

THE PATHFINDER

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GODFIRE

(Part 4)

HELLFIRE

TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB

HELLFIRE

As appalling as the doctrine is, many still believe that God will subject the vast majority of His human creation to an *everlasting, never-ending judgment of hellfire*. One reason for believing this is that they have been taught, namely, that it is one of the major tenets of Christian faith. Some have said that all the oceans and seas of the world would dry up before God would do away with eternal damnation. Another reason is due to assuming it is recorded in the Bible. Of course, it appears to be so in some translations, like the King James Version; but such is not in the original Scriptures.

You would think that this profound belief is humanly impossible to embrace as being true, yet millions over the ages have laid hold to it like it is one of the sacred jewels of God's immutable truth. Some even suggest that if you do not believe this, you are not saved and will be going to that "*eternal furnace of affliction*" that is stoked by the devil himself. Such deception is on an unprecedented scale. The world has never seen the likes.

Notwithstanding, other views prevail throughout the world; but one is almost as exceptional as that of eternal torture for most of humanity, and it begs to be addressed as well. It is the persuasion that there is "*no judgment at all.*" We have one extreme to the other. This sentiment has God being so *passive* and *loving* that there will be no cost to pay for the deeds done in the flesh or for the unbridled lusts and rebellion harbored in the soul. This easy-going God supposedly freed everyone at the cross. He gave everyone an *Executive Pardon*, and the only thing lacking is for them to *realize*

it. By *real-izing* it, their exoneration will become *real*. There are, of course, many things that would do us good if we could and would realize it; but some things are ignorantly taken with more liberty than what is true or good for them. It is like a person realizes that Jesus not only turned water into wine, but He drank it from time to time, enough to be called a wine bibber. Therefore, they booze it up and spend most of their time drinking to excess and drunkenness whereby their communion with Him in the true wine of His Spirit is severed.

Another supposition is that there will be no pain or suffering once death has claimed their bodies. It is widely assumed that the carnal soul of cravings, of lust, of evil, of all human desires and tendencies will magically vanish. This aberration has led many to see death as a friend rather than an enemy. With thoughts like this, death is an easier way to achieve perfection rather than the process of overcoming that the Spirit spoke of no less than nine times in the book of Revelation. *To him that OVERCOMETH will I give to eat of the tree of life....To him that OVERCOMETH will I give to eat of the hidden manna and give him a new name....He that OVERCOMETH shall not be hurt by the second death.... He that OVERCOMETH will I give power over the nations....He that OVERCOMETH shall be clothed with white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life....Him that OVERCOMETH will I make a pillar in the temple of My God....And the Lamb shall OVERCOME them, and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful...To him that OVERCOMETH will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also OVERCAME, and am set down with My Father in His throne....He that OVERCOMETH shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.* (rf. Rev.2:7, 11, 17, Rev. 26; Rev. 3:5, 12, 21; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 21:7).

With this having been said—Do we recall any place in the Bible where even one of these achievements is gained by merely dying? I cannot think of any, and I doubt that a verse can be found that makes reference to one. So you see, death does not merit such, and neither does having said the sinner's prayer and/or belonging to a church.

Although the other side is a great mystery, we can be sure that death is not the instrument that awards all those wonderful things that are achieved *only by overcoming*.

Moreover, since it is clear that there will be judgment of souls in **the lake of Godfire**, it seems obvious that death does not change us a great deal. **Who we are on this side** will be very much **the same on the other**. Whether our hearts are beating on this side and are not on the other, does not determine our eternal destiny, and neither does it change who we are. However, when there is something lacking in the character of the soul, or if there is something adverse to the Spirit and holiness of God, it will be dealt with and corrected by His unquenchable **GODFIRE**.

The record leaves no doubt that the wood, hay, and stubble of the natural man, along with the tares of the field, shall be subjected to *the judgment fires of God*, whether in this present age or those to come. Jesus said that some would be subjected to "*hell fire*," that is, "*gehenna fire*," or "*the fire of gehenna*."

