



LESSON #17 - THE SMOKE OF BABYLON'S TORMENT

Revelation 14:9-11:

In our last lecture:

"Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation...."

Lecture today:

"...He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Matthew 25:41: *"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 25:46: *"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

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

The crucial question

Will the devil and the wicked be **tormented forever and ever** without end? That's what the texts **seem to be saying but let's take a closer look**

What is the Eternal Fire?

Fire and brimstone from the Lord out of the **heavens** and the **smoke** goes up

Genesis 19:24, 28: “Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. ...²⁸ Then he [Abraham] looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.”

Burnt with eternal fire

Jude 7: “. . . 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.”

Reduced to ashes

II Peter 2:6: “. . . and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly.”

God is the consuming fire

Deuteronomy 4:23, 24: “Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. ²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.”

God is the consuming fire

Hebrews 12:28, 29: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.”

God’s glory is the fire

Exodus 24:15-17: “Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.”

Sea of glass mingled with fire

Revelation 15:2: “And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.”

The Wicked are Devoured

Malachi 4:1, 3: *"For behold, the day is coming, **burning like an oven**, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall **burn them up**," says the LORD of hosts, "That will **leave them neither root nor branch**. ...³ You shall trample the wicked, for they **shall be ashes** under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts."*

Revelation 20:9: *"They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and **devoured** them."*

Matthew 13:4: *"And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and **devoured** them."*

From which there is no resurrection

Revelation 21:8: *"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**."*

The Righteous, not the Wicked, will live in the Everlasting Fire

Isaiah 33:14, 15: *"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: **"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"**¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil."*

Will Satan and the wicked suffer the same length?

Luke 12:47, 48: *"And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with **many** stripes."⁴⁸ But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with **few**. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."*

Revelation 20:13: *"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**."*

Would a **common sinner** deserve the same punishment as **Adolph Hitler**? Would it be just for a judge to punish a **traffic violation** and **murder** with the same sentence?

But, what about “forever”

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

Isaiah 34:9, 10: *“Its streams shall be turned into **pitch**, and its dust into **brimstone**; its land shall become **burning pitch**.¹⁰ It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it **shall lie waste**; no one shall pass through it **forever and ever.**”*

Both the Hebrew and Greek expression refer to a **long and indefinite** period of time. But the fire **does go out eventually**. The expression in **Revelation 20:10** literally says: “**unto the ages of the ages.**” In **Spanish** it is translated “**por los siglos de los siglos.**”

Allan Macrae, president and professor of Old Testament Theology at the Biblical School of Theology in **Hatfield, Pennsylvania** states:

“The LXX generally translates olam by aion which has essentially the same range of meaning. That neither the Hebrew nor the Greek word itself contains the idea of endlessness is shown both by the fact that they sometimes refer to events or conditions that occurred at a definite point in the past and also by the fact that sometimes it is thought desirable to repeat the word, not merely saying ‘forever,’ but ‘forever and ever.” Allan Macrae, **Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament**, volume 2, pp. 672, 673.

James Hope **Moulton** and George **Milligan** explain:

*“In general, the word depicts **that of which the horizon is not in view**, whether the horizon be at an infinite distance. . . or whether it lies **no further** that the span of a Caesar’s life.”* **The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament** (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1952), p. 16. Emphasis supplied.

*“In the plural aion formulae the meaning of aion merges into that of a long but limited stretch of time. In particular, aion in this sense signifies the time or duration of the world, i. e., **time as limited by creation and conclusion**. At this point we are confronted by the remarkable fact that in the Bible the same word aion is used to indicate two things which are profoundly antithetical, namely, the eternity of God and the duration of the world. This twofold sense, which aion shares with the Hebrew olam, points back to a concept of eternity in which eternity is identified with the duration of the world.”* Gerhard Kittel, **Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament**, volume 1, p. 202

Satan will Burn out

When I say, "I will **love you forever and ever**" it means for an indefinite period till death do us part!!

Satan will **become ashes and be no more** so he can't burn forever

Ezekiel 28:18, 19: *"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. ¹⁹ All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and **shall be no more forever.**" ' ' "*

Root and branch will burn out and become **ashes**

Malachi 4:1-3: *"For behold, the day is coming, **burning** like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be **stubble**. And the day which is coming shall **burn them up**," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither **root** nor **branch**. ² But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. ³ You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be **ashes** under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts."*

How long will the devil suffer?

Leviticus 16:7: *"He shall take the **two goats** and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."*

Leviticus 16:20-22: *"And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. ²¹ Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, 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. ²² The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness."*

The **wicked** were cut off for their **own sins** on the Day of Atonement—only **forgiven sins** were placed on the **scapegoat**

Leviticus 23:29, 30: *"For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be **cut off** from his people. ³⁰ And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will **destroy** from among his people."*

The Testimony of Ellen G. White

"Then I saw thrones, and Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon them; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God [Revelation 20:4]. Christ, in union with His people, judged the

wicked dead, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Word of God, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body [Revelation 20:11, 12]. Then they meted out to the wicked **the portion** which they must suffer, **according to their works** [I Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:11, 12]; and it was written against their names in the book of death. Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints [II Corinthians 6:2, 3]. **Satan's punishment was to be far greater** [in terms of length] than that of those whom he had deceived. His suffering would so far exceed theirs as to bear **no comparison** with it [Revelation 20:10]. After all those whom he had deceived had perished, Satan was still to **live and suffer on much longer.**” **Early Writings**, p. 290

“I saw that some were **quickly destroyed**, while others **suffered longer**. They were punished **according to the deeds done in the body** [II Corinthians 5:10]. Some were **many days** consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, **all the sense of suffering remained**. Said the angel, “The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon.”

Satan and his angels **suffered long**. Satan bore not only the weight and punishment of his **own sins**, but also of the sins of the redeemed host, which had been placed upon him; and he must also suffer for the ruin of souls which he had caused. Then I saw that Satan and all the wicked host **were consumed**, and the **justice of God** was **satisfied** [key point]; and all the angelic host and all the redeemed saints, with a loud voice said, “Amen!”

Said the angel: ‘Satan is the **root**, his children are the **branches** [Malachi 4:1]. They are now consumed root and branch. They have died an **everlasting death**. They are **never to have a resurrection**, and God will have a **clean universe**.’ **Early Writings**, pp. 293, 294.

God’s Strange Act

Isaiah 28:21: “For the LORD will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon--that He may do His work, His awesome [strange] work, and bring to pass His act, His **unusual act**.”

The fire falls **on the earth** according to **Revelation 20:7-10** because the wicked will be **destroyed outside the city**:

Then, according to **Revelation 21:3-5** God promises to make everything new

“To sin, wherever found, “our God is a consuming fire.” **Hebrews 12:29**. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the **glory of God**, which destroys sin, must destroy them. Jacob, after his night of wrestling with the Angel, exclaimed, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” **Genesis. 32: 30**. Jacob had been guilty of a great sin in his conduct toward Esau; but he had repented. His transgression had been forgiven, and his sin purged; therefore he could endure the **revelation of God's presence**. But wherever men came before God while **willfully cherishing**

evil, they were destroyed. At the second advent of Christ the wicked shall be consumed "with the Spirit of His mouth," and destroyed "with the brightness of His coming." **2 Thessalonians 2:8.** The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked." Desire of Ages 107, 108

