσον is the abode of demons.

This word ἄβυσσος is used in Scripture for the abode of damned spirits. This is certainly meant here We must distinguish between ἄβυσσος the ad interim place of torment, and the lake of fire into which the devil will be cast by Christ at the end: see Rev. 20:3, 10.²

Revelation 9:1-2

In this passage, ἡ ἄβυσσος occurs three times:

And the fifth angel trumpeted and I saw a star having fallen out of heaven unto the earth and to him was given the key of the shaft of the abyss.

And he opened the shaft of the abyss; and a smoke went up out of the shaft of the abyss as smoke of a great furnace and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the shaft (Rev 9:1-2).

Revelation represents ἡ ἄβυσσος as entered by a shaft or well, ῥέας (cf. John 4:11); the mouth of which is kept under lock and key. The star is pictured as having fallen or dropped in a place where it is able to use the key. It is given the authority to open the mouth of the abyss. However, God is in control of the abyss and the demon-locusts which ensue from ἡ ἄβυσσος. This divine

¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 473.

²Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament, 4 vols., rev. E. F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), 1:519.

permission is seen in the expression, ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἡ κλεῖς, "was given to him, (the star) the key." As soon as the star unlocks the mouth of ἡ ἄβυσσος, smoke comes out of the shaft of the abyss and darkens the sun and the air. According to Joel 2:20, the sun's face is hidden. In the Revelation 9:1-2 passage, the sky was darkened by reason of (the ἐκ being causal) the smoke which was emitted from the shaft or well of ἡ ἄβυσσος like smoke coming from a chimney of a furnace.¹ Out of this smoke come hordes of locusts. From the ensuing description in Revelation 9, these weird creatures have been identified as demonic or at least demon-like in their activities. Robertson says, "The plague of demon-locusts is here turned loose."² Thus, ἡ ἄβυσσος is again associated with demons.

Revelation 9:11

"They have over them a king, the angel of the abyss, the name for him in Hebrew is Abaddon and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon." In Proverbs 30:27 it states that the locusts have no king, but this is not true of these demonic locusts. For their king the locusts of the abyss have the angel, τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἀβύσσου, whose orders they obey. His name, Abaddon אֲבַדּוֹן, is used almost exclusively in the Wisdom literature (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Prov 15:11; 27:20). In the LXX (cf. Job 31:12) אֲבַדּוֹן is

¹Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John, p. 115.

²Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 6:361.

translated ἀπώλεια, meaning either general destruction or destruction in Sheol. Here in Revelation 9:11, destruction is in the deeper sense as if it is personified; hence, Ἀπολλυών, a present active masculine singular participle, is preferred to ἀπώλεια. The personification of Abaddon is known in the Talmud where six destroying angels are mentioned over whom preside $\eta\lambda\eta$ and $\gamma\iota\tau\alpha\eta$.¹ Robertson says it is not clear whether John means Satan when he uses Ἀπολλυών.² Nevertheless, it is clear that he uses ἡ ἄβυσσος as the abode of the king of the demonic locusts. Whether the king is Satan or an evil angel is beyond the scope of this paper to determine.

Revelation 11:7

"And whenever they had finished their witness the wild beast, the one coming up out of the abyss, will make war with them and will overcome them and will kill them." This is the same ἄβυσσος mentioned in Revelation 9:1, 2, 11. However, now a new character is introduced, τὸ θηρίον. The present attributive participle, ἀναβαῖνον, characterizes the beast--the one coming up out of τῆς ἀβύσσου. His abode is the abyss. The article τὸ θηρίον probably points out this is a definite wild beast who has his home in the abyss. Swete says the article "assumes that this figure is familiar to the reader." This θηρίον from τὴν ἄβυσσον is clearly a

¹Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John, pp. 119-20.

²Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 6:365.

power of imperial magnitude and great strength which derives its origin from beneath and opposes itself to Christ's witnesses.¹ Robertson concludes that nothing less than the antichrist will fit the picture here.² Therefore ἡ ἄβυσσος is pictured here as the abode of the wild beast, known as the antichrist during the tribulation.

Revelation 17:8

The wild beast which you saw, was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss and is going into perdition. And the ones dwelling on the earth, shall wonder, whose names have not been written on the scroll of life from the world's foundation, on seeing the beast that was and is and shall be present.

Here the beast is represented as having died of his wound, λύκ ἔστιν, and is going down to the abyss although he is about to return to life, μέλλει ἀναβαινέιν ἐκ τῆς ἄβύσσου before he meets his final doom, εἰς ἀπώλειαν.³

Lenski, who argues that τῆς ἄβύσσου is hell in this passage, comments concerning the wound of the beast:

How terrible the death-stroke was, is involved in "is not"; this phrase shows, it threw the beast into the abyss, and by means of its return it came up out of this abyss. Throughout these visions "the abyss" (articulated definite) is hell; no one has ever shown that more than this one abyss exists. To speak of several abysses, none of which is hell, is to play with fantasies. . . .

¹Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John, p. 137.

²Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 6:380.

³Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John, p. 218.

It is going into perdition; is on the way already. . . .
'Απώλεια is the standing term for the perdition of
hell.¹

However, this would mean John is using two terms
τῆς ἀβύσσου and ἀπώλειαν for hell in the same passage.
Rather it seems that the two terms are being distinguished;
ἀβύσσου for the abode of demons (Luke 8:31; Rev 9:1, 2), and
the beast (Rev 17:8) and ἀπώλειαν designating the beast's
(antichrist's) final doom or estate, the lake of fire (Rev
20:10).

Revelation 20:1-3

And I saw an angel coming down out of the heaven
having the key of the abyss and a great chain on his
hand.

And he seized the dragon, the serpent, the ancient
one, who is the devil and Satan and bound him for a
thousand years.

And cast him into the abyss and shut and sealed it
over him in order that he should no longer deceive the
nations until the thousand years are finished; after
these things it is necessary to loose him for a little
time.

The angel who is coming down from heaven with the
key, κλεῖν, of the abyss, also carries a manacle, ἄλυστις.
The fetter is of great size as it is intended to hold a
prisoner of extraordinary strength. This great chain lies
on the angel's hand, ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα, ready for use as soon as
he comes upon the dragon. Thus Satan is rendered powerless;
and bound with a great chain. He is flung down the shaft
into τὴν ἄβυσσον, the mouth of which is locked and made

¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of Revelation
(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), pp. 500,
502.

secure. A last precaution is taken to prevent his escape, ἐσφράγισεν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ; the abyss' mouth is sealed. The use of the seal here is parallel to the seal described in Matthew 27:66, "And they, having gone, made the burial place safe, sealing the stone, the guard with them." The purpose of sealing the entrance of τὴν ἄβυσσον was to prevent any attempt to escape unobserved. Thus the confinement of Satan to τὴν ἄβυσσον, is not so much a punitive as a precautionary measure; as long as he is in τὴν ἄβυσσον, he cannot deceive the nations, ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ ἔτι τα ἔθνη.¹ Therefore the ἄβυσσος is the abode of the dragon (Satan) during the millennium.

The Lower Parts of the Earth

The term κατώτερος is found only in Ephesians 4:9. "Now this He ascended, what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth." Three issues must be resolved in order to determine the meaning of this expression. First, is the comparative, κατώτερος, used like a superlative (meaning to descend into the lowest parts of the earth) or the positive (meaning Christ descended into the regions of the earth which lie below).²

Then what stress should be placed upon (μέρη). Hendriksen believes the omission of the word parts or

¹Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John, pp. 259-61.

²The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "κατώτερος," by H. Bietenhard.

regions, (μέρη) in p⁴⁶ D, G, is of minor importance, because it affects the meaning very slightly. For in the present context, after "he descended into," the neuter plural τὰ κατώτερα would still have to be translated "the lower regions," or something similar.¹ Moreover, most recent texts and translations retain μέρη.²

Finally, what kind of genitive is γῆς? If the genitive is appositional then the expression would mean the lower part--the earth. In this case the descent of Christ was for the purpose of the Incarnation. However, if the genitive is partitive or ablative, it would mean lower than the earth. In this case Lenski believes this is a reference to Christ's descent into hell,³ while other writers would see this to mean only a descent into the realm of the dead.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary maintains that "grammatical considerations alone cannot finally determine the significance of εἰς τὰ κατώτερα (μέρη) τῆς γῆς."⁴ Nevertheless, it is possible to make a decision by a careful examination of the passage.

¹William Hendriksen, Epistle to the Ephesians, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 189.

²A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 12 vols., ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 11:60.

³R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle of Ephesians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), pp. 591-92.

⁴A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 11:60.

The Parts Lower than the Earth

As far as the Greek alone is concerned, it is possible to explain this as meaning the lower earth. However, the contrast ὑπεράνω τῶν οὐρανῶν is against such a view. Also, the phrase is Hebraistic and it is a close parallel to that of Psalm 62:10 in the LXX, εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς (i.e., Sheol or Hades). The underworld is the region in question. "The descent is to the lowest, as the ascent is to the highest, that nothing may remain unvisited."¹

According to this view, Christ's descent into the underworld (which usually, but not always) is believed to have occurred during the interval between his death and resurrection. The purpose of His descent was: to release the souls of Old Testament saints from the Limbus Partum; or to proclaim grace to the lost (or at least to some of them) or to taunt Satan with the announcement of Christ's victory. In connection with the last alternative, it has been said "that at Christ's arrival the devils were so scared that some of them fell out of hell's window!"²

However there is nothing in the context, either of Ps 68:18 or of the Ephesian passage to suggest such a descent. Nor is there any hint of it in Phil. 2 or, for that matter, anywhere else in Paul's epistles. According to the Gospels the dying Christ committed his soul to the Father. On the day of the resurrection it was

¹J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, n.d.), p. 180.

²Hendriksen, Epistle to the Ephesians, in New Testament Commentary, p. 192.

restored to the body from which it had been taken. And as to 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6, these passages . . . when contextually interpreted do not teach anything of this nature. It is enough to say that they have reference to preaching to those, who though now dead, were still living on earth when they received God's warning.¹

The Lower Part Which Constitutes the Earth

Paul uses the second aorist indicative 'Ανέβη with the article τὸ to depict Christ's ascension. He then concludes that His ascension implied a previous descent κατέβη. If ἀνέβη is the ascension of Christ then κατέβη would be the descent (Incarnation) to the earth, and τῆς γῆς would be the genitive of apposition. Moreover, verse 10 argues the case for the incarnation, "The one who came down Himself is also the one who ascended high above all the heavens in order that He might fill all things."²

Possibly the best way to state this view is the unique way Hendriksen does. This writer agrees and believes it represents the correct interpretation of Ephesians 4:9. Accordingly, the phrase, "he ascended, what can it mean but that he had (previously) descended," does not seem logical at first.

An ascent does not necessarily presuppose a previous descent. The fact, for example, that Elijah ascended to heaven does not mean that he had previously come down from heaven. The solution lies in the fact Paul is not

¹Ibid.

²Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 4:536.

stating a general law but is speaking about Christ, and is saying that in his case ascent implied (previous) descent.¹

Christ, by his ascension, re-entered heaven as the Victor over Satan, sin and death. This would never have been possible had he not first descended from the glories of heaven to earth's suffering and shame. This is another way of saying that Christ's exaltation resulted from His humiliation--a humiliation which was so deep and ineffable that the Apostle Paul characterized it by saying, "he descended into regions lower than the earth." This expression in verse 9 is in direct contrast with "higher than all the heavens," in verse 10. Thus the two expressions are to be understood in relation to each other. Also, they should be so considered because they are concerned with the same person: "The One who in order that He might fill all things." Paul is the best commentator of this passage in Philippians 2:5-11: "He emptied himself . . . and became obedient even to the extent of death by a cross. Therefore God raised him to the loftiest heights."²

Another way at arriving at this same conclusion is as follows:

What we have here is a matter of simple apposition. The right translation is: "He descended into parts, viz: the earth" (Hodge). Calvin favors this interpretation, and so do many other commentators.

¹Hendriksen, Epistles to the Ephesians, in New Testament Commentary, pp. 191-92.

²Ibid., p. 192.

However, in the final analysis the difference between the view of Calvin, Hodge, etc., and the one which I, along with many others, favor, becomes minimal when this descent to earth is interpreted in its most comprehensive sense, namely, as an incarnation involving deep humiliation: "Jesus from his throne on high came into the world to die." Thus Calvin comments as follows on Christ's descent to the earth: "And at what time did God descend lower than when Christ emptied himself (Phil 2:7)? If ever there was a time when . . . God ascended gloriously it was when Christ was raised from our lowest condition on earth, and received into heavenly glory." Here the two views, Calvin's and the one I favor, though based on two different renderings of the text, coincide completely!¹

Hades

The etymology of the word ᾠδης is not certain. It may come from ἰδεῖν, meaning "to see" with the negative prefix and thus would denote the invisible. However, ᾠδης may have meant "gloom, gruesome."² In the New Testament, ᾠδης is mentioned ten times and only in the books of Matthew, Luke, Acts and Revelation.³

The Greek word ᾠδης was used by other peoples in the ancient world. Homer, the Greek poet, had Ulysses going down to Hades. The Roman poet, Virgil described the progress of Aeneas in the regions of Hades. For the Greeks and Romans, Hades was the abode of all the dead, the good and evil alike. It was located in "the very bowels of the earth," and was a happy place for no one. How grimly the

¹Hendriksen, Epistle to the Ephesians, in New Testament Commentary, p. 193.

²The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "ᾠδης," by H. Bietenhard.

³Ibid.

Greeks saw Hades can be seen in the words of the dead Achilles as he responded to Ulysses. Efforts to comfort him were made by bringing his former greatness before him.