But Jesus was speaking *metaphorically*; for *hell fire*, *gehenna fire* speaks of *the fire in the valley of Hinnom* which burned out many centuries ago. The word *gehenna* is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *ge hinnom*, meaning "*Valley of [the sons of] Hinnom*." **The New World Encyclopedia** says this about it:

"Originally, **gehenna** referred to a garbage dump in a deep narrow valley right outside the walls of Jerusalem where fires were kept burning to consume the refuse and keep down the stench....It is said that the garbage dump of Gehenna was full of rotting garbage which sent up a stench that could be smelled for miles. There are stories of fires that were kept burning by adding brimstone (sulfur). The King James Version of the Bible speaks of 'hellfire' and of being 'cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched.' The original Greek scriptures of the New Testament actually used the word gehenna, which tended to become hell in English. It was also the location where bodies of executed criminals, or individuals denied a proper burial, would be dumped....along with every other kind of filth." (<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Gehenna>)

As long as there was trash, garbage, and dead bodies of criminals in that valley, there was also unquenchable flames that never ended. The metaphor pointed to something spiritual. It was not meant to be thought of as *a literal valley filled with death and garbage*, but *a lake of unquenchable fire* to be filled with *the spiritual dead and carnal garbage*, which includes *all death and hell*. It is to be filled with everything opposed to *God's Life*, and His holy flames will devour the last mite and mote of death and corruption.

This strongly suggests that the judgment is less than pleasant. God, as a good Father, uses whatever is necessary to correct rebellion in His Kingdom; first in love with His Spirit of gentleness, and if need be with the spiritual flames of "*hellfire*"; but it is always through His Spirit of love that never ends and never fails. Yet strong wills and rebellion require strong judgment.

Every bastion of the first Adam must come to nothing in order for the greater Kingdom of the last Adam to flourish. When it is manifestly finished, it will be as Isaiah declared: "He will destroy in this mountain the face of **the covering** cast over **all people**, and **the veil** that is spread over **all nations**. He will swallow up death in victory; and **the Lord will wipe away all tears from all faces**. For when **Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**" *Isaiah 25:7-8, 26:9*.

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

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

These verses by no means say God will blindly sweep a man's willful, deliberate, contemptible, presumptuous sins under the carpet and never deal with him about them; but neither do the verses say the man will never be delivered. They do say, however, that the **JUDGMENT OF FIRE will devour them**—not the man, but will devour **his adversaries—HIS SINS—HIS LAST ENEMY WHICH IS DEATH!** God's fiery judgment will swallow up all sin and death in victory. The Lord will wipe away **all** tears from **all** faces; for when *His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants, every person of the world will learn righteousness.*

We may wonder why it is that this anointed declaration is so hard to grasp by so many? Perhaps, it is because that which the prophet wrote was an **anointed word**, and perhaps it is as Paul wrote: "...**The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:** for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because **they are spiritually discerned.**" 1 Corinthians 2:14.

God never intended for us to not be responsible for our actions. Jesus said in a couple of places, "Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Matthew 5:26. The writer of Hebrews reminded us of an age-old principle, "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." And "...no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Hebrews 12:6 & 11. And, please, let us not forget the words of David: "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. **It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.**" Psalms 119:67-68, 71.

Try as he may, neither man's traditions nor the span of ages will change the principles of God. It matters not if the principles have to do with one man or the entire world, whether they were applied in the days of David, in this present dispensation, or the ones to come—the **fiery judgments of God will purge and change individuals and nations that will bring them to righteousness.**

It is recorded in *Nahum 1:5*, "The mountains quake at Him, and hills melt, and **the earth is burned at His presence, yea the world, and ALL that dwell therein.**" Do we suppose this is saying that God will finally get so tired of dealing with His rebellious creation, and rather than patiently working with them any longer, He will just burn up the whole lump sum? No, not at all! Not by any means! He is severe, but severely remedial: "Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for **all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may [omitted in the Hebrew] ALL call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with ONE consent.**" *Zephaniah 3:8-9*. Please be reminded that the Hebrew word for *ALL* is *kôl kôl* and means the same as it does in other languages, namely—*ALL, the WHOLE!*

Take note of God's fiery judgment upon Israel, and know that the Lake of Fire will be no less to those cast therein, but also notice **the benefit of that fire**: "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof **by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.** And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" *Isaiah 4:4-6*.

Paul was no stranger to hardships, and when it came to others his hand was not slack that he would not turn them over to severe judgment for a time, but know also, it was for their good: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. I have judged concerning him that hath so done this deed, **to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved** in the day of the Lord Jesus" *1 Corinthians 5:5*. And "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom **I Have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme**" *1 Timothy 1:20*. Wouldn't you prefer to have the adversary sent against you than to continue in fornication or blaspheming God? You see, it is a good thing to be *judged and corrected unto life*. If need be, *it is a good thing* to find our place in *the Lake of Fire*. And is it not apparent that this principle of love and judgment has been applied to nations, especially this one?

