

# The Pathfinder

#287.17

## GODFIRE

(Part 2)

### THE LAKE OF FIRE

### BEWARE OF THE SECOND DEATH?

### THE LAKE OF FIRE

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it...and the books were opened...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books..." ***Revelation 20:11-12.*** "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 20:14-15.***

Some people assume that I do not believe in hell or the lake of fire, which, of course, is a false assumption. I believe every jot and tittle the Bible says about both, and I say both, since hell and the lake of fire are not the same thing as many believe that they are. Yes, I certainly do believe that there is a hell and that there is the lake of fire; but I do not believe what the church of Rome says about them, or what their *prophet* Dante Alighieri wrote about them. I do not believe what her apostate daughters has had to say about them, and neither do I believe the false scenario that tradition has to say about them. I do believe that "...the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in ***the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.*** ***Revelation 21:8*** makes this very clear. I would be a fool to refute such clarity of truth.

There is no uncertainty whatsoever in my mind and spirit that ***there is a lake of fire that God made,*** and there are dire consequences that people will suffer who are subjected to it. It is not a laughing matter or some passing thought that merits little attention; for we can see by reading the scriptures that there is a dreadful foreboding to the carnal man whose name is not written in the Lamb's book of life. They who love the world and the flesh more than God and His holiness should be concerned, but not so in most cases. They thumb their nose at Him and the cross of Jesus Christ. They are flippantly arrogant. One comedian, so called, said, as she accepted the Emmy, "Now, look, a lot of people come up here and they thank Jesus for this award. I want you to know that no one had less to do with this award than Jesus. He didn't help me a bit...So all I can say is, suck it Jesus, this award is my god now." People of this caliber have no love for God nor do they fear or have any reverence for Him, not in the slightest. They brush Him off as if He is worth no more than an annoying house fly. Some, of course, may display some semblance of righteousness by what they

say and do; but their religious service is often a mere pretense. The service of these *Christians*, we believe, does not come out of the love for God, but more from fear of going to hell.

I remember someone once said, "If there was no prospect of hell, some people would promptly tell God to go to hell." With that spirit, many would surely indulge their lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life while descending to the lowest levels of man's world. But those who truly love God always serve from the foundation of that love. They never serve out of fear. Even if every fragment of the threat of punishment was completely removed from hanging over their heads, and if it was taken out of the entire universe, they would still serve God with all their hearts. Such are called the Sons of God!

It is strange that there is such a misunderstanding concerning *the lake of fire*; but it is to be expected; for the eyes and ears of carnal minds are closed to the spirit of truth. They cannot see or hear until God opens them to hearing and seeing spiritual matters. So misconception pervades almost everyone, and not only by believers, but those of the world as well.

Frankly, the whole world has been influenced to believe what the lake of fire **is not**. Many picture it as to how the aforementioned Dante Alighieri portrayed it to be in his epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*. Regardless of traditional influence, we know a few things about this lake. For one, the word *burn* not only means *to set on fire* but also *to consume*, but not in the sense of annihilation; for there is really no such thing as annihilation. Change, yes, but annihilation, no. For instance, when a tree is ignited by a forest fire and is consumed by the flames, it is not annihilated. The fire does not absolutely destroy any of the elements of the tree. The intense heat simply *transforms its elements*. When the tree is burning, the heat vaporizes some of them to form certain gases. Some are changed less and form particles of smoke. The more resistant elements are reduced to ashes. So what was once a tree is no longer identified as a tree. Its matter has not been annihilated, but has been transformed. It has been changed into a new and altogether different form.

Therefore, to burn, simply means to change, or transform, that which is subjected to fire. Moreover, it is interesting that fire burns up rather than down. The flames always reach upward while carrying its cargo with it into the heavens they seek. Except for the ashes all that the fire consumes *goes up in vapor and smoke* to exist in a transformed higher realm. Although the ashes fall downward; but please remember that He will give them beauty for ashes (***Isaiah 61:3***). So there is mourning, and there is a descent of the ashes, in beauty it is upward as well.

