

THE PATHFINDER

...studies concerning Christ and the ages...

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THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD

(Part VIII)

THE SECOND DEATH

*"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it...And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 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.**" (Rev.20:11-15).*

TRADITIONS OF THE FATHERS

Before venturing into the positive aspects of *the Second Death* we will borrow a few things from history as well as touching some present beliefs. The '**RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION,**' as it was interpreted in John 5:29 of the King James version, is commonly taught with the above verses in a negative tone of fearful warning and awful consternation, and there are reasons for it.

Over the centuries the church system has embraced many seemingly impervious doctrines, good ones and bad ones alike. With the ravaging of time and the bombardment of religious synods many of the adopted views have changed over the centuries, often evolving beyond any semblance of their origin; those of man growing more grotesque while the others degenerate, taking on the form of the earth as they fall from heaven's glory. The less they are understood by the Spirit the more they suffer in the "guardian" care of men — one of which is **THE SECOND DEATH.**

During the fourth century when Christendom was integrated by many of the world's religions, the meaning of *the Second Death* began to change. Traditions established by pagan prophets, poets, and artists served as very real elements of change, not to mention the Church fathers' views.

The Second Death has received a wide scope of speculation which range from the *willingly ignorant*, to the *extreme liberal*

side of the scale today, to the *ultra conservative*. The *willingly ignorant* simply ignores the thought and hopes for the best, which is becoming a fairly popular approach. The *liberal* view suggests 'God is all love,' and no one shall suffer any recourse for their wanton lusts and deeds. The *other perspective* conserves the archaic school of thought by going to the opposite side of the scales, which enfolds the very graphic "R" rated scenarios of cavorting demons and naked flesh writhing in boiling, searing fire throughout eternity. The latter speaks of the hordes of unsaved men, women, and teenagers being raised *from the seas, from their graves, and out of the depths of hell* to receive their *just dues* of "eternal damnation." (If people really believed this, we wonder why they don't euthanize their children before reaching the age of "accountability" — for wouldn't they think it a better thing for them to live only a short time now and be guaranteed eternity in paradise, rather than to live a little longer here and possibly abide in hell forever?)

Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and other post-Nicaean Church leaders can take much of the credit for establishing the thought of "eternal damnation" in the ranks of Christianity. Dante, of course, like an undeclared prophet, helped to strengthen this ruse. He supplied religion with ample imaginations for countless hair-singeing sermons over the centuries. His epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*, although seldom read or consciously considered as a major source of doctrine, seems to have become 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 decade ago *The Odyssey* was required reading in all the European and American schools. For the sake of art and literary education our nations have poisoned the minds of countless millions; and the crux of the matter is, the poison has become accepted tradition. We are beginning to see, in part, where the roots of these macabre teachings are anchored.

Tradition, an almost impossible thing to overcome, has played a major acting role in the featured play of the misrepresented "*Second Death*," but listen to what Jesus and Paul said about men's *sacred* 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.**" (Mt. 15:2-3, Mark 7:9,13)*

*"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 religious 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**" (Gal. 1:14-16, Col. 2:8).

Regardless of one's sentiment of "*eternal damnation*," or convincing arguments on hand from mistranslated portions of the Bible, the doctrine is not founded in truth. It is nothing more than a product of **TRADITION**, plain and simple. Be not deceived, brethren, into assuming that every thing you learned in school, were taught in church, or have read from your English translated Bibles are necessarily true. Appearances and persuasions can be misleading. It matters not how heavily the pages of your Bible are lined with lustrous gold-leafing, or how it is bound and covered with the finest leather, or how sacred the columned printing appears to be, or how passionately that letter of the word is sanctioned by the clergy and propped up by tradition — **not one of the translations is inerrant nor infallibly true**. Along with the many truths, they contain a graveyard of errors, as I have said before, some moreso than others. Both sweet and bitter waters flow from its pages. But lest we run with pride and fall with those before us, let us always be aware that we can also err, especially should we rely on the letter and intellect alone. Have we not learned that even with mountains of study guides at our disposal, this is not our reliance; and do we not know that the carnal reasoning of human intellect is likewise far from being the solution? Have we not come to know with certainty that Christ only is the answer, and is our Life? Indeed we have!

