

Satan's Fate

Authored by
Arthur V. Braidic & Terry K. Moore

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It is said that the only sure things about life are death and taxes. This is certainly true regarding death. It is inextricably tied to all life as we know it. We see it every day in the news, movies, and the never-ending wars around the globe. We experience it personally when we lose loved ones to death's inevitable claim. To put it succinctly, humans are destined to die; but what about powerful spirit beings such as Satan and his demons? Can they die, or is the devil immortal—like God?

Satan's Fate

God is absolutely sovereign over every aspect of His creation. The Scriptures forcefully proclaim that He is the embodiment of power (Psa. 147:5). We are told that nothing is too difficult or impossible for Him. He created the worlds by His Word, and He upholds the entire universe by the enormous power of that Word (Psa. 33:6; Heb. 1:3). Moreover, He can just as easily dissolve the universe—and He promises to do so prior to creating an entirely new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:1).

God's immeasurable power evokes a fascinating question. Is God only sovereign over physical things, or does He have absolute power over His entire creation? What about angelic beings and other objects made of spirit? Consider Gabriel, Michael, the angelic army, His throne, the sea of crystal, and various books, crowns, girdles, harps, and trumpets that are all composed of spirit (Eze. 1:1-28; Rev. 1:4; 4:4-6; 5:8; 8:2; 14:2). Does the Almighty have complete power over them? What about the devil? Is God sovereign over him?

The Scriptures reveal that God made all things both in heaven and the physical universe (Col. 1:16), but another truth must be understood. He did NOT create them from nothing. As the author of Hebrews stated:

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible (Hebrews 11:3).

Thus, God spoke and the earth came into existence. He made angels, planets, and stars from invisible spirit. He created physical man and breathed life into his nostrils. While the Eternal

made Adam from the earth, everything physical originated from the spirit dimension.

This shows us that the Almighty has complete power over spirit. He can command incorruptible spirit to become corruptible matter. He can create beings composed of spirit and give them life. As will continue to be demonstrated, God not only has the power to give life, He has the power to take it—even from a spirit being. Any thought less than this trivializes the Almighty God.

Are There Things God Cannot Do?

A young boy was traveling by plane to visit his grandparents, and found himself seated beside a seminary professor. The professor noticed that the boy was reading a church tract, and thought he would encourage the lad. “Young man,” the professor said. “If you can tell me something God can do, I’ll give you a big, shiny apple.” The boy thought for a moment and replied, “Mister, if you can tell me something God cannot do, I’ll give you a whole barrel of apples!”

Young as he was, this boy voiced an enormous truth. The Scriptures plainly state that “with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37). In light of this verse, could the Almighty have created a multitude of things that He is incapable of changing or eliminating? Can He change His holy law? What about verses that say He cannot lie or be tempted with evil? (Tit. 1:2; Jam. 1:13). Can these examples be used to say that God is incapable of destroying anything made of spirit?

James 1:17 helps to clarify the answer to this question. This verse declares that with the Almighty there is “no variation or shadow of turning.” Could this statement possibly mean that God cannot make a turn? Such reasoning would obviously be foolish. The word “variableness” refers to fickleness (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, G3883). In other words, the Almighty does not choose to go one way, and then suddenly turn in the opposite direction. This verse obviously does NOT indicate that the Eternal’s abilities are limited. It expresses the fact that He stays on a straight, moral path and will not alter His course. When God commits to a way, He can be fully trusted to keep His commitment. Simply put, He is not inconsistent!

God cannot lie or be tempted by evil, but it is not because He doesn't have the ability to do so. God is omnipotent (Rev. 19:6). Any limits on His behavior are boundaries He has set for Himself. He is the Almighty, and as such, He made a cognitive decision to live by a code of righteous behavior. Moreover, He has the character never to turn from that choice. No object or living being can limit Him in the fulfillment of His objectives.

In another case, the Apostle Paul explained that man is not always true, but God is "faithful" and "cannot deny Himself" (2Tim. 2:13). Does this mean He lacks self-control? Obviously not! Faithful means to be "sure" and "trustworthy" (*Strong's*, G3982). This means that God is absolutely sure of who and what He is. He will never contradict the way of righteousness He has chosen. Any verse that might *appear* to say that God's abilities are limited is only a reflection of the Eternal's personal conviction.

God's law applies both physically and spiritually, but can He suspend it? Of course, He can! On one occasion, citing David and the shew bread, Christ allowed His disciples to eat grain as they traveled on the Sabbath. Yet the Messiah did not eat it Himself. This was not because He could not eat it. Having agreed to be man's Savior, Christ set Himself on a course in which He would never transgress the law. He refused to glean on the Sabbath because it was a sin and would oppose His greater plan of salvation (Mat. 12:1-8). However, out of divine love, Christ allowed His disciples to unlawfully glean on the Sabbath; applying the ox in a ditch principle (Luke 14:5). This illustrates that, if our Savior believes an action serves a higher purpose, He has the compassion and power to permit individuals to break the law and proclaim them blameless.

As another example, although God chooses not to lie, He can allow deception to occur without tainting His righteous character (2Ths. 2:11). One way God does this is by blinding men to the truth (Luke 24:16; Rom. 11:25). In one case God desired wicked King Ahab to go to Ramoth to be killed and He allowed a lying spirit to influence false prophets to advise the king that he would prevail; when the truth was—he would die! Notice that God takes responsibility for the lie even though it was performed by a wicked spirit (1Kin. 22:20-23). By this we understand that God permits

Satan and his demons to have influence on earth for His own purposes—even if it results in breaking His law.

These are just a few examples reminding us that nothing is impossible to God. If He desires a task to be accomplished, He will make it happen. If He created the law, He has the power to abrogate that law when He deems fitting. If He made something out of spirit, He also has control over it. Our great Architect created the universe by the breath of His mouth and He can speak it out of existence just as easily. He alone has the power to give life, and He can also remove it regardless of its composition!

God Alone Possesses Immortality

Virtually all believers agree that God is immortal. There has never been a time when He did not exist. Even the definition of His Name boldly declares this truth. YHWH literally means “self-existent” or “eternal” (*Strong's*, H3068). While man *has* a spirit, God *is* Spirit (Job 32:8; John 4:24). This profound truth prompted the Apostle Paul to write:

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus... that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, **who alone has immortality**, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen (1 Timothy 6:13-16).

The words “*He who is*” in the above passage are italicized, indicating they are not part of the original text. This means that the Son will reveal the Father to mankind at the very end, and that the Father alone has immortality. We can be certain this refers to the Father because no man has seen Him (John 1:18). However, Christ was seen by Moses, Joshua, Abraham, and others. Only after His millennial reign will Christ turn everything over to the Father who will finally be seen by men (1Cor. 15:24-25; Rev. 21:3).

These verses tell us that only God is immortal. This divine attribute is the word *athanasia* and it literally means “deathlessness”

(*Strong's*, G110). His innate life lies in His own essence, not at the will of another. Famous Bible commentator Albert Barnes described the meaning of immortality with the following words:

God, in his own nature, enjoys a perfect and certain exemption from death. Creatures have immortality only as they derive it from him, and of course are dependent on him for it. He has it by his very nature, and it is in his case underived, and he cannot be deprived of it (*Barnes Notes*, Ephesians to Philemon, p. 202).

Barnes makes this statement with the understanding that the Father has always possessed unbroken immortality. He owns His life, and it is self-sustaining. He had immortality in eternity past, He has it now, and He will always possess it. In this way He differs from any other being.

Perhaps even more amazing is the fact that the Father has the ability to bequeath unending life to others. He proved this by raising Christ from the dead and restoring eternal life to Him. Prior to this, the Savior had surrendered His immunity to death.

Originally living as a magnificent spirit being with the Father, the Word possessed immortality (John 1:1-4). In an act of supreme love, He relinquished this unique status to become a mere mortal. Then, as Christ on earth, He was unmercifully crucified; and this next statement must be understood. HE DIED! He lay dead in the grave for three days and nights (Rom. 5:6; Mat. 12:40). The fact that Christ was changed from spirit into mortal flesh and died should be evidence enough to grasp the truth that there is at least one way for a spirit being to die.

Thus, Christ's immortality was removed from Him. However, during His ministry, He prophesied that the Father would raise Him up. Christ did not resurrect Himself. It was the Father who restored self-existent life to the Messiah (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 1:1). As the Savior boldly proclaimed:

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in

which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:26-29).

The Messiah explained that the Father would once again confer immortality on Him. Christ was then empowered to give eternal life to the chosen Saints at their resurrection (1Cor. 15:53; Rev. 20:6). By these words, Christ related that He did not have eternal life while human. It was only after His resurrection that He would no longer be subject to death. As the Apostle Paul stated:

Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him (Romans 6:9).

Even though Christ's immortality was interrupted, this divine trait was restored to Him. He now shares the same self-sustaining, unending life that the Father has always possessed.

God Sustains All Life

God made every living thing. There is not a single angel, plant, or microorganism that was not designed by Him. As the Apostle John declared:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:1-4).

Being the Creator of all things, God also gave life to His creation. This includes both the physical and the spiritual community. Having inherent life, God continues to sustain all living beings. As Nehemiah wrote:

You alone *are* the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all (Nehemiah 9:6).

Nehemiah unequivocally stated that God not only made everything in the universe, he also “preserves” it all. This expression is defined as “to *live*... to *revive*: - keep (leave, make) alive...” (*Strong's*, H2421). In other words—GOD KEEPS THEM ALIVE! This makes it clear that angels and demons do not have inherent life. Like all living things, they were created by God and their life continues according to His will.

Only the Father and His Son have immortality at this time (1Tim. 6:16). With such power they can create spirit beings and sustain their lives so that they do not age—they can exist incorruptible. But this does NOT mean that Satan is immortal like God. Demons do not have self-sustaining life that can be imputed to others.

For this reason, the words eternal, immortal, and immortality appear dozens of times throughout the Bible. Yet these expressions are NEVER used to describe angels and certainly not devils. God can take their life if it is His decision to do so. As this subject continues to be explored, it will become clear that wicked spirits will be destroyed.

Angels Proclaim—God Lives Forever

It is obvious that God’s immortality is unique. The angels do not possess it, and they openly proclaim this fact. For example, during John’s vision he was presented with a view of God’s throne where magnificent angelic beings were present. These angels were so impressed by God that John wrote, “And they do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!’” (Rev. 4:8).

These righteous angels boldly acknowledge the Eternal’s immortality, and John watched as they continued to honor God. While describing the vision, the apostle understood the profound meaning of their praise and reiterated the point they made:

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever... (Revelation 4:9-10).

Without question both John and the angels acknowledge that God “lives forever.” Consider just how important these words are. The apostle and these spirit beings would NEVER stress that God lives forever if angels and demons did too! This truth is of such significance that it was recorded six distinct times. Notice the additional three:

Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever (Revelation 5:14).

The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever... (Revelation 10:5-6).

Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever (Revelation 15:7).

These verses show us that God’s immortality sets Him apart from all other spirit beings. The testimony of both John and the holy angels repeatedly make the distinction that it is God who lives forever. They would never use such words if all spirit beings were immortal. While it is true that the angels do not age, that is their bodies are not corruptible, they do not possess immortality.

Understanding Incorruption

Angels comprise one of God’s greatest creations. They are able move in and out of both the physical and spirit dimensions. They can perform miracles, and their bodies never age. They are a spiritual wonder. As a result of their superior qualities, some believe that angels are immortal. This mistake occurs when people confuse incorruptibility with immortality. However, these attributes are not the same. In fact, the Apostle Paul made this distinction when he wrote:

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, AND this mortal *must* put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53).