Those who believe that the lake of fire represents an eternal doom and gloom for most of Adam's race are missing out on God's truth and great plan of the ages for His creation. They are oblivious of God's purpose for humanity. They know nothing of His wonderful dealings in judgment. And please know that there is judgment. There are consequences of that which is sown to the flesh; such as greed, graft, inordinate affections, sin, and evil across the board. Paul named two men who used the death of Jesus as a supposed free ticket to glory. He wrote of them, saying:

"...Some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have **delivered unto Satan**, that they may **learn not to blaspheme**." ***1 Timothy 1:19-20***.

These foolish ingrates were turned over to Satan to be tormented, and it was for their own good. Let us note that their judgment was not throughout eternity in man's idea of the lake of fire. They were delivered unto Satan for them to know who their Lord truly was and to never blaspheme Him in any way, to never willfully sin that would bring Him again to open shame. Once this judgment upon the two worked its purpose, we can know that Satan was set at bay, or sent elsewhere to do God's bidding. Since Hymenaeus and Alexander were restored to their place in the body of Christ the adversary's service was no longer of use. God's judgments are remedial, not vindictive.

God's remedial judgments will be dealt on this side of the grave or the other. It's His doing as to when, how long, and where for our good and His purpose. Sometimes He will transform a man by His tender mercies, but if the man digs in his heels, extreme judgments will be used. Jesus said that this sort of punishment is called *many stripes*. These many stripes are significant as being severe; but they are limited and correct the wrong. They are done in love and are not forever. Eternal judgment would serve no purpose whatsoever. God would not benefit from it. Jesus who died for them would not benefit from it. Their loved ones would not benefit from it. And those being punished would certainly not benefit from it.

So again, what is *the Lake of FIRE*? Let us see what is listed in the Bible as being fire. For one, we know that *God's word* is *fire*. Two, *God Himself* is *a consuming fire*. Three, *God's angels* (*His messengers*) are *fire*. And four, *God's ministers* are *flames of fire*. Is it not obvious that the lake of fire is made up of those four entities. Yes, it is obvious. But what else is it?

In contrast to such an horrible, endless expanse of literal molten brimstone and searing flames of fire, the Greek word for *lake* is *limneo*, which means, *a pond large or small*. A pond doesn't really describe the awesome majesty or the enormity of a thing wherein most of the world will be cast. With a little understanding, however, we can see that this little pond is *within a person* in the same way the rest of the book of Revelation takes place, first, within every person, saint and sinner alike, and then outwardly in the world. Therein is where it serves God's purpose, but a little more on this *lake*.

The Greek word *limneo* comes from *limeon* and means, *a harbor* according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and the student is recommended to compare it to G2568 *Kaloi Limenes*, which means, *"a Good Harbor, or Fairhaven."* Whether the word is translated lake, pond, harbor, or haven, we must keep in mind that neither of the terms suggest a physical size; for this body of fire is a spiritual realm as sure as hell, hades, or sheol are generally spoken of as being spiritual realms. *Hell* is the *realm of the dead*, while *the Lake of Fire* is *the realm of the living*. It is hell's opposite. It is its counterpart. It is the realm of the Living wherein all death and hell are destroyed. This lake is contrary to the flesh, and abhorrent to religion; for it is the absolute death to every thing that reeks with death—it is *the Pond of Fire, the Good Harbor of Safety*, or even *the Fire Haven of Life*. This is *a Lake, Pond, Harbor, Haven* that burns steadily and passionately with the Lamb's wrath, His flaming love. We must stress, however, this *Fair Haven* is not a welcomed port to death or any part of the carnal man; for such realms delight in darkness, turmoil, and strife. Although *a good harbor*, it is the *last harbor* for the *last enemy* to dock. This is the harbor that brings the end of a long night of sailing through the fierce seas of hell and death, ending all things *humus*, or *human*. At first it is the tormenting Lake of Fire, but then the Harbor of Life wherein there are no more tears, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more suffering, and **NO MORE DEATH!**

