

The Resurrection of the Just and the Unjust



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Message by; By Leroy Surface

If a man dies, shall he live again?

This is an age old question that is presented in "*The Book of Job*," which is believed to be the oldest book in the bible. It is a simple question that has troubled every generation from the beginning of time. The apostle Paul tells us, "*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27). It is an irrefutable fact, according to the scriptures, that every person that has ever lived on planet earth is going to live again to stand before God in judgment, who will also determine their eternal destiny.

The angel Gabriel said, "*Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*"

Jesus Christ said, "*...they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*"

The apostle Paul said, "*...there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*"

Are you ready?

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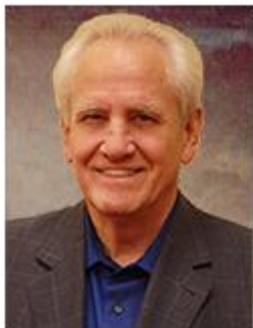
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Message by: **Leroy Surface**



Leroy Surface
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John 5:25: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”*

John 5:28-29: *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**”*

The soul of man was made for eternity. It was made just a little lower than God, and it was made in the image and likeness of God. The scripture gives the record of when God made the first man, Adam. *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”* (Genesis 2:7). Notice that Adam *“became a living soul.”* Adam was a *“soul”* that lived in a body. His body had *“conditional immortality;”* if he ate of the tree of life, he would *“live forever”* (Genesis 2:22-24), but if he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would *“surely die”* (Genesis 2:17). On the same day that Adam disobeyed God, he died to God and became *“alive to sin,”* which along with Satan is the number one enemy of God. On that same day, Adam physically became a *“mortal man.”* He would have become an *“immortal man”* if he had eaten of the *“Tree of Life,”* but the entrance of sin brought the entrance of death. Adam lived for another nine hundred and thirty years and the scripture says *“and he died.”* James defines for us what death is to the natural man; *“For as the body without the spirit is dead...”* (James 2:26). It is when the soul leaves the body that

the body is “*dead.*” Adam’s body slowly grew old until the time it could no longer sustain life, and it “*died.*” Adam, however, was not a “*body;*” he was a “*living soul.*” At the moment of death, which is the laying aside of a body that can no longer sustain life, the soul of man never loses consciousness. It goes immediately to a place to await the resurrection of its body. It does not “*sleep*” during that time, however, but is fully conscious until the resurrection and final judgment. The final state of the soul of man is sealed for all eternity when the last breath is breathed by the mortal body. The “*righteous*” await their resurrection in a place of comfort and love. Before Christ died for us, the “*righteous*” were those who “*believed God*” and “*obeyed His voice,*” as did Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and many others. Since Christ has died for us, the “*righteous*” are those who have been “*made righteous*” (Romans 5:19), by faith in Christ who came into the world to “*make and end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24-25), and to “*take away our sin*” (I John 3:5-6, John 1:29). These, whose sin has been “*taken away*” and who “*abide in Christ*” in this life, simply continue to “*abide in Christ*” as they await the resurrection of their body. As Paul indicated in II Corinthians 5:8, they are “*present with the Lord,*” never to suffer or sorrow again.

The Rich Man in Hell

Luke 16:19-24: “*There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; **And in hell** he lift up his eyes, **being in torments**, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; **for I am tormented in this flame.**”*

Some people believe this is one of the parables of Jesus; others believe it is a literal truth. It really doesn't matter if it is a parable or

not, because it reveals a truth about the future of those who “*die in their sin;*” their “*soul*” goes immediately to a place of torment that Jesus called “*hell.*” It was a place of burning, because the rich man said, “*I am tormented in these flames.*” It should be noticed that the rich man is dead, his body is in the grave, but his soul is in hell where he is tormented in flames. He has not received his final “*reward,*” however, but he is in a holding place for those who die in their sins. In hell, he will wait in torment for the resurrection of the unjust, where he will be brought back to life in a resurrected body to be judged at the great white throne judgment “*according to his works*” (Revelation 20:12-13). There is only one ultimate end for the rich man, however, because he will be cast alive into the “*lake of fire*” where he will be tormented “*day and night forever and ever*” (Revelation 20:10, 15).

