

he Jew, then for the Gentile; 10 but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the G
entile. 11 For God does not show favoritism.

God will have mercy upon whom He has mercy, and He will harden whom He hardens. His eye will not spare, neither wi
ll He show mercy to those who refuse to be persuaded by the truth and choose instead to be persuaded by unrighteousn
ess.

mak

Re: My Eyes will not spare, neither will I show mercy - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/20 9:28

I felt prompted to add my thoughts upon why the Lord declares multiple times - "the end has come" (perfect tense in the
Greek).

What time had reached its conclusion or culmination? I believe the "acceptable time" had come to its end.
"Now is the acceptable time, today is the day of salvation, today if you hear His voice do not harden your heart."

There is an acceptable year of the Lord, a time for mercy and forgiveness, before the day of the Lord comes when He wi
ll render to everyone according to their deeds.

We are even to consider the longsuffering of the Lord to be salvation, because the Lord is not willing that any should peri
sh. However, the acceptable time for sparing and mercy will come to an end. Then the day of the Lord will be revealed,
a day of wrath and judgment that men have been storing up to themselves. A day of judgments so severe that men will l
ong for death that does not come. A day when vials of wrath will be poured out upon the earth and no one repents, bec
ause the acceptable time to repent and receive mercy has ended and there is nothing left for them but the severity of Go
d, because they have rejected mercy and squandered away the acceptable time.

mak

Re: My Eyes will not spare, neither will I show mercy - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/21 2:45

Mak,

You said:

Quote:

----- What time had reached its conclusion or culmination? I believe the "acceptable time" had come to its end.
"Now is the acceptable time, today is the day of salvation, today if you hear His voice do not harden your heart."

There is an acceptable year of the Lord, a time for mercy and forgiveness, before the day of the Lord comes when He will render to everyone accordin
g to their deeds.

2 Cor. 5:18-6:3 â€

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliatio
n, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He h
as committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an
appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

for He says,

"AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU."

Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION "â€"

giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

It seems to me that Paul was saying that the glorious day of salvation has dawned and he was begging people to be reconciled to God and not to take God's grace in vain.

He did not say that the acceptable time will end.

The acceptable time and the day of salvation could not commence until after the death and resurrection of Christ. It began in the 1st century AD and has stretched on to the present 21st century.

Our faith must stand on the sure word of God and not on human opinion.

Can you give scripture that clearly says it will end at the end of this age and will not stretch into the ages of eternity to come?

Consider these scripture:

Isa. 9:6-7 â€"

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;

And the government will rest on His shoulders;

And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be NO END to the increase of His government or of peaceâ€"â€",

Note: â€œNO ENDâ€œ.

Isa. 54:8 â€"

In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment,

But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,"

Says the LORD your Redeemer.

Isa. 57:16-19 â€"

For I will not contend forever,

Nor will I always be angry;

For the spirit would grow faint before Me,

And the breath of those whom I have made

Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him;

I hid My face and was angry,

And he went on turning away, in the way of his heart.

I have seen his ways, but I will heal him;

I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners,

Creating the praise of the lips.

Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,"

Says the LORD, "and I will heal him."

ADD

===

â€œacceptable timeâ€œ has also been translated as â€œfavourable timeâ€œ.

HELPS Word-studies:

1184 δεκτός (an adjective derived from 1209/δεξιμαί) â€" properly, what is received favorably (acceptable), describing what is welcomed because pleasing.

Ps. 103:17 (NKJV) "But

the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,

Blessings

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/21 5:19

Hello Jade,

Yes, I offer these scriptures for your consideration.

All of these scriptures have this Greek word ἡ τέλος, ἡ ἑκτέλευσις - meaning - a completion, a consummation, an end.

These references are all taken from the words of our Lord

Matthew 13:39

Matthew 13:40

Matthew 13:49

They are all found in the context of our Lord's explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares.

He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

The year of the Lord's favor is now, today is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time.

This is what our Lord Jesus knew and declared in the synagogue at Capernaum:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor....

Notice that our Lord did not complete the entire quote from Isaiah. He stopped short of quoting the whole prophecy. Have you ever noticed this? Jesus stopped before quoting - "and the day of vengeance of our God."

Why did Jesus stop where He did? I believe it is because of what He said next, with the eyes of everyone upon Him - "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus knew that the day of vengeance was not "today" and was not being fulfilled in their hearing.

Jesus knew that His first coming was not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He knew that the Father had set a day to judge the world, a day of vengeance, but that day was in the future, not today.

There is a "completion of the age". Our Lord associated the completion of the age with the separation of the wicked out of His kingdom and their being thrown into the lake of fire.

What do you associate the "completion of the age" with?

mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/21 9:53

Hi Mak,

PARABLE OF WHEAT AND TARES

Christ came to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:38), not men. He came not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). He is Savior of the world (John 4:42, 1 Jn. 4:14). He destroys the wicked old man in Adam to bring in the righteous new man in Himself. In Adam ALL die. In Christ, ALL are made alive. When the works of the devil are destroyed, and all are made anew in Christ—Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Scripture speaks of "Christ the first fruits" (1 Cor. 15:23) and the church "a kind of first fruits" (James 1:18, Rev. 14:4).

If the church is called "first fruits" shouldn't there be the rest of the harvest?

And if the church, the first fruits are being gathered in this present age, when would the rest of the harvest be gathered if not in the ages of eternity to come?

Quote:
----- This is what our Lord Jesus knew and declared in the synagogue at Capernaum:
"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor...."

Notice that our Lord did not complete the entire quote from Isaiah. He stopped short of quoting the whole prophecy. Have you ever noticed this? Jesus stopped before quoting - "and the day of vengeance of our God."

Why did Jesus stop where He did?

I don't know why. Scripture didn't say.

But scripture says this:

Isa. 35:3-10
Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.
Say to those with anxious heart,
"Take courage, fear not.
BEHOLD, YOUR GOD WILL COME WITH VENGEANCE;
THE RECOMPENSE OF GOD WILL COME,
BUT HE WILL SAVE YOU."
THEN the eyes of the blind will be opened
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.
Then the lame will leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.
For waters will break forth in the wilderness
And streams in the Arabah.
The scorched land will become a pool
And the thirsty ground springs of water;

In the haunt of jackals, its resting place,
Grass becomes reeds and rushes.
A highway will be there, a roadway,
And it will be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean will not travel on it,
But it will be for him who walks that way,
And fools will not wander on it.
No lion will be there,
Nor will any vicious beast go up on it;
These will not be found there.
But the redeemed will walk there,
And the ransomed of the LORD will return
And come with joyful shouting to Zion,
With everlasting joy upon their heads.
They will find gladness and joy,
And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Quote:

----- What do you associate the "completion of the age" with?

The end of this age will bring an end to everything that is unrighteous to God and all things will be made new in Christ and the ages of eternity will begin in which God show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7).

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/21 17:18

Dear Jade,

I can see how you are seeking to harmonize the passages about Christ work and the fruits that follow from it.

It would be helpful to me to know your thoughts on the Second Death. I assume you have somehow come to some understanding of what happens to those who experience the second death.

Revelation 21:8

But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.â€

The Second Death occurs after the resurrection of the dead - Revelation 20:12-14

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. 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. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Can you explain your own understanding of the process you believe happens after the second death.

Jade, I hope this is in time for you to address this question as well. In the first passage in Revelation 21, the restoration of all things appears to have taken place. The New Heaven is present, the New Jerusalem is present, and in contrast with this - the distinction between those cast into the lake of fire and those who are present in the New Heaven is set forth.

In your understanding of how all things have been fully reconciled and every work of the devil destroyed. How do you u

nderstand the presence of the separation in the introduction of the New Heaven and the New Jerusalem.

mak

Re: - posted by Lordoitagain (), on: 2020/6/22 3:16

A sobering scripture to consider from Our Lord:

Notice the words "everlasting" and "eternal" in verse 46. Obviously the acts of injustice toward the Savior were done on earth as it mentions earthly needs. The consequences are everlasting.