Renowned Ulysses! think not death a theme
Of consolation; I had rather live
The servile hind (farmhand) for hire, and eat the bread
Of some man scantily himself sustained
Then sovereign empire hold o'er all the shades (departed spirits).¹

For the Greeks and Romans, Hades was sullen and dull. At best it was far from being as pleasant as the former life was at its worst. One's place in Hades was determined by how he had lived before death.²

Relation to Sheol

In the LXX, נִשְׁמָה is almost always translated ἄδης. However, Lenski maintains נִשְׁמָה does not have an exact equivalent in either Greek, English or German. He believes ἄδης is a narrower concept than נִשְׁמָה, and further that linguistics are only helpful when the context of each individual passage is considered.³

Not only are the views in Rabbinic literature concerning the souls/spirits in נִשְׁמָה different, they are also inconsistent. The common representation is that נִשְׁמָה was a gloomy subterranean abode, whose inhabitants were mere shadows. The best of them were not in a state of suffering,

¹Braun, Whatever Happened to Hell?, p. 147.

²Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "ἄδης," by Joachim Jeremias.

³Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 852.

yet their enjoyment consisted only of the anticipation of deliverance when the Messiah should come. At other times the souls/spirits of the departed in נֶפֶשׁ were divided into two compartments, Paradise and Gehenna. According to some, all Jews were in Paradise; while others believed only the believing Jews were in Paradise. On the other hand, the Gentiles were the inhabitants of Gehenna. When the Messiah came the Jews would be raised from the dead, while the Gentiles would be left forever in the abode of darkness. "Paradise according to this view was a place of positive enjoyment and Gehenna a place of positive suffering."¹

Moreover, according to The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Paradise is the generally accepted name for the Garden of Eden in Genesis.

Because it was the abode of man in his state of innocence Paradise naturally became in religious speculation about the hereafter; the dwelling place of the righteous after death, even to the extent of describing it along the lines of the Original as found somewhere hidden on the earth, where Enoch, Elijah and other righteous men now dwell. Here we have the origin of the idea of an earthly paradise, Christians incorporated in their belief (Luke 23:43). According to the New Testament this Paradise, the old Garden of Eden, is in the Far East and is the abode of the departed saints, something like Elysium and the Island of the Blessed in Greek mythology.

There was however, in the standard Hebrew writing a more ideal conception of the dwelling place of the righteous after death, namely a heavenly Paradise. . . . The heavenly Paradise is figurative of what Adam lost, it is the sublime type of which the earthly Paradise is said, in rabbinic speculation, to have been transported to heaven, immediately after Adam's fall. According to the Talmud, it was created long before the earth was formed.

¹Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3:734.

On the other hand, those whom divine justice did not raise to Paradise remained in Sheol. . . . In this rabbinic representation of Sheol there is a foreshadowing of the Christian's idea of purgatory.¹

Therefore, in view of the above speculation, one must conclude there is only one reliable source of information in regards to גֵּיִן/עֶדֶן and that is the Bible. The writer believes גֵּיִן in the Old Testament refers to the same place as עֶדֶן in the New Testament; and this connection between גֵּיִן and עֶדֶן is seen in the fact that both refer to the place where the wicked dead's soul/spirit reside (Prov 23:14; Luke 16:19-31). There seems little likelihood that there would be two receptacles for the souls/spirits of the wicked dead. Thus this paper will deal with the terms גֵּיִן and עֶדֶן as a reference to the same place.

Nevertheless, among conservative Christians there are two different views in reference to גֵּיִן/עֶדֶן, as a designation for the abode of the material part of the departed. One views גֵּיִן/עֶדֶן as the abode for all the dead--both the righteous and the unrighteous with some variations. While in the other view, גֵּיִן/עֶדֶן is regarded as receptacle for only the immaterial part of the wicked dead.

Abode of all the dead

Until the resurrection of the body

The most popular view of גֵּיִן/עֶדֶן is that it is the abode of all the dead: believers and unbelievers. All men,

¹The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Paradise," by Charles A. Rubenstein.

according to this theory go to the same place when they die; a place of neither blessing nor one of pains. It denotes a region of shades.¹

Objections

Hendriksen objects to this view in the following manner. If 𐤁𐤓𐤕𐤕/𐤁𐤓𐤕𐤕 is the place to which all men go when they die, how can descent into the place be a warning (Ps 9:17; Prov 5:5; 7:27; 15:24; 23:14)? If 𐤁𐤓𐤕𐤕/𐤁𐤓𐤕𐤕 is never a place of suffering, how can Moses say that God's anger burns there (Deut 32:22)? If the Old Testament teaches that everyone at death goes to the dreary abode of the shades, how can the believer face death with joyful expectation (Num 23:10; Ps 16:9-11; 17:15; 73:24-26)?² Psalm 16:11 says, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Hodge strongly asserts that if "the ancients regarded the underworld or Hades as a gloomy prison That Paul should have desired death in order that he should be thrust into a dungeon, no man can believe."³ "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil 1:21, 23).

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 48.

²Ibid., p. 84.

³Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3:730.

The deciding factor as far as this writer is concerned is Luke 16:26. Here it is stated in no uncertain terms that a great chasm or ravine has been firmly established (χάσμα μέγα ἐστήρικται) to prevent the unrighteous from passing to where the righteous are, and the righteous from going to the place of the wicked. Thus the wicked and righteous do not go to the same place.

Until the resurrection of Christ

Another related view holds that believers and unbelievers in the Old Testament dispensation, went to $\lambda\acute{\iota}\tau\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$. However, Jesus, after His death on the cross, entered the realm of the dead and remained there until His resurrection. During his descent into $\lambda\acute{\iota}\tau\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$, the souls/spirits in the upper part were released and taken to heaven so that the upper part of $\lambda\acute{\iota}\tau\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$ is now vacant.¹

According to this view $\lambda\acute{\iota}\tau\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$ was divided into two compartments: the lower part for the wicked and the upper part for the righteous dead. When Jesus died, he took the penitent thief into the upper section (Paradise) of $\lambda\acute{\iota}\tau\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$ (Luke 23:43). Paradise is not heaven as Jesus did not go to heaven until forty days after his resurrection.² This view necessarily makes a distinction between the Paradise which is believed to be the upper part of

¹Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 856.

²John F. MacArthur, Adventuring in the Next World (Burbank: Voice of Calvary, 1967), p. 93.

גֶּן־עֶדֶן and the Paradise found in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, "caught up to the third heaven . . . into paradise," and the one in Revelation 2:7, "the Paradise of God." MacArthur brings this out in his writings:

There is also a New Testament Paradise, not to be confused with the former Paradise part of Hades or Sheol, which is called "the Paradise of God" in Revelation 2:7, and which is the same place we have in mind when we speak of heaven.¹

Scofield along with many others believes that when Christ ascended, a change took place which affected Paradise. Ephesians 4:8-10 indicates when this change occurred. "When he ascended up on high he led a multitude of captives. . . . He had descended first into the lower parts of the earth," i.e., the Paradise division of גֶּן־עֶדֶן.² However, this belief is dependent upon one's interpretation of Ephesians 4:8-10, since there is no mention of Paradise per se in the passage.

Some of those who advocate this view believe that no one is in hell until after the Great White Throne Judgment.

No one is in hell at the present time. No one has ever yet gone to hell. The resurrection precedes the final judgment. . . . (However, the author later contradicts this statement.) We know there is a hell because of the testimony of those who have gone there. Only one time is the curtain drawn back, allowing a glimpse of the world of the lost (Luke 16:22-24).³

¹Ibid., p. 96.

²C. I. Scofield, The Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 99.

³MacArthur, Adventuring in the Next World, pp. 106, 107, 118.

Close to the above view is the Catholic belief of Limbus Patrum. According to this view, the souls/spirits of the righteous waited in לִיכְּשׁוֹן/עֶדֶן for the coming of Christ. When Christ came and accomplished his work of redemption by dying on the cross, He then descended into the underworld, לִיכְּשׁוֹן/עֶדֶן , where the souls of the patriarchs were confined and delivered them from captivity carrying them in triumph to heaven.¹

Objections

Calvin objected to the view that there is only one place where the souls/spirits of the righteous and wicked went at death. He commented on a לִיכְּשׁוֹן/עֶדֶן which consisted of two subterranean divisions in the following manner:

I know not, how it came to pass that any should imagine a subterraneous cavern, to which they have given the name of limbus. But this fable, although it is maintained by great authors, and even in the present age is by many seriously defended as a truth, is after all nothing but a fable.²

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that לִיכְּשׁוֹן/עֶדֶן is divided into two sections. In the Old Testament a divided Sheol is nowhere taught. Psalm 9:17 does not say the wicked will be turned into a division of Sheol but into Sheol itself. In Proverbs 15:24, the wicked are not urged to avoid a compartment of Sheol, but Sheol itself. The Scriptures never say that at death God's children went into this

¹Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3:744.

²Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 2:594.

or that division of $\gamma\eta\sigma\psi/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$: "The idea of a Sheol with two divisions is derived from the pagan view of the underworld. Neither Sheol in the Old nor Hades in the New has that meaning."¹

Beside the above objections, the writer sees two other problems with this view. One is Enoch and Elijah. It is true that they are exceptions to the rule in that neither died physically. In 2 Kings 2:11, Elijah went to heaven in a whirlwind, and Genesis 5:24 and Hebrews 11:5 speak of the translation of Enoch. Thus, it is true that neither Enoch nor Elijah died, so their souls/spirits did not depart from their bodies. However, according to many who hold the above view, the Old Testament saints remained in the upper section of $\gamma\eta\sigma\psi/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$ until Christ's death on the Cross settled the sin question. According to Psalm 14:1, 3; Romans 3:10, 23, etc. the sin problem has touched everyone who has ever lived, including Enoch and Elijah; they were righteous men but not without sin. Therefore, if the sin question had to be taken care of before the Old Testament saints could enter heaven, why not for Enoch and Elijah too? Thus, to this writer, it appears that the settling of the sin question is an invalid reason for keeping the Old Testament believers out of heaven and confining them to $\gamma\eta\sigma\psi/\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$.

Finally, in Luke 16:24 Jesus uses two different terms for the abode of the two men: $\tau\acute{o}\nu\ \kappa\acute{o}\lambda\pi\omicron\nu\ \alpha\beta\ \rho\alpha\acute{\alpha}\mu$ (vs. 22) and $\alpha\delta\eta$ (vs. 23). The narrative that Jesus relates here

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 86.

happened under the Old Testament economy. According to the advocates of the above view, the wicked inhabited the lower section of ᾠδης while the righteous abode in the upper section until the resurrection of Christ. If this were so, why did Jesus refer to the upper section τὸν κόλπον Ἀβραάμ but did not refer to the lower section (Gehenna or whatever it was designated)? Instead, He referred to the whole concept ᾠδης when referring to the abode of the wicked. No, it appears to this writer, Jesus was talking about two different places. Harry Ironside, former well-known pastor of the Moody Memorial Church, puts it this way:

We should not make the mistake of thinking of Abraham's bosom as the name of a locality in Hades. The locality was paradise.

Many will object to this. Some will cry out, "Stop a moment. The word translated hell there does not refer to the final abode of the lost which is really Gehenna," and we grant that. They insist that Hades does not convey any thought of judgment to come. But let us read the passage and use the Greek word, and see how it sounds. "The rich man also died and was buried: and in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." Observe that the torment was not done away with by changing the word from English to Greek.¹

Abode only of the damned

This view, the writer believes, is the correct view. In the Bible ᾠδης does not always mean hell. In its broader reference the term refers to the grave. Genesis 44:29, 31, speaks of Jacob's "gray hair" descending into the grave (Sheol)." There is a possible reference of ᾠδης to the grave

¹H. A. Ironside, Addresses on the Gospel of Luke (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, November 1971), pp. 512-13.

In Acts 2:27, 31. Hendriksen analyzes this passage in the following manner,

Hades is by many interpreted as indicating that the soul of Jesus was not abandoned to the state of death (disembodied existence), not left in that state. It means either that or the phrase "my soul" (according to a well-known underlying Hebrew idiom) simply means "me." Thus construed, the entire passage (Acts 2:22-31) would point to the fact that Christ's flesh (in contrast with David's) was not left to see corruption in the grave, but on the third day was gloriously raised.¹

However, when הֵיכֶל is used in the Old Testament as the place of punishment for the wicked, hell is a good translation. In such passages as Psalms 9:17; 55:15 and Proverbs 15:11, 24, it is the wicked and not the righteous who descend into Sheol at death. Likewise, in the New Testament, ᾠδης may well be correctly rendered hell in the following passages. In Matthew 11:23 and Luke 10:14, Hades is sharply contrasted with heaven. Then in Matthew 16:18 the thought is that not even all the demons streaming forth through the gates of hell will ever be able to destroy Christ's true Church. Finally, Luke 16 refers to a place of torment and of flame and the place of the wicked after death.²

The Reformed or Calvinistic view maintains there is no intermediate Hades between heaven and hell. The Westminster Catechism says that,

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory . . . and their bodies still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection. . . . According

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 81.

²Ibid., pp. 81, 86.

to this statement there is no essential difference between Paradise and Heaven. . . . The souls of the wicked are at death cast into hell, and their bodies kept in their graves till the resurrection and judgment of the great day. . . . According to this, there is no essential difference between Hades and Hell.¹

A Temporary Place

At the resurrection of the wicked dead, ᾠδης gives up the dead it contains (Rev 20:13). Therefore, ᾠδης is not eternal but only a temporary place. Throughout the New Testament, ᾠδης is depicted as serving only a temporary purpose. At the resurrection of the bodies of the wicked ᾠδης will be replaced by τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός as the final place of punishment.²

A Place of Retribution not Soul-Sleep

The idea of soul-sleep has no part in the New Testament; sleep is used as an euphemism in describing death (John 11:11-14). At death the soul is separated from the body, but it experiences temporary retribution in ᾠδης during the time between death and the resurrection of the body (Luke 16:19-31).³

Gehenna and the Lake of Fire

Gehenna

Γεέννα is the Greek form of the Aramaic ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܢܝܚܐ which was derived from the Hebrew מִן הַיָּדֵי (Josh 18:16), and is an

¹Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 2:594.

²Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "ᾠδης," by Joachim Jeremias.