In this verse Paul compares two physical and spiritual characteristics. He contrasts corruption in the physical world with the incorruption of the spirit dimension. The degeneration of physical elements from aging, sickness, disease, accidents, or simple wear and tear takes its toll on the flesh. The human body continues to deteriorate until it ultimately experiences death. Humanity's composition also prevents access to that which is spiritual. Man cannot naturally see things composed of spirit; nor can he look upon God's face and live (Exo. 33:20).

Angels differ from humans in that, as spirit, their bodies are incorruptible. They are unaffected by age, sickness, and disease. They can enter into God's presence unscathed. Even non-living objects composed of spirit do not decay. Thus, while Mount Sinai burned at the presence of the Eternal, God's throne and other heavenly objects are not set ablaze. This is NOT because they are immortal. It is because they are made of spirit!

The fact that spirit is not subject to decay does not mean God is unable to destroy it. If the Almighty desires to change the scenery in His spiritual Kingdom, He can reshape, remake, or vaporize whatever He desires.

For example, God's throne presently rests upon a massive sea of glass (Rev. 4:6), but this location is only temporary. After the end of human history, the Father is going to relocate His throne from heaven to the New Jerusalem on His new earth (Rev. 21:3). He will then inhabit this beautiful edifice where the sea of glass will be replaced with a magnificent river issuing from under His seat of authority (Rev. 22:1).

This raises an interesting question. What is going to happen to the enormous sea of glass? Does it exist forever because God cannot destroy it, or does the Eternal recycle objects made of spirit? It would be absurd to believe the Almighty cannot destroy or reshape any of these heavenly objects simply because they are spirit. If this were true, God would require a massive spiritual junkyard to store all the items He no longer wants or needs.

In another example, when the Scriptures state that the elect will receive an imperishable crown and the creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, these verses do not mean that the new heavens, earth, or divine crowns will be immortal

(1Cor. 9:25, Rom. 8:21). The prophecies indicate that they will be composed of something that does not decompose.

In like manner, though Satan and the demons are composed of spirit, this does NOT indicate they are immortal. It simply means that they do not age or wear out. Like any other thing that God creates, they can be destroyed. We must believe the Scriptures—not our own thoughts or traditions.

Understanding Immortality

The second contrast Paul makes in first Corinthians 15 is between mortality and immortality. There is an obvious distinction between these two traits. One leads to death while the other eternal life. In order to achieve victory over death, humans must have both the incorruption attributed to spirit AND the immortality of God. This is stated a second time by Paul who wrote:

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54).

This verse expresses that humans experience two states of existence. We age and decay as a result of being corruptible, and that which is mortal ultimately dies. Paul stated that both the physical corruption and the limits of mortality will be changed in those who attain the first resurrection (1Cor. 15:52). This means that, in order to have eternal life, one must possess BOTH of these traits!

The word “incorruption” is *aphtharsia* in the Greek. It refers to the state of the elect’s future bodies as well as the unchanging love and character of a true Christian (Eph. 6:24). However, some make a common mistake thinking that incorruption can be used interchangeably with immortality. Even the King James translators made this error on two occasions. *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* states that in, “Rom. 2:7; 2Tim. 1:10; this is wrongly translated ‘immortality’ in the KJV” (p. 131).

We must understand that incorruption only describes that which does not decay. Spiros Zodhiates, a well-known authority on

biblical Greek, states exactly what *aphtharsia* means. Regarding our physical body, he wrote that God will:

... reshape it and give not immortality, not the absence of death, (athanasia [110]) but incorruptibility (*The Complete Word Study of the New Testament*, p. 298).

When it comes to “immortality,” Zodhiates explains that it and reflects the kind of life that God has:

In the NT it expresses the nature not of life itself, but strictly speaking, only a quality of life such as the quality of life of God and the resurrection body of the believer (ibid, p. 88).

Immortality is self-sustaining life that only God possesses at this time. The life He owns never ceases, and He has the power to grant eternal life to another being if He so desires.

Incorruption simply means that it does not decay. Angels, demons, and spirit objects are incorruptible. They do not grow old, but this does not mean they are immortal. In addition, it does not mean that they cannot be changed.

Sin Demonstrates that Spirit Can Change

Spirit beings are not corruptible in the same way humans are. They do not age and cannot be harmed by anything physical. Still, because the angels were created with free will, they can pervert themselves. For example, Lucifer was a bright, shining light in the angelic kingdom (Isa. 14:12). He was created exceedingly glorious, talented, and perfect among the angels (Eze. 28:15-17). Ezekiel spoke of this once magnificent angel saying:

You *were* the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone *was* your covering... The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You *were* the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God... You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in

you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned (Ezekiel 28:12-15).

This former archangel committed horrible and unpardonable sins. Consequently, his name was changed from Lucifer meaning “morning star” to Satan meaning “adversary” and “the arch-enemy of good” (*Strong's*, H1966; H7853; H7854). Yet, this is not the only way he changed. Ezekiel continued:

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor (Ezekiel 28:17).

Wickedness caused Lucifer's wisdom to be corrupted. No longer displaying the splendor and glory he once had, he was reduced from a source of light to functioning as the prince of darkness (Eph. 6:12). Even his appearance changed to reflect his perverted mind. As John wrote:

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan (Revelation 12:9).

Although the devil was not subject to the decay of aging, he was morally and ethically corrupted. Not only did his nature become depraved, he lost his glory, much of his power, and even his countenance degenerated. Satan is no longer stunningly beautiful. His sin caused him to become one of the least attractive of creatures. Certainly, the enormous lesson from this fact is that spirit can be changed!

Readers need to realize how important this is. Immortality refers to the self-sustaining life possessed only by God. Incorruptible refers to something that is not subject to decay. While spirit does not grow old and die of itself, the Scriptures clearly show it is subject to its own form of corruption. As we shall see, such corrupt spirit beings will be destroyed.

The Wages of Sin—an Eternal Principle

Human reasoning prevents us from knowing many of the things of God. As Paul wrote, “we see in a mirror, dimly” at this time

(1Cor. 13:12). Therefore, we are told to consider God's creation to help us understand (Rom. 1:20). Something that God created is the written word, and we must believe His Word that tells us this profound truth:

For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

The wages of sin were revealed to mankind at the very beginning of our existence (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:3). God has continued to remind us of this penalty throughout all of human history (Gen. 26:5; Exo. 20-23; Eze. 18:4; 2Pet. 2:5). Christ said, "but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). This means that unrepentant sin is a death sentence.

Still, because the Bible was written to humankind, some believe that the wages of sin only apply to unrepentant humans and does not concern any other species. However, such a belief cannot be found in the Scriptures. It is just another assumption—a tradition of men. Believing this concept actually limits the Lawgiver to the point that He is no longer who He says He is *El Shaddai*—the Almighty God.

The wages of sin are an eternal moral principle that applies throughout God's entire creation. As Romans 1:20 tells us, the fact that this law exists on earth means it must be reflected in the spirit world. If not, how is it possible that the great I AM who created all things was required to die after taking on our sin? If demons cannot be destroyed, why would they ask Christ if He had come to destroy them? (Luke 4:34; Mark 1:23-24).

We are also told that God does not show partiality (Rom. 2:11, Acts 10:34). Could the Scriptures be wrong and God actually ignores the sins of some while focusing on others? Because the Bible was written to mankind, could it be that God's enduring law only applies to humans and not angels? Absolutely not! If this were the case, how could Christ label Satan a "murderer" and "liar"? (John 8:44). These descriptive words show us that Lucifer violated the same laws that were given to mankind.

This truth raises another interesting question. If God's laws are universal, why are animals allowed to break some of them

without repercussion? The answer is obvious. Not every law applies to every creature.

As an example, dogs are not required to keep the law of adultery. While the seventh commandment may not concern them, there are other laws that DO apply. When animals break those laws, the wages of sin are to be death. Notice the following verses:

If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten (Exodus 21:28).

If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death (Leviticus 20:15-16).

These examples show us that, while every law given to humankind does not concern animals, beasts are subject to the laws that DO apply to them. Breaking those laws result in death.

The angels were also given laws that concern them. Christ said that the devil “sinned from the beginning” (John 8:44). This means that he broke God’s commandments. Because the wages of sin are an eternal principle that pertains to all of God’s creation, Satan and his followers have earned the death penalty (Eze. 28:16).

The Spirit in Man

The Scriptures reveal that humans do not have an immortal soul (Psa. 146:4; Eze. 18:20). In this respect we are like the animals (Gen. 2:19). Our bodies are corruptible, subject to decay, and destined to die (Ecc. 3:19).

However, God has given us an element of spirit that works in conjunction with our brain. This spirit gives us the power of *mind*; a unique intelligence which enables us to understand the mentality of other people and creatures on the planet (Job 32:8; 1Cor. 2:9). It makes possible the astonishing creative powers we wield on this earth (Gen. 1:26). This spirit is more than just intellect however. It allows us to introspect, to question our motives, and exercise

conscience. It keeps track of every element we are composed of, and records every experience we encounter.

It is not a living entity of itself, but it is still a type of spirit. Because of this, upon death of our body, this spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecc. 12:7). As an element of spirit, it can exist in heaven and be in His presence. In fact, we are told that the souls of the martyred saints are kept under the altar (Rev. 6:9). Can this spirit in man die? The Scriptures give us the answer as they address the resurrections.

Christ revealed in the book of Revelation that the second death will have no power over those who are raised in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6). Those faithful few will be given inherent life, just as Christ received at His resurrection. Later, God will use this unique spirit to restore the minds and thoughts to those He raises to physical life in a second resurrection (Eze. 37:1-13; Mat. 12:41-42). It is during this time these individuals will be offered salvation and the opportunity to choose God's way. Those in the third resurrection, who are not found written in the Book of Life, will be cast into the lake of fire and suffer the second death! As the Apostle John wrote:

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death.** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15).

What will happen in this massive inferno to the spirits of those individuals who are unrepentant of sin? As they are burned up, will the spirit be destroyed, or will it go back to God again?

Understanding the purpose of the spirit in man, if it were to return to God, there would always be a record of sin before Him. Moreover, there would be no point in raising these individuals a second time, and no reason for putting them in the lake of fire. He could simply leave them in their prior state of death. Instead, God will burn up these wicked spirits in order to extinguish every last vestige of sin in preparation for the sinless new heavens and earth.

The Almighty is omnipotent and can destroy anything He has created. He absolutely can destroy the spirit in man. In fact, the purpose of the lake of fire is to eliminate every trace of evil. Christ confirmed this when He warned humankind with these words:

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:28).

The word “soul” in this verse is *psuche* in Greek. This unique word means “breath” and refers to man’s “spirit” (*Strong’s*, G5590). The word “destroy” is *apollumi*, meaning to “fully destroy,” or “perish” (*Strong’s*, G622). The expressions are used to describe the fate of the unrepentant sinner’s physical body as well as their spirit. Therefore, Christ is plainly telling us that only the Almighty has the power to destroy that spirit. For this reason, we are warned to fear Him. Only He can destroy both physical and spiritual elements. This again proves that spirit is neither immortal nor indestructible. God can create matter from spirit, and He can also destroy that spirit in an extraordinary fire of His design.

The Origin of Sin

Christ was a Spirit being who became human and died. This tragic event reveals that it is possible for spirit to perish. Nevertheless, some believe this truth is actually evidence that Satan cannot be destroyed. They base their theory on the Scripture stating that death came by man. They suppose that if death came through a human, becoming a human is the only possible way spirit can die. Some have taken this a step further claiming that spirits entering into the physical realm must be BORN into it and only then can they die. In an attempt to support this view, they quote Paul who wrote:

For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ’s at His coming (1 Corinthians 15:21-23).