Mat 25:41Â Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:Â

Mat 25:42Â For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:Â

Mat 25:43Â I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not:Â

Mat 25:44Â Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?Â

Mat 25:45Â Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.Â

Mat 25:46Â And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.Â

Re: - posted by Lordoitagain (), on: 2020/6/22 3:27

As a young person this passage gripped my heart and soul with what I now recognize as the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom:

Mar 9:43Â And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:Â

Mar 9:44Â Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.Â

Mar 9:45Â And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:Â

Mar 9:46Â Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.Â

Mar 9:47Â And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:Â

Mar 9:48Â Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.Â

I have only heard of one person physically carrying out in a literal way the suggestion of Jesus here, but Jesus is making a case for the never ending nature of the punishment of those who give in to temptation.

The case that I heard of came from Foxe's book of Martyrs I believe. The Christians were being hauled into town square demanding that they either sign a decree denying Christ or they would be burned alive publicly. This man signed the decree and went away free, but all night his conscience tormented him! "How could I have denied my Lord who bought me?"... The next day as the proceedings continued, he stood before the crowd and stated: "cursed be this hand that would sign such a thing denying my precious Savior who died to save me... (something along those lines). He then went over to the blazing fire and stuck that hand into the fire to watch it burn in front of everyone. They then put the rest of him into the fire. He died in the flames but then met The Lord who had paid the penalty for his sins.

Re: - posted by Lordoitagain (), on: 2020/6/22 3:34

SO MANY scriptures come to mind when I meditate on this subject.

Rev 14:9Â And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,Â

Rev 14:10Â The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:Â

Rev 14:11^Â And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.^Â

Re: - posted by Lordoitagain (), on: 2020/6/22 3:36

SO MANY and SO MANY MORE

Rev 22:10^Â And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.^Â

Rev 22:11^Â He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.^Â

Rev 22:12^Â And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.^Â

Rev 22:13^Â I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.^Â

Rev 22:14^Â Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.^Â

Rev 22:15^Â For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.^Â

Re: Noble but misguided - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/22 10:51

While I can understand the desire to see God's mercy and forgiveness in the way you see it Jade, I sincerely believe your efforts are misguided and unfounded.

You have alleged that God does not destroy wicked "men", but the wickedness IN men so that they may ultimately be saved. You believe that His wrath is poured out upon their works, not for their destruction but for their salvation.

Paul warned believers about this very matter.

Ephesians 5

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them

Notice that God's wrath does not come upon the sins, but upon "the sons" of disobedience.

Furthermore in II Thessalonians 1, Paul wrote that the wrath of God comes upon men, not simply their sins

since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power

The grammar is clear, that vengeance is upon "those" (men) who do not know God. They (these men who do not know God) will be punished with everlasting destruction.

You are in danger of turning destruction into salvation so that you can work out every man being saved. This is a serious twisting of scripture and Paul warns that when men do this, they do so to their own harm.

If you twist the meaning of everlasting destruction into a means through which men are ultimately saved, then what can everlasting salvation mean?

Your motive may be good and sincere, but your method is spurious and dangerous.

mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/22 11:40

Hey Mak- just wanted to check on how you define "destruction."

TK

Re: Mak - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/22 12:01

Quote:
----- You have alleged that God does not destroy wicked "men", but the wickedness IN men so that they may ultimately be saved

Have I??

Quote:
----- You are in danger of turning destruction into salvation so that you can work out every man being saved. This is a serious twisting of scripture and Paul warns that when men do this, they do so to their own harm.

If you twist the meaning of everlasting destruction into a means through which men are ultimately saved, then what can everlasting salvation mean?

I don't know what you are talking about.

Quote:
----- While I can understand the desire to see God's mercy and forgiveness in the way you see it Jade, I sincerely believe your efforts are misguided and unfounded. Your motive may be good and sincere, but your method is spurious and dangerous.

We will all stand before the judgment seat of God and each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

Re: Mak - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/22 12:03

Quote:
----- The Second Death occurs after the resurrection of the dead - Revelation 20:12-14. In the first passage in Revelation 21, the restoration of all things appears to have taken place. The New Heaven is present, the New Jerusalem is present, and in contrast with this - the distinction between those cast into the lake of fire and those who are present in the New Heaven is set forth. In your understanding of how all things have been fully reconciled and every work of the devil destroyed. How do you understand the presence of the separation in the introduction of the New Heaven and the New Jerusalem.

I don't think we can really understand eternity while still living in time. So, speaking in time and in human terms --

The works of the devil have already been destroyed at the cross (Col. 2:15 -principalities and powers disarmed; Rom. 6:

6, Gal. 2:20 "fallen old man crucified; Gal. 6:14 "world crucified.)

All authority has been given to the Lord Jesus in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18).

It is time to bring in the harvest.

John 4:35 "

Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

The first fruits (the church) are being gathered in this present age.

Time ends and eternity begins. (Yet time and eternity co-exist even now!).

The resurrection of the dead takes place (Rev. 20:12-15).

If anyone's name is not written in the book of life (comment: belonging to Christ), he is thrown into the lake of fire, the second death.

Comment:

How great a number this must be! They include all who have not heard the gospel throughout time.

New Jerusalem has been made ready as a bride adorned for her husband, having the glory of God (Rev. 21:2,11).

Then,

A loud voice from the throne says:

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, AND HE WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES; AND THERE WILL NO LONGER BE ANY DEATH; THERE WILL NO LONGER BE ANY MOURNING, OR CRYING, OR PAIN; the first things have passed away." " Rev. 21:3-4

Comment:

Who are the ones who will be mourning, crying and in pain? Surely not New Jerusalem. They can only be the vast number in the lake of fire, the second death.

Note: "AND THERE WILL NO LONGER BE ANY DEATH"

1 Cor. 15:26 "The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

And He who sits on the throne said:

"Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true" (Rev. 21:5).

Comment:

The new heaven and new earth and New Jerusalem have all come into being. What else is not yet made new? The countless number of people in the lake of fire who are still of the old creation in Adam.

Rev. 21:6-7 "

Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

Comment:

Surely this is the "second chance" for those in the lake of fire! Actually it is just the first chance for the billions who had never heard the gospel before.

Rev. 21:8 "

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Comment:

Yes. There is still free choice. Will anyone in the terrible lake of fire reject the offer of the water of life and not repent and eagerly run back to the splendour of the Father's house like the prodigal son?

Scripture answers:

Isa. 66:23

And it shall be from new moon to new moon

And from sabbath to sabbath,

ALL MANKIND WILL COME TO BOW DOWN BEFORE ME, says the LORD.

The Lord said to Abraham: I will bless you And you shall be a blessing And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:2,3).

So must the church, the New Jerusalem, be (re: Gen. 22:18, Gal. 3:16, Gal. 3:29).

And, so she will be. And so you must be

Rev. 21:23-24

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

Rev. 22:1-2

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month ; AND THE LEAVES OF THE TREE WERE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS.

Scripture says:

But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more (Rom. 5:20).

The Lord says: For I, the LORD, do not change (Mal. 3:6).

Lam. 3:21-23

This I recall to my mind,

Therefore I have hope.

The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,

For His compassions never fail.

They are new every morning;

Great is Your faithfulness.

v. 31-33

For the Lord will not reject forever,

For if He causes grief,

Then He will have compassion

According to His abundant lovingkindness.

For He does not afflict willingly

Or grieve the sons of men.

God's last words in the Bible are words of grace, words of kindness, words of comfort, words of love:

Rev. 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come!

And let him who hears say, Come!

And let him who thirsts come.

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

v.21 â€

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with ALL. Amen.

