



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume IX
Issue 212

Total Victory over Sin!

Part 3

by – Bill Petri

Revelation 14:10 sheds further light: these subjects are also tormented by and through another agency, which in reality sums up and constitutes the fire and brimstone, and that agency is THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB, and the holy angels (or messengers).

What an amazing divine paradox! The Lamb – precious embodiment of the very character of innocence, patience, meekness, gentleness, holiness, sacrifice and redemption – being made TORMENT to men for whom He died! The very thought seems incongruous. You see, dear ones, IT IS NOT THE NATURE of a lamb to torture anyone. It is simply not in the nature of the lamb to want to hurt in any way. Really! What could a lamb do to torture anyone? It has no capability for such a thing. So it is with the LAMB OF GOD! The Lamb of God has no desire, no ability to inflict torture in any way. His desire is entirely redemptive – that men might have life and have it more abundantly!

I cannot imagine this One, with the nature of a lamb, packing poor lost souls like brick into a kiln, standing there blowing the fires of hell through them for ever. Such a grotesque representation charges the blessed Redeemer with crimes more heartless than those of Adolph Eichmann.

Ah, the torment comes not from the Lamb. The torment lies within the bosoms of the tormented. Scripture does not say that the Lamb torments them! If you think it does, you are mistaken. It

states that THEY ARE TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE of the Lamb. What a thought! TORMENTED *IN HIS PRESENCE*. The Lamb is merely present – He does not torment. The condition of torment is *within* them: Because they are wrong and sinful in nature, wicked in their hearts, selfish in their minds, and impure in their desires, they are CONDEMNED IN THEIR CONSCIENCES by the very PRESENCE of the pure, holy, sinless, selfless, sacrificing Lamb of God. Hell is at its fiercest when it sees heaven, and not until then.

When these realize the presence, or the character of the Lamb, they are tortured in their consciences, for in the Light of the Lamb they see themselves for the wretched little devils they are. The very PRESENCE of TRUTH torments the deceitful and the liar. The very PRESENCE of HOLINESS torments the immoral and corrupt. The very PRESENCE of LOVE is torment to the mean and hateful. The PRESENCE of Him who is the PRINCE OF PEACE is torture to those who live by violence and the sword. The very PRESENCE of the LIFE OF THE LAMB is the most awful torment and torture to all the opposing forces, both deceiver and deceived, until all the deceit and hostility has been taken out of them, and they come to KNOW THE LORD. When

(see **VICTORY**, page 2035)

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Our Mailbox.....2039

Dear Family,

I have had the privilege of enjoying some wonderful fellowship and teaching times over the past few months; four of them to be exact.

During these gatherings we were able to meet, for the first time, many saints who rejoice in our Father being the "Savior of all men," and who along with us are outside of the religious system. What an encouragement to be with saints that have no "church" to promote except God's own treasured ecclesia!

Ohio: Andre Sneidar, my sons Clyde III and Nathan, Aaron Locker, and I drove to the Cleveland OH area in June. Ted McDivitt was the gathering host for the three-day fellowship, and our personal hosts were Greg and Barb Camacho. The other teachers there were: Dean Hough, Tony Nungesser, Don Bast, Rick Farwell, Kenny Clinton and Dan Sheridan. It was truly a refreshing time.

Pennsylvania: Also in June we drove to Youngwood, PA for another wonderful time of fellowship. Dan Gargon went with us this time. I had only met Dan a couple of days before the meeting. He lives only about seven miles from me. He, too, has come to see the salvation of all and has left the professional ministry.

Joe Gardner was our gathering host for the two-day fellowship. Martin Zender and Brother Jean Douglas were the other teachers. Danny Russino ministered some wonderful music to our hearts.

Illinois: In September I flew to the Chicagoland area to a three-day gathering hosted by Dan Sheridan. We had beautiful weather and an even more wonderful time with saints from many parts of the country. Other teachers were: Dean Hough, Tony Nungesser, Robert Johnson, David Sielaff and brother Jean Douglas.

Texas: In Early October we were off on a road trip to Texas! We traveled some 3,500 miles for a nearly 60-hour round trip. It was quite an adventure. We haven't been on a road trip like that since our last trip to CA many years ago.

We stopped to see the grandbabies on the way and on the way back (and their parents too!) We also took in a few extra stops along the way. Among other things, we saw the "Air Force One" collection at the Wright-Paterson Air Force Base outside of Dayton, OH, and rode to the top of the St. Louis Gateway Arch.