Before anything else, it must be realized that there is not a single scripture stating that becoming human is the only way spirit can perish. Though it might be one possible way, to insinuate that this is the **ONLY** way is a concept fabricated in the human mind.

Moreover, it is presumptuous for anyone to set limits on God. It is foolhardy to say that the Almighty is only capable of what can be imagined in our mind. We must not underestimate or limit Him. God is not constrained to one way to accomplish His objectives. He is certainly not limited to what is concocted in the minds of men (Isa. 55:8-9).

Second, in the verses above, the Apostle Paul is speaking about death and life as it relates to mankind. He is not addressing spirit beings at all! His point is that death to the human race came because of Adam's sin, and eternal life came through the second Adam—Christ—who died to pay the penalty for sin (Rom. 5:14-17). These verses make no attempt to identify the literal origin of death. For example, they do not consider the vital part that Eve and Satan played in Adam's sin. These verses actually validate the parallel that exists between physical and spiritual creation. Based on Paul's words, it is logical to consider that, if death came to humans through the sin of humans, then the death of angels would be the result of the sin of angels.

When Paul recorded these verses, it was in the context of what had occurred before Adam sinned. In the unknown amount of time prior to the creation of man, Satan caused one third of the angels to join him in an attack on God's throne (Isa. 14:13-14; Rev. 12:4, 9). The devil and his wicked angels were cast back down to earth where he later manifested himself as a serpent and deceived Eve. Finally, it was she who influenced Adam to sin (Gen. 3:6). Only then did the consequences of sin pass to the rest of mankind.

This means that the process of sin leading to death actually began in the spirit realm. It was initiated by Satan. He is the one who used sin to bring death to mankind. In fact, the Bible plainly reveals that the source of death to mankind is "...him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

Satan is the one who "sinned from the beginning" (1John 3:8). He is the author of sin. In addition, man's rejection of God, and his decision to follow Satan, resulted in the devil becoming the god

of this world (2Cor. 4:4). His demonic followers became lesser gods worshiped as various deities throughout the earth (1Cor. 10:20). While it is true that death *passed* to humanity through Adam, the origin of sin and death has always been the devil. As the apostle John recorded Christ to say:

You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it (John 8:44).

Because Satan is the author of sin, the symbolism of the Day of Atonement demonstrates that the offences of mankind will ultimately be placed upon his head (Lev. 16:21). Thus, Paul's statement that "the wages of sin is death" applies to more than just humans. His words along with those of Christ make it clear that the devil will be burned up in the final lake of fire:

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

This supernatural fire, created by God for the devil and his angels, makes the point absolutely clear. Spirits do not have to become human to die. The Bible does not foster such fallacy. In addition, though Christ died for our sins, the Scriptures NEVER state that this is the reason the Savior became a man. The reason God became a human was for an altogether different, extraordinary, and magnificent purpose.

Why Christ Became Human

Christ is the God who created all things (John 1:3). He is the great I AM who called Abraham, spoke to Moses, and delivered Israel out of bondage (John 8:58). The Savior became a human being and was able to die. We must understand that there is not a single Scripture stating that Christ had to become a man, or be born

of a woman, in order to die. In fact, the Bible tells us that this was not the primary reason for His transformation.

The Messiah became one of us so that He would experience everything a human being does. He was tempted in all the ways we are (Heb. 4:15). God's Word states that Christ learned by what He suffered (Heb. 5:8). Part of this learning process was to experience human nature, temptation, pain, and death. As a result, He can completely relate to mankind's emotions and pulls of the flesh. This was made clear when He spoke to Peter saying "the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak" (Mat. 26:41).

Christ will ultimately pronounce judgment on every human being (2Cor. 5:10). Therefore, He became one of us to experience what it is like to be human! He made this enormous sacrifice "that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest" (Heb. 2:17).

This does not mean that the only way a spirit being can die is to be born of a woman. In fact, Adam and Eve were created from the earth, and that earth was made out of spirit. They were not born of a woman, and yet they died.

The Almighty is not limited to a single way to accomplish anything He proposes to do. There is no truth in any statement that limits the power of God. No one can rightly claim that there is only one way the Eternal can accomplish His will. The Creator is not bound by human reasoning. Sometimes He reveals how He will accomplish His goal, and other times He does not, but one thing is certain. He will achieve it.

When it comes to Satan's fate, the Almighty has revealed that He plans to eradicate ALL wickedness in His Kingdom, and He has told us exactly how He will do so (Rev. 21:1-8). It will be in a massive conflagration—the final lake of fire!

Bruising Satan's Head

As early as the book of Genesis the Scriptures begin to reveal Satan's fate. After this wicked spirit seduced Eve into eating from the forbidden tree, God made a unique prophetic pronouncement:

So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you *are* cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will

put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:14-15).

Theologians have named these verses the “proto-evangelium;” meaning the first declaration of the gospel. The words contain condemnation toward the serpent, but an enormous hope for humankind. First, God pronounced a judgment on all serpents because Satan took this form when beguiling Eve. This reptile would be forced to crawl on its belly. Second, hostility would always exist between the serpent and the woman.

Next, the pronouncement concludes with a prophecy regarding the woman’s “seed.” However, the word “seed” does not refer to all humanity. The verse uses the singular “it” meaning the one seed of humankind which is Christ (Gal. 4:4). *The Complete Jewish Bible* translators recognized this truth. As they translated the Hebrew text, they speak of these two powerful spirit beings, stating, “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). This terminology is clarified when the Apostle Paul explained a statement that God made to Abraham:

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “and to your Seed,” who is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Therefore, Genesis 3:15 tells us that, while Satan would bruise Christ’s heel, the Savior would ultimately bruise the devil’s head. The phrase, “bruise his heel” refers to an injury that is not painful and yet not permanent. On the other hand, “bruise your head” refers to a fatal blow.

This is confirmed by the fact that the exact same word for “bruise” is used when referring to both Christ and Satan. The respective injuries are mutual in the sense that they are both bruises. However, they occur in different parts of the body. The equality only reflects that each being would experience the same type of injury—death. However, one is in the heel, and the other in the head. This indicates the severity of each injury. The wound of the devil will result in a greater consequence. His death will not be temporary as was Christ’s. It will be permanent!

The sense of this word “bruise” becomes more obvious as we examine the original language. The Hebrew word is *shuph* which means “to *gape*, that is, *snap* at; figuratively to *overwhelm*: - break, bruise, (or) cover” (*Strong's*, H7779). This means that Christ will cause a “gape” in Satan’s head. He will split, or break it. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown agree that Satan’s fate is fatal:

Thou shalt bruise his heel—the Serpent wounds the heel that crushes him; and so Satan would be permitted to afflict the humanity of Christ... It shall bruise thy head—The serpent’s poison is lodged in its head; and a bruise on that part is fatal. Thus, fatal shall be the stroke which Satan shall receive from Christ, though it is probable he did not at first understand the nature and extent of his doom (*Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, p. 20).

Satan caused man to sin. Striking the first blow, Christ would then have to suffer and temporarily die in order to save us. Though the devil may have appeared to win the first round, it’s not over yet. Satan would only do a limited amount of damage to the Son of Man, but our Savior will strike a lethal blow to this fallen angel. This truth is confirmed in the New Testament where, thousands of years later, the apostle Paul referred to this future event in Genesis three, saying:

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly (Romans 16:20).

This verse does not mean the resurrected saints will literally stand on top of Satan, but they will be over the devil in power and authority. At that time, Satan will finally be struck down, destroyed, and he will no longer be the god of this world.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible further illustrates this truth showing us that the Greek word for “bruise” is *suntribo*. This expression means “...to *crush completely*, that is, to *shatter* (literally or figuratively): - break (in pieces), broken to shivers...” (G4937). Well-known and respected scholar E.W. Bullinger also states that “bruise” means to “crush in pieces, or utterly” (*The Companion Bible*, p. 1693).

To avoid any misunderstanding, it must be noted that *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* adds a second and even a third definition that has misled casual readers. For example, he admits that the word "bruise" means to "break" or "break in pieces, break down or crush" (p. 607). Yet in an alternate definition he goes on to say that the word can mean "to put Satan under foot and (as conqueror) trample on him... to tear one's body and shatter one's strength" (ibid). Readers must realize that such a lengthy definition could never be derived from a single word. This latter option is nothing more than Thayer's opinion.

The time and culture of his work exposes the error of his second definition. He and other scholars unilaterally believed the Catholic and Protestant doctrine that Satan, demons, and wicked men would live forever while burning in hell fire. Looking through the lens of this false doctrine, various commentators such as Matthew Henry and John Gill may imply that the word "bruise" indicates that Christ will remove Satan's power or strength, not take his life. However, the origin of this interpretation came from a common belief in the false doctrine of an immortal soul and an ever-burning hell fire. We must not be influenced by ancient heretical beliefs. We must stay true to the biblical meaning and not the false traditions of men.

With this understanding, notice how this Greek word is honestly defined. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* provides its meaning:

suntribo (4937), lit., "to rub together," and so "to shatter, shiver, break in pieces by crushing"... of the eventual crushing of Satan (p. 78).

Realizing that Paul's comment in Romans 16:20 refers to the account in the third chapter of Genesis, translators rendered the Greek *suntribo* as "bruise." However, they knew the word does not refer to a superficial wound, but means to literally "crush." Of course, this would be its meaning! Serpents slither on the ground where they can easily be trampled on by a heel or foot. When encountered, many will pick up a large stone and crush the head of venomous snakes. So, we can see how Paul's statement forcefully

drives the point home. Satan's wound will be much worse than Christ's. The Savior was damaged by temporary pain and death, but Satan will be destroyed by death from which there is no return.

The King of Tyre and the Spirit behind the Throne

During the history of the Old Covenant, God addressed an evil king who ruled the city of Tyre. This ruler was very wise, but used his intellect to amass personal gain. He became proud and arrogant—actually calling himself a god. His attitude reflected the mind of Satan. As God rebuked this wicked king, His words lifted to a higher level as they spoke to the power behind most of the thrones in this world—the devil (Mat. 4:8-9). The Almighty declared:

Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You *were* the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone *was* your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You *were* the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones" (Ezekiel 28:12-16).

It is obvious that this description is speaking of the devil prior to his sin, rather than a human king. These words have no place in describing any human being. Satan is the one who held the position as a covering cherub at the holy mountain of God. He had been in Eden the garden of God and wore precious stones much like those in the high priest's breastplate (Exo. 28:15-20).

God then declared destruction of this wicked spirit being. Some believe that God's penalty was simply to remove Lucifer from his exalted position in God's government. This conclusion is born out

of the translated past tense of destroy as well as the expression “from the midst” a phrase meaning to “sever from” (*Strong's*, H4480; H8432). This has led some to think that Satan’s destruction already occurred when he was cast down to the earth (Luke 10:18).

Though Lucifer was removed from his position as a covering cherub, the belief that his demotion was his destruction cannot be true for several reasons. First, Ezekiel 28 was written in approximately 586 B.C. At that time Satan had long been cast down to earth. The King James translation states that God “will” cast him out of the mountain of God. It also states that the Almighty “will destroy” the devil. This better rendering reveals that Satan’s sentence has not been entirely executed. Instead, God declares that his destruction will occur.