To God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be the glory and the dominion forever!

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/22 12:31

Hi Todd,

The word Paul uses in II Thessalonians is

Ã³lethros (from ollymi/"destroy") â€ properly, ruination with its full, destructive results (LS). 3639 /Ã³lethros ("ruination") however does not imply "extinction" (annihilation). Rather it emphasizes the consequent loss that goes with the complete "undoing."

This definition is copied from Bible Hub, a site that is a good source for such questions.

Mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/22 14:08

Thx Mak.

Is this part:// â€Ã³lethros ("ruination") however does not imply "extinction" (annihilation). Rather it emphasizes the consequent loss that goes with the complete "undoingâ€// someoneâ€™s interpretation or is that an absolute fact regarding the Greek word? The reason I ask is that I have read or heard somewhere that this word can mean either ruination or total annihilation. I am not a Greek expert.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/22 19:02

Todd,

Bible Hub is a free website with an excellent Greek and Hebrew content.

There is an interlinear section where the strong number is posted above the Greek word, which is posted above the English word.

By clicking on the Strong number, you are given definitions taken from scholars, along with verses that the word also appears in.

I have found it a very helpful resource when attempting to ascertain the basic meaning.

I am not a Greek expert either, but I am grateful for the many men who devoted their lives to provide us detailed information that we may not otherwise have access to. I have been fortunate to make good use of many of these resources for a number of years, and I am so grateful for the help they have been to me.

mak

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/23 10:01

Jade, thank you for your candid acknowledgment

The only rational, logical conclusion to your position is that those who have been cast into the lake of fire will receive another opportunity to be saved.

At least your view has come into the light to be examined.

Please consider the ramifications of this position. This removes salvation by grace through faith.

This removes any eternal consequence for unbelief.

This removes the truth of eternal punishment.

This proposes a doctrine similar to purgatory - that suffering the lake of fire after death is really only for the purpose of temporal punishment leading to the ultimate salvation of the soul.

I do not hesitate to call this heretical - a teaching that has arisen out of your own personal choice.

mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/23 11:39

Mak,

Quote:
----- The only rational, logical conclusion to your position is that those who have been cast into the lake of fire will receive another opportunity to be saved.

At least your view has come into the light to be examined.

Please consider the ramifications of this position. This removes salvation by grace through faith.

This removes any eternal consequence for unbelief.

Salvation out of the lake of fire by grace through faith STANDS now and forever.

Your position is that grace through faith is withdrawn after this present age.

I am challenging that position.

Quote:
----- This removes the truth of eternal punishment.

If you mean the truth of ~~“eternal torment”~~, that is challenged.

Quote:
----- This proposes a doctrine similar to purgatory - that suffering the lake of fire after death is really only for the purpose of temporal punishment leading to the ultimate salvation of the soul.

I am not interested in the doctrine of purgatory, whatever it is.

The suffering in the lake of fire is the terrible FACT of separation from God.

The difference between us is that I believe in the greatness of God's love and compassion and will and power to save all men, but you don't

Quote:

----- I do not hesitate to call this heretical - a teaching that has arisen out of your own personal choice.

Heretics, of course, are those who disagree with you. And of course, only your own theology is truth.

This discussion is no longer profitable as it has degenerated into personal attacks.

Blessings

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/23 18:55

Dear Jade,

This statement is disingenuous at best: you wrote

Heretics, of course, are those who disagree with you. And of course, only your own theology is truth.

I am certain that you are already very aware that your interpretation is unique, although that in itself does not make it wrong. You show confidence, which I admire to put forth your views on this forum; in fact, you voluntarily joined this thread and interjected your own thoughts.

Please do not take offense at the term "heretical". The basic meaning of heresy is "to choose". I do not hesitate to call the teaching that there is a second opportunity to be saved by grace through faith after being thrown into the lake of fire - "heretical." - Heresy means a "choice", and you have made the choice to interpret certain passages according to your personal understanding and assimilate them together.

It is already well understood, by yourself and others, that thousands of men and women of God, over hundreds of years, have studied the same passages you quote and interpreted them differently. Certainly this fact has not escaped you. That is why I admire your confidence to share openly. I am certainly not the first to have called this teaching heretical, many men and women more qualified than I would not hesitate to do so still.

This is a public forum, where discussion may lead to disagreement. You are free to believe what you wrote - "The difference between us is that I believe in the greatness of God's love and compassion and will and power to save all men, but you don't"

But the open minded reader who has followed this thread can look back and see that what originally moved me to post was the glimpse into God's heart to spare and to show mercy.

As you have said, we will all stand before the Lord to give account for ourselves, nothing is hidden from the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Like Paul, I can say that I am not aware of anything against myself, but that does not make me innocent, it is the Lord who judges me. But knowing that He is the judge with the ability and authority to judge righteously, it matters very little to me to be criticized by lesser authority. The support of friends does not prove one right, and the opposition of anyone contrary does not prove one wrong.

I thank you for the opportunity to discuss these topics on the forum. I will leave you to the compassion and mercy of God, but I do so aware of His own warning about adding to or taking away from what He has spoken.

If you are correct, I have nothing to fear anyway.

mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/23 22:20

Mak-

The traditional concept is that God will keep the vast, vast majority of his creation conscious and aware for the sole purpose of torturing them for trillions and trillions of years, and even then He is just getting started.

Some of us, with careful study, have determined to know if this traditional idea is actually true.

There are alternatives to the traditional view other than that posed by Jade, and with minimal research you can find respected evangelicals who hold an alternate view.

Do you not think they can respond with scripture to any objection you might raise? Of course they can, and if you give them careful consideration you might be persuaded, or at least come to realize that alternative views are not on nearly as shaky ground as you might suppose.

I do not know which view is correct. But after years of looking into this I am of the opinion that the traditional view is the least likely to be accurate.

I realize that the great majority of evangelicals would disagree. But I submit that this great majority has never *seriously* studied the alternate views, but rather simply regurgitate what they have been told by teachers who are simply regurgitating what they have been told, etc etc.

Before we take the step of simply agreeing with the rather distasteful portrait of God described in my first paragraph above, I think it behooves us to make really, really sure that is an accurate portrayal.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/24 4:20

Todd,

Yes, I do think anyone who studies the scripture can answer with scripture. I was blessed to have an old bachelor, who would winter with my family, correct me many times with scripture. He knew koine Greek and was able to show me where my ideas were wrong from the actual texts.

I also understand why sincere men and women look for an "alternative" meaning to the traditionally held view. Nevertheless, the real and simple reason that the vast majority hold to their traditional view of eternal torment is out of respect for the language of the text itself. This is the only reason I hold this view myself.

The actual words found in the text are where the "traditional" view of eternal torment came from. These words are attributed to our Lord Himself. Surely, He was as sensitive as you, Jade, or anyone else, as to how the words would cause His Father to be perceived. Jesus was no respecter of tradition.

Nonetheless, He uttered the words you are seeking an "alternative" understanding of. We must wrestle with the words while remembering He never spoke from Himself, but only what the Father gave Him to say. If they were the very words His Father gave Him to say, it was not for Him to question how those words made His Father to appear. Our responsibility is similar. We must be honest with the actual words of the text, regardless.

Men with no axe to grind, with years of devoted study of the actual language, separated by hundreds of years, from different continents and cultures, reach the same conclusion. Why? Because the actual words of the text lead them to the same conclusion.

I certainly agree that majority opinion is no basis at all to ascertain truth. The unjust practice of slavery was acceptable t

o a majority of evangelical Christians for far too long, just to cite one example.

When you use the language "searching for an alternative view", I doubt you are simply trying to be a maverick. I recognize and can appreciate your honest concern; the traditional view paints a very sobering and severe picture of eternal torment. Nevertheless, the majority of those who read the scripture are just as sincere as you and Jade.