Our three-day gathering was hosted by Todd and Dollie Miller and saints from Amarillo. It was a beautiful retreat at the Hidden Falls Ranch, at the Palo Duro Canyon – the 2nd largest canyon in the U.S.

It was a splendid time of fellowship and teaching, with amazing views – as our cabin was only 52 feet from the edge of the canyon. Dan Sheridan and Martin Zender also taught.

Greenwood, PA: Speaking of gatherings, Joe Gardner is extending a fellowship invitation to Hoss's Family Resturant in Greenwood, PA on Sunday, November 8th for a Dutch Lunch. I'm planning on being there. If you are close enough to attend, it would be a joy to see you!

Until next week, I remain yours in the Love of Christ,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume IX, No. 212 – October 27, 2009

This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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Electronic Version (e-mailed to you)

1 Year (52 issues) – \$10; 2 Years (104 issues) – \$20

Printed Version (mailed to you)

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PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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VICTORY (continued from page 2033)

these have been exposed for a sufficient time to the PRESENCE of the Lamb, the Lamb will overcome them; His love and power will conquer their hearts; their rebellion and waywardness will be taken from them and they will at last ENJOY the Presence of the Lamb!

When the maniac of Gadara encountered the Christ the devils cried out, saying,

Have You come here to TORMENT US before the time? (Mathew 8:29).

IT WAS TORMENT FOR A POSSESSED PERSON TO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CHRIST. It is torment for any enemy of God to be ushered into the presence of God. Anyone who is unacquainted with God and happens to come into a group who are worshipping and praising God, is in torment all the time he is there. The sooner such a person can leave, the better he likes it. Such an atmosphere is hell for that person! Why is it so hard to get your unsaved loved ones and friends to go to Church? They are unhappy and miserable in a Church meeting! They are tormented when present with the saints worshipping God. They are citizens of the devil's kingdom, estranged from God, and cannot relate to the praises of God and the Word that is ministered. This all makes them unhappy and uncomfortable.

Again, the Greek does not say non-ending, but says for **ages**. That's sure to be a long time; but we don't know how long each age lasts, and time might be very different for God than for human beings. The point is that there is purification for those who are evil. They will be tormented/tested until they are transformed, like a tarnished metal passing through the fire. All the dross (sin) will be burned away and destroyed. Real torment is to see yourself, finally, as God sees you.

It could not be done other than in the presence of Holiness. God Himself is a burning fire! Notice that sulfur (brimstone) is mentioned in the verse

above. What does that represent?

Thayer's G2303 *theion* – 1) **brimstone** [sulfur]; 1a) divine incense, because burning brimstone was regarded as having **power to purify**, and to ward off disease.

So the brimstone or sulfur is symbolic of the fact that the flames of the Lake of Fire are purifying. This is an important point. Here is another verse where brimstone (sulfur) is mentioned:

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

So the second death is to purify further those individuals. They are still not done; they still have dross or sin present. They are being tested to bring about purity. God cannot dwell where there is sin. Remember, He desires **ALL** to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). This process is showing that God, in His infinite Love and Mercy, is very patient and willing to purify those He loves. God merely loves His enemies as He so commanded us to do. Who has the keys of hell and death? Jesus.

*I am He Who lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of **hell** and of **death*** (Revelation 1:18).

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

*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "**Death** is swallowed up **in victory**." "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"* (I Corinthians 15:54-55). ►

Even Death and Hell will no longer exist. So how can eternal torment be non-ending if the Bible says it will no longer exist? There will no longer be a need for testing and torment, because God will be *All, in all!!*

*And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put **all things** under Him, that **God may be All in all** (I Corinthians 15:28).*

Wow! What a wonderful plan! God loses nothing! God wins! *ALL* will be redeemed! *All, ALL, **ALL!!!*** How many is *ALL*? **Everyone!!**

Matthew 18:21-23 says that we are to **forgive** seventy times seven. Does God not do the same? How could God instruct us to do something that even He will not or cannot do?

I John 4:16 says that God is **love**. Could love torment any being for eternity? No, it would be impossible, because that is inconsistent with a loving nature.