Second, the devil continues to be the ruler of this world (John 14:30), and he will hold this position until Christ’s return (John 12:31). His appointed office is of such magnitude that even the archangel Michael would not bring a railing accusation against him (Jude 9). After being cast to earth, the devil has not been banned from the mountain of God. He continues to have access to the Eternal. As the book of Job states:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.” ...So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD (Job 1:6-12).

From these verses we see that God allows Satan to exert a level of authority over the earth (2Cor. 4:4). This and other Scriptures depict that removal from a position in heaven is not the only punishment God will carry out upon the devil. Still, some continue to believe that Ezekiel 28 only means that Satan’s power was reduced. What makes this argument flawed is that removal from a position of authority is not even closely reflected by the meaning of the word *destroy* found in Ezekiel 28:16. The Hebrew word for “destroy” is *abad* meaning:

A primitive root; properly to *wander* away, that is *lose* oneself; by implication to *perish* (causatively, *destroy*): - break, destroy (-uction), + not escape, fail, lose, (cause to, make) perish, spend, X and surely, take, be undone, X utterly, be void of, have no way to flee (*Strong's*, H6).

The word *abad* is used to describe that which becomes “void” of life. The Bible frequently applies the term referring to annihilation of that which is evil. For example, it is rendered as “perish” in Lev. 26:38; Num. 16:33; 17:12; 21:30; and Deu. 4:26. It is also translated as “destroy” or to be “destroyed” in Num. 33:52, and Deu. 12:3; 11:4.

Another common mistake stems from the fact that parts of Ezekiel 28 alternate between referencing the king of Tyre and Satan. With this in mind, we must realize that there is an obvious duality throughout the Bible. The spiritual reflection of that which is physical runs deep in the Scriptures and the following verses are no exception. The prophet recorded a twofold prophecy relating to both the physical king and the devil. Notice how God continues to rebuke both Satan and the ancient king:

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and *shall be* no more forever (Ezekiel 28:17-19).

This passage is an obvious reflection of both Satan and the wicked king of Tyre. However, though duality exists, not every point relates to both the devil and the king. In fact, much of the judgment described by Ezekiel ONLY pertains to Satan. For example, the record of history gives us another reason why these verses cannot be speaking of the fate of the king of Tyre. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* states:

According to Josephus the Babylonian siege of Tyre lasted thirteen years (c. 586 B.C. - 573 B.C.). A Babylonian text claims that Nebuchadnezzar was present during the siege. Apparently the long siege ended with a treaty stipulating that the Tyrian royal house was to be deported to Babylon. Although the king of Tyre was allowed to stay, he was under the control of a Babylonian commissioner. (The prince of Tyre was later) ...discharged from his position, relieved of his trust, and publicly humiliated (pp. 712, 715).

After a lengthy siege, Tyre was eventually taken by Nebuchadnezzar who plundered its goods and reduced the authority of its king. However, the city was not completely destroyed and the king was not burned to ashes. Therefore, Ezekiel was not describing the literal king of Tyre. Instead, he was foretelling Satan's fate!

Alexander the Great conquered Tyre 250 years later. Still, the city was not obliterated and remained a profitable seaport. In fact, Tyre still stands today as an extension of the coast of Lebanon—a bustling harbor that is far from desolate. If the bleak finality pronounced by God in Ezekiel 28:19 referred only to the king of Tyre, it was never fulfilled.

Thus, we have four undisputable pieces of evidence proving that the fatal judgment found in Ezekiel 28 is referring to the power behind the throne—Satan—and that one day this being who has been the object of terror will be completely removed from God's presence and will cease to exist.

The King of Babylon and Satan's Fate

Isaiah is another prophet who described Satan's fate. Through him, God began speaking to the king of Babylon, but again focuses on the real power behind the throne. The prophet recorded His words saying:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will

ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:12-14).

These verses take the reader back to the time when Lucifer's pride and selfishness drove him to attack the very throne of God. Motivated by a consuming desire for self-exaltation, this wicked angel carried out an assault on heaven. In an angelic war, Satan was overcome and thrust back down to earth where he became the adversary of both God and mankind.

If it were God's intention to simply imprison the devil, He could have done so before creating humankind. However, The Almighty allowed Satan limited power on earth in order to accomplish His master plan in which man would have to overcome the devil's influence. If humans are to be changed into righteous spirit beings who will live and rule with God in His Kingdom, the Eternal requires that we must overcome human nature, the pulls of this world, and this wicked spirit who broadcasts anger, hostility, and resentment (Rom. 12:21). After God has fulfilled His purpose, He will destroy the devil and his influence will be eliminated forever. The prophet Isaiah confirmed this by recording God's promise to Satan:

Yet you shall be brought down to sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit (Isaiah 14:15).

Sheol is a Hebrew term meaning a place of the dead or the grave (*Strong's*, H7585). In other words, Satan will die! The Scriptures repeatedly tell us that his day of reckoning will come. Though his life will be preserved during the coming millennium (Rev. 20:2), he will ultimately be destroyed in God's massive "vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). For this reason, the devils deeply fear what their future holds.

Why Wicked Spirits Tremble

The half-brother of Christ wrote an epistle in which he spoke of an emotion that is common to wicked spirits. In the second chapter of his book, James stated:

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! (James. 2:19).

The demons “tremble” because of God, but why? What is there to fear? One man claims that they are terrified because they will be forced to watch their wicked exploits be destroyed in the lake of fire. However, from the perspective of demons this would be more of a triumph rather than a punishment. Why would demons be afraid of seeing men, women, and the earth destroyed when their desire is to destroy humanity? The Apostle Peter left no doubt that this is their desire when he wrote:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

The ultimate desire of Satan and the demons is to destroy humanity. Christ said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). The thought of watching wicked people burn up does not frighten evil spirits. In fact, they would enjoy it.

It must be understood that the universe and mankind were created as physical objects with limited capabilities for a reason. God was not caught off guard when Lucifer made the decision to sin. It was not a lack of foresight that allowed angels to transgress any more than it was a mistake for Christ to choose Judas Iscariot as one of the twelve. It was God’s plan to give the angels freewill; understanding that eventually some would turn and become the spiritual force humanity would be required to overcome. This was God’s design to ensure that He could separate those who love righteousness from those who prefer evil.

Having a mind far superior to ours, the lake of fire was not an afterthought. It has always been the Creator’s plan to eliminate the physical dimension along with wicked men and evil spirits prior to the creation of the glorious new heavens and earth (Isa. 65:17; 2Pet. 3:13). Therefore, when the devil is released after the thousand years, the earth will no longer be in a perverted condition. It will have been restored to God’s intended state during the millennium (Acts 3:21). Though Satan will be released and allowed to gather the godless in an attack against Jerusalem, he will be defeated and those

rebellious individuals will be destroyed by fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:8-9; Eze. 38:18-23).

The devils will not be thrown into the lake of fire just to see their wicked works burned up. First, they will see a restoration of all they previously corrupted. Then, they will witness the end of the entire physical dimension and with it, wicked men. Finally, they will experience their own extinction. It is their personal destruction that the demons fear.

Demons Will Be Destroyed

During a visit to the synagogue in Capernaum, Christ encountered a man possessed by unclean spirits. A dialogue between these two is recorded in both the gospels of Mark and Luke. There, the fate of demons becomes clear. In fact, these wicked spirits admit that this is their end as they tell Christ:

Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God! (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34).

In both gospels, the demons use the term “destroy” when referring to their fate. This word is the same expression used in Matthew 10:28 where Christ says that God can “destroy” both the spirit and the flesh. The word is *apollumi* in the Greek meaning:

To *destroy* fully (reflexively to *perish*, or *lose*), literally or figuratively: - destroy, die, lose, mar, perish (*Strong's*, G622).

The term “destroy” can be a confusing study for many individuals. For example, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* is generally considered a reliable resource for the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words. Yet, Vine made a grave error in explaining the meaning of this word. He wrote, in an ambiguous way, that the word is:

Apollumi (G622), a strengthened form of ollumi, signifies “to destroy utterly”; in middle voice, “to perish” (p. 164).

However, he continues to say that “The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of wellbeing” (ibid). Continuing his explanation, Vine revealed his true motive for expressing this view, stating “...the loss of well-being in the case of the unsaved hereafter” (ibid).

W. E. Vine clearly viewed the meaning of this word through the lens of his personal belief that both demons and wicked men are immortal and will only lose their wellbeing by burning for eternity in hell. Ironically, as he continued, he presents three references containing this word which literally contradict this false assumption.

The first is Matthew 10:28 stating that we are to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Second, Vine cites Luke 13:3 where Christ warns that except you repent, you shall all perish. Finally, Vine refers to John 3:16 which states that whoever believes in Him will not perish. Notice that none of Vine's references use the word to mean a loss of wellbeing. Why? It is because his statement regarding “the loss of well-being” was not a translation, but an interpretation based on the Catholic and Protestant belief that human beings have an immortal soul capable of burning for eternity in hell fire.

When Vine completed his work, most believed the wicked would never die, but only suffer loss of wellbeing by eternal torment. So instead of simply providing the definition of the word *apollumi*, Vine included his own interpretation based on a false Catholic doctrine.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament presents an honest view of the word “destroy.” Noted scholar Spiros Zodhiates described the literal meaning as:

The force of *apó* here is away or wholly; therefore, the verb is stronger than the simple *óllumi*. To destroy, mid. be destroyed, perish (p. 230).

When it comes to these two specific verses, this scholar addressed the word “destroy” stating that it is:

Spoken of **eternal death**, i.e., future punishment, exclusion from the Messiah's kingdom. In this sense it has the same meaning as *apothnesko* 599, to die (Matt. 10:28;

Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; 9:56). This eternal death is called the second death (Rev. 20:14) [ibid].

This further clarifies the truth. In Mark 1 and Luke 4, the fallen angels admit that they know their fate is exclusion from God's eternal Kingdom and that it is by reason of death. They recognize that God can do this, and the Eternal promises that He will perform it. In the Almighty's final judgment, He will destroy all the wicked.

Reserved for Judgment

When we commit ourselves to a sincere study of the Bible, we find that God's Word not only foretells the fate of demons, but also when, and how, this will occur. The Apostle Peter refers to their destiny as divine "judgment" stating:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment (2 Peter 2:4).

As we examine Peter's inspired words, we can see that the "judgment" devils face is not chains of darkness. This is clear by the words used to explain that demons are currently in chains "reserved" for their day of reckoning. Peter refers to God executing their sentence. He confirmed this when speaking of the same fate reserved for wicked humans, stating:

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:9).

If unjust humans face termination for their unrepentant sin (Rom. 6:23), what is Satan's fate? If God is NOT a respecter of persons as the Bible claims (Acts 10:34), and the angels that sinned are "reserved unto judgment," what kind of sentence do they face? The Scriptures are not ambiguous when it comes to answering this question. Jude is another New Testament author that made this clear when speaking of Satan's fate and wrote:0

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 6-7).

The chains mentioned by Jude are described as being everlasting. This has led some to believe that demons are restrained for eternity. However, this cannot be the case.

First, demons that are currently bound will not remain in the bottomless pit for eternity. God tells us that they shall be released during the trumpet plagues (Rev. 9:1-3). After a short time of tormenting people on the earth, they will again be detained for 1000 years (Rev. 20:2-3). Therefore, these spiritual chains cannot be a reference to their final end.

Second, Jude clearly states that these wicked angels are reserved “for the judgment of the great day.” This refers to a particular time that they are unable to avoid (Rev. 20:11). The everlasting chains are therefore symbolic relating the fact that God has bound demons, but they are tied to a sentence—one of everlasting death.