Almost two thousand years have passed since Jesus told us about the rich man, but the rich man is still in hell, still tormented in flames, still “*waiting*” for the resurrection of the damned, which will only make his lot much worse. According to the scriptures, it will be at least another thousand years before the white throne judgment, but the rich man will be there. Revelation 20:13-15 says of that day, “*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*”

If a man dies, shall he Live Again?

Job, in what is believed to be the oldest book ever written by man, asked the question, “*If a man die, shall he live again?*” (Job 14:14). In the case of Job, he fully expected to be raised again. “*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*” (Job 19:25-26). Few things are stated more directly or clearer in the scriptures than the fact of the resurrection of every person that has ever lived on earth from Adam until now. Jesus spoke of both the “*resurrection of life*” and the “*resurrection of damnation.*”

John 5:28-29: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**”

The angel Gabriel, whom God sent to tell Daniel about the coming of “*The Christ*” who would “*finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness,*” also told Daniel about the resurrection of the dead:

Daniel 12:2: “*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*”

As if the witness of Gabriel, the messenger angel of God, and of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, were not enough, the apostle Paul, the greatest of all the apostles of our Lord, adds his witness when he gives his testimony before the governor Felix, “*(I) ...have hope toward God, which they themselves (the Pharisees) also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust*” (Acts 24:15).

The second coming of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead is the “*blessed hope*” of every child of God. We look forward, not only to a resurrection, but to live eternally with Jesus Christ in “*a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*” (II Peter 3:13), which is the ultimate end of all those who have been “*born again of the Spirit of God.*” My purpose in this message, however, is not to prove a “*better resurrection*” for those who “*live godly in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:12), but to show the “*ultimate end*” of those who refuse the “*savior*” and the wonderful “*salvation from sin (Matthew 1:21)*” which He brought to those who trust in Him.

When I speak of an “*ultimate end,*” I do not speak of “*annihilation,*” but of the “*final condition*” and “*dwelling place*” of every person. For some, their “*end*” will be “*everlasting life.*”

Romans 6:22: “*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and THE END EVERLASTING LIFE.*”

The “*ultimate end*” of the righteous is “*everlasting life*” in the “*new heavens and new earth.*” The “*ultimate end*” of the ungodly and those who do not know God (II Thessalonians 1:8) will be “*everlasting burnings* (Isaiah 33:14)” in a “*lake of fire* (Revelation 20:15)” that burns “*forever and ever*” (Revelation 20:10).

Revelation 14:11: “*And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*”

Revelation 20:10: “*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*”

The thought of any person, regardless of how evil they may be, tormented by flames day and night “*forever and ever*” in a lake of fire where no one “*dies*” is almost more than I can conceive. One young man said that he knows that it is not so, because, “*I know God, and He would never do that to any person.*” It may be important to note at this point that Jesus, the Son of God, who is “*the eternal Christ*” who created the heavens and earth, the one whom Paul says “*...loved us and gave Himself for us*” (Galatians 2:20), speaks more about eternal damnation than any of His apostles.

Matthew 18:8: “*...it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.*”

Matthew 25:41: “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*”

Matthew 25:46: “*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*”

Luke 16:9: “*And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*”

The Beast and the False Prophet

There is a growing movement toward the belief of the annihilation of the wicked. According to their belief, the lake of fire is where the wicked are burned up to exist no more. The first place that we read specifically of the “*lake of fire*” in the book of Revelation, however, indicates something more than annihilation.

Revelation 19:20: “*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*”

This incident in which the beast and the false prophet are “*cast alive into a lake of fire*” takes place shortly after the second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth. The “*beast*” and the “*false prophet*” spoken of in this verse are not just two men. Neither are they literal “*creatures*” that rise up out of the earth (Revelation 13:11) and sea (Revelation 13:1). The simplest way to understand what they are is to see their counterpart in the body of Christ;

I Corinthians 12:12: “*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*”