In the Bible we read that one sin in particular, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, will not be forgiven either in this age or the age to come (Matthew 12:31-32). We do not know how long each age is, so how long does torment and punishment last? Only God knows however long it takes for each being individually. Again, the term “*forever and ever*,” used to describe the duration of punishment for the Devil and wicked beings, is literally **Age of the Ages**, which is however long it takes to complete the process of testing by the touchstone to make a metal (creature) pure (see Revelation 3:18; I Peter 1:7). How can anything be added to forever anyway? “*Forever and ever*” is an illogical statement. If the cup is filled all the way, how can any more be added? This doesn’t make sense.

*You turn **man to destruction**; and say, “**Return, you children of men**” (Psalm 90:3).*

CONTRADICTIONS? OR BIBLICAL TRUTH?

Nowhere in Scripture does it say that after death all hope is gone! Thus we see that:

- Sodom’s fiery judgment is eternal (Jude 7) until God will restore the fortunes of Sodom (Ezekiel 16: 53-55).
- Israel’s affliction is incurable (Jeremiah 30:12) until the Lord will restore health and heal her wounds (Jeremiah 30:17).
- The sin of Samaria is incurable (Micah 1:9) until the Lord will restore the fortunes of Samaria (Ezekiel 16:53).
- Ammon is to become a wasteland forever and rise no more (Zephaniah 2:9; Jeremiah 25:27) until the Lord will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites (Jeremiah 49:6).
- Egypt and Elam will rise no more (Jeremiah 25:27) until the Lord will restore the fortunes of Egypt (Ezekiel 29:14) and Elam (Jeremiah 49:39).
- Moab is destroyed (Jeremiah 48:4, 42) until the Lord will restore the fortunes of Moab (Jeremiah 48:47).
- Israel’s judgment lasts forever until the Spirit is poured out and God restores it (Isaiah 32:13-15).

Are these apparent contradictions of Scripture? Did the Lord change His mind? Or are these judgments only for a time, for an **AGE**? Clearly, the Bible teaches that God’s judgments are temporary, age-lasting, and intended to teach a lesson, not eternal torment or eternal annihilation (Psalm 90:3 disproves this idea).

POINTS TO PONDER

- A kind Father would not punish without purpose. What Father would send His

children to endless punishment? (Malachi 2:10).

- All souls belong to God; Does God give these up to the Devil forever to lose them? (Ezekiel 18:4).
- We are commanded by God to provide for our own house, so how can He abandon His own children in punishment?
- **All** things **given** to Jesus by God / All people (Psalm 2:8; John 3:35).
- **All shall come**, all flesh (John 17:2).
- **None** cast out (John 6:37).
- Who wills Salvation for **All** men (Matthew 6:10; I Timothy 2:4).
- Would God inspire us to pray for salvation for all men if He knew that they would not be saved?
- God wills that we come into relationship with Him on this side of life so that we do not have to go through torment, and that we may start in our growth into the image and likeness of His Son.
- If God wills all men to be saved, then He would have made provision for all to be saved.
- I John 4:8 says God is Love; Romans 13:10 says Love works no ill. If God is Love, and Love works no ill, then eternal torment would be a conflict of God's Own nature. If one is punished beyond recompense, that would be vengeful, evil and mindless. Is that God's just reward for evil?

Questions one must consider if ascribing to the Traditional Orthodox Damnation Doctrine:

- If Jesus preached eternal torment to the Samaritans in John 4:42, would they have concluded that Jesus is the Savior of the whole world?
- Why didn't Moses or any of the Old Testament prophets ever mention such a horrible consequence to disobedience?
- Doesn't "eternal suffering" prove that Satan did a better job at corrupting creation than Christ did in redeeming it?
- Doesn't "eternal suffering" show that God devised His Own everlasting defeat when He planned His creation?
- Doesn't "eternal suffering" demonstrate that Christ's atonement for all mankind (in many cases) is an everlasting failure?
- Doesn't "eternal suffering" show that Loving Kindness, Himself, has created billions of people whom He foreknew would never hear Christ proclaimed during their earthly lives and therefore would suffer forever? Wouldn't that make God infinitely evil? Punishment must fit the crime if He judges justly.
- Won't "eternal suffering" reveal that love is neither committed nor unfailing, nor is it by any means unconditional?
- Won't "eternal suffering" show that Holy Love has foreseen and therefore fore-planned for everlasting disaster for much of His Own creation?
- Doesn't "eternal suffering" demonstrate that Christ is not the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, but rather reveals Him as the Lamb of God who *tried* to take away the world's sin and failed?
- Doesn't "eternal suffering" make Jesus just a partial Savior? ►

CONCLUSION

The idea of Ultimate Salvation is not a new doctrine. As seen in this brief study on the subject we can safely and undoubtedly say with utmost certainty that universal salvation is a widespread doctrine taught throughout the Bible. The Torah never once mentions such a horrible penalty of eternal punishment. The Prophets, Historical and Poetical books, do not mention eternal punishment. Jesus and the Apostles did not teach non-ending death or non-ending torture: Then why are we forced to believe it? Why are we forced to believe that God is some monster, lacking self-control over His revenge on the wicked? Is that what the “Good News” is all about? Is this the God you know? Is this the loving God of the Bible about Whom preachers throughout the ages have preached?