Thus, the Apostle Peter and Jude wrote that Satan and his demons have been judged, but the finality of their sentence has not yet been carried out. Still, they are bound to it. What makes this conclusion unmistakable is that Jude actually told us what their end will be. It is “the vengeance of eternal fire.” This does not mean it is a fire that burns forever. It means there is no return from its flames. It is a judgment with no chance for pardon. The Savior also spoke of this final verdict for both wicked men and angels when He stated:

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels’ (Matthew 25:41).

These divine words tell us that the lake of fire will be prepared for the devil and his angels. This means that it is designed to destroy

them. It will also vaporize everything evil and corrupt. If these future flames were unable to eliminate them, God would not tell us that this is their purpose. Instead, He uses specific words to describe the devil and his angels' fate.

For example, the word “cursed” in the verse above is *kataraoimai* in the Greek meaning “to execrate; by analogy to doom” (*Strong's*, G2672). Therefore, Christ boldly declared that the devil and his angels are doomed!

In addition, the term “everlasting” has led some to believe that this fire lasts forever. Yet, *Strong's* explains that the word is *aiōnios* and its base is *aion* meaning an “age” (G166, G165). This likely means that the is age lasting. In other words, the fire burns until the end of that particular age.

As an example, consider that God told Judah He would send a fire to Jerusalem that “shall not be quenched” (Jer. 17:27). However, Jerusalem is not still burning today. Also, Jude wrote that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered vengeance of eternal fire, and yet those ancient cities are not still ablaze. These terms that God used are simply expressions describing the finality in His judgment. They do not mean unending burning torment, or dark imprisonment. What is everlasting about this fire is its effect on those who are cast into it. It will be the second death for wicked humans, but the first and final death for wicked angels.

Consider the mountain of evidence that has been presented so far. The Scriptures make it clear that God is sovereign over His entire physical and spiritual creation, and what we can know of Him is clearly seen in His creation. Therefore, because man can destroy what He makes, the Almighty can destroy whatever He creates. Christ was a great spirit being and died. The entire angelic host depends on God to sustain their lives. The angels praise God because He lives forever. This means that angelic beings do not have the same self-sustaining life. Angels are incorruptible and do not decay, but they are not immortal.

The wages of sin are death, and the demons sinned. Christ said that the spirit in man can be destroyed. Moses and Paul wrote that Satan's head will be crushed. Prophecies of Ezekiel and Isaiah declare that Satan will be destroyed. The Scriptures state that wicked angels are reserved for the judgment of eternal fire—a death from

which there is no return. Christ said that the lake of fire is actually created for the devil and his angels. It is obvious their end is annihilation!

All these biblical truths point to one conclusion. Satan's fate is destruction. Despite the enormous amount of evidence, some might continue to hold the view that the devil will only be imprisoned for eternity. This may be the result of misunderstanding some verses, or purposefully twisting others. Therefore, serious students of the Bible should continue reading in order to fully understand these errors.

Misunderstood Verses

The Power of Death

Some determined to propagate the belief that Satan and his demons cannot be destroyed, but will merely be imprisoned, misinterpret a verse in the second chapter of Hebrews where the author wrote:

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14).

Before we discuss the meaning of these verses, we should consider two questions. First, do the words tell us that Satan is immortal? Second, do they say that the devil will be incarcerated for eternity? The answer to both questions is no. So, what is God telling us with these words?

Because the verses refer to the devil's "power," some assert that it is only Satan's ability to influence others that will become inoperable. The first and most obvious reason such an assumption is not accurate comes from the words God inspired. They state that Christ "might destroy him." This does not say that He will simply take away the devil's power, but that the Messiah will literally destroy the devil.

Examining the language brings to light another truth. The translators correctly chose a past tense verb to further indicate that

this “power” possessed by Satan has already been conquered. It says that the devil “had the power of death.” This point is made by indicating exactly how the devil’s power was rendered inoperable. It was by Christ through His death.

Because Satan is the author of sin, and the wages of sin is death, Satan is the one who introduced the possibility of unredeemable death to mankind (Gen. 2:17). As John wrote, Satan “was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). However, Christ’s act of becoming flesh and dying in our stead has rendered the devil’s ability to bring enduring death to believers useless. Christ’s sacrifice made forgiveness and the gift of eternal life possible. By His supreme selfless act, He rescued us from the death penalty. Other verses confirm this meaning. As the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy saying:

Our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

What has led some astray is two possible definitions for the word “destroy.” While both are applicable to Hebrews 2:14, neither can rightly be used to say that the devil is immortal or that he will simply be imprisoned for eternity. The Greek word for “destroy” is *katargeo* meaning:

To *be (render) entirely idle (useless)*, literally or figuratively: - abolish, cease, cumber, deliver, destroy, do away, become (make) of no (none, without) effect, fail, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away (down), vanish away, make void (*Strong’s, G2673*).

Because this word can be translated as *entirely idle* some believe Satan’s fate is not death, but simply to be rendered powerless. However, these verses are not speaking of the devil’s power to deceive, but of what Christ did for us regarding the devil’s ability to cause death.

In addition, while one definition of the word “destroy” can be “idle,” that is NOT its intended meaning when speaking of Satan’s fate. The translators chose “destroy” because that is exactly what the Author of holy writ intended.

Not one single verse in the entire Bible says that devils are immortal, that they will live forever, or that they will be bound for eternity in a powerless state. Therefore, the King James translators chose the correct translation of *katargeo*. As *Strong's* clearly states, the word can also mean “abolish, cease, destroy, do away, vanish away, make void.” This word truly describes Satan’s end. He will be abolished, cease to exist, and vanish away! Consider a few examples of the numerous verses indicating that *katargeo* was appropriately translated:

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with (destroyed), that we should no longer be slaves of sin (Romans 6:6).

Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them (1 Corinthians 6:13).

Every Christian must remember this fact. God is able to do whatever He pleases. He is the Almighty and will perform all that He has planned (Isa. 46:10). He has the power to destroy anything that He has created, and He does not intend for despicable spirit beings to live forever. Eternal life is a gift that He gives only to those who wholeheartedly desire to renounce sin and live His way (Rom. 6:23). Conversely, the Scriptures tell us that God’s plan is to abolish all that is evil.

Destruction of the wicked will be carried out. At that time, demons will experience their cataclysmic end. They will suffer the vengeance of the lake of fire—a death sentence from which there is no return.

Immortality and Marriage

Some believe that Christ’s words in Luke 20:36 prove that Satan and the fallen angels are immortal. Their preconception leads

them to assume that the entire realm of angels, including Satan and the demons, are equal to the resurrected saints who will be given immortality. They mistakenly conclude that anything made of spirit can never be destroyed. Yet this is not what the Savior said or what He meant. Speaking about the resurrected saints to a group of Sadducees who were trying to discredit His teaching, Christ said:

But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:35-36).

Taking this verse out of its proper context, some conclude that, since the saints will be given eternal life, all spirit beings must be immortal. However, close examination of the entire conversation reveals five points proving that Christ's words never meant Satan and his demons are unable to die.

Point 1: In any discussion of a disputed Biblical verse, the context is the single most important factor in determining the intended meaning. This is a basic rule of study. In this case, the context is the Sadducee's question regarding levirate marriage and the resurrection—not the fate of the wicked angels!

In this type of wedlock, the Old Covenant commanded that when a man died childless the next younger brother was to marry the widow and father her children. This insured that she would have descendants to carry on the family name and inherit the estate (Deu. 25:5-10).

The Sadducees, who did not believe in an afterlife, tried to discredit Christ's teaching regarding the resurrection using a scenario based on this statute. Consider the actual subject matter of the conversation as recorded by Luke:

Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to *Him* and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us *that* if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as

wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife” (Luke 20:27-33).

These Sadducees thought they had trapped the Savior in an unwinnable argument. However, Christ exposed their lack of Scriptural knowledge and answered them with a statement regarding levirate marriage. He explained that this type of relationship did not apply to those in the resurrection, just as it did not apply to the angels:

Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Luke 20:34-36).

As we can see, the subject was never if the angels are immortal or not, nor was it the fate of demons. The question was regarding how levirate marriage would apply in a resurrection. Christ’s response was that this statute will not apply because those who are raised as righteous spirit beings will not marry one another, and they will not be subject to the physical degeneration that causes death.

Point 2: Christ did not give an answer explaining every detail regarding the similarity or difference between angels and the resurrected saints. His response was not meant to apply to anything other than the context of the question posed by the Sadducees. This fact is further clarified by the correct translation of a particular word Christ used.

He did not say the saints will be literally “equal” to angels in every way. The term He used was *isos* which means “through the idea of seeming; similar” (*Strong’s*, G2470). Therefore, the Lord did NOT imply that resurrected saints would be identical to the angels. In fact, the saints will be superior in power, and

authority. Those in the first resurrection will ultimately judge angels (1Cor. 6:3; Heb. 2:5).

In addition, Christians are expected to understand that the entire resurrected Church will *collectively* become the bride of Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb (John 3:29; Rev. 19:7-9). This level of relationship will apply to a chosen few, but never to angels. Christ's answer only conveyed that the resurrected saints will not marry one another, and they will no longer be composed of corruptible, mortal flesh. Thus, the physical issues requiring levirate marriage will not apply.

However, the saints will differ from angels in another important way. They will be given immortality! Not one verse in the bible indicates that angels have self-sustaining life and are eternal. Ignoring the meaning of Christ's answer and attaching such meaning to the verses in Luke 20 is adding to the Word of God and is a clear violation of Scripture (Deu. 4:2).

Point 3: Consider the following question. Would the Savior ever intend to say that Satan and demons are equal to the resurrected saints when the opposite is actually true? To imagine that they are alike is ludicrous! For this reason, Christ did not include demons in His answer to the Sadducees. He said nothing of the second death, the lake of fire, or the fate of the wicked.

The comparison was only between Christians born into God's Kingdom and faithful, holy angels who reside in heaven. The gospel writers Matthew and Mark made this clear in their respective records of this same dialogue when they stated:

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven (Matthew 22:30).

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven (Mark 12:25).

Christ clearly made a comparison between the chosen saints and the righteous angels. Like them, the saints will enjoy the liberty of inhabiting heaven. They are in no way similar to those wicked angels restrained to earth. Neither was the author speaking of the

demons that will be locked in the bottomless pit and later cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:3; Mat. 25:41).

Point 4: Consider that Luke would never have recorded these words if he thought that wicked spirits cannot be destroyed. After all, it was Luke who recorded a demon to say:

Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? (Luke 4:34).

From this companion verse, we see that even the demons cannot deny their fate. Additionally, Luke would not contradict himself or Christ. Wicked angels can, and will, be destroyed.

(Point 5). A final point comes from the word that Luke used for “die.” As a physician, he preferred the unique term *apothnesko*. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament* defines this word as:

To die. Literally, to die off, but used with the simple meaning of to die... To die a natural death, applied to both men and animals (Zodhiates, p. 224).

This is further evidence that Christ was not saying that the devil and his demons are immortal. Christ meant that those in the first resurrection will no longer be subject to sickness, age, disease, and fatal accidents. His response was regarding levirate marriage which only applied to humankind. Once the context is considered, it becomes clear that His words do NOT discuss whether or not demons are immortal.

Some Questions Answered

What Does the Day of Atonement Picture?

The Day of Atonement reflects a vitally important aspect of God’s plan for mankind. During this holy day the high priest placed his hands on the head of the goat called *azazel* meaning “goat of departure” (*Strong’s*, H5799). He would then “confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and

shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man” (Lev. 16:21). Banished, the animal would be cut off from the people.