³Ibid.

abbreviation of גִּיאַ בֶּן-הַתֵּנִי (Jer 7:32). The name was given to the Wadi er-rababi which was located in southern Jerusalem.¹

High places were built in the valley of the son of Hinnon, בְּגִיאַ בֶּן-הַתֵּנִי (Jer 7:31). It was subsequently identified with Tophet, "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnon" וְשָׂמָּה אֵת הַתֹּפֶת אֲשֶׁר בְּגִי בְּנֵי הַתֵּנִי. Tophet either means the place of spitting out or abhorrence; or it could designate the place of burning. According to Isaiah 30:33, Tophet is described as a high place whose top has a deep hole in which wood was piled and this wood was ignited by a stream of brimstone. The wicked kings Ahaz and Manasseh made their children pass through this terrible fire as offering to the gruesome idol Moloch (2 Chr 28:3; 33:6). Others practiced their wicked examples (cf. Jer 32:35). As a result Jeremiah predicted that divine judgment would strike Tophet, that is, God would visit the wickedness which occurred in בְּגִי-הַתֵּנִי with such mass destruction that the place became known as the "valley of slaughter," וְלִי א-יִקְרָא (Jer 19:6; cf. Jer 7:31-34). The God fearing King Josiah defiled this idolatrous high place and stopped the abominations in 2 Kings 23:10, "And he defiled Tophet . . . that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to

¹Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "γῆεννα," by Joachim Jeremias.

Molock."¹ Thus the predicted judgments over this sinister valley in Jeremiah 7:32; 19:6, etc. came to be equated with the hell of the last judgment in apocalyptic literature from the second century (i.e., Enoch 90:26). The name גִּי הֶזֶם came to be used for the eschatological fire of hell.²

Now by adding these various ideas represented by Ge-Hinnon--namely, ever-burning fire, wickedness, abomination, divine judgment, slaughter--it is easily seen that this Ge-Hinnon became a symbol for the everlasting abode of the wicked, namely hell. Ge-Hinnon became (in Greek) Gehenna, a place of never-ending torment.³

In the New Testament γέεννα occurs twelve times, and then only in the Gospels and James. These occurrences may be summarized as follows:

Matthew 5:22 declares the man who says to his brother, "You fool," is in danger of τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός. The severity of the judgment of God on sin is expressed by Jesus in His threatening of γέεννα for contemptuous words.⁴

Matthew 5:29; 18:9 and Mark 9:37: the man whose eye causes him to stumble must pluck it out and throw it away, lest his whole body be cast εἰς γέενναν.

Matthew 5:30 and Mark 9:43: a similar statement is made in reference to the man whose hand causes him to stumble, τὸ σῶμα σου εἰς γέενναν ἀπέλθῃ. No sacrifice is too costly when considering the consequence of sin.

Mark 9:45: the man whose foot causes him to stumble is warned that it is better to cut it off rather than to keep both feet and βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν.

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 196.

²Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "γέεννα," by Joachim Jeremias.

³Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 196.

⁴Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "γέεννα," by Joachim Jeremias.

Matthew 10:28, cf. Luke 12:5: God is able to destroy both body and soul ἐν γέεννῃ.

Matthew 23:15: Pharisees were twice as much a (αὐτόν) υἱὸν γέεννης.

Matthew 23:33: How can the Pharisees and Scribes escape τῆς κρίσεως τῆς γέεννης.

James 3:6: The tongue is said to φλογιζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς γέεννης.

Clearly, therefore, Gehenna is the place to which God sentences the wicked to be punished in both body (eyes, hands, feet) and soul.¹

Further, the writer believes that Matthew 25:41, τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον, "the fire, the eternal one," is probably referring to γέεννα. In Mark 9:43-48, γέεννα is described as τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον, "the unquenchable fire," which is just another way of saying "the everlasting fire" (Matt 25:41). Notice ἄσβεστον has a second article which makes the adjective, unquenchable, a kind of apposition--a climax. Therefore, a fire that is unquenchable is by that very fact eternal.²

Moreover, τὴν κάρινον τοῦ πυρός, "the furnace of fire" (Matt 13:42) can be identified with τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον, "the outer darkness" (Matt 8:12; 23:13; 25:30), τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, "the place there with the hypocrites (unbelievers)" (Matt 24:51), and ἐκβαλλομένους

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 197.

²R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 407.

ἔξω, "being thrown outside" (Luke 13:28). Each of these phrases are used with "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Lenski says, "the anguish described includes the bodies of the damned, hence implies their bodily resurrection."¹ There are only two places in the Scriptures where both the body and soul/spirit of the wicked are tormented--γεέννα and τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. Hence, the writer believes the above expressions are probably referring to γεέννα since the term τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός is used only in Revelation. Howbeit, it will be pointed out that both Gehenna and the lake of fire are either similar or the same.

The Lake of Fire

This designation τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός occurs only in the Book of Revelation and then only in chapters 10, 20, and 21. In Revelation 19:20 it is the final abode of the beast and the false prophet. The second occurrence, in Revelation 20:10, τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός, provides the place of the final destination of the devil. Then in Revelation 20:14 death and Hades are cast into τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός, and subsequently Revelation 20:15 depicts the final abode of the unsaved. In the final occurrence, Revelation 21:8, τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ becomes the abode of specified sinners: the coward, the unbeliever, the abominable ("any

¹R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 540.

who have been made a stink"),¹ the murderer, the whorers, the idolaters and the liars. As a result Lenski concludes that τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός is another designation for hell. "It is the description that marks this lake as hell."²

In regards to the relationship between γέεννα and λίμνην τοῦ πυρός, this has already been dealt with in Chapter 1. It is sufficient here to quote Swete's comment concerning τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός in Revelation 19:20:

the use of the definite article on its first appearance seems to imply that the conception was already familiar to the Asian Churches. . . . Possibly it was a local expression for γέεννα τοῦ πυρός which was familiar to Palestinian Christians (Matt. 5:22ff).³

Relation of Gehenna and/or the Lake of Fire to Hades

Lenski sums up this relationship extremely well as follows:

Thus ὁ ἄδης, "the unseen place" (found ten times in the New Testament) = hell as the place to which the souls of the wicked go at death till at the resurrection the death and the hades give up these souls, to be united again with their bodies, and thus to stand before Christ's judgment throne and to receive their verdict. "The lake of the fire," like the Jewish term "Gehenna of fire" = hell, but as the place into which the wicked will be thrown with body and soul at the final judgment.⁴

Thus, it is the writer's view that ἄδης is the abode of the immaterial part of the wicked dead, who are pictured

¹Lenski, Interpretation of Revelation, p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 565.

³Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John, p. 258.

⁴Lenski, Interpretation of Revelation, p. 618.

as though they have a body. In Hades they are tormented (Luke 16) before the resurrection of their bodies and their final judgment (Rev 20:15). Therefore, the best way to distinguish Hades from Gehenna and/or the Lake of Fire is that the former is the place of torment and flame for the soul/spirit of the wicked (Luke 16:19-31), while the latter is the place of torment and fire of both body and soul/spirit of the wicked (Mark 9:43-48).

Summary

Ταρταρώσας, ἡ ἄβυσσος and κατώτερος, are probably not references to hell. The Bible identifies the participle ταρταρώσας, with sinning angels who are kept in Tartarus until their judgment. While ἡ ἄβυσσος, with the exception of Romans 10:7, is used in connection with demons, the devil or the antichrist. In Romans 10:7 it is used in reference to Christ's death and resurrection. Finally, κατώτερος is a reference to Christ's incarnation particularly when He emptied Himself as spoken of in Philippians 2:7.

Moreover, it is the belief of this writer that ἄδης is not divided into two parts: an upper section called Paradise which is the abode of the righteous and a lower section which is the abode of the damned. But rather the Paradise that Christ promised the penitent thief in Luke 23:43 is the same as that mentioned in 2 Corinthians 12:4 and Revelation 2:7, while ἄδης is the abode only of the wicked dead's souls/spirits. Thus ἄδης differs from γέεννα

and τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός in that the latter two are both the abode of the bodies and souls/spirits while the former is the abode of the immaterial part of the wicked until the Great White Throne Judgment.

CHAPTER III

THE WICKED DEAD BEFORE THEIR BODILY RESURRECTION

In the Bible, the disembodied state is not known as the intermediate state. The intermediate state is an ecclesiastical term which first appeared with the doctrine of purgatory. In Scripture death is pictured as the deciding epoch in each person's existence. It is the boundary between the two αἰώνων in the Bible. Until one dies, he is in this world, τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι (1 Tim 6:17); however, after death, he enters the future world, τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ (Mark 10:30). The usual understanding of the Scripture is that one is in time only as long as he is alive on earth; when he dies, he enters eternity. Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment." This teaches that before death one's destiny is not settled yet, he has not yet received his sentence; but after death one's destiny is final. When he dies, the private judgment is passed upon him; that is, one is immediately personally conscious of penitence or impenitence. Each soul/spirit, at the moment of death, when it "returns to God who gave it" (Eccl 12:7), knows by personal consciousness, whether he is a child of God or an enemy of God. Death is the turning

point in human existence and fixes the everlasting state of each individual. The rich man asked that Lazarus be sent to warn his brothers before they died and entered Hades. For after one dies and enters Hades, "there is an impassable gulf between misery and happiness, sin and holiness" (Luke 16:26).¹

Examples from Scripture

When the Scripture speaks concerning the destiny of the wicked, very often it means their final state, that is, their punishment as to both body and soul, after the Great White Throne Judgment. But what happens to the wicked when they die? Although the teaching of the Scripture is not extensive, it is clear enough. According to Asaph, when the wicked die they are plunged into ruin; in a moment, they become a desolation. They are literally swept away by terrors (Ps 73:12-19). When the rich man died, he opened his eyes in a place of torment from which he could not escape (Luke 16:23-26). Finally, when Judas committed suicide, he went "to his own place," the place of perdition naturally" (Acts 1:25).²

Hades

Although the New Testament indicates ᾠδης is a temporary place (Rev 20), it nevertheless is the place of punishment for the wicked dead until their final resurrection

¹Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 2:694-96.

²Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 81.

(Luke 16; cf. Rev 20). It also marks the place where the wicked know that their final destinies have been decided or fixed, as the rich man clearly knew in Luke 16. Therefore, the writer believes it is proper to translate ~~ᾠόν~~ by "Hell" when it refers to the place of punishment for the wicked.

Matthew 11:23 and Luke 10:15

And you Capernaum will not be lifted up into heaven, to Hades you will be cast down. Because if in Sodom had been done the works of power performed in you it would have remained until today (Matt 11:23).

Matthew 11:23 has a parallel in Luke 10:15: "And you Capernaum will not be lifted up to heaven. To Hades you will be cast down." Capernaum was the center of Christ's activities. It was His headquarters during the Great Galilean Ministry. Jesus performed many miracles here (Luke 4:23, 31-37; 7:1-10; John 2:12). In Capernaum He customarily attended the synagogue and delivered several messages including the Bread of Life address (John 6:24-64). Matthew even referred to Capernaum as Christ's own city (Matt 9:1).¹ It was there that He restored Peter's wife's mother to health, and there He raised the daughter of Jarius and healed the woman who touched His garment. Surely the people would receive Him. Yet, its people rejected Him.²

The main point is that the population of Capernaum had not repented despite all the labor of love which Jesus

¹William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 578-79.

²Itonside, Addresses on the Gospel of Luke, p. 335.

had bestowed upon it. For this reason, He rebuked it. Thus the term cities, πόλεις (Matt 11:20), refers first and foremost to all the inhabitants.

A mere topographical entity--streets, buildings, a wall--cannot be expected to "repent," is not held accountable for any deeds, and does not enter the judgment. It is true, nevertheless, that what is done by the citizens is bound to affect the place where they live.¹

Christ's rebuke of Capernaum reminds one of Isaiah 14:13, 15. In this passage the King of Babylon is depicted as boasting that he would ascend into heaven and then is pictured as descending into Sheol's lowest depth.²

Hades refers to Hell

Note the position of Hades before the verb, ᾅδου καταβήσῃ. This makes Christ's cursed-filled prediction all the more emphatic. In addition, ᾅδου is sharply contrasted with οὐρανοῦ. Thus, Hendriksen concludes that Hades is equivalent to Hell here.³

Also, the context reveals that Christ's rebuke will occur in the day of judgment ἡ μέρα κρίσεως (Matt 11:22, 24). This has led even Meyer, who believes Hades was the abode of all the dead prior to Christ's resurrection, to conclude that,

¹William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), pp. 494-96.

²Ibid., p. 496.

³Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 579.

Capernaum, who has been exalted to heaven, i.e. raised to the highest distinction through (Christ's) dwelling and laboring within (her), will be brought down to Hades, namely, on the day of judgment, to undergo punishment in Gehenna.¹

Thus, Meyer apparently equated Hades with eschatological Gehenna and there are few conservative expositors who would question the fact that eschatologically, in the day of judgment, Gehenna does not refer to Hell, the final abode of the wicked.

Moreover, Lenski confirms the belief that Hades refers to Hell in the Matthew 11 and Luke 10 passages in the following manner:

Hades is here not used as a translation of sheol for Jesus is not quoting though he may have used sheol in the Aramaic. . . . Yet hades cannot mean das Totenreich the realm of the dead, into which some say all the dead descend. If it is a place that is different from heaven and from hell, a receptacle for all dead men which really existed, it would be pointless for Jesus to declare that obdurate Capernaum shall be cast thither--where else would dead men go? No hades is the place of the damned.²

Hades the opposite of Heaven

There is a clashing contrast between the phrases $\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\pi\alpha\nu\omicron\upsilon$ and $\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \alpha\delta\omicron\upsilon$. Moreover, this contrast is intensified in the compound verbs, as seen in the words up in

¹Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Gospel of Matthew, 11 vols., trans. from the sixth edition of the German by Peter Crestie, trans., rev. and ed. Frederick Combie, William Stewart (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), 1:229.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, pp. 577-78.