The fact is, extreme cases necessitate extreme measures, and it is always for

ultimate good when it is by the hand of God. He is never remiss with His love. No one escapes the salting of beloved fire, especially those who bring Christ to an open shame by sinning willfully or the ones who revolt against His authority. In such cases, *there is no more a renewing of them by repentance, but renewing by fire along with the briars and thorns (Hebrews 6:4-8).*

What a glorious day it is to be privileged to hear the song of Moses and understand what he was saying: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, **for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.**" *Exodus 15:1.* Praise God! **HORSE and RIDER (SIN and DEATH) IS THROWN INTO THE SEA, A FIERY SEA—THE LAKE OF FIRE! TWO OF THE GREATEST ENEMIES KNOWN TO MAN ARE TRIUMPHED OVER—FOREVER!** And please know, **there will be torment in this lake**, and to clarify this point, let me close this short series with the words from the anointed pen of J. Preston Eby:

TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB

"Ah, the torment comes not from the Lamb. The torment lies within the bosoms of the tormented. The Scripture does not say that the Lamb torments them! If you think it does, you are mistaken. It states that **THEY ARE TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE** of the Lamb. What a thought! **TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE.** The Lamb is merely present. He does not torment. The condition is within themselves. Because they are wrong and sinful in nature, wicked in their hearts, selfish in their minds, and impure in their desires, they are **CONDEMNED IN THEIR CONSCIENCES** by the very **PRESENCE** of the pure, holy, sinless, selfless, sacrificing Lamb of God. Hell is at its fiercest when it sees heaven, and not till then....

"...A person under deep conviction is tormented. Tormented with what? He is tormented with the fire of God's holy presence, the fire of His penetrating, burning Word. He has no peace or rest, day or night. His conscience troubles him continually. When you and I were under deep conviction for our sins and past life we were tormented by the Holy Spirit, the presence of God. And we had no rest day or night. When we were finally broken by the Holy Spirit's dealing and repented and confessed those sins to Jesus, we cried often and shed many bitter tears of remorse and regret. **THAT**, my friend, is exactly what the rebellious will do in the ages to come as God deals with 'every man in his own order.' There was no short cut to salvation for us, and there will be none for them. In some cases it took months and years, sometimes a lifetime, of preaching and dealings to win our hearts to the Lord. And I am sure that it will take much preaching and many dealings along with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to win the ignorant, disobedient, and defiant masses that lived and died

in this world outside of Christ.

"A brother in the Lord shared this illustration of wicked people being tormented in the presence of the Lamb: 'A few years ago, we often preached to ALL the women in the state penitentiary for women. They were forced to sit and listen while we sang about Jesus, talked about Jesus and preached about Him. Some wept, some stared, and some faces showed bitter hatred toward us. Others seemed to writhe and twist in mental anguish and physical torment. Why? Because they were forced to listen. There was no escape.'

"Suppose a few filthy, vile men and a few immoral women from some house of prostitution were forced to sit in the midst of a large congregation of singing, shouting, worshipping saints. This certainly would be torment to most of them. They would be tortured in the flames of the blazing glory of God in that place! If they were not held in their seats by force, most of them would rush out of there. I have been in meetings where I witnessed three responses to the glorious manifestation of the Lord's presence. First, the saints who loved the Lord rejoiced and adoringly worshipped. Some who were not Christians, but whose hearts were tender toward the Lord, came under deep conviction and, weeping and broken, gave themselves into the loving hands of Jesus. But others, filled with self, haters of righteousness, I have seen men jump up and literally run out of a meeting — **TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB!** Sure, they would rush, even run to get away from the convicting power of the Holy Ghost! I have seen it, and so have you.

"To the unsaved, HIS GLORY is a LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE - divine, cleansing, purging, purifying, consuming fire! In ages yet unborn God shall expose ALL MEN to the sweet abiding presence of the Lamb. They will come under such severe processings, under such profound conviction that they will be tormented and have no rest day or night until they finally yield. And when they do, many fountains of tears will flow with weeping, praying, and calling upon the Lord." —End quote

Therefore, dear friends, we see **GOD** coming forth *as a consuming fire*, His **WORD** resounding *as fire*, His **MINISTERS** being manifested *as flames of fire!* And when He brings them **ALL** together in **ONE BLAZING BODY**, they will be **HIS GLORIOUS LAKE OF GODFIRE!**

Ah, such a marvelous and holy wonder to behold...

Elwin R. Roach

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