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 long centuries ago. They are words dead and buried in the earth of religious minds, but raised to life and understanding in the eyes of many who are now peering beyond that veil.

It pleases me to say that there is a vast multitude who know the mystery of His will, the mystery Paul so clearly wrote about in Ephesians 1:9-11, 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* coming to nought in *the fiery presence of the Lamb's wrath*. 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 SECOND DEATH*.

BEWARE OF THE SECOND DEATH?

THE SECOND DEATH — what is it exactly? The term is found in no other area of the 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 churches, we could find it sown like *a blazing ribbon* throughout the tapestry of the Bible, especially in the New

Testament. We would expect to see many warnings to its readers and telling them to ***BEWARE of the Second Death***; but God strangely omits the impending danger to His unsuspecting offspring. For thousands of years He said nothing about the "Second Death." Moses didn't mention it; the apostles did not bring it into view, except the four times John placed it in script, but not as a dreadful woe; and Jesus failed to even refer to it. Some say that Paul hints at it in his letter to the Hebrews, but Paul was not one to "hint" at anything. He was probably the most straightforward and 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, but he did not say they would never enter "*into*" His Kingdom as citizens. 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. Nevertheless, many are dancing to that hopeless tune.)

One would suppose if such a dreadful penalty of eternal torment stood with gaping jaws awaiting hapless man, God would have

made it plain and clearly established it in every book of the Bible. But it is not to be found. What is found, however, is **THE ANSWER to death — JESUS CHRIST!** This is the ribbon we see sown throughout — **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, HELL, AND THE GRAVE. Any thing that is contrary to the Kingdom of God, and separates men from Christ, finds its end in *the Lake called the Second Death.*

"And DEATH and HELL were cast into THE LAKE OF FIRE. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14). Let us mark this fact as we continue on, that **THE LAKE OF FIRE** does not cause the second death — **IT IS THE SECOND DEATH.** In the ultimate sense, *Death* is simply being *void of the life of Christ Jesus.* *Hell*, by definition of "*hades*," the Greek word from which it is translated, speaks primarily of the *unseen realm, the place, the abode, the home of the dead.* And **THE LAKE OF FIRE** is *that which both death and hell are cast into.* The next verse (Rev. 20:15) tells us there is yet some additional refuse that finds itself subjected to this misunderstood lake: *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

What we see going into **THE LAKE OF FIRE** is everything that pertains to DEATH. **Death** itself goes; **hell (the abode of the dead)** goes; and **everyone whose names are not written in the**

Book of Life shall find their place in the Lake of Fire. All death is cast into **THE LAKE OF FIRE, W-H-I-C-H I-S THE SECOND DEATH.**

This lake has been used as a threatening tool by religious orders for countless centuries; and it has effectively enslaved intelligent human beings by the billions, almost everyone at one time or another. The hour has come, however, for it to be seen for what it is. It should not be a dread, but to the contrary, for it is humanity's hope. It is their assurance. I agree that it may be a dreadful, foreboding thought to the carnal man, but to the spirit it is a promise of life. Be assured that Jesus will never forget those He died for (all mankind of the scattered earth), because He loves them too much for such irresponsible neglect. He has this wonderful Lake of All Consuming Fire wherein He remembers them, and into a consuming embrace, He *"lights their fire."*

THE FIRST ADAM and THE LAST ADAM THE FIRST DEATH and THE SECOND DEATH

Let us consider for a moment the **FIRST MAN** (Adam) and the **SECOND MAN** (Jesus Christ) as mentioned in I Corinthians 15:45-47. He is also called the **LAST ADAM** in the same passage. This **SECOND MAN, THE LAST ADAM**, reverses everything the **FIRST ADAM** did, whether directly or caused to happen indirectly. By one act of sin, **ALL LIFE** was cast into the **FIRST ADAM**, and all died — ***THIS WAS THE FIRST DEATH, the DEATH OF LIFE***, if you please. On the reverse hand, by an act of righteousness, **ALL DEATH** is cast into