The scapegoat represents the devil who is the author of sin (John 8:44). The symbolism in this acted oracle portrays the time when God will put the sins of humanity on Satan and confine him to the bottomless pit. In that dark prison, he will be cut off from all people for 1000 years. John foresaw this in a prophetic revelation:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20:1-3).

Some mistake the meaning of the Day of Atonement believing that it portrays Satan’s final judgment, but this holy day and these verses in Revelation do not speak of his end. In fact, the Day of Atonement occurs immediately prior to the Feast of Tabernacles, and this sequence of holy days was by divine design. They serve as a prophetic pattern of major events in God’s plan (Col. 2:16-17). The Feast of Tabernacles portrays the time following the imprisonment of the devil. It foreshadows the return of Christ, setting up His Kingdom on earth, and the time when He will tabernacle with humankind.

After the millennial rule of Christ, a second resurrection will give life to the rest of the dead (Rev. 20:4-5). Satan will be released from his prison and allowed to deceive the nations again. By broadcasting thoughts of dissatisfaction, hatred, and greed, he will influence many to make war against Christ’s throne (Rev. 20:7-10). The Savior will utterly crush this rebellion and the devil will NOT be placed into his previous prison pictured by the Day of Atonement. Instead, he will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet were thrown (Rev. 20:10). This is where he will remain until the end of that age.

To think that the Day of Atonement foreshadows Satan’s fate is an enormous error. Instead, it foreshadows Satan’s imprisonment

during the millennial rule of Christ where he will be cut off from all people on earth. His ultimate destiny is represented by the physical fire in which he is cast after the second resurrection. It is this fire that actually foreshadows his fate when he will be destroyed in a supernatural inferno (Mat. 25:41).

Why a Physical Creation?

If spirit can be destroyed, why did God create a physical universe? If God can destroy spirit, why didn't He work out His plan in the spiritual dimension?

First, consider the power of spirit beings. They have abilities far more potent than those possessed by physical humans. Even given his limited strength and intellect, the devastation man has inflicted on the earth and its inhabitants are shocking. To work out a plan of salvation by giving mankind the power of spirit would be destructive and reckless. Had the Creator made humans with the power of angels, one shudders to think of the havoc they would have inflicted. Therefore, God made humans mortal so they would be limited in their abilities.

On another level, the spirit realm is invisible to man (Col. 1:16). This is an important part of God's strategy, and it reveals great insight on His part. The Almighty desires that each person willingly choose to obey Him. He wants those who will be His sons and daughters to consider the two ways of life and choose His way because they want to, not because God is visibly ruling over them causing them to feel obligated to obey. This is exactly why He placed Adam and Eve in the garden, gave them two trees to choose from, and then took a walk.

Moreover, if man were already spirit, he obviously would have far less incentive to attain the Kingdom of God in the spirit world. The knowledge that a much more fulfilling life awaits us is a great motive to achieve that life.

Thus, even though God can destroy spirit, these are some of the reasons He chose not to create man as a part of the spirit realm. Instead, the Creator designed an entirely different dimension in which humankind is able to work out salvation (Php. 2:12).

What is God's Purpose for Allowing the Devil to Exist?

God did not create the devil. God created a righteous angel known as Lucifer that was beautiful and talented. The devil is what Lucifer became due to his own pride and ego. His evil is enormous, widespread, and it has affected every human being. This has caused many to wonder why God allows Satan to continue to live and corrupt mankind?

The answer to this question was provided by King Solomon who noted a vital and eternal truth. "To everything *there is* a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecc. 3:1). God has a time and purpose for Satan.

When the earth was made the angels shouted for joy knowing they were designed to inhabit it (Job 38:7). When God began His plan for mankind the earth had existed for untold eons inhabited by angelic beings (Jude 6). However, before He created earth, God knew he would make man and that humans would require a sacrificial redeemer (Rev. 13:8). At some point the angels understood they were to become servants to the human heirs of salvation who had yet to be formed (1Cor. 6:3; Heb. 1:14). Still, God waited before creating man, and did so only after an angelic war left the earth in ruins (Gen. 1:2).

What was God waiting for? Is it possible He was waiting for one of the angels to turn? He certainly did not create an evil angel (Jam. 1:13), but He knew that if he gave the angels free will, and waited long enough, one of them would turn.

Understand that the Eternal was mindful of Lucifer's growing pride. He was not surprised when Lucifer began to induce hostility in the minds of other angels. The angelic rebellion did not catch God off guard. He knew what was happening, yet He did not take immediate action. God allowed Lucifer to initiate war on heaven (Isa. 14:13-14).

The war devastated the planet as it became covered in darkness (Gen. 1:2). Then, instead of imprisoning or destroying Satan and the wicked angels, God cast the devil back to the earth. He imprisoned some of the demons (2Pet. 2:4), and recreated the earth by filling it with beautiful plants, majestic animals, and finally humankind (Gen. 1:3-28; 2:18-23).

After creating man and woman, and instructing them how they were to live, God did what might seem counter-productive. He allowed Satan access to Eden leaving the first humans exposed to the devil's temptation (Gen. 3:8). Although God was well aware of what was happening, He did not intervene to prevent it.

This too was part of His plan. He wanted man to experience the influence of this powerful spirit being. Therefore, the Almighty allowed Satan to deceive Eve for His own purpose, and we see this pattern throughout the Scriptures. God used wicked angels to plague Egypt (Psa. 78:43-49). He used the devil to bring Job to his senses (Job 2:6-7). He allowed Satan to influence Judas to betray the Savior so that He would be crucified (Luke 22:3). Paul explained how God allowed Satan to afflict him to keep him humble (2Cor. 12:7). God also allows wicked spirits to motivate members in His Church to repent (1Cor. 5:5). Even during the second resurrection, following the 1000-year reign of Christ, the devil will be released to tempt those who have only known God's way. They too must overcome evil. By this God will provide everyone an opportunity to prove whether they will follow His way or not. Though it is not God who tempts humans with evil, He allows the wiles of the devil in order to fulfill His plan.

This shows that it has always been God's intention that humankind should overcome the evil influence of a devil (1John 2:13-14). It is our Creator's desire that man should experience the consequences of pride, jealousy, lust, greed, and hostility. He deemed it essential for man to experience the effects of the devil's way and reject him before humanity can be changed into spirit beings and given even greater power than angels (1John 3:2).

God's plan for man is similar to the way He worked with the angels. The Almighty allowed Lucifer to influence them so that each could make their own choice regarding which way to live. In like manner, throughout the age of mankind, God allowed Satan certain freedoms so our Creator will know those who will voluntarily be faithful to His way and who will not.

When the final judgment does take place, those who follow God will be given eternal life. Those who do not will be cast into an enormous lake of fire along with Satan and his demons (Mat. 25:41;

Rev. 20:15). The destruction of the wicked in these flames will be a final witness of the consequence of sin (Rom. 6:23)!

Why Bind Wicked Angels in Tartaroo?

If Satan's fate is death, why are wicked spirits imprisoned in *tartaroo* (2Pet. 2:4)? Could this be evidence that God cannot destroy them, and is forced to simply lock them away?

It should first be noted that some demons roam the earth (Mat. 8:29; Mark 1:24; Acts 19:15), while others are awaiting judgment in prison (Jude 6). Although the Bible does not tell us exactly why some demons are free and others are not, it is possible to speculate based on other Biblical statements.

We understand that Satan convinced one third of all the angels to reject God and attack His throne (Rev. 12:4). It would appear this is an enormous number. Understanding that not all angels are alike, some of these beings are more powerful than others. Therefore, it's possible that those who were imprisoned represent the worst of those who rebelled. God may have restrained them as a means of protecting mankind. He does not give us more than we can bear (1Cor. 10:13). If the more vile and powerful demons had been allowed access to man, the world may have been ravaged with far more wars, destruction, disease, and suffering. Left unchecked, they would have destroyed humankind in short order. Therefore, this may be why God detained the worst of them.

Still, these detainees will not be confined forever. God will release them, but only temporarily. He is going to use them during the trumpet plagues to punish mankind for their rejection of His way, just as He used demons to punish Egypt (Psa. 78:49). Even though the Almighty will place limits on the injury they can inflict, they will exact enormous pain. As the Apostle John wrote:

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded

not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them (Revelation 9:1-6).

These locusts are the imprisoned demons whose number is so great that they look like smoke coming out of the pit. They will be allowed to torment humans, but not to kill them. So great is the suffering that millions will wish they were dead.

God likely decided to detain these deranged demons to protect mankind from the venom of their anger until the end when God will use them to punish an out of control and rebellious world. One thing is certain; the Scriptures never even remotely hint that they have been imprisoned because God is unable to destroy them.

Does Binding Satan Picture His Fate?

Satan's imprisonment during the millennium does not picture his fate. God will bind him so that mankind, who has only lived in a world influenced by the devil, can finally see what life is like without Satan's influence. Man will experience the results of God's approach. Each person will be able to compare the two ways of life and to see the benefits of walking in the way of righteousness. That is the purpose of Satan's confinement.

After 1,000 years have passed, a second resurrection will occur (Rev. 20:5). Billions of people who had never known the truth of God will be raised to experience a society and culture administered by God. Satan will then be released and allowed to deceive the nations once again. However, his freedom will continue to serve God's purpose. Those who never knew the truth will learn the way of God and then be tempted by Satan. They will be given the choice to live either God's way or the way of the devil—the same choice God's disciples are being called upon to make today.

This is God's reason for keeping Satan alive during the millennium. It is not because He is unable to destroy him, nor does

the devil's imprisonment picture his fate. It is simply because God is not through with him yet.

What are Wandering Stars?

When the Scriptures speak prophetically, stars represent angels (Rev. 1:20). However, some have been misled to assume that the “wandering stars” in Jude 13 are angels. This is not the case. What must be understood is that biblical symbols used in prophecy do not apply to parables or allegories.

For example, Christ relates a parable in which He says, “The Kingdom is like leaven” (Mat. 13:33). Although leaven is used as a symbol of pride and sin, this does not mean that the Kingdom is full of pride and sin. This analogy doesn't apply to every use of leaven in the Bible. Christ was relating that the Kingdom will spread until it fills the earth just as leavened bread expands to fill its pan.

The passage in Jude regarding wandering stars is not prophetic, but rather an indictment of false teachers and a warning to the Church during the first century. Although Jude did address the fate of the fallen angels in earlier verses, in this case, he turned his attention to *human* heretics. Consider the context of his words:

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 10-13).

Jude used a series of allegories to describe false teachers who vilified the things of God. In fact, every comment he made in this passage is describing human heretics. He stated that they talked about what they knew “naturally,” not supernaturally. They were “brute beasts” who were carnally minded. Going “the way of Cain”

and “Balaam,” they coveted recognition and financial gain—both of which are human desires. These false Christians participated in the “love feasts” yet they were blemishes among the congregation. They were like dark clouds that promise refreshing rain, but hold no water. These human teachers were carried about by winds of false doctrine. They were like the fig tree that Christ condemned for not bearing fruit (Mat. 21:19).

Jude says that, by exalting themselves, they would perish like Korah. They are “twice dead” meaning they will suffer the second death unlike the wicked angels who will experience their first and only death. They would be “pulled up by the roots” because their convictions do not run deep, and nothing of them will be left to sprout new growth. They acted like “raging waves” that crash against the water, but their works will foam up and then vanish. In other words, they might have been passionate and animated in their boisterous, false teaching, but their clamor would end in the useless froth of fallacy. Notice that the context of these statements is never about angels.