The “*beast*” and the “*false prophet,*” while demonic in nature, have “*many membered bodies*” made up of those who have received the “*spirit*” of the beast and the false prophet. It is exactly as the “*church*” is the “*body of Christ,*” made up of those who are “*born of God*” and have received the “*Seal of God.*” The counterpart of this is those who have been deceived by the spirit of the “*beast*” and the “*false prophet.*” They “*worship the beast*” and they receive the “*mark of the beast*” which is the counterpart of the “*seal of God*” which, according to the scriptures, is “*in the foreheads*” of the children of God (Revelation 7:3). Those who “*worship the beast*” and partake of his spirit are those who make up the body of the beast and the false prophet. These are “*cast alive*” into the lake of fire. According to the scripture, they will still be there a thousand years later when the devil also is “*cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,*

where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

The particular manifestation of the beast that is revealed in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation was fulfilled in the false church of the dark ages, which we know to be the “*Roman Catholic Church*” from its inception until the reformation. It was during the reformation that this “*head of the beast*” received its deadly wound, that was healed (Revelation 13:3). The “*healing of the beast*” is taking place in our generation, as many of those who were formerly called “*protestants*” are once again looking to the pope of Rome as the “*head of the church.*” These are men such as those described by the apostle Paul; “*professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*” (Romans 1:22). They should heed the warning and admonition given by the prophet Jeremiah to his generation of Israel;

Jeremiah 51:9-10: “*We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies. The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.*”

Those “*superstars*” of “*Christianity*” who are hoping to “*heal*” the Roman Catholic Church are deceived. They would do much more for Catholics to preach the gospel to them without seeking to “*heal the beast*” that has held them captive for the past sixteen centuries. Those who would “*heal the beast*” are in danger of being “*cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone*” at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The False Prophet

Revelation 13:11-12: “*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*”

The “*many membered body*” of the False Prophet is made up of those who are currently seeking to “*heal*” the deadly wound of the

beast (Revelation 13:11-12). It is a beastly manifestation that has arisen in this, the last generation before the return of Jesus Christ to earth. The first prophetic words that I received from the Spirit of God were in the second year of my ministry in June of 1965. I was sitting in a Catholic church for the wedding of a friend. While waiting for the ceremony to begin, I observed all the images around the perimeter of the sanctuary. I examined the pictures of the “*stations of the cross*” that were on the upper walls of the church, and noticed with disgust that there was no picture depicting the resurrection. As an indignant young Pentecostal preacher, I wanted to stand up and shout at the top of my lungs, “*Don’t you know that He is alive?*” I restrained myself, and as I sat in utter disgust at my surroundings, I heard the voice of the Spirit speaking to me; “*In the last days a harlot will arise out of Pentecost that will be more vile in her affections than the Roman Catholic church of the dark ages.*” I was shocked at what I heard, but I could not deny that I heard it. It was a reproof to me from the Holy Spirit that dwelt in me. Later that same year I received my first prophetic vision from the Lord, in which I saw a time of great revival that would come to communist Russia, a thing that seemed utterly impossible at that time. It was incredible to see and believe that true revival would come to “*godless Russia*” before it would come to America. Russia received its time of great Christian revival immediately after the Iron Curtain fell in 1989. America has yet to see true revival.

In July of 1969, I saw in a vision from the Lord that a false spirit would come to the churches, pretending to be the Holy Ghost, and many of the churches would receive the false spirit. I know today that I was seeing, before it came, the arising of the second beast of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, which is called the False Prophet. When it would arise, the first sight of it would be the “*two horns like a lamb.*” Because of its appearance of reality (the horns of a Lamb), it would be able to deceive millions of people and bring the semblance of great revival to America and much of the western world. Those who were deceived by it could not hear that its “*voice*” was the voice of a dragon. In fact, it spoke with much “*tenderness*” and “*love*” as it brought the “*doctrines of devils*” into churches that had once known the truth and the glory of God. God warned the prophet Ezekiel of just such a generation as we see in the

churches today; “...with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezekiel 33:31). Peter also warned against the false prophets and false teachers that would come in our generation.

II Peter 2:1-3: “*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as **there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying (contradicting) the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.***”

II Peter 2:14-15: “*Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness (prophesied for money) .*”

Can you “*cease from sin?*” The apostle John spoke of those who are “**born of God** (I John 5:18)” and “*cannot sin* (I John 3:9)” because they “*abide in Christ*” where there “*is no sin*” (I John 3:5-6). The apostle Peter warns us against those “*false teachers (ministers)*” that “*cannot cease from sin.*” These “*false prophets and teachers*” are those who “*preach for money,*” and tell us continually that “*we are all sinners, that we sin everyday, and that we will continue to sin for as long as we live in a body of flesh.*” The apostle Paul contradicts them, saying, “**...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me**” (Galatians 2:20).