Christ the **LAST ADAM**, the **SECOND DEATH** — ***THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH, the DEATH OF DEATH.*** ALL who died to life in the first Adam shall die to that death in **the last Adam** — ***THE LAKE OF FIRE.*** Their death shall die, it shall cease to be, it shall be no more. The same all who died in *the man of sin and death* shall live in *the man of righteousness and life* (I Cor. 15:22). If you can do simple arithmetic, or understand the principle of balancing equal weights, it is easily seen. The **ALL** in the **FIRST ADAM** is the **SAME ALL** in the **LAST ADAM.**

If **the First Death** is dying to God, to His righteousness, and to His life, **then reversing the process** — dying to Adam, his sin, and his death — **is the Second Death.** But how is it done? How does one die to Adam? How can a man die to sin? And **what is the process of the death of death?** Death to the old man Adam begins by the birth of the new man Christ in one's life. Sin dies in the fire of His Holy Spirit, wherein every soul shall be baptized. And **the process of THE DEATH OF DEATH is simply THE FILLING UP WITH LIFE** that which is dead.

For example, in November of 1949 in Austin, Texas there was a little eight year-old girl, the daughter of Edward and Agnes Mitchell, and granddaughter of Brother C. C. and Sister Mitchell, but her cherished life came to an abrupt end. Every effort failed to save her, and **she lay dead in a cold bed of Austin's Seton Hospital.** While the heart-torn father and doctors were getting the death certificate in order, and her grieving mother sat with head

heavily bowed and buried deep into her hands, and weeping beside the lifeless corpse of the departed child, something profound happened. Upon hearing of the grave situation, our dear friend **Charles Roby** and his future father-in-law, Brother **R.F. Miller**, rushed to the hospital. They hurried past the doctors and father and entered the room of death. Without a word to the mother, Brother Miller went directly to the bedside of the dead little body and lifted the sheet from her covered head. With the *Voice of the Son of God* he spoke Life. In a simple prayer was the command for her to **LIVE!** Life immediately flooded that little shell of clay! She coughed, and **sat up — A-L-I-V-E — crying out, "MOTHER! MOTHER!"** At the quickening cough and voice of her daughter, the mother's head shot up from her tear-drenched hands, and she screamed with inexplicable joy. Deep sobs turned to laughter, and instantly she swept her darling baby girl into her empty arms, filling them with robust life. What a tremendous change!

Charles, a young man of eighteen at the time, said he wasn't expecting this, and the initial shock of seeing someone raised from the dead scared him spitless, but it was for only an impulsive moment. He was then so caught up into the Spirit of praise he felt that he walked out of that Catholic hospital at least a foot off the ground, which lasted for several days. With all the commotion, the hospital staff quickly filled that erupting room of uncontrollable joy and great excitement, the room which only a few moments earlier had been engulfed and permeated with a foreboding, thick cloud of suffocating presence we call death. The nurses and nuns were beside themselves with excitement; while the doctors were visibly upset. Not only were they confused and unable to

comprehend what had just happened, but they were seemingly resentful that this lowly man of God did something they knew nothing about nor had the power themselves to do. Nevertheless, it caused quite a stir in that hospital; and to this day it is a testimony of the *Life and Authority* that is contained in the *Quickening Voice of the Son of God*; and it is still sounding as a trumpet from the heavens of *the victory of life over death*. "**What happened that day,**" Charles said, "**not only quickened the dead — BUT THE LIVING TOO!**"

You see, there was only one thing that could have caused that little Mitchell girl to live. It was **LIFE!** At the command, her spirit entered again to the place it had once called home, her body. Without her spirit, she would have never breathed another breath of air or caressed the tender cheek of her dear mother. In the natural sense that child experienced *the death of death*. The Second Death (LIFE) destroyed the First Death that wonderful day forty- four years ago in an obscure hospital room in Austin, Texas. This was but a shadow of the SECOND DEATH, CHRIST'S HOLY SPIRIT OF LIFE, THE LAKE OF FIRE, swallowing up and destroying the FIRST DEATH — a shadow not only pointing to the future quickening of the dead, but **a shadow for today as well.**