I do not believe that the majority who hold the traditional view of eternal torment do so just because they heard someone else describe it in the way they understand it. There is a simple explanation for why the traditional view of eternal torment is held by the majority of Christians, the actual language of the text.

I trust you have already considered this in your search for an alternative meaning. The most disturbing words describing eternal torment were uttered by our Lord Jesus; that is, if we are to accept the record we have been left by those who heard Him. I doubt you will lump Jesus into the category of the majority view, yet you know He is the primary reason the traditional view is held. If you find an "alternative" meaning to His words that is one thing, but you can not change the words He used. His words are difficult for you to accept. His description of eternal torment is the reason you are searching for an "alternative meaning", the majority of evangelicals are not the cause for this struggle.

I care very little about majority opinion - broad is the way and wide is the gate that leads to destruction and many go therein, narrow the way and small is the gate that leads to life, and few there be that find it. So it is possible to discover wonderful truth and life that the vast majority will never discover. Our Lord Himself is famous for "you have heard that it has been said, but I say...." I state this to make sure you know I am no defender of tradition for tradition's sake.

I am not looking for an "alternative" view - I choose instead to study the actual words found within the text and attempt to verify they are translated correctly. I can assure you that the actual words in the text create a very disturbing picture of eternal torment. Our Lord Himself chose the words that you wrestle with.

I understand why you and other sincere believers are searching for an "alternative understanding". But the real issue is not whether the majority held view is reliable, the real issue is what did our Lord mean by the words He used.

It is one thing to set up the traditionally held view as the straw man and topple it because it easily appears callous and in different to the horrid depiction of torment. It is another thing all together to wrestle with the actual words of the text uttered by our Lord Jesus Himself.

mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/24 9:10

Mak,

Quote:
----- I will leave you to the compassion and mercy of God, but I do so aware of His own warning about adding to or taking away from what He has spoken.

This is written and I certainly DID NOT TAKE THIS AWAY:

Rev. 21:4 'and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away

And this is not written, and I certainly DID NOT ADD THIS:

Billions of men will be mourning, crying and be in pain in the terrible lake of fire, the second death, forever and ever. God's mercy would have ceased and there will be no more grace. Sin abounded and cancelled grace.

Quote:

----- If you are correct, I have nothing to fear anyway.

Yes, Mak. I preach the exceedingly good news of the great love of God and the super-abounding grace of our mighty Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the angels proclaimed years ago:

Luke 2:10-11,14 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY which will be to ALL people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth PEACE, GOODWILL toward men!

You said to Todd:

Quote:

----- I choose instead to study the actual words found within the text and attempt to verify they are translated correctly. I can assure you that the actual words in the text create a very disturbing picture of eternal torment. Our Lord Himself chose the words that you wrestle with. It is one thing to set up the traditionally held view as the straw man and topple it because it easily appears callous and indifferent to the horrid depiction of torment. It is another thing all together to wrestle with the actual words of the text uttered by our Lord Jesus Himself.

Did you behold the Saviour who came not to condemn but to save?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/24 12:08

Jade,

In the very same passage you began with, spoken by the very same person you quoted, are words distinguishing between two different scenarios.

Here is the passage from Revelation 21:3-8

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, '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. 4 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.'

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.'

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 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."

Do you accept everything written in this passage? The one speaking from the throne clearly differentiates between those who overcome and the cowardly, unbelieving, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. The very same person speaking in verses 3 and 4 contrast the promise which He says is for the one who overcomes and the end of those whose part will be the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

You erase the distinction that the one on the throne chose to make Himself. I accept all His words. He describes conditions within the paradise of God and conditions outside. He declares that certain men will have "their part" in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

I bless the One Who sits on the throne for every word He said. He is righteous to show mercy and He is to be glorified by His wrath just as well.

We are exhorted to behold His kindness and His severity. I am not ashamed that the gospel of God includes the truth that the wicked shall be destroyed by the breath of His mouth.

Paul, who understood grace better than either of us, introduced the gospel of God alongside the wrath of God being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who suppress the truth in their unrighteousness.

The question is not whether you or I have seen Jesus, but it does seem to be a relevant question of which Jesus have we seen. There is another Jesus, and another gospel, and another spirit. The Jesus of the New Testament is both Savior and the one leading the armies of heaven to slay the wicked.

mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/24 14:28

//I am not ashamed that the gospel of God includes the truth that the wicked shall be destroyed by the breath of His mouth.//

But in your view they really won't be, will they? That is just a very nice way of saying something infinitely worse.

I've always been a little confused about the term "second death". If it means being tossed into the LOF that would seem to be the 3rd death (1. Dead in trespasses and sins 2. Physical death 3. LOF)

And why use the term "death" when those in LOF are very much alive?

I think we must also keep in mind that Revelation is apocalyptic literature with an awful lot of strange and symbolic imagery.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/24 15:36

Is it really "my view" Todd?

The plain meaning of the words is really not in question is it? You will readily acknowledge that Jesus, His apostles, Paul, Jude and the writer of Hebrews use very graphic and disturbing words. We don't have to disagree there do we? Why pin the difficulty on me, instead of where it really lies. You don't like what Jesus said - that is why you are looking for an "alternative meaning" to the plain reading of His words. Surely, you can admit this. The basic idea of eternal torment came from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, not mine, nor any other teacher, or preacher. You can accuse us of embracing a horrid concept of eternal suffering, fine, but you can not do so without implicating our Lord Himself. I am just an easier target than Jesus. If I merely repeat what He has said, then your beef is not with me - you do not like the way our Lord chose to describe the end of the wicked.

You may not appreciate persons like myself who defend the words that were written, but it is not as if myself or others have invented "a view" out of the blue. The difficulty is not in translating the words, they are plain enough. The real difficulty is grappling with what the words actually say. I can appreciate that difficulty, but that is where the issue should remain, not whether or not I "hold" such a view. Countless men and women can read the plain text. That is not in dispute. What you want to dispute is what the words actually mean. Go ahead and do so, but blame Jesus for making it so graphic and unappealing - not others.

I will read with an open mind your own "views" of weeping and gnashing of teeth. I am sure we don't disagree that Jesus actually used the phrase multiple times. Neither do we disagree that He used the actual term eternal torment. You seem to think that "my view" is horrid. At least you can admit that I got the idea from reading the words of Jesus. Can we begin there? I hope so, because if we can not trust the words of Jesus to be reliable, where does that place any confidence in the scripture?

Have at it to search out a meaning that is agreeable to you. I will not fault you for trying. Please feel free to post your considerations that you have discovered regarding possible meanings. We are to test all things. There is nothing wrong with testing interpretations that are at least plausible.

I won't bother to offer my own views because it appears if I simply quote the scripture, you have more than likely already figured out what "my view" is.

mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/24 16:03

I promised Greg a few years back I wouldn't argue about the views of hell.

I realize I am skirting around the edges here but I don't want to get into arguing actual scriptures in depth. There are plenty of resources available should a person want to study for themselves.

I do acknowledge that Jesus talked about hell. Obviously he did. But there is a huge question as to what he was actually talking about, particularly when he used the term Gehenna. This is because Gehenna was an actual physical place near Jerusalem filled with fire and rotting corpses.

But I can't get into arguing the scriptures on this. I understand the traditional view is traditional for a reason. However, supporters of the three main views (eternal conscious torment, conditional immortality, universal reconciliation) all embrace **without discomfort** terms such as "eternal judgment," "eternal punishment" and "eternal fire." In other words, they all use these phrases to support their case. How is this possible? Obviously this is because there are differing opinions (supported by scripture) as to how these words are interpreted and what they actually mean.

Like I said before, I am not sure which view is correct. But I have studied the issue enough to realize that it is not as simple as you are making it out to be.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/24 16:26

Thanks Todd, we are nearing agreement.