Christ came into the world to “*make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24-25). He is the “*Lamb of God*” who came to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). He is the “*savior*” who came to “*save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). We “**know**” that He was manifested to “*take away our sins*” (I John 3:5). The false teachers deny everything you have read in this paragraph, even though it is

quoted directly from the scriptures. False teachers love to tell us “*what the bible teaches;*” those who “*know the truth*” understand that the bible does not “*teach,*” it only “*says,*” and it means exactly what it says. “*False teachers*” love to teach what the scripture really means when what it “*says*” contradicts their doctrines. Where is the scripture that explicitly “*says*” that our sins are already forgiven, “*past, present, and future?*” Where is the scripture that says our sins are forgiven “*before we commit them?*” Where does the scripture explicitly say that Christ came into the world to “*take the penalty for our sins?*” Please, for your own sake, find these “*scriptures;*” but if you can’t find them, dare to believe what the scriptures “*say*” instead of what you have been told they “*teach.*”

These “*superstars of religion*” that have told us these things are the “*false teachers*” Peter warned us about. I will be bold and say they are “*the body*” of “*the false prophet*” that will be cast alive into the lake of fire at the second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth. If you are one that is sincere, but have been deceived by those who preach for your money, and have caused you to believe that “*sin*” is a “*light thing*” not to be concerned about, “*deliver yourself;*” vote with your feet and your pocketbook, and get out of the ranks of those who are “*deceiving, and being deceived*” (II Timothy 3:13). These will all “*perish*” with the beast and the false prophet at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

II Thessalonians 1:7-10: “*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*”

Why Eternal Damnation in a Lake of Fire?

When I consider the things the bible says about the resurrection of the damned and their eternal torment in a lake of fire, everything within me wants to cry out against it. I can understand those who

want with all their hearts to believe the doctrine of “*annihilation*,” that the unrighteous are simply “*burned up*” in the lake of fire. I even sympathize with those who believe that the unrighteous will not be raised again, but simply return to dust. I understand why they want to believe such things, but it is not what the scriptures “*say*,” and I can only preach what they say. Still, the magnitude of billions of souls being “*tormented day and night for ever and ever*” (Revelation 20:10)” is more than I can comprehend.

Revelation 14:11: “*And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have **no rest day nor night**, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*”

I realize that the Lake of fire is punishment for those who have refused Christ and fought against the gospel. I can understand some degree of such punishment for the “*abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars*” in Revelation 21:8, but what about the merely “*fearful and the unbelieving*” in the same text? I would not wish eternal torment in a Lake of fire upon my worst enemy. I would not wish it upon the members of Isis, who are certainly deserving of harsh punishment for their murders of innocent people. I have to receive understanding of why our God, who “*so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son*” to die for us, would cast everyone who has not “*trusted in Christ*” into such a place forever. There will be billions of people from ages past who worshiped devils because no one ever told them about the true God and His Son, Jesus. Many of them would have been saved if they had heard, but there was no one to tell them. I cannot find the justice in punishing them. I know that God is a loving and a just God, but I know just as well that I cannot change what the scriptures plainly say to present the kind of justice that I would require. I must know the truth about eternal damnation in a lake of fire. I know that it must be about something more than punishment. I come before God, seeking understanding, and I find that this “*truth*” is also found in the truth of the gospel of Christ.

The Entrance of Sin

The heavens and the earth were created in perfection. Man was created in the *“image and likeness”* of God, just a little lower than God. The one we call *“Satan”* and *“the devil”* was actually created as one of the most trusted angels of God. His name was *“Lucifer,”* which means *“the shining one”* or *“the morning star.”* According to the prophet Ezekiel, he was *“the anointed cherub that covereth,”* who was *“full of wisdom”* and *“perfect”* in *“beauty”* and *“perfect in all his ways”* until iniquity was found in him.

Ezekiel 28:14: *“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.”*

Ezekiel 28:15: *“Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”*

Our finite minds cannot even begin to imagine the wonderful glories of a *“perfect creation.”* The *“heavens and earth”* were created in perfection. Everything God created in them was also *“perfect.”* For heaven, He created the angels; for earth, He created man and his wife. The angels were *“perfect in beauty and in all their ways.”* Man was created even higher than the angels, in the *“image and likeness of God.”* In fact, the Hebrew text says of man in Psalms 8:5, *“Thou hast made him a **little lower than God**, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.”* The angels in heaven worshiped God both day and night continually. They were also given in the charge of man, to serve his every need (Hebrews 1:13-14).