ὑψωθήσῃ and down in καταβήσῃ.¹ Thus, ὑψωθήσῃ refers to a place opposite of καταβήσῃ.²

In Luke 10:15 the verb καταβιβάσῃσῃ, the future passive indicative of καταβιβάζω, occurs in some Greek translations. In this case, the meaning would be to be made to descend, or to be thrust down. Hence, the inhabitants of Capernaum will be thrust down or made to descend into Hades. However, this reading is doubtful, and the variant καταβήσῃ, as used in Matthew 11:23, may also be the correct rendering in Luke 10:15. If so, the meaning would be, "To Hades you shall descend."³ In contrast to ascending to heaven, the inhabitants of Capernaum will descend to Hades, ἕως ᾧδου καταβήσῃ. Thus, the clashing contrast in the verses and the compound verbs stress the idea that Hades is pictured here as being the opposite of Heaven.

Luke 16:19-31

Unfortunately, so-called parallel accounts from Egyptian folk lore and Jewish legend, which depict a rich man and a poor man in the hereafter life, have been cited as connected with the rich man and Lazarus. In an article published in 1918, "Vom Reichen Mann und Armen Lazarus," in

¹Ibid.

²Herman Olshausen, Olshausen's Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, trans. David Fosdick, Jr., rev. A. C. Kendrick (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman and Company, 1858), pp. 429-30.

³Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 588.

Eine Literageschichtliche Studie, H. Gressmann gave parallels to the first part of Luke 16:19-31 from Jewish and Egyptian literature and stated that Jesus based His narrative on a story which originated in Egypt and was well-known in Palestine at the time. It is believed to have been written down in the first century A.D. but "it is certainly of pre-Christian origin."¹ The story is concerned with Setme Chamois, the high priest and son of Ramses II, and his son, Si-Osiris. Setme, from the balcony of his house, saw a rich man being carried into the burial field, with great honors, to a luxurious grave. Then, he saw another funeral, a poor man from Memphis being carried to the burial field wrapped in a mat. No one participated in his procession. Consequently, Setme and Osiris entered the realm of the dead, Amnte. They walked through a number of halls until they reached the seventh hall. In this hall the following judgment scene took place. They saw the poor man. His sins were weighed against the good deeds which he had performed on earth. Since his good deeds were more numerous than his sins, it was ordered that:

the tomb equipment of the rich man be given to this poor man . . . and that he should be placed amongst the transfigured ones as a man of God. When the rich man was brought into the underworld, they found his sins were more numerous than his good deeds and he was punished accordingly: "his mouth was opened to lament."²

¹Thorwald Lorenzen, "A Biblical Meditation on Luke 16:19-31," The Expository Times 87 (September 1975-76):41.

²Ibid.

Similar legends are found in Jewish folk lore. Rudolf Bultmann mentions another story in which a boy brought a message to a man from his wife out of hell. After having seen her in the torture of the fire, the boy brought both her ring along with this message from the woman: "Tell my husband to turn over a new leaf, for the power of repentance is great."¹ Deeply moved, the husband repents. This story led Bultmann to the ridiculous conclusion that:

In the form in which we find it, this story is relatively old, it is hard to imagine that it derives from the gospel story. That gives rise to the alternative suggestion that a Jewish story lies behind Luke 16:19-31.²

Such an assumption is sheer folly and illogical at best. The resemblance of these legends to the Luke 16:19-31 narrative is remote and so full of contradictions that one need not give serious consideration to these so-called parallel accounts. The inspiration and authority of the Scripture are unique here. The Biblical record is so superior in every way to these Egyptian and Jewish legends, that the inspiration of the account given in Luke is appreciated that much more. They should be treated just as the Mesopotamian or Babylonian flood or creation accounts in comparison with the Biblical record, interesting but not worthy of comparison.

¹Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), p. 197.

²Ibid.

After reading some of these legends, the writer is more firmly convinced that Luke 16:19-31 is not a parable but a real situation which Jesus is reporting. If it were a parable, one might unjustifiably conclude that one of these legends precipitated Luke 16:19-31.

Moreover, the striking evidence that Luke 16:19-31 is uncharacteristic of any other parable in the New Testament leads one to conclude this is an actual event. For instance,

It would be the only New Testament parable which describes things that are outside the realm of human experience. The other parables talk about things which the listener was familiar.

It would be the only New Testament parable which repeatedly mentions a historical person, Abraham (Moses also) in verses 23, 24, 25, 29, 30. Furthermore, this historical person actually carries on a conversation with the rich man.

It would be the only New Testament parable describing where the dead go (i.e., Abraham's bosom; Hades, place of torment).

This would be the only parable which the Lord told that mentions angels. (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-49 is an example of angels being mentioned in the explanation of the parable but not in the parable itself.)¹

Finally, it would be the only New Testament parable which uses a proper name. With the dative *ὀνόματι*, the name *Ἀβραῶν* (nominative), is mentioned. It is the naming of the beggar which has led many expositors to believe that both men were real.²

Thus, it is the position of the writer that Luke 16:19-31 is not a parable but a real life situation.

¹Anna E. Clark, "Poor Rich Man" (M.Div. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1975), pp. 48-49.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 847.

"Now it came to pass the beggar died and was carried away by the angels into the bosom of Abraham; moreover, the rich man also died and was buried" (Luke 16:22). Simply, the beggar's disease, (ἔλκη, vs. 21), killed him.¹ Hodge maintains the implication is undeniable that Lazarus' transition from earth to Abraham's bosom was immediate.² The rich man also died and was buried, ἐτάφη. In regards to ἐτάφη, Robertson said, it was used, "Apparently, in contrast with the angelic visitation to the beggar."³ This is the way in which Jesus spoke of the souls/spirits of the dead.

All conceptions of time and space, succession and distance must be removed from the other world for they do not exist there. If Jesus should speak in the terms of that world, no human mind would understand a thing. . . . (For the reason) why our ideas of space are absolutely inadequate for understanding of the other world, look at Revelation 21:16: heaven, the Holy City, "the length and breadth and the height of it are equal, four-square," a perfect cube, which is beyond mundane conception. . . . One can only receive and accept what is told in the scriptures and can do no more. It is sheer folly to rationalize, speculate, draw conclusions with our finite minds beyond what has been conveyed to us.⁴

Hades is a place of consciousness

The phrase, "And in Hades, having looked up with his eyes" (Luke 16:23a), not only denotes where the rich man is but also his conscious state. The use of the dative

¹Ibid., p. 848.

²Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3:727.

³Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 4:222.

⁴Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, pp. 849-52.

singular ᾠδὴ is the designation for Hades here. Hades is depicted by flame and torment (Luke 16:24), as the eternal punishment of the wicked is pictured elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Mark 9:43-48 in reference to Gehenna and Rev 20:10-15 in reference to the Lake of Fire). According to Bruce, "here Hades seems = hell, the place of torment."¹ C. G. Montefiore says that,

The Greek word Hades in this verse is equivalent to hell or Gehenna. . . . The story follows the second main strand of popular belief in the hereafter. Instead of waiting, all alike, in Hades or Sheol, until the Resurrection and the last Judgment, the good and bad are judged at once. Straightway, after death the good go to heaven, the bad to hell.²

Thus, it is the belief of the writer that Hell is a good designation for Hades in this passage.

The condition of the dead and the communication between them is very literal, in earthly terms. This gives a vivid impression. The lifting up of the rich man's eyes took a voluntary action on his part which only a conscious person who was fully aware of his situation could perform. He immediately knew he was in Hades and was in torment, a state which only his senses could discern. Hendriksen says, "the departed ones are not asleep but fully awake; some are saved; others are suffering."³

¹Alexander Balmain Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 5 vols., ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 1:589.

²C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, 2 vols. (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1968), 2:538.

³Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 785.

Hades is a place of torment

In Hades the rich man was "existing in torment," ὑπάρχων ἐν βασάνοις (Luke 16:23b). The noun βασάνος indicates: originally, a touchstone to test gold and other metals; the instrument of torture by which slaves are tortured; and torment or acute pain--the latter meaning fits the situation best here.¹ Barnes notes that,

Torment means pain, anguish; particularly pain inflicted by the ancients in order to induce men to make confession of their crimes. These torments or tortures were the keenest that they could inflict, such as, the rack, or scourging, or burning, and the use of the word here denotes that the sufferings of the wicked can be represented only by the extremest forms of human suffering.²

Torment is now the rich man's habitual condition: not ὄν, but ὑπάρχων.³ (The present active participle meaning he is now and continues existing in torment.) Thus ὑπάρχων ἐν βασάνοις states the condition of the souls/spirits in Hell (Hades).⁴

Hades is a place a great distance from Abraham's bosom

In Hades, the rich man "sees Abraham from a distance and Lazarus in his bosom" (Luke 16:23c). The present active

¹Ibid., p. 452.

²Albert Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, ed. Robert Frew (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, February 1949), p. 116.

³Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke, in The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, 46 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1922), 30:394.

⁴Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 853.

indicative ὁρᾷ is used. When the present is used for vividness, as frequently in modern languages, it is said to be a dramatic present. This vividness is portrayed when the rich man, in his torment, looked up and saw the poor man who laid at his gate being comforted. What a contrast--everything which occurred on earth was reversed.¹

What the rich man saw was Abraham and Lazarus far away from him, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν.² Lenski says, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν refers to the χάσμα μέγα (Luke 16:26); ἀπὸ being idiomatic. The Greeks measured from the far place to the beholder, not as is customarily done today--from the beholder to the far place.³

These circumstances mean that there will be a separation, and that the wicked in hell will be conscious that the righteous, though on earth they were poor or despised, will be in heaven. Heaven and hell will be far from each other and it will be no small part of the misery of the one that is far and forever removed from the other.⁴

Hades is a place where no mercy is shown

And he, having cried out, said, "Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus in order that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue because I am in anguish in this flame" (Luke 16:24).

¹Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 116.

²J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke (Leiden: Brill for the United Bible Society, 1971), p. 572.

³Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 853.

⁴Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 116.

The rich man now appeals to the great patriarch and addresses him as "Father Abraham." He asks for Abraham to take pity on him. The rich man himself had never shown any pity, when the opportunity to do so had arisen on earth.¹ The aorist imperative, ἐλέησόν με ("have pity on me"), points to a specific act of pity which πέμψον indicates: "Send Lazarus" for this purpose.² Thus, the pity the rich man asked for was not to be released from Hades; nor did he seek restoration.³ This implies that he knew his condition was fixed--there was no such thing as a second chance.

The request of the rich man is that Abraham would dispatch Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool off the rich man's tongue. Notice that ἄκρον means only the top or tip of Lazarus' finger was to be employed. In Matthew 24:31 and Mark 13:27, the meaning of ἄκρος is end, extremity, farthest reach.⁴ This stresses the smallness of the matter requested: "only a small part of the smallest finger dipped in water."⁵ Then the genitive of place, ὕδατος denotes the place within which the act of

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 785.

²Reiling and Swellengrebel, A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke, p. 572.

³Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 116.

⁴Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 789.

⁵Reiling and Swellengrebel, A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke, p. 573.

mercy was to take place. Professor Sproule commented, "There is a literal Hell where even the tip of one's finger in water would be of some help."¹

Finally, the rich man states the purpose for his request: in order that Lazarus "might cool off my tongue because I am in anguish in this flame" (Luke 16:24). The first aorist active subjunctive, καταψύξῃ is used only here in the New Testament, but is common in Greek medical books.² The κατά plus ψύχω, "to blow," means "to cool off by blowing" or simply "to cool." The Greek literally says, "to cool down," whereas the English idiom means "to cool off" or "to cool."³ "The effect of great heat on the body is to produce almost insupportable thirst. Those who travel in burning deserts thus suffer inexpressibly when they are deprived of water."⁴ Thus, the rich man is represented as desiring that his tongue be cooled off or refreshed with water.

The agony, ὀδυῶμαι, from which the rich man was seeking relief, is the present passive indicative meaning

¹John Sproule, "Intermediate Greek Notes" (Notes taken in class on Luke 16:24, Grace Theological Seminary, 1977).

²Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 2:223.

³Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 789.

⁴Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 116.

"to be in pain or agony."¹ Alford states that the omission of the article before ὁδυνῶμαι points to subjective torments. However, he adds, "but where lies the limit between the inner and outer to the disembodied?"² In any event, the rich man is in intense agony or pain in this flame, φλογὶ ταύτῃ (Luke 16:24).

He who knew not the quality of mercy nor its exercise when human need called out to him day after day at his own portal, now himself cries out for mercy: "Mercy me," the Greek verb being transitive.

All mercy is ended in hell. Even the least mercy as when a mere drop of water is asked for a tongue that is burned crisp: . . . This very request shows plainly that the conversation is only a vehicle for something that underlies it. He whose tongue daily tasted the finest wines and the most delectable cooling drinks now burns with ceaseless flame. Pitiless are the final judgments of God, and this is the illustration. Let men ignore them or rave against them now and they cannot believe in such a God, the facts stand as they are depicted here.³

Hades is a place of memory

But Abraham said, "Child remember that you have already received your good things in your life and Lazarus similarly the bad things; but now here he is being comforted while you are being tormented" (Luke 16:25).

The τέκνον answers to the πᾶτερ (vs. 24) and introduces a speech holding out no hope for the rich man.⁴ After

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 789.

²Alford, The Greek New Testament, 1:603.

³Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 853.

⁴Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1:589.

all, the rich man was a descendant of Abraham biologically and Abraham was the one who appeals to his memory.¹

Memory does not pass out of existence at death. Abraham reminded the rich man to remember what took place on earth. The verb *μυμνήσκω* means "to remember," and when it is used in the passive, it signifies "to be reminded of." In Luke 16:25, *μνήσθητι*, the aorist passive imperative of *μυμνήσκω*, means about the same as "to remember."² Thus, the rich man is to remember or think again--bring back to mind.³

One of the chief torments of hell will be the remembrance of what was enjoyed and of what was done in this world. Nor will it be any mitigation of the suffering to spend an eternity where there will be nothing else to do, day or night, but to remember what was done, and what might have been, if the life had been right.⁴

Further, *ἀπέλαβες* means "to receive in full."⁵ The *ἀπό* in *ἀπέλαβες* adds the idea of "getting what is due so that one can ask for no more."⁶ Certainly, the rich man had no more coming to him. When the rich man was asked to remember, Abraham stated only the facts. "The conditions of

¹Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 117.

²Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 789.

³Reiling and Swellengrebel, A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke, p. 573.

⁴Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 117.

⁵Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 789.

⁶Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 856.

the rich man and Lazarus are now reversed--that and no more. Why they are reversed is not stated--that comes later."¹ The ultimate ground for the reversal of character is not referred to--it is a mere question of fairness of poetic justice.²

It would be wrong to take this statement (vs. 25) to mean that because a man has good things in this life therefore he anguished in hell, and because a man has good-for-nothing things (κακά) in this life, therefore, he is comforted in heaven. Abraham does not say this, nor would it be true. But when a man in hell asks for mercy, or when living men think hell ought to be changed by even a drop of water, they may think on this reminder to the rich man in hell. Hence also Abraham says, "thy good things," those the rich man alone thought good, while he cared nothing for the spiritual and heavenly treasures and showed that his life was bare of these by his lack of mercy; but not "his bad things" for these were only trials that were sent to Lazarus to refine his faith and to make his trust rest in God alone. Regarding good things as the rich man did, he had them all, no more were coming to him; having spurned all others, he must do without.³

Hades is a place of permanent separation

And in connection with all these things, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed in order that the ones wanting to come over from there to you may not be able, neither may they cross over from there to us (Luke 16:26).

Abraham told the rich man there is a vast chasm, a yawning gorge, separating the lost from the redeemed. The Greek word χάσμα is derived from χάλω, meaning "to gape,

¹Ibid.

²Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1:589.

³Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 856.

yawn." Thus, what is meant is "a ravine, vast in depth, length and breadth; a wadi, a gorge."¹

Perhaps the best explanation of χάσμα, provided the conception is Palestinian, would be "wadi." . . . If the Old Testament has made us familiar with "Brook Cherith" --the Wadi Kelt--the New Testament has made us even more familiar with the "Brook Kedron." The wadis are there first, before the places often called after them, as in the exciting rediscovery of Qumran above the wadi of the name, where the rather sheer drop from the location of the settlement is several hundred feet. . . . In most Arabic versions χάσμα is rendered huwwah, which implies depth rather than width, an abyss, being connected with the root meaning (inter alia) "to fall."²

The ὅπως implies the chasm is there for the purpose of preventing transit either way. The location of the rich man was "fixed and final."³

Furthermore, ἐστήρικατι, the perfect passive indicative of στηρίζω, which means "to set fast" or "to fix," has the present connotation of "being fixed so now and forever."⁴ It points to the permanent and unchangeable situation of the rich man.⁵ Therefore, the meaning here is that "death

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, pp. 786, 789.

²F. F. Bishop, "A Yawning Chasm," The Evangelical Quarterly (January-March, 1973):3-5.

³Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1:589.

⁴Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 857.

⁵Reiling and Swellengrebel, A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke, p. 574.

decides forever, it is either heaven or hell."¹ There is a finality and permanency in death which makes one's destiny unalterable in irreversible. Montefiore explains it this way,

There is no passing from hell to heaven. He who is once in hell will always remain there. . . . Man's use of this life finds irrevocably his lot there--on one or the other side of an impassable chasm.²

This is the death blow to universalism or restoration of the wicked. "The saved can never lose their blessing and fall into perdition; the lost can never attain to blessing and enjoy salvation."³

How, in the face of the solemn statement of the Saviour here, can men believe that there will be a restoration of all the wicked to heaven? He solemnly assures us that there can be no passage from that world of woe to the abodes of the blessed; yet, in the face of this, many Universalists hold that hell will yet be vacated of its guilty millions, and that all its miserable inhabitants will be received to heaven! Who shall conduct them across this gulf, when Jesus Christ says it cannot be passed? Who shall build a bridge over that yawning chasm which he says is "fixed"? No: if there is anything certain from the Scripture, it is that they who enter hell return no more; they who sink there sink for ever.⁴

In Hades there is concern for family

Since any alleviation of his own misery is impossible, the rich man revealed a concern for his five brothers

¹Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, p. 857.

²Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, 2:9.

³Ironside, Addresses of the Gospel of Luke, p. 515.

⁴Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, pp. 117-18.

still on earth by begging Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them about "the place of torment" (Luke 16:27-31).

We have heard unsaved people flippantly exclaim at times, "Well, if I am lost I shall have plenty of company in hell." We have no suggestion here of anything like that. This man does not desire company; he does not want his most intimate relatives to be there. It gives us some conception of the awful loneliness of hell.¹

In the rich man's request, the οὐν (vs. 27) indicates, "if no hope for me, there may be for those still dear to me. Possibility of transit from Paradise to earth is assumed."² His condition was fixed: unalterable. But he had no desire that his family should suffer, and thought that if someone went to them from the dead, they would be persuaded,³ διαμαρτύρηται (vs. 28). Note that even now he is not asking that "anything be done for people in general, only for his five brothers."⁴

The present middle subjunctive, διαμαρτύρηται, is used by the rich man in his request for Lazarus to warn his brothers. This means either to "bear witness to his miserable lot and to the reality of hell; or testify may mean merely to warn."⁵ In all probability, Lazarus is requested

¹Ironside, Addresses of the Gospel of Luke, pp. 515-16.

²Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1:590.

³Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 118.

⁴Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 787.

⁵Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, p. 540.

to urgently testify to his five brothers, "telling them how it looks beyond, how it fares with their brother, with the solemn impressiveness of one who has seen."¹

Abraham replied to the rich man that his brothers have Moses and the prophets to testify to them (vs. 29). If they would listen to them, the brothers would not be lost. Both Moses (Deut 18:15, 18) and the prophets (Isa 53) pointed forward to Him who would give Himself a ransom for many.² However, the rich man said, οὐχί (vs. 30); "a decided negative--nay, that is not enough."³ The Scriptures were the usual method of imparting truth, what the rich man believed his brothers needed was something out of the ordinary, τις ἀπὸ νεκρῶν (vs. 30). The message of a dead man returned to life would cause his brothers to repent, μετανοήσουσιν (vs. 30).⁴ The verb μετανοήσουσιν is derived from μετανοέω which means "to be converted." A genuine sorrow for sin and an earnest resolution with the evil past is emphasized (Luke 3:13-14). However, this is the negative aspect of μετανοέω, the positive is fruit bearing (Matt 3:8, 10). Conversion not only affects the emotions but also the mind and the will. It indicates "a radical change of

¹Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1:590.

²Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 787.

³Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1:590.

⁴Ibid.

mind and heart that leads to a complete turnabout of life," (2 Cor 7:8-10; 2 Tim 2:25).¹ Thus, the rich man believed the message of one from the dead would lead his brothers to genuine repentance and conversion--but he was mistaken. Someone from the dead actually did appear to the people in John 11. Jesus raised Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, from the dead. Did it result in everyone being converted? No, the opposite occurred. As a result, the enemies of Christ planned to put the risen Lazarus to death (John 12:10), and were more determined than ever to kill Jesus (John 11:47-50).²

Therefore, Abraham's answer is not surprising. He does not reply that Lazarus could not possibly rise from the dead--the *ἐάν* clause (vs. 31) implies the contrary. However, such a resurrection would not lead to the conversion in the case of men who constantly refuse to hear, (*οὐκ ἀκούουσιν*, the durative present, vs. 31). "They will not be persuaded," (*πεισθήσονται*, future passive, vs. 31), i.e., persuaded that the man has really risen from the dead."³

God will give (men) nothing further to warn (them). No dead man will come to life to tell (them) what he has seen. If he did, (they) would not believe him. Religion appeals to men notibly ghosts and frightful apparitions. It appeals to their reason, their consciences, their hopes, their fears. It sets life and death

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 197.

²Idem, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, in New Testament Commentary, p. 787.

³Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, pp. 860-61.

soberly before men, and if they will not choose the former, they must die. If (men) will not hear the Son of God and the warnings of the Scriptures, there is nothing which (they) will or can hear. (Men) will never be persuaded and will never escape the place of torment.¹

Summary

A person exists in time only as long as he is alive on earth. After death, he enters eternity. Every individual will know at the moment of death, by personal consciousness, whether he is in heaven or hell (Luke 16:19-31). Individual judgment comes at the moment of death (Heb 9:27).

In Luke 10:15 and Matthew 11:23, ἄδου is equivalent to hell. Christ's pronounced judgment on the inhabitants of Capernaum will occur in the ἡμέρα κρίσεως (Matt 11:22, 24). There is a clashing contrast between the phrases ἕως οὐρανοῦ and ἕως τοῦ ἄδου which is intensified by the compound verbs ὑψωθήσῃ and καταβήσῃ. The indicated meaning is that Hades is the opposite of Heaven.

Then in Luke 16:19-31 the rich man is depicted in Hades while Lazarus is comforted in Abraham's bosom. The rich man having lifted up his eyes in a state of consciousness is in the torments of Hades (vs. 23). Hades means hell here. It is pictured as a place of torment (vs. 23), and flame (cf. Mark 9:43-48 concerning Gehenna and Rev 20:10-15 in reference to the Lake of Fire).

The lifting up of the eyes (Luke 16:23) implies a conscious existence in Hades/Hell. Moreover, Hades/Hell is

¹Barnes, Luke and John, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 119.

a place of excruciating pain or torment (Luke 16:23). The present active participle, ὑπάρχων, with the phrase, ἐν βασάνοις indicates the souls/spirits in Hades/Hell are in a habitual condition of torment. They are separated a great distance from the righteous, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν (vs. 23). Not even the smallest mercy, ἵνα βάψῃ τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ ὕδατος (vs. 24) will be granted to the souls/spirits in Hell/Hades. For those in Hell/Hades memory will not pass out of existence at death. Abraham asks the rich man to remember what took place on earth, μνήσθητι (vs. 25). The wicked dead are permanently separated from the righteous by a great chasm χάσμα μέγα (vs. 26); a ravine which is vast in depth, length and breadth--(a wadi or gorge). The present passive indicative, ἐστήρικται (vs. 26), means the chasm has been fixed. It points to the permanent and unchangeable situation of the lost. The location of the rich man was fixed and final. Finally, even the last request of the rich man was denied (vss. 27-31). In his request the οὐν (vs. 27) indicates that if there was no hope for the rich man, there might possibly be hope for his five brothers. The rich man's request is that Lazarus be sent to warn them, διαμαρτύρηται (vs. 28), "lest they come into this place of torment." Abraham's answer was not that Lazarus could not possibly rise from the dead--the ἐάν clause (vs. 31) implies the contrary. But this is not the issue. A resurrection would not lead to the conversion in the case of those who constantly refuse to hear (οὐκ ἀκούουσιν--the durative

present, vs. 31). If they will not hear Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded by one who arose from the dead and thus escape "this place of torment" (vs. 28).

CHAPTER IV

THE ABODE OF THE WICKED AFTER THEIR BODILY RESURRECTION

The Bible primarily uses two terms to describe the place of everlasting punishment of both body and soul/spirit of the wicked; although other terms, such as "the eternal fire" (Matt 25:41), "the furnace of fire" (Matt 13:41), and "the outer darkness" (Matt 8:12), are also used. These two concepts, γέενα (occurring in the Gospels and James) and τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός (mentioned only in Revelation), speak of eschatological judgment, after the bodily resurrection of the unsaved. (For the writer's view of the relationship of the terms to each other see Chapters I and II.)

The unsaved will suffer everlasting destruction "away from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess 1:9). They will "go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt 25:46). Jesus will say to them, "Depart from me" (Matt 7:23; 25:41; Luke 13:27). The wicked will dwell outside the banquet-hall, the wedding-feast, the shut door (Matt 8:11, 12; 22:13; 25:10-13), while within are the bridegroom and those who have accepted the invitation.¹

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 201.

Gehenna

Matthew 5:22

But I say to you that everyone who is angry at his brother will be answerable to the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, "numbskull," will be answerable to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, "you fool" will be answerable to the Gehenna of the fire (Matt 5:22).

It is interesting to note the emphatic "I" (ἐγώ) at the beginning of each verse (22, 28, 32, 34, 39 and 49), in which Jesus contradicts the traditional interpretation. In verse 22, it is as if Jesus were saying, "Principus obsta, that is, 'Resist beginnings.' The beginning of the outward act of murder is sinful anger, hatred, cf. James 4:1."¹

Gehenna is a place of judgment and punishment

The usual exegesis, regarding Matthew 5:22, describes the three sins and three penalties, in a climax. The second is graver than the first and the third more severe than the second: for anger, the judgment of the court; for calling an ugly name in anger, the Sanhedrin's court; and for an angry curse, the fire of Gehenna. This exegesis necessarily makes a distinction between *ῥακά* and *μωπέ*.²

However, there is no real justification for assuming that *μωπέ* is a stronger term than *ῥακά*: it may be a

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 297.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, pp. 218-19.

translation of ῥακά.¹ Lenski believes that,

ῥακά is derived from req through the Syrian raga, and thus means an empty one who acts as a numbskull. Uttered in anger, it would be something like our "Blamed bonehead!" . . . The latter (μωρό) sounds like a genuine Greek word, μωρός, "stupid," "foolish," although in the Greek it is not used for calling names. But this Greek word was adopted by the Jews and was used by them as a vile epithet, somewhat like our "Blamed fool!" Matthew, therefore, really leaves both epithets untranslated, for his Jewish readers would understand the words without a translation. The two epithets are in reality synonymous, one referring to an empty mind, and the other is a slow mind.²

Another reason the writer rejects the traditional interpretation of three graduations of sin and punishment concerns the term κρίσει. The view that κρίσει means local court is probably erroneous. It is hard to imagine how being angry with a brother, without revealing his anger in deeds or words, could get one into trouble with a local court. Also in none of the over forty New Testament instances can κρίσει mean local court (unless Matt 5:21-22 refers to the local court). Often it refers to a decision, judgment or verdict. "Sometimes this amounts to a decision against, hence condemnation, punishment."³

Perhaps the best explanation of the passage is that Jesus is saying that sinful anger, which leads to bitter words, is in its very nature murder. It is murder that is

¹Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to St. Luke, in The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament, pp. 78-79.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, pp. 219-20.

³Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 298.

committed in a person's heart. Unless one repents, this person faces everlasting punishment in Gehenna.¹ So while the Pharisees and Scribes put the emphasis on the external act, God judges the heart. Barnes concludes that,

As these offences were not actually cognizable before the Jewish tribunals, he must mean that they will be punished hereafter and all these expressions therefore relate to degrees of punishment proportionate to the crime in the future world.²

Gehenna is a place of fire

The genitive case, τοῦ πυρός, describes Gehenna as "marked by fire."³ It was pointed out in Chapter II that hell as a place of fire or of flame is characteristic of the language used throughout the Bible (Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31; Rev 19:20).⁴

Lenski maintains that,

The addition "of the fire" refers to the fire of hell. The eleven passages in which Gehenna occurs cannot refer to the valley near Jerusalem. We have no evidence that the Jews ever burned criminals alive, or that the bodies of dead criminals were dragged out to this valley, or that constant fires were kept going there. Hell cannot be abolished by such interpretations of Gehenna.⁵

Nevertheless, this passage refers to Gehenna as characterized by fire. The question arises, does this refer

¹Ibid., p. 297.

²Barnes, Matthew and Mark, in Notes on the New Testament, p. 53.

³Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 1:44.

⁴Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 202.

⁵Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, p. 220.

to a literal fire? A noted evangelist said, "I am often asked, 'Do you believe in a literal fire?' The best answer I have is this: anything that is a symbol of something is always less than the reality."¹

It is, therefore, entirely possible that in some literal or, if you prefer, semi-literal but nevertheless physical sense, hell is the place of the flame; that is of burning.

Those who deny this point to the parable recorded in Luke 16:19-31. The writer believes this to be a real life situation, not a parable--see Chapter III. But granted that in his disembodied state the rich man was not being burned physically does this in any way prove that when once the wicked receive their bodies, they will not be tortured by a fire which in some sense is physical? It should be born in mind that the rich man in the parable is pictured as if he had a body. . . . In that as-if-body he suffers torment "in this flame." How this in any way proves that hell cannot be the place of the flame I fail to understand. The parable would rather seem to teach that terrible punishment, first as to the soul, but later also as to the body, awaits the wicked. And is not that the teaching of Scripture throughout?

But though the idea of a literal fire--that is a fire which in some sense is physical--need not be excluded, it remains true that according to Scripture the literal sense does not exhaust the concept. Everlasting fire has been prepared, "for the devil and his angels" yet other concepts with that of fire, namely the divine wrath and consequently anguish for the wicked (Deut 32:22; Jer 4:4; Rev 14:10-11).²

Matthew 10:28

And fear not from the ones killing the body but not being able to kill the soul but rather you fear the one being able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna (Matt 10:28).

¹MacArthur, Adventuring in the Next World, p. 106.

²Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, pp. 202-03.

Whatever one's enemies may do, there is one thing they cannot do, that is, kill the soul (ψυχή). The ψυχή is synonymous with the πνεῦμα when referring to the immaterial part of man. It is the soul/spirit or immaterial part of man that Jesus is referring to in Matthew 10:28.¹ Thus, Jesus refers to Gehenna as the place of both body and soul/spirit.

Here, φοβέομαι φοβεῖσθε is the form used in the Third Edition of the United Bible Societies' The Greek New Testament indicating a fear that causes one to flee from what is feared; . . . Jesus minces no words when he calls the foes of the disciples "them that kill the body," nor should we underrate what this means. Think of Stephen, the first martyr. Bodily death has caused many to fear and to deny Christ and the gospel. Yet this is the limit of the power of hostile men: they can murder the body but they cannot touch the soul. To lose the body is to lose little, to lose the soul is to lose all. Here ψυχή is in contrast with σῶμα and hence does not mean merely "life" but what the English calls "soul," the seat and bearer of the spiritual life; and thus in substance, it is the same as the πνεῦμα.

"Soul and body in Gehenna" implies the bodily resurrection of the damned.²

Gehenna is the place God casts both soul and body

That the phrase, "the one being able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna," refers to God need not be doubted. The change of the construction of the verse, from μὴ φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτεννόν τὸ το φοβεῖσθε δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν δυνάμενον (which is the normal construction for fearing God) indicates this. Nowhere does the Scripture tell the

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, pp. 470-71.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, pp. 410-11.

Christian to fear the devil. "Fear God and resist the devil" is the doctrine of the Bible (Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:7). "The devil tries to bring us to Gehenna, but he has no authority to send us there. It is the fear of God, not of the devil, that is to enable the disciple to overcome the fear of man."¹

Moreover, the similar passage, James 4:12, speaks of the "one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy" (ἀπολέσαι). There is no doubt that the reference here, in James, is to God. God is the Lawgiver who has the power either to save or destroy.

The verb φοβεῖσθε, has the same meaning throughout its repetitious use in Matthew 10:28. It means to be afraid or thoroughly scared. This is not childlike fear, motivated by disobedience, but the terrifying fear of God's holy, burning wrath. "This is the fear which really belongs to the enemies of God and of Christ, the fear from which they try to hide by their self-deceptions which will at last overwhelm them."² Thus, it is God alone who has the power to sentence both soul/spirit and body in Gehenna.

Gehenna is a place of everlasting destruction

Further, Jesus is saying that the soul/spirit and body of the wicked will both have an everlasting future.

¹Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke, in The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament, p. 155.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, pp. 410-11.

Neither will be annihilated but will be fit for everlasting destruction.¹ "Destroy," ἀπολέσαι, does not mean annihilation but eternal punishment in Gehenna.²

Arndt and Gingrich refer to the use of ἀπολέσαι, in Matthew 10:28, as meaning ruin or as used in speaking of eternal death.³ Alford connects it with the similar passage in James 4:12. He notes the meaning of ἀπολέσαι from James 4:12 as follows: "But as connected with νομοθέτης καὶ κριτής what meaning can ἀπολέσαι bear, except that of eternal destruction?"⁴

Then finally, Dr. John Gill commented concerning the fact that ἀπολέσαι does not mean annihilation in the following manner:

This is a description of God, and of his power, who is able to do that which men are not: all that they can do, by divine permission is to kill the body, but He is able to destroy, that is, to torment and punish both body and soul in hell, in everlasting burnings, for neither soul nor body will be annihilated; though this He is able to do. As the former clause expresses the immortality of the soul, this supposes the resurrection of the body; for how otherwise should it be destroyed, or punished with the soul in hell?⁵

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 432.

²Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 1:83.

³Walter Bauer; William F. Arndt; and Wilbur F. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2nd ed., rev. and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 95 (hereafter cited as BAGD).

⁴Alford, The Greek Testament, 1:109.

⁵John Gill, An Exposition of the New Testament, 2 vols. (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1851), 1:91.

The destruction of which the Scripture speaks is the everlasting destruction of the wicked (2 Thess 1:9).

Their hopes, their joys, their opportunities, their riches, etc., have perished, and they themselves are tormented by this and that forevermore. When Jeremiah speaks about shepherds who destroyed the sheep, did he mean that those sheep ceased to exist? When Hosea exclaims, "O Israel, you have destroyed yourself," was he trying to say that the people had been annihilated? Did Paul (Romans 14:15) mean to imply that by eating meat you can annihilate your brother? Or that he himself had at one time annihilated the faith? (Galatians 1:23).¹

Therefore, it is clear that ἀπόλλυμι does not mean annihilation in other New Testament Scriptures. In addition to this, there are many Scriptures which refer to the everlasting existence of the wicked (Matt 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43, 48; Luke 16:19-31). The wicked will be cast into an "everlasting," "unquenchable" fire where their worm does not die. The rich man was in torment and excruciating pain in conscious existence in Hades. According to Revelation 20, Hades will continue to exist until it is cast into the Lake of Fire where torment continues endlessly (Rev 20:14).

Thus, ἀπολέσαι cannot mean annihilation or the cessation of the wicked, but speaks of their complete ruin, everlasting destruction or eternal death which will never end.

Mark 9:43, 48

And if your hand entraps you, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life maimed than having the two hands to go away into the Gehenna, into the fire unquenchable (Mark 9:43).

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 198.

Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:48).

The word σκανδαλίζη forms the connecting link between Mark 9:43 and the preceding discourses; Jesus is beginning to speak concerning what it means to be identified with Him. This leads Him to speak of the things in man which would lead to his entrapping.¹

The σκάνδαλον is the bait-stick in a trap or snare. It is the crooked stick that springs the trap; hence, snare, temptation to sin, enticement (Matt 18:7; Luke 17:1); also: object or revulsion, the stumbling-block of the cross (1 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:11). Similarly the verb basically means: to ensnare, lure into sin, lead astray.²

Thus, these stern warnings in Mark 9:43-48 relate to the ensnaring of one's self into sin. The offense is in the question of the decision for the Kingdom of God, which cannot be separated from the person of Jesus and faith in Him. It is especially pertinent to note the eschatological framework of Jesus' words concerning the radical self-punishment of an offending member of the body. "The sharp contrast between departure (or being cast into hell) and entrance into life (or the Kingdom) presupposes the situation

¹Ezra P. Gould, The Gospel According to St. Mark, in The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, ed. Charles Augustus Briggs, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Alfred Plummer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 178.

²William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 364.

of the final judgment in which the decision of God (or the Son of Man, cf. ch. 8:38) concerning each man is irreversible and entails eternal consequences."¹

Gehenna is a place to be avoided at all costs

The key to the correct understanding of Mark 9:43-48 is the cumulative impact of the three ἐάν clauses. Jesus speaks of three bodily members. They do not act independently from the person. The hand, foot or eyes act in accordance with one's volition and hence sets and baits a trap for the soul. Lenski concludes that,

It is your own evil heart and will that abuse these bodily members to make them the instruments of lust and passions that center within you. It ought to be plain, then, that removing these members from your body and mutilating it would not help you, the lusts and passions would still be there. The heart and will must be changed; thus alone will you be saved. That is why Jesus speaks of having one hand, one foot, and of being one-eyed. These single members would still be left as instruments to serve the evil heart if it remains unchanged.²

The Palestinian custom was to refer to specific members of the body which were responsible for one's action. This was the reason Jesus spoke of the offending hand, foot, and eye. They concretely characterize the person as one who acts and is responsible for those actions.

The radical demand that the hand or foot should be hacked off or the eye plucked out if they expose a man

¹William L. Lane, The Gospel According to Mark, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 347.

²Lenski, Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel, p. 45.

to the danger of final rejection juxtaposes the relative value of physical life with the absolute value of that authentic, imperishable life which is bestowed by God alone. Jesus did not hesitate to call for the renunciation of possessions (Ch 10:21), family (Ch 10:28f) and of life itself (Ch 8:34f) if these things stood in the way of following him; here he demands the complete sacrifice of the sinful activity of the member. This was not a demand for self-mutilation, but in the strongest manner possible Jesus speaks of the costliest sacrifices.¹

Perhaps Lenski states the writer's view best concerning this passage:

The argument thus becomes a reductio ad absurdum. For, on our own assertion, the only other alternative would be to let the virulent members actually kill us in their trap and destroy us in hell. The repetitions found in these verses, hand, foot, eye, each treated separately in the same drastic way, aim to hammer in the truth that we are at all hazard to try to escape hell and make sure of heaven. If, then, the way of physical amputations is hopeless and absurd, there must be another way. Since these entrapments must be escaped, we must search out that way. Jesus does not state what it is; but his teaching has made it plain: the heart must be converted and must then control the body and all its members to spring traps neither on others nor on ourselves.²

Gehenna is a place of unquenchable fire

In verse 43, Gehenna is defined as "the unquenchable fire" (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἀσβεστόν) which literally means the fire that cannot be extinguished. "The meaning is that the

¹Lane, The Gospel According to Mark, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament, pp. 347-48.

²Lenski, Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel, p. 406.

punishment for those who enter there is never-ending, everlasting. See Matt 25:46."¹

To the term αἰσβεστον is added a second article (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰσβεστον), which makes the adjective "a kind of apposition, in fact, a climax. A fire that is unquenchable is by that very fact eternal."²

Gehenna is a place of endless destruction

Gehenna conveys an image of extreme horror. Entrance into Gehenna/Hell indicates spiritual ruin in the starkest terms. This idea is reinforced with the quotation from Isaiah 66:24 in Mark 9:48, "where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." This passage was probably thoroughly familiar to the disciples as "a vivid picture of a destruction which continues endless."³

The σκώληξ is a maggot which consumes the flesh of a corpse. The fact that it does not die means its work is eternal even as the fire is never quenched and is therefore eternal.⁴ Accordingly, the torment will be both external (τὸ πῦρ) and internal (ὁ σκώληξ). "When Scripture speaks of unquenchable fire, the point is not merely that there will

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark, in New Testament Commentary, p. 366.

²Lenski, Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel, p. 407.

³Lane, The Gospel According to Mark, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament, p. 349.

⁴Lenski, Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel, p. 408.

always be a fire burning in Gehenna, but that the wicked will have to endure that torment forever."¹ "The worm that gnaws, and the fire that burns inwardly have no limits. They propagate themselves."²

Other Terms Denoting the Final Place of Everlasting Punishment for the Wicked

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus used more than one term to describe the place of everlasting punishment for the wicked. Matthew 8:12 refers to it as a place of outer darkness (τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον). Then Matthew 13:42 designates it as the furnace of fire (τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός). The final expression to be discussed here describes it as a place of eternal fire (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον) in Matthew 25:41.

A Place of Darkness

But the sons of the kingdom shall be thrown out into the farthest darkness. In that place will be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth (Matt 8:12).

The phrase, the sons of the kingdom (οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας), and the verb ἐκβλήσονται do not necessarily imply that these people were actually in the kingdom. A person may be thrown out when he attempts to enter a place without ever being able to enter it. This is the situation depicted in this passage. The term υἱοὶ, sons, conveys the

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark, in New Testament Commentary, p. 367.