In his cold embrace THE FIRST ADAM, THE FIRST DEATH, consumed and destroyed all life; while it is the fiery embrace with which THE LAST ADAM, THE SECOND DEATH, consumes and destroys all death. Christ shall burn up hell in the Lake of Fire. He shall destroy death in the Lake of Fire, and it is the same Lake wherein He shall destroy sin — but not men. God does not

destroy men in the lake of fire. Such a thought is a paradox, for how can you destroy death by creating death? You can't. How can you, as some teachers suppose, abolish death by bringing men under the bondage of eternal death, from which there is no escape? Frankly, it is impossible. The purpose of Jesus has never been to destroy men, not by any means. *He came into the world to SAVE SINNERS* (I Tim. 1:15), and *to MAKE AND END OF SIN* (Dan.9:24). **SIN and DEATH and HELL are the things destroyed.** The root of death, SIN, is destroyed; the abode of the dead, HELL, is destroyed; and with them the fruit of sin, DEATH ITSELF, is destroyed. And we read, "...***The last enemy that shall be DESTROYED is DEATH***" (I Cor. 15:26).

So often the message is delivered that **HELL is PERPETUAL, UNENDING, EVERLASTING DEATH IN THE LAKE OF FIRE**; that there is no escape for all who pass over to those foreboding borders. With alarming conviction we are told it is a place of no return. This teaching of "*perpetual, unending, everlasting death*" ranks among the most sensational, spine-tingling fantasies of all time; but has been in Christendom only since the inception of the Roman Catholic Church. It was introduced by this State church in the early A.D. 300s, and later endorsed by the Reformationists as a result of tradition. Other contributing factors were the lack of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and the abundance of ill-translated Bibles. Most other religions of the world have had their hell, the abode for the evil dead, but it was the Christian Church that popularized the concept of it "*never ending.*"

Nevertheless, we still wonder, how could the plain words of Paul have gone unnoticed for such a long time? "*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING? O GRAVE, WHERE IS THY VICTORY?***" (I Cor. 15:54-55). Some will contend that he was referring to the Christians, and only through Christ is the victory of salvation gained, citing verse 57: "*But thanks be to God, which giveth **US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.***" In another place it is written, "*...Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). **AMEN! I am in complete agreement**, for it is only by His matchless name that a man is saved, and only those in Christ Jesus can gain this victory — but there is more. It is not limited to just a few, but **THIS VICTORY IS FOR ALL MEN**; where this promising message is clearly trumpeted not only in the various verses we have already covered, but in at least ninety others. (We have compiled a list of ninety-three and are free upon request.)

Religious tradition very often has the *LAST ENEMY* to be destroyed, or separated eternally from God, as the *LAST SINNER*; but in I Corinthians 15:26 Paul states clearly that the last enemy to be destroyed is **DEATH**. No reference whatsoever is made to the annihilation of sinners. In the above verses (54 & 55) he goes on to say how both, death and the grave, are swallowed up in victory. Elementary understanding tells us that the victory over **DEATH** comes only by making **ALIVE**; and the **GRAVE** can only be destroyed by man's **RESURRECTION**. If one soul is left dead or

in the grave, regardless of what or where either may be, victory is foreign to Christ, and death has not been destroyed.

In the light of plain truth, how can responsible people continue embracing the concept of "*everlasting death?*" What a ruse. I believe the *traded* church has been dancing the *New Mexican two-step* and *Texas shuffle* with her people. The steps are fancy, and the rhythm is peppy, but nothing comes of all the dust-kicking cloud but a worked-up sweat and sore feet. So stop the music, people! Pack up your drums, and send the band home! Vain imaginations are no truer today than they were two and three thousand years ago, but the truth stands undaunted. The plan of salvation through fear has not worked, and there is no more a place found for such side-stepping maneuvers, intentional or otherwise, in Christ's great Church.