How long the creation continued in this perfect state, we do not know. We do know, however, what destroyed this *“perfect state.”* It was simply a *“thought”* that was found in Lucifer, one of God’s most trusted angels. God had set him to be *“the anointed cherub that covereth”* (Ezekiel 28:14). This placed him in a position nearest to God Himself, as is depicted by the cherubs that overshadow the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. Heaven itself was about to be thrown into a state of chaos because of single *“thought”* that developed in the heart of God’s anointed cherub. Isaiah tells us what that *“thought”* was;

Isaiah 14:12-14: *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”*

This was the beginning of “sin,” which is the “iniquity” that was found in one of God’s perfect angels. *“I will exalt my throne... I will ascend above... I will be like the most High.”* This was the original sin that was found in Lucifer. It was self-exaltation. He would no longer “serve man,” but he would be “served by man.” He would no longer “worship God;” he would be “like God,” and “equal to God.”

When describing the perfection of the “*beauty, wisdom, and ways*” of Lucifer, God said, *“Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God”* (Ezekiel 28:13). The Garden of Eden did not exist until after man was created. God “*planted*” the garden specifically for Adam (Genesis 2:7-8). In reading Ezekiel 28:13-15, it becomes obvious that Lucifer was still in his “*perfect state*” when he came into Eden. It is commonly believed that Lucifer led a rebellion against God millions of years before, and literally destroyed the earth when he was “*cast out of heaven*” long before the creation of Adam. This cannot be the true scenario. The day the serpent began questioning Eve about the Word of God must have been the first time the iniquity in Lucifer’s heart was outwardly manifested. Eve had no reason to fear the serpent or even to question his loyalty to God. Even though God had warned Adam against eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He had never warned him against the serpent because the one we call “*the serpent*” was God’s “*anointed cherub that covereth.*” He had been “*perfect in beauty, full of wisdom, and perfect in all his ways*” until this very day that iniquity was found in him. “*Iniquity*” began as an evil “*thought*” in the heart of Lucifer. When put into action, his “*thought*” became “*sin,*” which was transmitted to Adam and Eve when they believed the serpent and disobeyed God. However it got there, iniquity

changed the nature of Lucifer to exalt himself above what God had created him to be, and seek to take the place of God Himself.

Man was God's ultimate creation, created even above the angels themselves. In his quest to take the place of God, Lucifer plotted to bring man, who was created in the image and likeness of God, into subjection to himself, thus he would become the "god" of man. This was the reason for the seduction of Eve. He questioned her about the will of God. He cast doubts about the word of God. He set before her the possibility of becoming "as god" if she would eat the fruit of the tree that God had specifically told Adam and his wife not to eat of. She knew the word of God, but she disregarded it, and in so doing, she established that she also would be a "god" unto herself, to do according to her own will. She ate of the forbidden fruit; she gave it to Adam, and he ate of the fruit, and immediately the glory of God departed from them. They lost the image and likeness of God and became ashamed in the presence of God because they knew they were naked. The Spirit and nature of God departed from them, and "*as the body without the spirit is dead*" (James 2:26), so man, without the Spirit and nature of God, is spiritually dead. This is when the "*reign of death* (Romans 5:14)" began, which will not end until "*death*" and "*hell*" are "*cast into the lake of fire*" (Revelation 20:14).

Sin destroys everything it touches. The man and his wife were cursed by sin. Sickness and disease, sorrow and pain came upon man because of sin. The earth itself was cursed because of sin. Weeds and briars sprung up in what had been a paradise. Poisonous reptiles and stinging insects came into being. Where once there had been nothing that would hurt or harm upon the earth, now man lived in ever present danger of the beasts of the field that had once been friends to him. Even the heavens were cursed by sin, because sin destroys everything it touches. Everything God created in perfection is now in the process of decay and in the grip of death because of the entrance of sin. Even the "*heavens and the earth*" will "*wax old as a garment*" and "*pass away*" because of the pollutions of "*sin.*"

Heaven and Earth shall Pass Away

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, confirms to us in very simple terms that the heavens and earth will indeed “*pass away.*”

Matthew 24:35: “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*”

The first indication of this is found in the words of Job in the oldest book of the bible.