²Gould, The Gospel According to St. Mark, in The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, p. 180.

idea of legal standing, thus making it distinct from τέκνα, children. The Jews were the physical descendants of Abraham. However, according to John 8:37-41,

Although they were beyond question "the sons of the kingdom" because they were "Abraham's seed" and thus the potential heirs, they forfeited their inheritance of the kingdom by unbelief; they disavowed their father Abraham, annulled their birthright, and lost their place in the kingdom. When, in spite of all this, they proudly demanded entrance, they compelled God "to throw them out."¹

A place of the most distant darkness

This outer darkness is depicted as a place, ἐκεῖ, "there," just as heaven is described as a place. Τὸ σκότος is definite, just as ἡ βασιλεία. It literally means the darkness that is farthest out. The adjective, having a separate article (τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον), thus has the same emphasis as the noun and is an appositional climax. Moreover, ἐξώτερον, which is comparative in form, is used as a superlative--the farthest out darkness. The darkness (σκότος) "denotes not merely the absence of light, life and joy but also the dread power that drags men away from the light and holds them forever in its grasp."²

Hendriksen, interestingly comments on darkness as the place of punishment for both the wicked's body and soul in connection with the fire of Hell:

If hell be the place of fire how can it also be the place of darkness? Or vice versa. Are not these two mutually exclusive?

¹Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, pp. 330-31.

²Ibid., p. 331.

My answer would be not necessarily. I happen to know someone who at one time by a certain form of radiation was seriously burned, though when this took place that person was in a dark room. And do we not also speak about burning thirst, burning fever, etc.? It is therefore entirely possible that in some literal or, if you prefer semi-literal but nevertheless physical sense hell is the place of the flame; that is of burning, even though it is also the abode of darkness.¹

The writer is not suggesting that the above is the actual case, for that would be speculation, but only the possibility of the coexistence of darkness and fire. Indeed not only the possibility but the fact that the Bible says the everlasting punishment of the wicked will entail both fire and darkness. As to the method, no one can ascertain.

A place of excruciating pain

"The awfulness and the terror of the utter darkness produces the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth, the definite articles pointing to the specific effects that accompany this darkness. There is no other weeping, etc., that is like this weeping."² According to Arndt and Gingrich, ὁ κλαυθμός indicates the unique and extreme character of the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Moreover, they conclude that ὁ κλαυθμός καὶ ὁ βρυγμός τῶν ὀδόντων is used only in connection with the tortures of Hell.³

The tears which Jesus describes here in Matthew 8:12 are those of inconsolable, never-ending wretchedness and

¹Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, pp. 202-03.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, pp. 331-32.

³BAGD, pp. 433, 435, 555.

utter hopelessness. This weeping is accompanied by the grinding or gnashing of teeth (Matt 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). The grinding teeth depict excruciating pain and frenzied anger. The grinding of the teeth will never cease (Matt 25:46).¹

All are agreed that the weeping is the effect of the complete loss of happiness. But many think of rage or of helpless despair as causing "the gnashing of the teeth." We prefer to think of the excruciating torment of the outer darkness. Compare 13:42, 50: "the furnace of fire: there shall be the wailing and gnashing of the teeth." These two passages, together with 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28, make the words a standard description of the place of torment. The damned shall not be annihilated. . . . When Luke 13:28-30 reports that Jesus used what Matthew here records in a different connection and also changed the order of the sentences, it is obvious that Jesus repeated this mighty warning, which certainly also deserved repetition.²

The Furnace of Fire

And will throw them into the furnace of fire. There will be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth (Matt 13:42).

The context pictures the tares being gathered and burned (vss. 40-42). Thus, Jesus is referring to the cleansing of the kingdom.

On the day of judgment--but not before!, that is the emphasis here--the kingdom will be purged of all impurities. As to sphere of activities, . . . whatever in them was offensive or seductive, hence contrary to God's holy law, will in the gloriously transformed universe have been completely removed.³

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 398.

²Lenski, Interpretation of Matthew, p. 332.

³Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 572.

Concerning this passage, Lenski says that the two articles τὴν καμίνον τοῦ πυρός leave nothing indefinite as to what furnace or what fire is referred to here.¹

The phrase ὁ κλαυθμός καὶ ὁ βρυγμός τῶν ὀδόντων seems to identify the furnace of fire with the place of outer darkness (Matt 8:12; 22:13), the place of hypocrites and the unworthy servant (Matt 24:25), the place of the servant who wasted his talent (Matt 25:30) and the place of all the workers of unrighteousness (Luke 13:27-28). In each of these verses the phrase ὁ κλαυθμός καὶ ὁ βρυγμός τῶν ὀδόντων is mentioned. These verses speak of the future judgment of the wicked and in Luke 13:27-28, the place is identified with all the wicked.

Moreover, in Matthew 13:40, Jesus says this judgment will occur at the consummation of this current world's age (ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος). Therefore, the furnace of fire is connected with eschatological judgment. Hence, the writer believes the furnace of fire (τὴν καμίνον τοῦ πυρός) is probably referring to Gehenna. Gehenna is the only place of future punishment of the wicked, Jesus mentions in the Gospels. According to Luke 16, the judgment of the wicked in Hades comes after death, but when the judgment scene pictured in the above passages occurs, Hades will have served its purposes and will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14-15).

¹Lenski, Interpretation of Matthew, p. 539.

A Place of Eternal Fire

And then he will say to those on the left: Be going from me, such as have been cursed into the eternal fire, the one that has been kept in readiness for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41).

The writer believes Jesus is probably referring to Gehenna. The articles (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον) point to a definite eternal fire which his Jewish audience would readily recognize. The Jews usually associated the eschatological fire where the wicked are punished with Gehenna. Also, in Mark 9:43, 48 the unquenchable fire of Gehenna, as has been previously pointed out, is equivalent to the eternal fire.

The fire in this passage may be characterized in three ways. It is a place of separation (πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ (οἱ) κατηραμένοι). It is an eternal place (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον). Finally, it is a place of association (ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ).

A place of separation

The eternal fire is a place of separation. The wicked will hear these fateful words of Jesus, "Depart from me you accursed," which is the opposite of "Come, you blessed" (Matt 7:23, cf. Matt 25:34).¹ Those on the left are κατηραμένοι--having become the subjects of the curse.

¹Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 890.

This perfect passive participle (κατηραμένοι) pictures the wicked as having incurred God's curse. Jesus uses the descriptive present imperative πορεύεσθε (be going) when he separated the accursed ones on the left from the blessed ones (Matt 25:34). Lenski notes this imperative is used in the following sense: "'be going;' as though it (πορεύεσθε) were marking the brief delay granted them until the final words that justify this terrible verdict have been spoken."¹ Thus, when the Saviour speaks these solemn words, the blessed ones on the right (Matt 25:34) are permanently separated from the accursed ones on the left (Matt 25:41). The former inherits the kingdom while the latter goes into the eternal fire.

An eternal place

The fire is described as αἰώνιον. In order to determine the meaning of αἰώνιον, when applied to the punishment of the wicked, it is necessary to determine the substantive from which the adjective is derived. Αἰών denotes an age. The word itself does not determine the length of the duration or age. Therefore, if the punishment of the wicked takes place in the present αἰών, it is used in the sense of temporal punishment. However, if the αἰών occurs in the future age (i.e., the future kingdom age), as it does in this case, then the αἰών is used in the sense of endless.

¹Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, p. 996.

The adjective gets its meaning from its noun. Sometimes the future αἰών is pictured as being made up of lesser αἰώνων (Rev 20:10).¹

However, the doctrine of annihilation or conditional immortality has attempted to prove that the punishment of the wicked is the extinction of consciousness. They believe αἰών refers to an age which is not of endless duration:

The objection that because αἰώνιος, or "aeonian," denotes "that which belongs to an age," it cannot mean endless, rests upon the assumption that there is no endless αἰών or age. It postulates an indefinite series of limited aeons or ages, no one of which is final and everlasting.²

On the contrary, perhaps the most telling argument against the assumption that the wicked are simply annihilated but the righteous will continue to live forever is Matthew 25:46. In this verse the same word (αἰώνιον) is used to describe both the duration of the punishment of the wicked and the blessedness of the righteous. "The wicked go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life."³

Concerning Matthew 25:41, Lenski concludes that,

Regarding αἰώνιος as meaning "eternal" little needs to be said. Those who would reduce the fire of hell to a shorter or a longer period of time must then similarly reduce the joys of heaven. But αἰώνιος was spoken by the king after time has already ceased, and after all angels and men have entered on their fixed and unchanged fate, and therefore, cannot be understood in this

¹Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 2:682, 685-86.

²Ibid., 2:687.

³Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter, p. 198.

limited sense. And if this Greek adjective does not mean "eternal," which Greek adjective does have that meaning? Or did the Greek world including the Jewish (Jesus spoke Aramaic) world have no words for eternity or eternal?¹

A place of association

"Hell means association, the most gruesome togetherness of all. The wicked will dwell forever with the devil and his angels (τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ), for whom the everlasting fire was prepared."²

Thus it is appropriate to end this verse with these words:

The remarkable thing is that hell fire was originally prepared for the devil and his angels as the fit punishment for their irremedial apostasy from God; and not for men. It is a fair deduction that men are consigned to this devil's fire for the simple reason that they have turned from God to the devil and have become incurable apostate even as he is. The devil and his angels whose promptings these men followed on earth will be their constant companions in the eternal fire.³

The Lake of Fire

The Book of Revelation has sometimes been called the Book of Climaxes. In regard to everlasting punishment it is no exception. In Revelation 19, 20, 21, the Lake of Fire is pictured as the final doom of all wickedness.

¹Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, p. 997.

²Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel to Matthew, in New Testament Commentary, p. 890.

³Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew, p. 997.

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet, the one having performed the miracles before him, by which he deceived those having received the mark of the beast and those worshiping his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire being kept burning with brimstone (Rev 19:20).

The final abode of the beast and false prophet

The first aorist passive indicative, ἐπιδέσθῃ, is used to refer to the capture of the beast and false prophet, like a rebel or thief. The verb is found more often in the Gospels. Six times it is used to describe the schemes to capture Christ; twice it is found in the narrative of the miraculous drought of fishes; twice it occurs in the Book of Acts; once it is used in the arrest of Peter; and finally, once it depicts the attempt to arrest Paul at Damascus.¹

In Revelation 19:20, it literally means,

"taken, laid hold of, captured was the beast." This verb fits the action of battle; . . . "The pseudo-prophet" was with the beast and was thus taken "in company with him."²

After the beast and false prophet have been seized, they are cast alive (ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν), into the Lake of Fire. "They fall together even as they fought together."³

¹Simcox, The Revelation of St. John, in Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, p. 188.

²Lenski, The Interpretation of Revelation, p. 559.

³Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 6:455.

The emphasis is on living (ζῶντες). These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire, while all the rest were killed and their flesh devoured by the birds.¹ "They will have come up from the Abyss and they are still found alive in the lake of fire at the close of the thousand years (Rev 20:10)."² Thus, no other conclusion can be reached then that the Lake of Fire is the final abode of the beast and false prophet. These two are identified by most conservative scholars as the Antichrist and the Religious Leader during the Tribulation. As such they are probably men who will be empowered by Satan.

A place burning with brimstone

The Lake of Fire is a place "burning with brimstone," τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ. According to Swete, the identification of τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός would have probably been known by the Palestinian Christians at the time John wrote Revelation. "Possibly it was a local expression for the γέενναν τοῦ πυρός which was familiar to Palestinian Christians (Matt 5:22ff)."³

This Lake of Fire burns with brimstone, which is a yellow sulphurous substance which readily oxidizes in air.

¹Lenski, The Interpretation of Revelation, p. 599.

²Bullinger, The Apocalypse or The Day of the Lord, p. 607.

³Swete, The Apocalypse of St. John, p. 258.

In its natural state, it is found in volcanic regions such as the Valley of the Dead Sea (cf. Gen 19:24; Ezek 38:22).¹

A lake of burning brimstone would not only be intensely hot, but malodorous and fetted as well. It is an appropriate place for all that is sinful and wicked in the world. The Antichrist and the false prophet are its first inhabitants. Later the devil (20:10), Death and Hades (20:14) and all evil men (21:8) will join them in this place of ceaseless torment.²

Revelation 20:14-15

And the death and the hades were thrown into the lake of the fire. This death is the second, the lake of fire.

And if anyone was not found as having been written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:14-15).

Final abode of death and hades

In a great psalm of thanksgiving Isaiah said that God "will swallow up death forever" (Isa 25:8). The best commentary on ὁ θάνατος in Revelation 20:14 is 1 Corinthians 15:26: ἔσχατος καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος. The last enemy (the death) is put out of effect. It has been put out of commission--abolished. The dreaded power of ὁ θάνατος is thus put out of commission by being thrown into the lake of fire.³ Moreover, Lenski maintains that the death and the

¹Robert H. Mounce, "The Book of Revelation," in The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 350.

²Ibid.

³Lenski, Interpretation of Revelation, p. 609.

hades are companions. The reason for this is that the death and the hades are associated as companions as Revelation 6:8 also states.¹

When the passage speaks about this death (οὗτος ὁ θανάτος), it refers to the second death namely the Lake of Fire (ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός being in apposition to ὁ δεύτερος). Thus, "'his death' - the throwing of the two companions, death and hades into the lake of fire. This is the second death, namely, to put it tersely is the lake of fire."² Alford writes, "As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death (Rev 21:4) so after that death there is no more life."³

Moreover, τῷ ᾧ in this passage may be summarized as follows:

As the place into which the souls of the wicked go at the time of death until at the time of the resurrection the death and the hades give up these souls so that they may again be united with their bodies and thus stand before Christ's judgment throne and receive their verdict.⁴

Death and Hades are personified (cf. 6:8) and in a vivid image are cast into the lake of fire to be permanently destroyed (cf. 19:20; 20:10). This not only fulfills Paul's cry concerning the last enemy, death, which will be defeated by the victorious kingdom of Christ

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 610.