The simplest aspect of this subject to me is the translation of the words in the text. I can appreciate the increasing difficulty thereafter. To search out the meaning of the words is an endeavor worthy of undertaking.

I believe the plain meaning is the safest, but I agree with you that Revelation is full of symbolic terms, and there are other passages where the matter of understanding is quite complex. We have so much more of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge to explore. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of kings to search it out.

Thank you for your participation in the discussion. I have often been refreshed by your own perspective. I also enjoy being challenged directly, because it compels me to examine the scriptures again to see if I may be in error. I have no desire to hold to a view simply because it is what I have been taught.

I alone am to blame for whatever understanding I have come to. No man has forced his opinion upon me, and if I have failed to search out a matter to verify it, then the fault is my own alone. I bear the sole responsibility for what I believe and as a teacher I understand that I face a stricter judgment for my influence upon others.

This is sufficient cause for me to carefully study and pray to know the truth. I enjoy the company and fellowship of many others on this forum who share a like passion and vision.

mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/24 18:05

I did want to mention that in the past I have led Bible studies and I have never taught anything other than the traditional view, sometimes through gritted teeth I admit. I am the only Christian I personally know who even considers other viewpoints, although I think one guy may be considering it based on some Facebook posts of his, but I had nothing to do with it.

I will freely admit that my primary qualm about eternal conscious torment is quasi-philosophical. I say quasi because I do not think there is some scriptural support to the objection. Namely it is this: Scripture SEEMS to say that Jesus is the cosmic victor when all is said and done (Phil. 2:9-11).

If the view of eternal conscious torment is true, this means that the vast majority of beings God created in His image (at least 90%?) will be tormented, by Him, for all eternity. In that scenario, Satan is the cosmic winner. Can't you just hear Satan snickering at those numbers? At the end of the day, God is torturing almost all of the men He loves, or at least used to love.

Now, someone might say that even if Jesus' sacrifice saved one person from eternal torment, He is still the cosmic victor because no one deserved to be saved. But that explanation simply changes the definition of victor and loser.

Re: brother Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/6/25 7:59

While it's not my intention to disrupt this thread, you did/are making some honest statements that bespeak of your starting point, which by all indications is squarely outside the Kingdom of God. To approach these matters from a worldly perspective is to fall short of the truth of God's spirit being revealed as even being a potential. Without the spirit who can see or know the things of God? When left to our human devices we inevitably fall into human reasoning and at best apply a pragmatic principle to what is divine, as such miss the requisite truth-

From your words, it sounds like you are "interviewing" God's plan to see if it meets your ideas of fairness and justice... seems like God may not be "god enough" for you to come into agreement with Him in that He is God, we are not and we have a choice whether we believe His word. It would seem plain enough that if God intended for ultimate or universal reconciliation with all men that He would simply say so,... but in fact, He says quite the opposite as do all His apostles and if that weren't enough, you can simply ask Him yourself?

I mean surely you can pray and ask Him yourself, being willing to accept whatever He says without reservation.... if anyone seeks wisdom, let him ask.. James 1:5

The idea that you can reason out the divine eternal justice of God by way of fallen human faculties is surprising to hear from you as even a consideration much less a possibility... yet here we are

Perhaps in addition to seeking the Lord to reveal this truth to you personally and therefore have it once and for all time settled in your heart, mind and spirit, you might also consider addressing the offense/contempt you hold regarding His fin

al judgement being beyond our influence or appeal.

I say this humbly because I too have held a disposition that veiled my eyes from seeing the truth and until He had broken me down, I was unwilling to accept His Truth on His terms. Yes He was patient and merciful with me as I am sure He is with you, but until I was "poor" enough in spirit to let God be my God, He (His Truth) was a thing to investigate not a person to love. Only when it was settled in my heart that I would accept Him as He chose to reveal Himself was I able to know Him.

Having said all of this, when I was struggling with the selfsame He gave me an analogy that helped me to better understand His perspective and my hope is that it also blesses you :)

When a human body has a cell or group of cells that are not under the direction of the head, we call that cancer. Now these cancerous cells are not lazy, but are in fact quite busy but their work is against the head and by extension the body that supports and supplies them. Treatment for these cells seeks to "reform" them, convincing them to stop their rebellion by opposing them, reducing not only their influence on surrounding cells but also in the supply of energy/life itself. This is an act of love for the cells individually and the body as a whole. If after a period of this they (the cancerous cells) do not repent, coming back under the authority of the head, then the love for the body requires that they be cut out of the body and cast out never to be restored. This too is an act of love and it's not because they weren't loved that this happened, for the head provided for all the cells equally in source, context and opportunity by giving the supply of life which was used to initially rebel and remain so... all those cells have to do is submit to the authority upon which they themselves are dependent for their life and not think they "know better". Obviously from their "local" perspective these actions being taken by the cancerous cells makes sense to them, seeming the "right thing" to do or the "correct way" to view it but you see dear brother they were deceived into forsaking the very source of their life itself and as such, though through repeatedly and sincere efforts by the head, are (for the sake of not allowing the whole body to succumb) cut out and it's an act of mercy to do so "Y~••»"

Understandably one may say, yes ok but.... to then torture these cells with eternal conscious torment is too much to be just, for it is enough that they are cut and thrust out.... and to that I say God is God whether we want Him to be or not but we have to ascribe to Him dominion for Him to be "our God". He didn't ask our permission to give us life, nor is He required to ask our permission to execute judgment over His creation whether we see it as just or not,... that's the paradigm of Authority-

So I hope you see that He is indeed being merciful with you, by not allowing you to have peace where there is error, we are forced (encouraged) to seek Him personally that He may be both the source and solution to our quandary. I believe He is blessing you immensely and desires to draw you unto Himself that He may speak to your heart and with His word settle your heart just as His word is forever settled in heaven "Y~‡"

It is to this end that I will pray dear brother believing the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob will reveal the truth of His spirit to us in a more intimate and amazing way, that we might know Him and Jesus Christ whom He sent "Y~••»"

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/25 8:21

Today I have found myself rejoicing in the unique position I have found myself on this forum.

Those of you who have been on the forum for some time, and have followed some of the threads that I have participated in will be able to relate to my realization. I discovered myself in the middle of two different views regarding salvation.

I have enjoyed wonderful discussions with several dear brothers on this forum who advocate that only the elect have been predestined for salvation. Their understanding is that God does not extend prevenient saving grace to all men. They sincerely believe that according to His own foreknowledge God has predestined the elect unto salvation. In these discussions, they explained that the state of death that men are in under the bondage of SIN has rendered men incapable of responding without the prevenient grace of God quickening them first. I have not understood predestination, election, and grace in this way, but have set forth my current understanding that from the beginning Christ was predestined as the source of grace offered to all men and that the elect are those who respond in faith to the grace that comes to them through the preaching of the gospel. The discussions were very helpful to me personally and I hope they were equally helpful to my brothers with whom I engaged.

Recently, I have encountered a fellow believer on the forum who advocates that the saving work of Christ is so extensive as to ultimately save every person either by grace through faith in this life, or eventually even by grace through faith ou

t of the lake of fire. This person advocates that everyone, from every age will have been ultimately saved by the redemption Christ accomplished.

These are the two positions that I find myself between. I am somewhere in between my dear brothers who sincerely believe salvation is for the predestined, elect, alone and never intended for all men and another who believes that my understanding of grace is too limited because I believe even though all men are offered the opportunity to be saved by grace through faith, many will perish eternally because of their unbelief.

I do not feel lost in the middle, but rejoice that God is the only one who knows all. Today, I find myself rejoicing that the one who searches hearts and minds sees my gratitude for His love to us through Christ Jesus and who knows that I can only trust in His mercy to continue to reveal Himself to me and to all my brothers and sisters here who love Him.