That journey began ages ago when the first death entered the world by *the first man Adam*. He **brought the first death, an end to life**. It is reversed with *the Second Death*, this last death is by *the Second Adam, the Last Adam* which is comprised of His body of many members. He ends death for everyone, forever. They who are cast into the fire of the second death will surely suffer great loss, but this is good. For this will be the loss of every carnal, selfish, dead thing about them; but they will in turn gain much, which is Christ Jesus, His Life, and His Father's Name forever. They will all enjoy the same liberty as the *children of God*, that is, they will be *born of God*.

I realize this comes as a foreign language to some; for how can a person immediately grasp any thought he or she had never considered, and especially when the old is rooted so deeply. Nevertheless, even if what is being said sounds strange and incomprehensible, how could anyone malign the truths of God's judgments that are so clear throughout the Bible, especially that of the

blazing glory of the Harbor of Fire? How could people who go by the name of Jesus Christ demean such Divine wonders and call them something they are not, even so opposite to His very nature that only the demented could do? And how could they deny His ability to save to the utmost? Could they possibly believe His ultimate sacrifice was not sufficient for the ultimate salvation of all? Surely, no one could be guilty of such atrocities except, of course, the blind, those who are genuinely deceived, the willingly ignorant, or worse, religious leaders who know the truth but have so much to lose by teaching it, as it was with the Pharisees. One of them, Nicodemus, said "WE KNOW YOU ARE A TEACHER COME FROM GOD" (John 3:2), but they still called the works of Jesus that of Beelzebub and crucified Him just the same.

So there is little wonder why Jesus responded to them in no kind words, for they knew who He was, and brazenly claimed that His power to cast out devils came from *the dung god, the lord of the flies*. Jesus was hard on the scribes and Pharisees; for they were the devil incarnate. He said that they were of their father the devil, and sad to say, there are many with us today. They know the truth but war against it. Nothing has changed. They are clouds without water, heavens without rain, trees without fruit. They are twice dead, plucked up from the Kingdom of God, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame of contempt for the truth. They are wandering stars, held captive by their own chains of age-abiding darkness, having no sense of righteousness whatsoever, as Jude so graphically spoke of them!

Everything about the Pharisees, old and new, is of the lowest order of the first heaven and earth — twice dead — dead in their religious heaven of authority and dead in their earthly works. But praise God, **the Lake of Fire** will bring an end to death, even their spiritual death. It will all be swallowed up in victory to be no more. **A new heaven and a new earth will emerge from the flames, and there will be no more sea, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more suffering, and no more death! They too shall be made free!** Since Jesus said to *love your enemies*, don't you think *He did and still does as well?*

To be reminded, here are His words: "But I say unto you, **Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;** That ye may be **the children of your Father** which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Matthew 5:44-45.

**Praise God!** Not even His enemies will be lost. Although He was very harsh and truthful to them, He loved and died for them as He did for you and me and the rest of the world. Do we think they were left out of God's great scheme of things? Not on your life.

Before going further into the marvelous aspects of *the Second Death*, we will notice some history as well as some present-day ideas that are not so wonderful. The first to consider is *the resurrection of damnation* as the King James Version of the Bible has it in John 5:29. It is commonly taught with a very negative tone, one of eternal and dreadful dismay for most all of humanity who will be called to this resurrection. However, the meaning of the Greek word for *damnation*, which is *krisis*, is very seldom considered. \**Krisis* is the word from which our English word *crisis* comes. \**Krisis* -Greek: Subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension a *tribunal*; by implication *justice* (specifically divine *law*).