As Jude concluded, he stated that they were like “wandering stars.” What exactly does this allegory mean? It certainly does not mean that they were angels. Saying they were “wandering” is another reference to the lack of stability in their teachings and beliefs. Using the expression of “stars,” Jude referred to the fact that they cannot be depended upon to direct people to the right way.

During the apostle’s time, ships navigated using the stars because they could always depend on their position in the night sky. In stark contrast, these individuals could not be trusted to safely navigate a spiritual course. They might have appeared luminous, but if one were to follow them, they would find themselves drifting in spiritual darkness (2Cor. 11:13-15). As Edwin Blum explained:

Now with burning eloquence, Jude piles figure upon figure (six of them in all) to describe the errorists: the final metaphor (asters planetai, wandering star) is astronomical. The ancients called meteors, shooting stars, comets, or planets; but planets is the most likely meaning. An unpredictable star would provide no guidance for navigation, so false teachers are useless and untrustworthy. Their doom is the eternal darkness that is

reserved for them (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 12, p. 393).

Interestingly, Peter used nearly the same language in describing heretical teachers. Notice his words:

But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, *and* will receive the wages of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. *They are* spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. *They have* a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (2 Peter 2:12-17).

These verses confirm the words of Jude. It is clear that neither of these apostles were speaking about angels in the respective verses. They were referring to human heretics who had come among God's people with personal agendas.

As a final witness to this truth, notice how the context of Jude's words does not change. They continue to speak of human false teachers, saying.

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit (Jude 17-19).

Though he wrote about men in these Scriptures, Jude did refer directly to the fate of fallen angels in earlier verses. He spoke of them understanding that they are not reserved for eternal incarceration, but for a judgment similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah—a vengeance of fire from which they will not return (Jude 7).

What is the Blackness of Darkness Forever?

Although Jude's metaphor does not refer to demons, some stubbornly hold to a belief that wandering stars are angels and their fate is the "blackness of darkness forever." Despite the lack of any biblical evidence, they believe this darkness is a literal place whose location is unknown, but where wicked angels will be imprisoned forever. This is clearly an erroneous assumption.

Jude indicated that these wandering stars are false teachers who are "twice dead" (Jude 12). Twice dead means they are reserved for the second death which is a state of being, not a location (Rev. 20:14). When we die, life fades to black—to nothingness. This is the final end of the wicked. Darkness forever simply means death.

The Apostle Peter confirmed this truth when he wrote of similar heretics. He stated:

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (2 Peter 2:17).

As a second witness to this truth, Job was suffering so much at one point that he wished to die. Remarking that his days were only a few on the earth, he asked God to bring them to an end. He wanted relief from his misery. His words provide insight into what the Scriptures mean when they speak of darkness forever. As the Patriarch stated:

Are not my days few? Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort, before I go *to the place from which* I shall not return, To the land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land as dark as darkness *itself*, as the shadow of death, without any order, *where* even the light *is* like darkness (Job 10:20-22).

Neither Jude nor Peter spoke of demons being indestructible and destined to be imprisoned in darkness for eternity. These inspired men of God were referring to human beings who perverted the true gospel, and whose fate is the blackness of the second death. Those claiming that Jude 13 is speaking of Satan and the demons have NO biblical evidence to support their claim. Because of this, what can they turn to in an attempt to validate their belief?

The Book of Enoch

Some have claimed that the *Book of Enoch* is a credible source of information in regards to ancient history and divine revelation. However, the book, or books, attributed to the great grandfather of Noah is considered to be a part of the apocrypha. This means that the writings claim to be divinely revealed, but are excluded from the Canon of Scripture. The reason for exclusion is because the *Book of Enoch* consists of spurious writings that are falsely attributed to a biblical character. It is considered by all credible scholars to be a pseudepigraphal work written between 200 BC and 200 AD. When we compare many of the details found in the *Book of Enoch* to the Bible, we find that the book repeatedly contradicts the Scriptures.

For example, some of the months in the *Book of Enoch* are said to have 29 days and one has 28. It is also said that a year is 364 days (*The Book of Enoch*, 78:9; 82:6). This does not match the months described in the first chapters of Genesis. According to the trustworthy account, the beginning and ending of the flood was exactly 150 days. This time-frame began on the 17th of the second month and ended on the 17th of the seventh month (Gen. 7:11; 8:2-4). The reckoning indicates that, during Enoch and Noah's time, each year was exactly 360 days long. The only conclusion is that the sun and moon were in perfect sync at that time.

For reasons not made known to us in the Scriptures, the lunisolar reckoning changed at some point in time. The change necessitated a different calendar. It was not until the 8th century B.C. that the Roman King Numa Pompilius added a month consisting of 28 days to the calendar in an attempt to reconcile the timing of seasons. Further, it was not until 45 B.C. that the astronomer Sosigenes convinced Julius Caesar to change the number of days in

the year to 365 and to add a single day every fourth year to create what we know as a leap year. If the *Book of Enoch* was written by Noah's great grandfather, he would have used the same 30-day months as indicated in Genesis 7-8.

Another indicator of the fallacy of the *Book of Enoch* is the judgment of demons. The spurious writings state:

And I saw a deep abyss, with columns of heavenly fire, and among them I saw columns of fire fall, which were beyond measure alike towards the height and towards the depth... I saw there seven stars like great burning mountains, and to me, when I inquired regarding them, the angel said: 'This place is the end of heaven and earth: this has become a prison for the stars and the host of heaven. And the stars which roll over the fire are they which have transgressed the commandment of the Lord in the beginning of their rising, because they did not come forth at their appointed times. And He was wroth with them, and bound them till the time when their guilt should be consummated (even) for ten thousand years (18:11-16).

And from thence I went to another place, which was still more horrible than the former, and I saw a horrible thing: a great fire there which burnt and blazed, and the place was cleft as far as the abyss, being full of great descending columns of fire... Then Uriel answered me, one of the holy angels who was with me, and said unto me... 'This place is the prison of the angels, and here they will be imprisoned for ever' (22:5-10).

These verses contain several teachings that are contrary to what the Bible teaches. First, they state that there are two separate fires that will imprison angels. The Bible speaks of a single fire that will consume anything it touches. Second, they claim that many demons will be cleansed of their sin after 10,000 years. Nothing like that is said anywhere in the Bible. Third, they declare the existence of a "holy angel" called Uriel that led Enoch around heaven. The only holy angels named in the Bible are Michael & Gabriel, and Christ said that "No one has ascended to heaven" except for the "Son of Man" (John 3:13).

Some have actually cited the spurious *Book of Enoch* which, paradoxically, states that a supernatural prison for demons is filled with the light of massive fires—not blackness of darkness. That fanciful text actually sounds like the false Catholic and Protestant concept of hell.

It is important to understand that pseudepigraphs are composed of extra-biblical, mystical, religious writings of uncertain origin. They are rejected by the Church of God and most other biblical authorities. In fact, it is believed that they a product of the Qumran community. They simply cannot be trusted as authoritative in any respect. Gabriele Boccaccini wrote an extensive book on this subject titled *Enoch and Qumran Origins* which represents the collaborative efforts of 47 specialists from eleven countries. Boccaccini summarized their conclusion saying:

The contributors demonstrate that the roots of the Qumran community are to be found in the tradition of the Enoch group rather than that of the Jerusalem priesthood... Documents like 1 Enoch, which in Jewish eyes had always remained the bizarre product of marginal sects detached from normative Judaism, appeared now more and more irrelevant also to the many Christian scholars (Jacket, p. 2).

Notice a few additional quotes regarding the books supposedly written by Enoch:

The *Book of Enoch* is a pseudepigraphical work [a work that claims to be by a biblical character] (J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*).

The materials in 1 Enoch range in date from 200 B.C.E. to 50 C.E... Pseudepigrapha is a Greek word meaning “falsely superscribed,” or what we moderns might call writing under a pen name. The classification, “OT Pseudepigrapha,” is a label that scholars have given to these writings (Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, pp. 22-23).

The book we refer to is the Book of Enoch, an ancient composition known from two sets of versions, an Ethiopic one that scholars identify as “1 Enoch,” and a Slavonic version that is identified as “2 Enoch,” and which is also known as *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*. Both versions, of which copied manuscripts have been found mostly in Greek and Latin translations, are based on early sources that enlarged on the short biblical mention that Enoch, the seventh Patriarch after Adam, did not die because, at age 365, “he walked with God”—taken heavenward to join the deity (Zecharia Sitchin, *When Time Began*, p. 127).

Both 1 Enoch and Jubilees are unmistakable products of Hellenistic civilization. A world view so encyclopaedic that it embraced the geography of heaven and earth, astronomy, meteorology, medicine was no part of Jewish tradition - but was familiar to educated Greeks, but attempting to emulate and surpass Greek wisdom, by having an integrating divine plan for destiny, elaborated through an angelic host with which Enoch is in communication through his mystical travels (Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, p. 178).

We may, therefore, with reasonable certainty assign the composition of our text to the period of 1-50 A.D... The author was a Jew who lived in Egypt, probably in Alexandria. He belonged to the Hellenistic Judaism of his day... In questions affecting the origin of the earth, sin, death, etc., he allows himself the most unrestricted freedom and borrows freely from every quarter. Thus, Platonic, Egyptian, and Zend elements are adopted into his system. The result is naturally syncretistic [a combination of different forms of belief] (R. H. Charles, *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, Introduction, p. xxvi).

Religious authorities caution readers against trusting the books of Enoch, and for good reason. Describing this pseudepigraphical work as a journey of “mystical travels” is accurate. The text was written from the perspective that Enoch did not die, but was taken to heaven at age 365 to join God. This alone

should be sufficient evidence to recognize that the book is filled with myth (John 3:13).

These are not the only apostate teachings found in the *Book of Enoch*. It contains esoteric stories comparable to fables of ancient Greek gods. The text claims that:

- Heaven consists of seven levels
- There are spiritual portals all around the earth from which the sun, moon, wind, and rain come into contact with our atmosphere.
- A group of angels had sex with women and animals and are currently incarcerated in a third level of heaven.
- A race of half human, half angels were born, called the “nephilim” or literal giants.
- There exists a “holy angel” named “Uriel” that led Enoch around heaven.
- Enoch was used by God to “reprimand” wicked angels.
- Many demons will be cleansed of their sin after 10,000 years of incarceration.

So outrageous are the stories found in the books of Enoch that some have connected the work to witchcraft and UFOs. In addition to the previous citations, one of the most respected Church of God authors wrote about the books of Enoch, stating:

Some have made claims that the Book of Enoch should be a part of the Bible. But the so-called “Book of Enoch” was not written by the Patriarch Enoch who lived before the Noachian Flood. The book was the product of *first-or second-century B.C.* mystical writers, thousands of years after Enoch had died... Jude did not quote from it. Jude obtained his information *directly* from Jewish tradition, which this Book of Enoch also drew on. Obviously, all such tradition is not correct. But the information Jude used is accurate because God had it incorporated into inspired Scripture. The Book of Enoch, on the other hand, contains such unbiblical myths as angels marrying women, and the “fall” of Adam. The spurious Book of Enoch was *definitely not* regarded as inspired by New

Testament writers (*Do We Have the Complete Bible*, Herbert W. Armstrong, p. 5).

“Spurious” is certainly the correct word to describe the book of Enoch. It was a work erroneously written in the name of a faithful man to foist false doctrines. It is blatantly obvious these books cannot be trusted, and to use such writings to teach doctrines that pretend to be Biblical is nothing short of heresy!