Since, I can only know in part, I can only hope and trust that in His mercy, the Father will bring me and those I have enjoyed interacting with here on the forum to the full knowledge of the truth in His own good time.

mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/25 8:28

Hey Fletcher-

You can interject whenever you want. I am pretty much done with this discussion but that's ok.

I am not 100% sure what you are trying to say in your post. You seem to be saying that I am basing my willingness to consider some alternate view to eternal conscious torment on "wishful thinking" or "my concept of fairness" (my phrasing, not yours) I will admit I have a very difficult time understanding how God keeping folks alive for all eternity for the sole purpose of torturing them brings Him any glory, but all that is just gravy. I think there is a ton of biblical support, particularly for Conditional Immortality.

Did you know that David Servant (who has 542 articles on this site) holds and John Stott held this view? Surely they did not reach this conclusion based on wishful thinking.

Re: brother Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/6/25 8:44

Ha!

No dear brother I do not believe nor am laying charge that you are "wishful thinking" regarding your willingness to question.... in fact I applaud it !

So forgive my clumsiness in attempting to articulate this point "•••••"

You, like the Lord, don't want anyone to perish and I share in that desire.

The simple truth is, just ask Him Todd... go before the Lord petitioning Him to open your heart to His truth believing He will and being willing to accept whatever He says as truth :)

Otherwise we are left to our own devices and as you well know, they fall well short of what is required to apprehend that for which we were apprehended.

Honestly I believe He gave you the desire to search out this matter and in this way gets glory from the revelation of it "•••••"

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/6/25 9:03

Todd, The idea of exploring the true meaning of texts that have such enormous implications is really very healthy and "noble". The thing I have always been concerned about for you and not for truth's sake or for Christ's sake is when you say something like "If God eternally torments then you find Him or that fact 'distasteful'" or on other issues maybe monstrous. I'm not trying to debate the doctrines or positions held. I've talked to David Servant who I consider a good friend about the same concerns with some statements he's made about the character of God if this or that doctrine is true. It really is more a concern for him (IF he is wrong). Being wrong on doctrine is one thing. Potentially, and I emphasize potentially, ascribing ugliness to God if the doctrine goes a certain way is a real concern on individual levels.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/25 9:04

Dear Jade,

As I am translating I John, I see a connection between "eternal life" and "believing" repeated multiple times. This caused me to reflect back on the gospel of John and the many times John records our Lord making the same connection.

Eternal life is given to those who believe. It seems that you have come to an understanding that even those who do not believe will be given eternal life.

Can you explain how you understand the words of Jesus equating eternal life with only those who believe and your conclusion that His redemption secured eternal life for everyone whether they believe or not?

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/6/25 9:15

BTW Mak, I thought I was in the middle. :)

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/25 10:10

Mak,

MY VIEW ON REVELATION 21:3-8

First, let me say that I uphold the holiness of God.

1 Pet. 1:15-16 "Be

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

God is holy and nothing unclean or anyone practicing abomination and lying can enter God's glorious city as Rev. 21:27 affirms: "and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

There are only two places for a man. He is either in life or in death.

Man must choose life or death.

From the beginning of the Bible to the end, God presents man with that choice.

To Adam:

Gen. 2:15-17 "Then

the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

To the Israelites in the land of Moab:

Deut. 30:15,19 "See,

I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,

And here in Rev. 21:3-8, God again sets before men the choice of life or death.

LIFE:

Rev. 21:6-7 "And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the WATER OF LIFE freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the WATER OF LIFE freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

DEATH:

Rev. 21:8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the SECOND DEATH."

But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the SECOND DEATH."

Comment:

Those without the WATER OF LIFE (re: John 4:14, 1 John 5:11-12) are in the SECOND DEATH.

At the beginning of creation, Adam chose death. What would his descendants choose at the end of this age? Scripture indicates that men will choose life.

John 17:3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Phil. 3:10-11 "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Isa. 11:9 "For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD

As the waters cover the sea.

Isa. 66:23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon

And from sabbath to sabbath,

All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.

All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.

1 Cor. 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Quote:

----- I bless the One Who sits on the throne for every word He said. He is righteous to show mercy and He is to be glorified by His wrath just as well. We are exhorted to behold His kindness and His severity. I am not ashamed that the gospel of God includes the truth that the wicked shall be destroyed by the breath of His mouth.

Can you give scripture that God is glorified by His wrath?

God says in Ezek. 18:32 that He has no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies and urges men to repent and live.

Quote:

----- Paul, who understood grace better than either of us, introduced the gospel of God alongside the wrath of God being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who suppress the truth in their unrighteousness.

Please read the rest of Romans.

Quote:

----- The Jesus of the New Testament is both Savior and the one leading the armies of heaven to slay the wicked.

Yes, Mak. Jesus, our Saviour, at the cross slayed our wicked "old man". Mine, and yours too. There is no salvation otherwise.

Quote:

----- Eternal life is given to those who believe. It seems that you have come to an understanding that even those who do not believe will be given eternal life.

What are you talking about??

Have you even read my replies to you on this and other threads regarding this??????

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/25 10:45

Fletcher" got it!

You are right, I do ask Him but I have not (yet) received a definitive answer. I may need to ask more often.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/25 10:48

Robert-

You are right- I have said things like that and I shouldn't.

God is God and because I know Him I trust that He will do what is right when all is said and done and I realize that not I (nor anybody else) has all the facts.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/25 14:19

Dear Jade,

What you are interpreting as a "choice" in Revelation 21 is a very unique interpretation. I admit to have read the passage for many years and never saw the choice you say is there.

But are you saying that those described as being in the lake of fire in Revelations 21 have chosen death again, or are they there because of their first choice. I am not following you. I apologize for asking you to explain, but I am attempting to understand how you have arrived at your understanding.

The things that I think I understand about what you have written is that you believe certain passages that refer to the destruction of the wicked are alluding to the "old man" being destroyed - ie Romans 6, Galatians 5, and possibly other passages. You have written that Christ did not come to destroy men, but to save men, and rightly noted He does not take pleasure in destroying men, just the wickedness in man. Am I with you here?

If I have understood you correctly, you also believe that Christ obtained a salvation for all men that will ultimately result in NO ONE who was cast into the hell being left in the lake of fire, or any suffering or sorrow of any kind anywhere, for ever more. Is that close to what you believe?

Please try to be patient, for certainly you must already know that your view is unique, and very uncommon. That does not make it wrong, but it does mean that the vast majority of men and women who have read and studied these same passages have understood them differently.

Perhaps you have received special revelation, that is a possibility. Perhaps you have a sharper mind than many others who have not understood the passages as you have. What is obvious, is that your view is not common and therefore please consider that since what you believe you have seen has not been seen by a great number of others, it may be more difficult to explain or to follow.

I hope that I am not picking up on the leaven of pride. What am I referring to? - a statement like "please read the rest of Romans." Can you see how such a statement could appear condescending? Perhaps you did not intend for it to be taken that way at all, but is it not better to assume that the scriptures are as precious to others as they are to you. Most of the brothers and sisters on this forum are devoted to the love of the truth and the careful study of the scriptures. Can you see how such a statement might be interpreted as leavened (even if only a little) with pride.

I do not agree with you but I love the scriptures, and I can see that you clearly love them. I have assumed that you have read and studied the scriptures very carefully. I am also aware that life can not be found only by studying the scriptures. I know what our Lord said to the Jewish leaders about studying the scriptures while refusing to come to Him for life.

I only hope to challenge your understanding. Yes, I believe you are wrong, but please do not single me out as if I think more highly of myself than I should. I just happen to be the one conversing with you now, surely others have before and others will after me. Certainly you do not think that anyone who does not agree with you is ignorant of the scriptures or has not received the revelation of Jesus Christ. I certainly do not think my own understanding is complete, but I am not afraid to challenge another person's interpretation.