Job 14:12: “*So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.*”

It should be remembered that Christ had not yet come when Job spoke these words. Only the “*dead in Christ*” will arise at the second coming of Jesus. The “*rest of the dead* (Revelation 20:5)” will not live again until the white throne judgment, which is after the heavens and earth have “*fled away*” (Revelation 20:11), exactly as Job said.

David, writing a thousand years before Christ was born to Mary, spoke of the eternal nature of Christ and the temporal nature of the universe;

Psalms 102:25-27: “*Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*”

The prophet Isaiah not only saw the end of the present heavens and earth, but he was the first to hear of the “*new heavens and the new earth*” which God will create:

Isaiah 51:6: “*Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.*”

Isaiah 65:17: *“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”*

The apostle Peter gives a little more insight into the final “end” of the heavens and earth that “are now” (II Peter 3:7).

II Peter 3:10: *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away** with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, **the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**”*

II Peter 3:13: *“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”*

The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus, who as the eternal “Word of God” created the heavens and the earth, will also be the one to oversee their final end;

Hebrews 1:10-12: *“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and **they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up,** and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”*

Finally, it is Peter who asks a most pertinent question concerning these things, a “question” that requires an answer from every individual;

II Peter 3:11: *“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?”*

The “End of all Things”

I Peter 4:7: *“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”*

II Peter 3:5-7: *“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that **by the word of God** the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: **Whereby the world that then was,** being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth,*

which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

Peter tells more clearly than any other exactly how “*the end of all things*” will come; “...*the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*” (II Peter 3:10). Everything that sin has touched must be destroyed. The type of this is seen throughout the Law of Moses; everything that was touched by an “*unclean thing*” had to be either destroyed by fire or purified by blood. Christ, the creator of heaven and earth, came into the world to “*rescue (save)*” the souls of those who would believe the gospel and trust in Him. According to the message of the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel, the manner of “*rescue*” is to “*make and end of sins,*” and “*bring in everlasting righteousness*” (Daniel 9:24-25). Remember that the same “*angel Gabriel*” spoke to Joseph concerning Jesus, saying, “*He shall save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). The apostle Paul tells us that Christ “...*gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.*”

This “*present evil world*” is going to be “*burned up*” with everything that is in it. If it were possible to make and end of eternal things with fire, then the “*burning up*” of the heavens and the earth that has been polluted by sin could be the ultimate solution. “*Eternal things*” cannot “*burn up,*” however, but will exist for ever and cannot be destroyed by any means. That brings us to the ultimate solution that God prepared for sin from the very moment iniquity was found in the heart of Lucifer.

The Ultimate Solution for Sin

Matthew 25:41: “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS.*”

The lake of fire was not prepared for man. It was prepared to “*quarantine*” sin and everything that has been contaminated with it. Lucifer and all the angels that followed him were destroyed from their former glory by sin. It was for them that God prepared the lake of fire. The beast and the false prophet will be the first to go there (Revelation 19:20). Death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire

(Revelation 20:14). Last of all, “...whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

Angels were created by God, but they were created for eternity. They had a “*beginning*,” but they will never have an absolute “*end*.” It is for this reason that the ultimate end of fallen angels is in the “*lake of fire*” which God has prepared to shut them forever out of His “*New Creation*.” When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, the same “*iniquity*” that was in Lucifer entered into them and they received the same nature the serpent had, which we call “*sin*.” Sin is the ultimate enemy of God. Sin destroyed a third part of the angels of God. Sin destroyed Adam, Eve, and all their descendants. Sin destroys everything it touches, which is the reason the original creation will be destroyed by fire. Anything that will not “*burn up*” will “*burn forever*.” According to the scriptures, the heavens and the earth will “*burn up*,” but the soul of man was created “*just a little lower than God*,” and cannot “*burn up*.” Every person born into this world is born with sin in their nature because of Adam’s transgression. They are a “*soul*” that is going to exist somewhere forever. Christ came into the world to redeem us from sin, that is, take it out of our heart and nature, if we will “*believe the gospel*” and “*trust in Him*.” The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus Christ “...*gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*” (Titus 2:14). The person who “*dies in their sin*,” however, will be lost forever to exist forever in that horrible place which God is “*prepared for the devil and his angels*.” Sin will not enter into the new heavens and the new earth.