The word in the truest sense means *a turning point*. For example, when a person's body is racked with fever, and its highest temperature is reached, this is called *the crisis—it is the turning point*. The crisis/crisis is *a decision that is made*. *Damnation* is a very misleading word; but *turning point, decision, even judgment* are words much closer to what *krisis* means. If we understand *God's judgment*, we know it is a good thing and a good word to use. *His Judgment* always carries

the thought of *a decision for or against a person, and when that judicial action is applied, the result is a point of turning*. When a judgment is in a person's favor, rewards are generally given due to their good works (promotions, raises, etc.). Upon not looking at the evidence of an accused man, or forgiving him of his actions, judgment can also come as an acquittal of his guilt. But when the situation constitutes it, judgment is levied *against* a person in the form of remedial punishment. This is the context that the word is most often used in the New Testament. The other translators of the Bible commonly used *judgment* for the word *krisis*, and the King James Version most often has *accusation, condemnation, and judgment* for *krisis, only three times was it translated as damnation*.

In brief, *the resurrection of God's divine justice brings His wayward creation to a turning point, back to Him from where they came*, which is much better than the misleading slap in the face of eternal retribution called *the resurrection of DAMNATION*. Although the translators, and the forces behind them have been held accountable, we know also that they served their purpose and are doing well wherein they dwell in the warm embrace of our Lord.

Yet the fact remains, over the centuries the church has embraced various doctrines about *the resurrection of damnation* and *the second death*. With the passing of time and the influence of religious councils, some of the views have changed, often evolving beyond any semblance of their origin, and with a few growing more grotesque while others fade to having little meaning at all.

For instance, during the fourth century Christendom was mixed with other religions, and the meaning of *the Second Death* was one point of doctrine that began to change. Over the years traditions were established by the influence of pagan prophets, poets, and artists. They served as very real influencing elements that were responsible in part to doctrinal changes.

Throughout the evolution of *The Second Death*, it received a wide scope of speculations. One thought came to be very plausible, primarily that *God is all love*, and He is. Who can find fault with this? Well, it depends on what is laid out concerning "God being love." You see, a few have attributed a form of love to God that leaves no room for correction, that no one will suffer any recourse for what they have sown to the flesh.

Another perspective harbors the archaic school of thought which is very contrary to the *liberal* view we just mentioned, and if people had a choice, they would go for the all-loving God that lets His spoiled children do as they please and never face any correction or retribution. The ancient one concept of the second death, of course, enfolds graphic "R" rated scenarios of cavorting demons and naked flesh writhing in the flames of boiling sulfur throughout eternity. This view speaks of the hordes of unsaved men, women, and teenagers being raised *from the seas, from their graves, even out of the depths of hell to be judged*. They will then receive, as it has been believed, their *just dues* of "eternal damnation." Some go as far as to say babies will be in hell spewing serpent's venom in rebellion against God. The exact words of Jonathan Edwards are: *"Reprobate infants are vipers of vengeance, which Jehovah will hold over hell, in the tongs of his wrath, till they turn and spit venom in his face! The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardour of the love and gratitude of the saints of heaven."*

Such conjectures are unfathomable to the mind and Spirit of Christ, and even though Jonathan Edwards was a mighty tool in the hand of God, he erred greatly when it came to what Jesus was sent to do for the world, the whole world. We don't know why this truth was not revealed to him, but it was not, and we find no fault in his lack of vision. If God does not open eyes, who are we to condemn the blind for not being able to see?

Notwithstanding, after Rome's emperor, Constantine, established the State Church, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and other post-Nicaean Church leaders were largely responsible for initially

instituting the doctrine of "*eternal damnation*." Dante Alighieri, the disgruntled Italian poet we mentioned previously, had a lot to do with it as well, of course not at first, but later on as his book became the read of the time. He had been exiled for life from his home town of Florence by the politicians who were in league with Pope Boniface VIII. This shame and heartbreak were great factors that helped to form his mind-set for his notable book which furnished religious leaders with ample fodder for countless hair-singeing sermons over the centuries.