Some think that Jude quoted an actual document written by Enoch in verse 14 of his letter, but such a belief was never taught by the Church of God. As Mr. Armstrong said, there is no genuine book that was ever written by Enoch, and Jude penned words that were handed down through oral tradition. It becomes obvious that we cannot use such a book to justify a pet doctrine. As Paul warned:

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).

Although some might claim the book of Enoch actually complements the Bible, Paul cautioned Christ’s disciples not to be moved by false writings that profess to be written by Church leaders. As we have seen, credible scholars, and God inspired men, have concluded that the book in question was not written by the patriarch Enoch, and it is filled with falsehood. One of its outright lies is the idea that demons will live forever in a fiery prison—a false doctrine promoted by the Catholic Church.

Which Fire Will Destroy the Devil?

Failing to recognize the duality between the physical and the spiritual (Rom. 1:20), some have become confused because of two separate occurrences of a lake of fire. There is a physical lake of fire created on earth by Christ at His return, and a supernatural lake of fire for the final judgment of wicked men and angels. Christ will cast the beast and false prophet into this first blaze prior to His return. As the Apostle John wrote:

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone** (Revelation 19:19-20).

This initial conflagration will be located on the earth. This is where the beast and false prophet will be burned up (Mal. 4). Its flames will continue to burn throughout the Millennium as a reminder to of the fate awaiting those who reject God's way. As Isaiah prophesied:

“And it shall come to pass *that* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD. “And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh” (Isaiah. 66:23-24).

After the beast and false prophet are destroyed, the devil will be detained for 1000 years in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-2). At the end of this period, the rest of the dead will be raised and Satan will be released (Rev. 20:3).

The devil will then go out to deceive the nations once again. He will eventually gather an enormous army to attack the seat of Christ's throne in Jerusalem (Rev. 20:7-9). However, before launching the assault, God will rain fire and brimstone down to destroy them (Eze. 38:22). Satan will then be cast into the same lake of fire where the beast and false prophet were thrown. As Christ explained:

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are (or were cast)*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

After his attack on Jerusalem, the devil will no longer be detained in the bottomless pit. He will now be confined to the same fire where the beast and false prophet were previously destroyed. Satan will not perish in these earthly flames. He will only be imprisoned there for a time. This verse does not reflect a belief that the ultimate fate of the devil is to be restrained in fire for eternity.

The lake of fire on the earth at that time is temporary and only a type of his end. This physical fire foreshadows Satan's fate. His restraint in these flames will be transitory. We know this from the words John used to describe his torment.

The apostle wrote that the devil and his demons will be tormented "forever and ever." This expression was translated from the Greek words *eis aion aion* which does NOT mean a time without end. These words are defined as "from age to age." (*Strong's*, G1519, G165). Ezekiel explained that people will burn the weapons of the dissenting army for seven years after the final rebellion (Eze. 39:1-13). Therefore, some time will pass after Satan's defeat; during which he will be tormented day and night from the end of one age until the beginning of the next in this initial lake of fire.

This is an amazing truth! The *age* of mankind will eventually come to an end. When it does, every trace of wickedness will be burned up in a massive supernatural lake of fire. At that time, a new *age* will begin (2Pet. 3:13).

Thus, Christ told us that the devil would suffer in these flames from the end of one age to the beginning of the next. When the eternal era begins, the devil's anguish will end when God destroys everything that is evil.

This first lake of fire on the earth foreshadows Satan's fate of experiencing the final lake of fire after the great white throne judgment. It will be a time of decision for humankind and the wicked angels. As John continued to write:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave

up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

This final blaze reveals part of the last stage of God's plan for man. The supernatural lake of fire will incinerate all matter, vaporizing the elements with a fervent heat, and the heavens and earth will be no more (2Pet. 3:10). Its flames are also prepared for Satan and his demons. As Christ prophesied:

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:41-42).

God will erase every vestige of the world that was. The record of sin that is so deeply engraved upon the earth will vanish. It is this final conflagration that can destroy both body and spirit (Mat. 10:28). It will be the second and final death for all incorrigible humans, and the first and final death for the devil and his demons. After the entire universe has been vaporized, all will be ready for the next stage in God's plan for mankind—a new beginning—a magnificent new heavens, and the New Jerusalem will descend to the new earth.

Does the Expression "No More Death" Apply to the Devil?

God is working out a plan that will ultimately result in "no more death." This future time will follow the creation of the new heavens and earth; after wicked angels and evil men are destroyed. The Apostle John explained:

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4)

Why will there be no more death? Is it because God cannot destroy wicked spirits? Absolutely not! The truth is that there is coming a time when there will be no more death because the wicked angels, who instigate sin, will have been destroyed!

If the devils were allowed to continue to live in some kind of fiery or black prison for eternity, the suffering and misery of these beings would be unimaginable. God will destroy them and keep His promise that there will be no more pain.

Notice that the rest of the verse explains that “the former things are passed away.” What are those former things? This is explained four verses later:

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).

The time is coming when death will no longer exist because the wicked will have been burned up in the lake of fire. Sin will have been erased and judgment for the wages of sin will have been carried out. Those remaining will be tried and true righteous spirit beings. It must be remembered that Satan is the author of all sin (1John 3:8). With him eliminated, there will be no more sin and as a result, there will be no more death!

Conclusion

Angels are not Immortal

The Bible never states that Satan will live forever, or that demons are indestructible. Not one verse tells us that they will be imprisoned for eternity or that they will burn perpetually. Such a belief is a doctrine of the great whore and her daughters who teach that the wicked do not die, but are immortal and imprisoned in a

place called hell where they will live forever in agony. We must realize that the Bible NEVER states such heretical dogma!

When the resurrection comes, the One who sits at the right hand of God will imbue the faithful saints with the divine trait of immortality. On the other hand, God will destroy all of the wicked. This is what He has promised, and this is exactly what He is going to do:

The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked
He will destroy (Psalm 145:20).

As long as Satan is alive, he will produce evil works. If he and the demons were to be imprisoned forever, it would create a place of continual anger, hatred, and power struggles. God and all the righteous would always be aware of the existence of this eternal state of sin, and God would never assign a being of His creation to an eternity of the torturous misery of solitary confinement. The wicked will simply perish, and there is a single grand motivating force for this punishment.

God is Love

When Christ said that the Father is greater than He, it was not an overstatement. The Father is the embodiment of power and holiness. Those who believe that wicked spirits will be tortured for eternity have apparently forgotten that God is also the personification of mercy and love. The Scriptures testify to this:

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love
(1 John 4:8).

Perhaps the greatest and most appreciated of the traits emanating from God's love is mercy. As the Psalmist wrote:

But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and
gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth
(Psalm 86:15).

God is unique. There is none like Him. He is entirely moral and perfectly just. He is more loving than humans could ever

imagine, and His mercy is continuously revealed in enormous acts of compassion. The phenomenal example of the sacrifice of Christ shows that He is willing to endure unimaginable suffering to alleviate the suffering and death that others deserve.

But make no mistake. The fact that God is love does not mean that wicked men and angels who know better will go unpunished. Such a thought is an absolute absurdity. God hates sin, and He abhors what unrepentant sinners become. He loved Lucifer, but He hates what he became as Satan.

The Almighty is also a being who acts rationally, and it would serve no purpose to cage evil spirits forever. Therefore, those who choose evil will be terminated.

However, this does not change the fact that God's nature will forever be love. In the minds of some people, condemnation cannot coexist with mercy. But God's thoughts are greater than any thoughts of man (Isa. 55:8-9). He can condemn the wicked and do so with mercy. He punishes wicked individuals, yet not to the degree they deserve. For example, when people in ancient Israel committed terrible sins, God did not command them to be tortured for the rest of their lives. Instead, their punishment was a quick and merciful death (Lev. 20:2, 27; 24:14-23; Num. 15:35; Deu. 13:10; 21:21).

As another example, Adolf Hitler was responsible for the murder of millions. Yet God is not going to raise him up, kill him, raise him up, and kill him, over and over again until he has satisfied the number of lives he had taken. Those who believe that Satan's fate is endless, day after day, torture in flames, or eternal isolation in a black prison filled with millions of angry, resentful, hostile, and cruel spirits, simply do not understand the love of God.

The Almighty punishes wicked people to teach them right from wrong and to bring them to repentance. For example, during God's final year of vengeance, his wrath is punctuated by seven terrifying trumpet plagues (Isa. 61:2; Rev. 8-9). These plagues are designed to teach men a lesson and cause them to turn from wickedness. They are not unleashed to sadistically torture humankind (Rev. 3:19).

In like manner, the captivity of Israel and Judah was to teach them a lesson. Every human being will eventually be given a chance to learn these lessons. Then the incorrigible who refuse to accept

correction—those not found written in the Book of Life, will die in the lake of fire. However, even this is not God's desire. He does not desire for any to perish, but that all would come to repentance (2Pet. 3:9). As God tells us:

Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die? (Ezekiel 33:11).

The Eternal does not enjoy violence or death. However, this is the way evil will be eliminated. It will not be boxed up and put on some spiritual shelf in the Kingdom. Iniquity will not be contained; it will be eliminated. God will not force the wicked to live forever in miserable agony. Eradicating all evil is the logical, loving, and merciful path to take.

Eventually, as a mother's pain in delivery is assuaged and replaced with the love of her new born child, even the memory of the suffering caused by sin will fade. Mankind's tears will be wiped away when they are born into God's Kingdom and enjoy the wonderful, fulfilling way of the Eternal (Isa. 26:14). This is God's infinitely wise solution.

The Ultimate Solution

In 1665, the residents of London were dying by the thousands each week. Because of unsanitary conditions, rats and fleas were spreading the deadly bubonic plague from house to house. 80,000 people had died. But on September 5, 1666, the great fire of London broke out and burned uncontrollably for four days. When the fire finally burned itself out, it had consumed 13,200 homes, 87 parish churches, numerous shops and bakeries, and left the vast majority of London's residents homeless. However, after the flames subsided, the people discovered that the rats and fleas were widely killed off and the epidemic was brought to a halt. The fire actually cleaned the city of the impurity that was killing its people.

God repeatedly tells us that the wicked will be cast into an enormous lake of fire where they will be destroyed. When all that is evil has been burned up, He will then dwell with humankind in a

pure environment. All that was former will no longer exist. As Christ revealed to John:

“Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:3-5).

God will cleanse the entire universe with a massive inferno that will engulf the heavens and the earth; purging both the human and spirit realms of all evil. As John wrote:

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (John 3:36).

Finally, the Eternal will create a new heavens and earth. In His new creation there will be no more sorrow or pain (Rev. 21:4). Wicked angels and men will not be suffering for eternity. Only the righteous will continue to live. This is God’s promise, and it is our hope. As Peter declared:

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13).

The new heavens and earth will be a vital part of God’s new creation. It will be a new spiritual universe where only righteousness will dwell. There will not be a pocket of demons tucked away in some distant corner. All the wicked humans and angels will have been extinguished. This will be the ultimate purging of any last trace of evil as God prepares for a wonderful new beginning.

Nowhere in God’s future Kingdom will sin be found in any form. Never again will Christ, the angels, or the resurrected saints

suffer. There will be only love. The kind of love that the Father and Christ share will be enjoyed by everyone.

This is the culmination of God's plan for humanity. This is the hope for the true Disciples of Christ. It is God's supreme expression of love, justice, and mercy. It is the example that we are to follow as we strive to be born into His glorious Kingdom.

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, audio, and video to help people better understand the Bible. Some of the printed material available includes:

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The Eternal Church of God

P.O. Box 80248
Billings, MT 59108
U.S.A

eternalcog.org