If I am wrong, I trust my heavenly Father will discipline me and show me the way more adequately. Thank God for the Aquilas and Priscillas of the world, who help brothers like Apollos see the way more completely.

In my last post I asked you a sincere question that arose as I was enjoying some time translating I John this morning. I wondered how you had worked out your own understanding of dying in unbelief and still ultimately receiving eternal life from Christ. I assume by the tone of your writing I should have already figured that out. I apologize, I think I know, but I wanted to see how you would put it in your own words.

I think you have said that those who are cast into hell, the second death, will be given the opportunity to choose life and of course they will do so. If that is what you believe, then I have understood you at least partially. I am not trying to misrepresent you.

Honestly, you are the first person I have ever corresponded with who has advocated what you do. Unless I have lived in a bubble, there are not many believers who see things the way you do.

mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/26 11:17

Mak,

Stanley P. Smith (1861 – 1931), a British Protestant missionary to China, was a proponent of universal restoration.

Stanley Smith was an attractive, athletic and handsome young man, an eloquent orator, and was the son of a successful and godly London surgeon.

In 1873, D. L. Moody and Ira Sankey arrived in the British Isles for a 3-year evangelical mission. Stanley Smith, then 13 years old, heard Moody preached and was converted.

In 1879, he entered Cambridge University. There he attended the fledgling Cambridge Intercollegiate Christian Union and helped with meetings for slum children.

He joined the Trinity College Rowing Club and by the autumn of 1881, he was the captain of the college boats.

He took his degree in 1882. After that, he met an elderly gentleman who showed him the difference between being an average Christian and living altogether possessed, set free from the domination of personal sin and used by the Holy Spirit of God. He learned to take at face value and to act on the truth, "He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again," and "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Taken from "The Shaping of Modern China, Hudson Taylor's Life and Legacy, Vol. II" by A. J. Broomhall).

In 1883, Stanley Smith made the decision to join the China Inland Mission, met with Hudson Taylor, and confirmed his decision.

Shortly before he left England for China, he spoke at a meeting at Exeter Hall. The great hall was overcrowded, and many could not get in at all.

As at Cambridge, Stanley Smith then gave the main, spellbinding address. It cannot be read without conveying the atmosphere in that hall. Neither the apostles nor their successors today were charged with the "milk and water of religion but the cream of the Gospel." William Carey on leaving yet another meeting of colleagues in Britain to discuss "the Gospel and the world," had protested, "Are we going to separate again, and is nothing to be done? If David Livingstone could leap to life (again) what would he say? "Do not follow my body home to this cathedral, but follow where my heart is in Africa." The five thousand would never have been fed if the apostles had served only the front rows again and again. Then seizing on the indignation of the hour, "a greater than Gordon cries from Khartoum" "the voice of Christ from the cross of Calvary" "I thirst" "He thirsts for the Chinese, for the Africans, for the Asiatics, and for the South Americans" "Would you pass by that Christ? "There is sin in the camp, the infidelity of Achan thwarting the victory of God's people, the triumph of the Gospel" (Taken from "The Shaping of Modern China, Hudson Taylor's Life and Legacy, Vol. II" by A. J. Broomhall).

He arrived in China on Mar 18, 1881, a member of the famed "Cambridge Seven".

In 1902, Stanley Smith declared himself a positive believer in the final restoration of all. This conflicted with the belief of the China Inland Mission and he had to leave.

He set up his small independent mission in East Shanxi in China and taught and preached until he died on 31 Jan 1931.

His son Algernon Stanley-Smith co-founded the Ruanda Mission in Africa.

Gladys Aylward who brought 100 children over the mountains to escape the Japanese was connected with Stanley Smith's small and humble mission.

Stanley Smith was not the only one in the China Inland Mission who believed in universal restoration. William Berger who co-founded the mission with Hudson Taylor also did. Because of widespread opposition to this belief, William Berger voluntarily retired in order not to derail the mission. His retirement was a tremendous loss to Hudson Taylor. He had been

n the main financial contributor and Home (England) Director and his hard work and support and dedication had been in valuable to Hudson Taylor in the early difficult years of the mission.

Following is an extract from "The Spiritual Condition of the Heathen: A Reply to Mr. Henry W. Frost, Director of the China Inland Mission in North America" by Stanley P. Smith:

THESIS VII

We believe that the heathen are lost and that they will be judged : but we can well imagine that God will give those who have not heard the Gospel in this world a chance to hear it in the other world, and that thus they will have the opportunity of being saved.

On this Mr. Frost remarks as follows: "

"It is always dangerous, so far as truth is concerned, to give freedom to the imagination. To grant men the right to imagine, would be to create as many theories of divine procedure as there are men. Moreover such liberty would cast us back on human reasoning as the basis of truth, which would create spiritual instability of the gravest kind. If there was no revelation, this would be the best, in spite of peril, which men could do. But since there is a revelation, the surest and safest thing for any one to do is to depend wholly upon it. And when we search the Word of God for some intimation to the effect that the heathen will have another chance in the world beyond, we search in vain. As to such a supposition, there is complete silence. Also, on the contrary, there is positive testimony that the present time is regarded as the only and final opportunity of salvation which men may have. For instance. Christ urged His apostles and disciples to preach the Gospel in this life, with fervent haste, throughout the world, and to every creature; which evidently would not have been the case if He could as well have left the work to another time and state and to other preachers, such as the angels or Himself. Again, the Apostles and Paul gave themselves, in the face of constant opposition and through the process of great suffering, to the task of evangelizing the whole world of their day; which manifestly would not have been the case unless they had been constrained by the conception of a present and pressing peril. And again, Paul witnessing to the Corinthians declares: 'Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation; 'which words, be it observed, were written to those who had been heathen and who were under the temptation of going back into heathen practices, and which thus indicate that what was true of them was also true of the heathen at large. Unless, therefore, we are to admit that the Word teaches annihilation or universalism " which doctrines a true theology has wholly and forever discredited " we are forced to the conclusion that the present world is the only place for the display of God's grace in saving souls and of man's opportunity of benefiting by that saving grace."

The reader will observe that Mr. Frost maintains "when we search the Word of God for some intimation to the effect that the heathen will have another chance in the world beyond, we search in vain. As to such a supposition there is complete silence."

By this "complete silence" I am reminded of the endless tormentist Sir Robert Anderson's words, " As regards the destiny of those the Bible fails to reach it is absolutely silent," a statement which, in the interests of truth, I am glad to see Mr. Frost's pamphlet effectually annihilates. But I stoutly maintain that Mr. Frost's statement about "complete silence" is equally unscriptural and untrue.

I respectfully ask Mr. Frost how "all nations" and "all families" (Acts 3:25) are not only to "have a chance" of being blessed, but will actually "be blessed" in Christ, if all the lost heathen are to suffer endless conscious suffering? Yet this broad statement of blessing occurs seven times in Scripture, and is described as being "the gospel" (Gal. 3:8).

Mr. Frost continues: "

"On the contrary, there is positive testimony that the present time is regarded as the only and final opportunity of salvation in which men may have."

I respectfully but firmly defy Mr. Frost to produce a single Scripture which will sustain this statement.

Mr. Frost gives three instances; by these I suppose he means to prove the above dogma.

He says: "

"For instance, Christ urged His apostles and disciples to preach the gospel in this life with fervent haste, throughout the world, and to every creature; which evidently would not have been the case, if He could as well have left the work to another time and state, and to other preachers, such as the angels or Himself."

To imagine that Christ would not urge His disciples to bring about vast present good, because that good, if now neglected, might be brought about in the far future, is a thought which seems to me to attribute callous indifference to our Blessed Lord.

Perish the thought!