It may sound like a “*play on words*,” but God has never “*forgiven sin*” even though He has always forgiven the “*sins*” of those who confess and forsake them. God has never “*cleansed sin*,” but He does “*cleanse the sinner from all sin*” when they “*walk in the light* (I John 1:7)” of the gospel of Christ, and “*being cleansed*,” they “*have no sin*.” The point is that “*sin*” is still “*exceedingly sinful*” (Romans 7:13), and that Christ came into the world “*to take away our sin* (John 1:29)” and thus “*make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24). It was because of His great love for sinners (Ephesians 2:4-5) that He gave Himself to die on the cross for our sin. He was not “*taking*

the penalty” for our sins, however. Instead, he was “*making an end of sins*” in the only way possible; He died to “*take away our sin.*” Peter explains the purpose of His death best;

I Peter 2:24: “*Who his own self **bare our sins** in his own body on the tree, **that we, being dead to sins**, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*”

This verse, which clearly shows the purpose of Jesus’ death on the cross, would be even clearer if the translators had written “*sin*” as singular instead of “*sins*” as plural. The Greek text makes no distinction between the two, but the result of the difference is monumental. As written, the reader may get the picture of Jesus carrying the untold trillions of “*sins*” of billions of sinners, which would be a “*load of sins*” larger than the world itself. In fact, some even believe that He “*became*” a sinner, guilty of every sin that has ever been committed by man. According to this horrendous theory, Jesus actually “*became*” a murderer, rapist, thief, terrorist, pedophile, and guilty of every “*sin*” that has been conceived in the heart of man. They base their “*theory*” on II Corinthians 5:21, which says “*For he hath **made him to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*”

Notice that II Corinthians 5:21 correctly says that Christ was “*made to be sin (singular) for us.*” If I Peter 2:24 were correctly translated, it would say, He “*...bare our sin (singular) in His own body.*” Jesus died as our “*sin bearer.*” He wasn’t being “*punished*” for our sins; He didn’t die a “*spiritual death*” on the cross, and He didn’t “*go to hell*” to “*take our penalty.*” He didn’t “*become a sinner*” on the cross, but He did “*bear our sin (our sinful nature) in His own body,*” to be “*nailed to His cross.*”

Romans 6:6-7: “*Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him**, that **the body of sin might be destroyed**, that **henceforth we should not serve sin.** For he that is dead is **freed from sin.**”*

God's Preparation for the Redeemed

Matthew 25:34: *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom PREPARED FOR YOU** from the foundation of the world.”*

The “*foundation of the world*” does not speak of the creation of the earth, but of the entrance of sin into this world. The apostle Paul calls it “*this present evil world*” which Christ died to deliver us from (Galatians 1:4). The same day sin entered through Adam’s transgression, God gave the promise of a “*redeemer*” who would come to “*undo*” what the serpent had done in the garden (I John 3:8). He would be “*the seed of the woman*” and he would “*bruise the head of the serpent*” (Genesis 3:15). At the same time, God purposed that there would be an end of everything he had created because of the pollutions of sin. The “*end*” would be by fire.

II Peter 3:7: *“But **the heavens and the earth**, which are now, by the same word **are kept in store, reserved unto fire** against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”*

II Peter 3:10: *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away** with a great noise, and **the elements shall melt** with fervent heat, **the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**”*

Revelation 21:1: *“And I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**: for **the first heaven and the first earth were passed away**; and there was no more sea.”*

God’s preparation for man is the “*new heaven and the new earth.*” Though not in existence at this time, it was determined by God from the first day sin entered into this world. The present heavens and earth were made for man, but both man and the world he lived in were destroyed by sin. Christ came into the world to “*make an end of sin.*” When John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the Jews, he said, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” They were all looking for “*The Christ*” to come, because it was the very year the angel Gabriel had pinpointed for his arrival (Daniel 9:25). They knew the words of Gabriel to Daniel concerning the Christ, that he would come “*to finish the*

transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness” (Daniel 9:24). Jesus did all these things when He died for us on the cross at Calvary. He did it for everyone who will “believe the truth” and “trust in Him.” The “truth” we must believe is that “Jesus is the Christ” who came into the world “to make and end of sins.” It is true that He does it in the heart and nature of all those who trust in Him to do it. The “sin” that “entered by Adam” has been “taken away by Jesus Christ.” If you can believe it, you will receive it.