More than a few are reluctant to teach concerning "The Great White Throne Judgment" and "The Lake of Fire." Some flatly refuse to teach out of the book of Revelation at all. One retired local minister with his doctor's degree in theology feels that the book should never have been canonized as a part of the Bible. He told me that he didn't have time to waste with a man (the apostle John) who had a nightmare, wrote it down, and then had the gall to send it all over the country claiming it was from God. Another said he would never teach from the book of Revelation, because every time a preacher did so, it split the church wide open. And then there are some who do teach from it; but too often their approach of end-time events and judgment come from the darkness of the carnal mind, and this is of no help. It only lends to more

confusion and wild imaginations. With such views and lack of understanding, we can see why so little is understood today when it comes to the fiery judgments of God.

Painful as it is, aren't we glad He has, and still is in the process of consuming us by His cleansing, transforming fire? We have learned what a good thing fire is in our own lives, whether it is for light, for warmth, or for purging. What then, I shall ask, causes one to believe it will not be a glad day, yet painful like our own, for the rest of the world in the Lake of Fire? It is strange how people can see the good of God's fire in their own lives during this age of preparation, but they fail to see it in other's in the age to come. (It's time to think....)

*"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the **HOLY GHOST, and WITH FIRE**" (Mt. 3:11). It is just as accurately translated, "He shall baptize you with the **HOLY GHOST, even FIRE,**" indicating the HOLY SPIRIT and FIRE are one and the same thing.*

The HOLY SPIRIT of God is the HOLY FIRE of God; and whatsoever the HOLY FIRE OF GOD touches, it either burns up or refines. It either destroys or changes; usually both, by destroying sin and changing the sinner. Anytime the SPIRIT IS ACTIVATED, FIRE PROCEEDS FROM THE THRONE — WAVES OF FLAME SURGE FROM THE LAKE OF FIRE. HIS PRESENCE IS FIRE, HIS WORD IS FIRE, and HIS MINISTERS ARE FLAMES OF FIRE. A sermon ministered in the Spirit is a

WORD OF FIRE. A song that is sung in the Spirit is a SONG OF FIRE. An act of love (not carnal) is a PASSION OF FIRE. The life of His ministers are FIREBRANDS IN THE EARTH. There can be nothing said, sung, or done in the spirit that does not change or destroy something inwardly or outwardly; for the SPIRIT IS FIRE, and everything fire touches it effects one way or the other. It consumes the wood, hay, and stubble while refining the precious metals of the Lord.

THE LAKE OF FIRE, or let us say "***THE LAKE OF GOD***," is ablaze with ***HOLY FIRE***. It burns fervently with the Word, it rises in anthem's celestial flames as the song of the Lord, and in swells of glory the fire roars, wave after wave of His fiery Word, while His ministers of surmounting flames move across the land by the guiding breath of God's heated Spirit of determined passion. How can we malign or caricature such a blazing glory? How can we demean such wonders of the Lord? And how can we undermine His ability to save to the uttermost? Hopefully, we never do again.

LIFE FROM THE FLAMES OF JUDGMENT

We have noticed primarily the concept of the erroneous "*everlasting, never-ending, judgment of hellfire*" upon the "sinners" of the world; but another extreme view needs to be addressed — the precept of "*no judgment*," or at least very little. This view holds the idea that God is such a loving God that there will be no retribution for the deeds done in the flesh or for the lusts and rebellion harbored in the soul. This loving God supposedly has

exonerated all men and their sins at the cross of Jesus, and the only thing lacking is for them to fall into His waiting arms. This all-loving presence will melt the hardest of hearts and cool the souls of absolute hatred. Some feel there will be no pain or suffering once the grave has claimed their bodies, just an understanding God who will magically change the carnal souls of everyone, including unrepentant rebels.