³Alford, The Greek New Testament, 4:367.

⁴Lenski, The Interpretation of Luke, p. 611.

(1 Cor 15:16), but also signals the earth's new condition; "There will be no more death" (21:4).¹

The final abode of the wicked

Revelation 20:15, begins with a first-class condition which assumes the reality of the first clause (καὶ ἔτι τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος). This first class condition shows the consequence in the second clause (εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός). Thus the verse may be paraphrased in the following manner: "If anyone's name was not written in the Book of Life, and I assume there were such, he was thrown into the lake of fire."²

We have already learned, that temporal death does not hinder eternal life, nay, may secure a better and an earlier resurrection thereto. We now learn the opposite doctrine that there is a resurrection not to life. It is quite true however that in popular Jewish belief, and in the language of the New Testament when the Resurrection is spoken of, it is ordinarily conceived as one to life. This does not prevent the more terrible side of the doctrine from being also taught in the Gospel, but it does indicate which side is the healthier as well as the pleasanter, for our thought to dwell on.³

Summary

The Bible primarily uses two terms in describing the eschatological punishment of both body and soul/spirit of the wicked: γεέννα and τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. According to Matthew 5:22, γεέννα is the place of judgment and punishment

¹Alan F. Johnson, "Revelation," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 12 vols., ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 590.

²Ibid.

³Simcox, The Revelation of St. John, in The Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, p. 188.

for the wicked. The writer believes that this passage is not referring to the three sins and punishment in a graduated climax but rather is talking about a matter of the heart. Unless the heart is changed the person faces everlasting punishment in τὴν γεένναν τοῦ πυρός. This fire is physical in some sense but may also be related to God's wrath and consequently to the anguish of the wicked.

In Matthew 10:28, Jesus describes γεέννα as the place of both body and soul/spirit. Moreover, ἀπολέσαι does not mean the annihilation of the wicked but refers to the ruin and everlasting destruction (2 Thess 1:9).

Then in Mark 9:43-48, Jesus is not referring to physical mutilation. But rather He uses the destruction of vital parts of the human body to stress the point that γεέννα is to be avoided at all costs. In this passage the use of the article (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον) denotes a fire that is eternal.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus used other terms in describing the place of punishment of the wicked. Matthew 8:12 refers to it as the place of outer darkness; Matthew 13:42 calls it the furnace of fire. Then Matthew 25:41 characterizes it as the everlasting fire.

Finally, the everlasting punishment of the wicked is in τὴν λιμνὴν τοῦ πυρός. This is the final doom of the beast and the false prophet (Rev 19:20), the devil (Rev 20:10), death and hades (Rev 20:14) and wicked men (Rev 20:15).

CONCLUSION

In a recent issue of Encounter, an article described how modern secular logic looks at eternal life. In summary, it compared this logic to that of Hamlet in the following manner:

What distinguished the secular outlook from that of Hamlet is not simply the loss of belief in a future life but the loss of apprehension about it. Hamlet was not convinced that there was a future life--"to sleep, perchance to dream." The sleep of death may well be dreamless. But what Hamlet did consider, and what does not occur to the secular outlook is the possibility that if there is a future life, it might not be totally to his advantage. If it is this lack of concern which is a distinctive feature of the secular outlook, then secularity is not characterized by the loss of transcendence. In traditional terms, the secular perspective is distinguished not by the loss of a future life, but by the loss of hell. So it is the issue of hell on which the logic of secularity hangs.

If our argument is correct, the secular outlook can claim to leave the issue of a future life open only because it does not consider the possibility of hell. However, this would not seem to be a serious liability because even theology gives little attention to the possibility of hell. In so far as the topic does rate mention in the mainstream of modern theology, it occurs usually to be dismissed as incompatible with the love or ultimacy of God, in that God cannot ultimately be defeated in his loving purpose for all his creatures.¹

Contrary to this secular vein of thought, eternity can be very much to one's disadvantage. There are definite conclusions one can discern from the Bible concerning an after-life in Hell.

¹M. Colin Grant, "The Secular Logic of Eternal Life," Encounter 41 (Autumn 1980):347, 349.

Chapter I discussed the meaning and misconceptions about Hell. In the days of Jesus and the ancient Church, Hell was viewed as the place of damnation and endless punishment for the wicked (Mark 9:43-48). It begins in the intermediate state where the wicked are in conscious existence (Luke 16:19-31) and climaxes with the resurrection of the body of the wicked. Both body and soul/spirit will then be cast into the Lake of Fire which is the Second Death (Rev 20:14-15). Moreover, the outer darkness (Matt 8:12), the furnace of fire (Matt 13:42) and the eternal fire (Matt 25:41) are probably references to γέεννα. These terms are all used in the eschatological judgment scene in Matthew. Also, all the terms refer to the fact that both body and soul/spirit of the wicked will be cast into them for punishment. There seems little likelihood that there would be more than one place of punishment existing at the same time. For these same reasons the writer believes that γέεννα and τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός are either the same or similar.

In Chapter II an overview of the various designations for Hell was presented. Since more than one Greek term is translated Hell in the English Bible, there may be confusion concerning the concept.

The first aorist participle, ταρταρώσας, occurs only in 2 Peter 2:4. It is used of sinning angels being cast into Tartarus. The aorist participle, ἁμαρτησάντων is probably an adverb of time. Hence, when the angels sinned, they were cast into Tartarus. Thus, this verb probably does not

refer to Hell but to a specific group of angels who sinned at a specific time and who are being held in Tartarus until the judgment.

In the New Testament, ἡ ἄβυσσος occurs ten times. Each time, with the exception of Romans 10:7, it is used in connection with the devil, demons, or the antichrist. In Romans 10:7, the context indicates that Paul is probably referring to Christ's death and resurrection. Therefore, it is not likely that ἡ ἄβυσσος means Hell.

The term κατώτερος is found only in Ephesians 4:9. Grammatical considerations alone cannot determine the meaning of εἰς τὰ κατώτερα (μέρη) τῆς γῆς in the final analysis. The writer believes that ἀνέβη plus the article το indicates Christ's ascension and that κατέβη would then indicate His descent or Incarnation to the earth (Phil 2:5-11). Thus, τῆς γῆς would be the genitive of apposition. Therefore, κατώτερος would not be a designation for Hell.

In the LXX, ᾠδης is almost always used for גֵּיהֵנָם. The writer believes גֵּיהֵנָם/ᾠδης does not always mean Hell. In its broader view גֵּיהֵנָם/ᾠδης denotes the grave (Gen 44:29, 31). However, when גֵּיהֵנָם/ᾠδης refers to the abode of the immaterial part of the wicked, Hell is a good translation (Prov 23:14; Luke 16:19-31).

The Bible clearly sets forth γέεννα as the place where the wicked will be punished in both body (eyes, hands, feet) and soul/spirit (Mark 9:43-48). Therefore, there is no question that γέεννα refers to Hell.

The designation, τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός, occurs only in Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8. It will be the final abode of the beast and false prophet (Rev 19:20), the devil (Rev 20:10), and the unsaved (Rev 20:14-15; 21:8). Here they will be punished endlessly (Rev 20:10).

Then Chapter III has dealt with the wicked dead before their bodily resurrection. In the Scriptures death is the boundary between the two αἰώνων. Until one dies, he is in this world, τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι (1 Tim 6:17); however, after death, he enters the future world τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι (Matt 12:32). The usual understanding of Scripture is that one is in time only as long as he is alive on earth; when he dies, he enters eternity.

What happens to the wicked when they die? According to Asaph, they are plunged into ruin (Ps 73:12-19). The rich man opened his eyes in a place of torment (Luke 16:23-26). Finally, Judas went to his own place--the place of perdition (Acts 1:25).

In the New Testament, ᾠδης is the place of punishment for the souls/spirits of the wicked dead. In Matthew 11:23 and Luke 10:15, Christ rebuked Capernaum. The inhabitants will descend to Hades (ἕως ᾠδου καταβήσῃ) in the day of judgment. In Jesus' curse of Capernaum, ᾠδου comes before the verb (καταβήσῃ). This makes Christ's prediction even more emphatic. Moreover, ᾠδου is sharply contrasted with οὐρανοῦ. Thus, the writer believes ᾠδης to be equivalent to Hell here.

Unfortunately, so-called parallel accounts have arisen in regard to Luke 16:19-31. As a result, the assumption has originated that these legends are responsible for Luke 16:19-31. However, a careful reading shows these accounts to be interesting but extremely inferior to the inspired Biblical account.

In Luke 16:23, the dative singular ᾧδῃ is the designation for Hades here. Hades is pictured by flame and torment (Luke 16:24) as the eternal punishment of the wicked is depicted elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Mark 9:43-48, in reference to Gehenna and Rev 20:10-15, in reference to the Lake of Fire). Thus, ᾧδῃς probably means Hell in this passage.

The lifting up of the rich man's eyes in ᾧδῃ took a voluntary action on his part which only a conscious person who was fully aware of his situation could perform--he was aware of Abraham, Lazarus and his own torment. He immediately knew that he was in Hades/Hell, existing in torment (ὑπάρχων ἐν βασάνοις, Luke 16:23). The rich man was a great distance from Abraham and Lazarus ἀπὸ μακρόθεν (Luke 16:23). Thus, Hades/Hell is a great distance from Abraham's bosom.

Next the rich man requested mercy (Luke 16:24). The aorist imperative ἐλέησόν με points to a specific act of pity which πέμψον indicates: send Lazarus for this purpose. The ἄκρον means only the smallest part of Lazarus' finger was to be employed in the water to cool the rich man's parched tongue. The agony ὁδυνῶμαι from which the rich man

sought relief, means to be in pain or to agonize. However, even this smallest of requests was denied. In Hades/Hell no mercy is shown.

Then Hades/Hell is a place of memory (Luke 16:25). The aorist passive μνήσθητι means about the same as to remember. The rich man is asked to remember, think again or bring back to mind events which occurred while on earth. Thus, memory does not pass away in Hades/Hell.

Moreover, Hades/Hell is a place of permanent separation (Luke 16:26). The Greek word χάσμα is derived from χαίλω meaning to gape or yawn. It probably refers to a ravine, vast in depth, length and breadth--a wadi, a gorge. It implies depth rather than width. The ὅπως signifies the purpose of the chasm: to prevent transit from Hades/Hell to Abraham's bosom or vice versa. The perfect passive ἐστήρικται has the present connotation of being fixed so now and forever. The chasm is permanent; the separation is forever. Therefore, Hades/Hell denotes the place of permanent separation of the saved from the wicked. Death decides forever.

Finally, Hades/Hell is a place where there is a concern for family (Luke 16:27-31). The rich man had five brothers still on earth whom he did not wish to come to Hades/Hell. The οὐν (Luke 16:27) indicates, if there was no hope for the rich man, perhaps there may still be hope for his five brothers. However, Abraham's reply was that a

resurrection would not lead to the conversion of those who constantly refused to hear (οὐκ ἀκούουσιν, Luke 16:31).

In Chapter IV, the abode of both the soul/spirit and the body of the wicked has been examined. The Bible uses primarily two terms to denote this place, γέεννα and τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. However, other terms are used such as "the outer darkness" (Matt 8:12), "the furnace of fire" (Matt 13:42), and "the eternal fire" (Matt 25:41).

In Matthew 5:22, the genitive case τοῦ πυρός describes Gehenna/Hell as marked by fire. The fact that the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 was not being burned physically, does not prove that once the wicked receive their bodies they will not be tortured by fire which in some sense is physical. Nevertheless, the literal sense does not exhaust the concept. Two other terms are associated with that of the eternal fire: namely, God's wrath and consequently, the anguish of the wicked.

According to Matthew 10:28, the One who is able to destroy both body and soul/spirit in Gehenna/Hell is God. The change of the construction of the verse from μὴ φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτεννόντων to φοβεῖσθε δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν δυνάμενον (the normal construction for fearing God), indicates this. Also, the verb ἀπολέσαι does not mean the annihilation of the wicked, but refers to their ruin or everlasting destruction (2 Thess 1:9).

Mark 9:43-48 does not mean one is to mutilate his body in order to keep from going to Gehenna/Hell. Jesus

spoke of the offending hand, foot or eye in the sense that they characterize the person as one who acts and is responsible for his actions. He uses these expressions to hammer in the truth that a person is, at all costs, to escape Gehenna/Hell and make sure of heaven. The torments of Gehenna/Hell will be both external (τὸ πῦρ) and internal (ὁ σκόληξ).

In regards to Matthew 8:12, the outer darkness is pictured as a place (ἐκεῖ). A place of darkness does not necessarily exclude fire. In this darkness, the phrase ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων describes weeping that is inconsolable, never-ending, wretched and utterly hopeless. This is accompanied by the grinding of teeth which depicts excruciating pain and frenzied anger of the wicked. Certainly, no language could be more characteristic of Hell.

Moreover, the eternal fire (Matt 25:41) pictures the most gruesome togetherness of all. The wicked will have the devil and his angels as their constant companions in the eternal fire (τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ). This is a probable reference to Gehenna/Hell.

Turning now to the Lake of Fire as the place of punishment for the wicked, Revelation 19:20 brings out the fact that the beast and false prophet are cast living (ζῶντες) into the Lake of Fire. Then according to Revelation 20:10, they are still there one thousand years later. In Revelation 20:14-15, the first condition (καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος) shows the

consequence of the second clause (ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός). As a consequence of not having their names written in the Book of Life, the wicked were thrown into the Lake of Fire. Thus, the eternal abode of the beast and the false prophet, the devil, and wicked men is the Lake of Fire.

The writer's intentions in writing about this sobering subject are not solely academic. It was first and foremost to glorify his Saviour. Then in the second place, it was doctrinal--to set forth as accurately a presentation, with a reliance on the Holy Spirit, as his skills would allow. The Bible has much to say concerning this subject which one dares not neglect. There is a literal Hell to shun and a literal Heaven to gain.

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