Dante's epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*, also called *The Inferno*, although seldom read later on or consciously considered as a major source of doctrine, it seems to have been a sacred scroll to the church at large. His detailed lyrics, coupled with the works of other poets and various paintings of the master artists of the past ages, helped to rivet these graphic images into the pliable minds of the masses. Among them is Virgil's poem, *The Odyssey*, of which Dante was greatly influenced. It went hand-in-hand with *The Divine Comedy*, and was a major contributing factor of this concept of hell in the western world. Until a couple of decades or so ago *The Odyssey* was required reading in all the European and American schools.

For the sake of art and literary education nations of the world have influenced the minds of countless millions that helped to form today's accepted traditions. Hopefully we are beginning to see, at least in part, where the roots of these macabre teachings and traditions are anchored.

Tradition is one of those things that people often use as a substitute for thinking, and it seems that the more remote a tradition's origin, the more it grows and is more revered and increases from generation to generation. It finally becomes a holy grail and is believed to have been breathed from the throne of God. Tradition is almost impossible to overcome and has played a major role in the featured play of the misrepresented *Lake of Fire*, that is, *the Second Death*.

Accepting tradition as ironclad truth makes people feel safe and free from deception, but this can be the reverse. They can become slaves to the past, to the spirits and ideals of their dead forefathers who haunt their steps from birth to death that rules them with a rod of iron. In their sight, what they did in the past are the patterns of right, the unwritten law to which they blindly yield in unquestioning obedience. And such is the doctrine of *hell, the lake of fire, and eternal damnation*.

Stephen Crane (1871-1900) said this about it:

Tradition, thou art for suckling children,

Thou art the enlivening milk for babes;

But no meat for men is in thee.

*The Black Riders and Other Lines*

Those who question tradition often discover what is true. When people are observing and questioning, they are learning and come to know the truth that will truly make them free. Let us take a moment to see what the master observer, Jesus, said in response to being asked concerning men's traditions:

**"Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" "And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." *Matthew 15:2-3, Mark 7:9,13.***

What Jesus said should suffice, but let us see also what Paul wrote about religious traditions:

"And profited in **the Jews' religion** above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of **the traditions of my fathers**. But when it pleased God, who separated me from **my mother's womb (of Jewish religion and traditions)**, and called me by His grace, To **reveal His son in me**, that I might preach Him among the heathen." "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after **the tradition of men...**and not after Christ." **Galatians 1:14-16, Colossians 2:8.**

Regardless of a person's traditional sentiments of *eternal damnation*, or convincing arguments from ill-treated portions of the Bible, **the doctrine is not founded in truth**. It is nothing more than **a product of men** that has become mere **tradition**, plain and simple. So be not deceived into assuming that everything you were taught in church, or you have read from various versions of the Bible are necessarily true. Just because a respected teacher, pastor, or elder has told you, or it is written in a book, does not make it so. **Not one of the Bible translations is inerrant. None of them are infallibly true.** Along with the many truths found in them, they contain errors.

Moreover, even if we were fluent in the ancient Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew, and we had the original manuscripts from which to read, there is something lacking. Jesus said: "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which testify about me. Yet you will not come to me, that you may have life." **John 5:39-40** NHFB.

Paul follows with: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; **not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.**" **2 Corinthians 3:6** KJV.

We should have learned by now that our reliance on a library of study guides that are at our disposal is not always reliable. Don't take me wrong, reading and studying books and the Bible is good, but again, such is not always reliable. For carnal reasoning of human intellect is far from being the solution to sound doctrine that comes from the Spirit. Without the anointed spirit of revelation we are dead in the water and left in a traditional boat with no sail or rudder to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

Once the Spirit of revelation makes truth known, the scriptures explode with brilliant, dazzling life. We catch the wind of His Spirit and are carried from the depths of the seas into the heights of His heavens. It is with this illumined Spirit of revelation that we desire today as we notice some of the words John penned many centuries ago. They are words dead and buried in the earth of religious minds, but raised to life and understanding in the hearts of many who are now peering beyond that shrouding veil and into His priceless mysteries.