The record leaves no doubt that the wood, hay, and stubble of the natural man, along with the tares of the world, shall be subjected to *the judgment fires of God*, whether in this present age or those of the future. In a couple of places Jesus said that some would even be subjected to "**HELLFIRE**," or "**THE FIRE OF GEHENNA**." This strongly suggests that the judgment is less than pleasant. God, like good parents, uses whatever is necessary to correct rebellion in His domain, first in love with the spirit of gentleness; and if need be, with the flames of **HELLFIRE**, but still in the spirit of love. Every stronghold of the First Adam must come to nought in order for the greater Kingdom of the Last Adam to flourish. When it is finished, it will be as Isaiah declared: "*He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over **ALL PEOPLE**, and the veil that is spread over **ALL NATIONS**. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from **ALL FACES**. For when Thy judgments are IN THE EARTH, **THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS**." (Isa. 25:7-8, 26:9).*

Never believe for a moment that people will not have to answer for what they sow in the flesh: "*For if we sin willfully after that we*

*have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain **fearful looking for of JUDGMENT and FIERY INDIGNATION, which shall devour the adversaries.** He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**" (Heb. 10:26-31).*

These verses by no means say God will blindly sweep a man's willful, deliberate, contemptible, presumptuous sins under the carpet and never deal with him about them; but neither do the verses say he will never be delivered of them. They do say, however, that the **JUDGMENT OF FIRE will devour them** — not the man, but **his adversaries** — **HIS SINS**.

God never intended for us to skip the rope of life and not be responsible for our actions. Jesus said in a couple of places, *"Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."* (Mt. 5:26) The writer of Hebrews reminded us of an age-old principle, *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby"* (Heb. 12:11). And how can we forget the words of David? *"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now*

*have I kept thy word. Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. **It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes**" (Psa. 119:67-68,71).*

The span of ages do not change the principles of God, and they always work. It matters not if they are toward one man or the entire world, whether they are applied in the days of David, in this present dispensation, or the one to come — the JUDGMENT FIRES OF GOD PURGE AND CHANGE, bringing PEOPLE AND NATIONS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

It is so aptly recorded in Nahum 1:5, "*The mountains quake at Him, and hills melt, and **the earth IS BURNED AT HIS PRESENCE, yea the world, and ALL that dwell therein.**" Do we suppose God just got tired of dealing with His rebellious creation, and at this point decided there was no use working with them any longer, and He was ready to annihilate the whole lump? Not at all. He is severe, but remedial. "*Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for **ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE DEVoured WITH THE FIRE OF MY JEALOUSY** (but not forever). *For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:8-9).***

Take note of God's fiery judgment to Israel, and know that the Lake of Fire will be no less to those cast therein, but also notice

the benefit of that fire: *"When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof **BY THE SPIRIT OF JUDGMENT, and BY THE SPIRIT OF BURNING.** And **THE LORD WILL CREATE** upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for **A PLACE OF REFUGE, and for A COVERT FROM STORM AND FROM RAIN**" (Isa. 4:4-6).*

Paul was no stranger to hardships, and when it came to others his hand was not shortened that he would not turn them over to severe judgment for a time, but know also that it was for their good: *"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up (saying, "I would never do that."), and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. I have judged concerning him that hath so done this deed, To deliver such an one unto Satan **FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH, THAT THE SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED** in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:5). And "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom **I HAVE DELIVERED UNTO SATAN, THAT THEY MAY LEARN NOT TO BLASPHEME**" (I Tim. 1:20). Wouldn't you prefer to have the adversary sent against you than to continue in fornication or blaspheming God? You see, it is a good thing to be *judged and corrected unto life.**

The fact is, extreme cases necessitate extreme measures of treatment, if not in this age, then in the one to come — and it is for their good. No one escapes the salting of fire, especially those who bring Christ to an open shame by sinning willfully or the ones who revolt against His authority. In such cases, *there is no more a renewing of them by repentance, but renewing by burning along with the briars and thorns* (Heb. 6:4-8).

What a glorious day it is to be privileged to hear the song of Moses and understand what he was saying: "*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: **THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HATH HE THROWN INTO THE SEA***" (Ex. 15:1). Praise God! **HORSE and RIDER (SIN and DEATH) IS THROWN INTO THE SEA (THE LAKE OF FIRE)! TWO OF THE GREATEST ENEMIES KNOWN TO MAN ARE TRIUMPHED OVER — FOREVERMORE!**

To be continued...

— Elwin R. Roach