To seek to secure, for the "lost" in this age, the unspeakable gains of forgiveness of a guilty past, acceptance with God, followed by a life of holy devotion to Him and His cause, is quite sufficient to demand our most strenuous and life-long efforts. In addition to this, however, there is their salvation from future punishment; this, of course, gives an added motive. There is no ground for working ourselves up into a frenzy by imagining that any single one of God's creatures is going to endless conscious suffering, for which doctrine Mr. Frost stands so resolutely, nor is there reason for going mad over the thought that all the departed heathen, or any of our departed loved ones have gone to such a doom.

To permit evil for a higher good is conceivable of God, and provable from Scripture (Rom. 5: 15-21, 8:20,21); but to permit evil in order to add to it endless evil is, to me, inconceivable of the ONE "save whom none is good" God, (Mark 10:18), who "is kind toward the unthankful and evil" (Luke 6:35), who "delighteth in mercy" (Mic. 7:18), who affirms that "mercy glorieth (or "exults") over judgment" (Jam. 2:13), and who "shuts up the all" (Rom. 11:32). The force of the Greek *panias*, which occurs twice in this verse, ("the all") is brought out by the words "all without exception," see Bengel Gnomon.) unto disobedience that He might have mercy on all without exception.

I ask the reader kindly to refer to pp. 50 fol. of "A Plea and a Protest," if he would care to see that those mediatorial offices of the Lord, which are directly connected with man's salvation, are in being throughout the mediatorial reign of Christ with His saints, in the age of the ages up to the consummation. These offices are in being, in order to be in exercise, with the saints as the ready channels of His saving ministry.

Let us proceed to Mr. Frost's second point.

He says: '"

" Again, the Apostles and Paul gave themselves in the face of constant opposition and through the process of great suffering, to the task of evangelizing the whole world of their day; which manifestly would not have been the case unless they had been constrained by the conception of a present and pressing peril."

I have the privilege of being a missionary, and devoting myself to the task of world-evangelization. My parish consists of five thousand square miles, made up of five counties, in each county-town of which we have resident native workers.

As the sole European male worker I find my hands full. Oh! to bring the full gospel of pardon, holiness and health through faith in Christ's atonement and the power of His Spirit to every man, woman, and child!

Yet, if I ask myself what is the "conception" which constrains me to work and pray for this prefecture, it is NOT the thought that any one of them is going to an endless hell. Quite the contrary; I believe in this world, or the next, or in the consummation, every one of them will be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. I believe this as firmly as I believe that God is "a faithful Creator," and that His word is true.

What keeps me at my work is: '"

- (1) The love of Christ to me, and mine to Him.
- (2) The command of Christ to preach the gospel to every creature.
- (3) The sense of the awfulness of the present sin, sickness, and misery, and the sense of duty to do all I can in the Name of Jesus and in the power of His Spirit to save them now.
- (4) And lastly, the knowledge that what men sow they must reap; and that, if they die impenitent, an awful ' because p

perfectly just, but in no case endless punishment awaits them in the future state.

Now these four heads are quite sufficient to keep me pegging away till Jesus comes. The dogma of endless torment is quite needless as an incentive. Indeed one of the keenest men I ever knew in China on endless torment, a man who hardly ever moved out of his study to save souls.

Mr. Frost's third point is as follows:

And again Paul witnessing to the Corinthians declares: "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" which words, be it observed, were written to those who were heathen and which indicate that what was true of them was also true of the heathen at large.

This is the only one of the three points where Scripture is adduced as direct proof. Mr. Frost would, no doubt, make a great point of the use of the definite article here "the accepted time-" "the day of salvation." That he so believes is proved by his own language; "the present time is regarded as the only and final opportunity of salvation which men have," and again "the present world is the only place for the display of God's grace in saving souls." The definite article, however, is not in the Greek. The text should simply read: "Now is an acceptable time; behold, now is a day of salvation." That "day" is as present now as then, and will continue throughout the "day of eternity" (2 Pet. 3:18, Greek, is an ascription of praise to the aviator), until universal reconciliation is accomplished.

Concerning Mr. Frost's three points, the first is to him "evident," the second "manifest," and the third unanswerable and dogmatic Scripture. To my mind each point seems weaker than the former.

Mr. Frost's last point is a summary judgment pronounced in favour of his own "theology."

He says:

"Unless, therefore, we are to admit that the Word teaches annihilation or universalism which doctrines a true theology has wholly and forever discredited we are forced to the conclusion that the present world is the only place for the display of God's grace in saving souls."

That is, "a true theology" believes in the endless torment of over a hundred thousand million human beings! Reader, kindly pause and THINK!

I understand that, in America, there are those who call themselves "universalists," who deny hell and future punishment. If this be true, I should have as little sympathy with their views, as with the views of endless tormentists.

Mr. Frost maintains that "a true theology has wholly and forever discredited" final reconciliation.

As I am speaking on behalf of many, and as the doctrine of final reconciliation is, to us, entirely Scriptural, and more precious than life, Mr. Frost can hardly expect us to take his castigation lying down.

When I say that Mr. Frost holds that God will inflict endless torment on over a hundred thousand million of "His offspring," I am not, as to numbers, unfair to him.

In the conclusion of his article he says: "It is admitted that one thousand million of the present population of the earth are heathen." Further, in his "Editorial Notes" he quotes an author to the effect that "half the earth's inhabitants die before 16," and reminds us that "these millions and billions are immortal souls."

Now I have a personal proposition to make to Mr. Frost as follows:

In my booklet "A Plea and Protest" sent herewith, I give a "resultant summary" of correspondence on "that God may be all in all," pp. 12, 13; and "an exposition of 1 Cor. 15: 24-28" pp. 45-57.

I have read what you have to say on "The Spiritual Condition of the Heathen," will you give me a hearing?

If you will, I propose you should take as your thesis, "That God may be all in all," and reconcile that prophecy with over a hundred thousand million beings enduring endless conscious suffering, in endless heart-hatred against God, and conse

quently God being NOTHING in any one of them! If you do this, I hope it will possibly help you to look a little more sympathetically on the views of some of your brethren in Christ, whom Christ does not love or honour less than He does you.

--- End of Extract.

I have appended the above article just for information and will not debate it.

I am finished with this thread.

No further comment.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/6/27 16:41

For those who have followed this thread, some final thoughts.

When we encounter a view like Universal reconciliation, we should assume that the individual who has embraced the understanding has done so after careful consideration. It is safer to assume that he or she has read most if not all of the passages of scripture that we might think counter their position.

In the future, for anyone who might hold to a unique or uncommon scriptural viewpoint, it would be very helpful for those discussing the issue to know how the various passages that might appear to counter a position have been worked out in your own understanding. Without knowing your own thoughts in your own words, how can others know how you have reconciled what are the apparent differences to others.

Everyone deserves to be given the benefit of the doubt that they have studied the matter out and come to a conclusion. Others who at first oppose the idea should be also given the same benefit of the doubt and for that reason it would be helpful to directly address some of the scriptural conflicts that the subject involves.

When a person is willing to explain how they have reconciled certain passages with others, it provides the opportunity for more careful examination. We make little to no progress simply assuming that a brother or sister is not open to our own consideration. If our thought process is earnest and sincere, we should have no shame to express it in a way that others can see how we reached our conclusion.

I can see where subjecting our thought process to the sport of mockery or intellectual gamesmanship is unprofitable and would agree this should be avoided. However, I have been blessed to gain a greater understanding and appreciation from several brothers here in the forum with whom I do not yet see the same on several topics. Nevertheless, their candor and ability to delineate their reason for their position has benefited me tremendously and who knows, may have laid the foundation for a change of my own position in the future.

If I have not expressed my hope adequately, I pray the spirit of my intention will be received. If I can not compare my own thought process with yours, in your own words, I am ill equipped to give your thoughts the full consideration they deserve.

Mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/6/28 7:56

Well said Mak.