And it pleases me to say that there are those who know some of the mysteries of His will. One mystery that the apostle so clearly wrote about is found in **Ephesians 1:9-11**; namely, that *ALL in the heavens and the earth shall be gathered together in Christ at the dispensation of the fulness of times*. Beyond the veil of carnal reasoning they are seeing some things that are instrumental in this gathering, including *death and hell (the unseen)* coming to naught in *the fiery presence of the Lamb's wrath*, more accurately, *passion*. They are hearing *the Voice of the Son of God* and are rising victoriously to the occasion of truth! They are seeing much of the plan of God as the Book opens; of which, a portion of that plan is ***the lake of fire—the gracious second death!***

### **BEWARE OF THE SECOND DEATH?**

***THE SECOND DEATH***—let us look at it a little more closely. The term is found nowhere in Bible except in the book of Revelation, and in this book of symbols, it is used only four times. One would think that since it is one of the foundational doctrines of most church organizations, like Preston Eby said, we could find it sown like *a blazing ribbon* throughout the tapestry of the Bible. We would expect to see many warnings to its readers and telling them to ***FEAR and BEWARE of***

*the SECOND DEATH, to avoid it all cost;* but God strangely omits the warning of this supposed danger that awaits most of the world. For thousands of years **He said nothing about the "Second Death."** Moses didn't say anything about it; the apostles did not bring it to our attention. Jesus never referred to it. Some say that Paul hints at it in his letter to the Hebrews (if he was its author), but Paul was not one to hint about anything. He was probably the most straightforward, outspoken of all the apostles. Alluding to truths was not one of his attributes, but just the opposite. He boldly stated that *he shunned not to declare the WHOLE COUNSEL of God (Acts 20:27)*. He spoke often of the consequences of sin, but never suggested there was a place wherein the sinner would go to never return, and neither did he ever say they would be annihilated completely from existence. He said that certain sinners would not *"inherit"* the Kingdom of God as owners/rulers, but he did not say they would never enter *"into"* His Kingdom as citizens.

Except for the four instances that John used the term in the book of Revelation, it is not to be found anywhere else in the scriptures, and then when we do read about it, with understanding, we see that it is not an eternal woe that has been taught. If either thought, *eternal damnation* or *annihilation*, was a part of God's counsel and the foundation of His truth to the Church, it is odd that they never surfaced in Paul's or any of the other foundational teachings in the Bible. A few scriptures can be misconstrued as referring to annihilation, that once a person dies he is dead forever, but such thoughts do not have the substantial foundation to stand in the presence of truth. This, however, does not keep people from embracing that hopeless scenario.

One would suppose if such a dreadful penalty of eternal torment stood with gaping jaws awaiting the majority of hapless humanity, God would have made it plain and would have clearly established it in every book of the Bible. But, again, it is not to be found. What is found, however, **is the answer to sin and death—JESUS CHRIST!** This is the blazing ribbon we see sown throughout the tapestry of the scriptures—**THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE rather than THE THREAT OF ETERNAL DAMNATION!** The truth is, the **Second Death** is a **BENEFICIAL AGENT**; for it is the very thing that **DESTROYS man's greatest enemies—SIN, DEATH, and THE GRAVE (HELL)**. Anything that is contrary to God and His Kingdom, anything that separates anyone from Christ will find its place in **THE LAKE OF FIRE, THE SECOND DEATH**, to be forever destroyed or changed, and ultimately made alive **in Jesus Christ**.

If a man or woman's lustful heart is changed by the fiery love of Jesus Christ to a heart like His, that old lustful heart will have been destroyed. The heart will not be destroyed; but the motivating desires of the carnal nature will be destroyed to never rise again, and as the new heart thinks, like Christ, so is he or she. Ah, the wonder-working power of the Lake that burns with relentless, passionate **GODFIRE . . .**

To be continued...

Elwin R. Roach

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