Restoration of all things

John 17:5: *“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”*

This is the prayer of the “eternal Christ,” which He prayed at the close of the last supper only the night before His death on the cross. Less than thirty minutes later, we hear the prayer of the Son of God who was “born of Mary” as He prayed in Gethsemane;

Matthew 26:39: *“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”*

The prayer in John’s gospel is the prayer of one who is actually looking forward to the cross because of the great “joy” that was set before Him on the other side (Hebrews 12:2). On the other hand, the prayer in Matthew’s gospel is the prayer of one who is fearful of what is set before Him, discovered in His words to his closest disciples; “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matthew 26:38), and “...the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

I remember Peter’s revelation of Jesus, found in Matthew 16:16; “Thou art **the Christ, the Son** of the living God.” Jesus is both “The Christ” and “The Son.” As “The Christ,” He is the creator of all things who became a man. As “The Son of God,” He is also the son of Mary.

Galatians 4:4-5: *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, **made of a woman, made under the law**, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”*

It is the prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John that tells us what the death of the Son of God at Calvary is about. It was about the restoration of all things to the way they were before iniquity was found in God's "*anointed cherub*" and entered into the world through Adam's disobedience. Jesus Christ asked His Father for the restoration of "*the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*" For this, He would gladly suffer and die on the cross, and that is exactly what He did. Paul defines it best in Romans 6:6-7; "*Knowing this, that our old man (Adam) is crucified with Him (Jesus Christ), that the body of sin (the entirety of that which was found in the anointed cherub and passed through Adam to us) might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (that never again would we be a slave to sin). For he that is dead (crucified with Christ) is freed from sin.*"

The prayer of Jesus was answered, and the "*glory*" has been restored in His "*new creation.*" He is "*glorified*" in those who have "*trusted in Him*" to "*take away their sin.*" Contrary to what religious tradition and fables tell us, those who "*abide in Him do not sin*" (I John 3:5), because they have no sin; Jesus Christ has "*taken it away.*" This is the present state of things for the children of God. Their future state is to live eternally in "*a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*" (II Peter 3:13). Sin and all sinners will be eternally "*quarantined*" in "*everlasting fire,*" a place which Jesus said was "*prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matthew 25:41).

Oh sinner! Do not die in your sins. If you do, you will never enter into the new heavens and the new earth. Jesus told the Jews, "*If ye believe not that I am He, you will die in your sins.*" They were looking for "*The Christ*" who would "*make an end of sins,*" but they did not believe that Jesus was "*He,*" and they "*died in their sins.*" Jew or Gentile, of whatever race or ethnic background you may be, regardless of whether you are "*Christian, Muslim, Budhist, or Hindu,*" you must come to God through Jesus Christ, who "*loved you, and gave Himself for you*" (Galatians 2:20). He not only came into the world to "*forgive your sins,*" but to "*take your sin away,*" out of your heart, out of your nature, making you a fit person for the "*new heavens and new earth.*" There is no ritual or ordinance

required for you to fulfill. Right now, wherever you are, believe the truth of who Jesus Christ is and what He came into the world to do. Know that He did it through His death on the cross and His resurrection the third day. Then, simply “*trust in Him*” to do it in you. Become a seeker of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Seek Him in prayer and the scriptures of the bible every day, and you will be amazed at the wonderful transformation that will take place in your heart and nature.

Revelation 20:13-15: “*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*”

Revelation 21:27: “*And there shall in no wise enter into it (the new heavens and the new earth) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*”

A Final Thought

I Corinthians 15:30-32: “*And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.*”

Why did Paul put his life in jeopardy every day to preach Christ to those who wanted to kill him because of the gospel he preached? The answer is a glaring truth; Paul was not “*working for his salvation;*” not even “*working because he was saved.*” It was the matter of the resurrection, but not the resurrection of the righteous. Paul knew that those who hated him and wanted to kill him would also come out of the graves at the resurrection of the unjust. He was “*laying his life down*” to save his worst enemies. The same “*love*” that put Jesus on the cross drove Paul to both live and die to save sinners. He said “*...if the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, because tomorrow we die.*” He believed in the eternal burning lake of fire.

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