You decide

Chances are that you just didn't think that much about the subject of Hell to begin with, and only believed what you were told. This would describe me to a “T”. Maybe somewhere in the back of your mind or in your heart you knew and have always known that God is love (I John 4:8, 16), and this doctrine of non-ending damnation was not true and cannot be true. How can this God of Love throw His Own creation into a mindless, sadistic, non-ending torture forever and ever? What pleasure does He have in this? What is the purpose of torment? What is the purpose of Hell? These were the questions I began to have in my thoughts the more I knew the God of the Bible.

Scriptures teach that the purpose of judgment/torture is for purification! What about the people whom God has put into our lives who have affected us, changed us and helped to lay the foundation of who we are? What about Parents, Grandma, Grandpa, brothers, sisters and friends who have a place of love in your heart: Will this God of Love just rip them and the remembrance of them out of your heart? Was their presence in

your life just meaningless, if they happened to be among the unsaved? No! One day **ALL** will be saved! Yes, **ALL!!!** That is the Gospel! That is the Blessed hope! That is the “**GOOD NEWS!!!**” That is why Jesus Christ came.

*Therefore as by the offense of one **judgment came** upon **ALL MEN** to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One **the free gift came** upon **ALL MEN** unto justification of life (Romans 5:18).*

Yes, the **whole world!** The Gospel of Salvation is not teaching some fear-mongering, ruthless consequence to inaction such as, “Believe, or Burn forever and ever.” This is **NOT** the Gospel! “Believe or Burn forever and ever” rejects everything that God is and has intended for His creation. This entire study proved that for me.

This IS THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION:

*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3-5).*

Whether in this age or the age to come, you *will* one day know the love of God. You *will* one day see all those who have gone on before you – they are not lost forever. Every single person that has ever lived and breathed on this planet from the beginning of time as we know it **WILL BE SAVED!**

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



Thanks for putting me on your list to receive your *Daily Email Goodies* ... Thanks again for your presentations [in IL]. You can't even begin to understand my appreciation for you. – **FL**

The *Daily Email Goodies* are really good!!!! Still following and enjoying your writing. Thanks for sharing these good words! Love ya. – **SC**

You have been instrumental in helping us find our way into a true walk with God. Thank YOU for keeping on keeping on. – **NC**

I want you to know how much we love and appreciate you. – **MD**

I just wanted to let you know that your series on the *Church in Ruins* [in the *Daily Email Goodies*] is awesome; I'm learning a lot from the Scriptures you're teaching that I didn't understand before. I can look around and see the apostasy but I relax that God has everything lined up according to His purpose. Thanks for your teaching. – **TX**

These II Timothy studies [in the *Daily Email Goodies*] are priceless. Thank God that you are putting these things in their contexts ... This is groundbreaking stuff ... I would love to see these collected into a small book. – **OH**

NOTE: Actually the II Timothy series should be available in book form in about a month!

I'm addicted to the *Daily Email Goodies*.

We're gobbling them up! – **PA**

Your *Daily Email Goodies* make so much sense; it's funny how I learn different yet vital things from you. – **TX**

Just wanted to thank you for all you are doing for the body of Christ. – **PA**

Nothing Shall Be Lost is the best book I've ever read on the subject and the easiest to understand. I am so glad to know that there are other voices out there teaching the truth that Christ died for all and He will not fail. You have a way of making things simple and easier to understand than I have sometimes found with other writers. – **IL**

This [II Timothy 2:25 – *Daily Email Goodie* #2162] has been one of my favorite verses in my adult life, largely due to the aggressive, condemning way I often saw the grace message being shared as a child. The attitude did not correspond with the message; to me that was a major flaw.

I think the only way out of this is to rest in the knowledge that God has already saved the world; he is just working out the revelation of this more slowly than we often like. When speaking with believers who are still in the religious system, it helps to remember that God has already set them free – that is not our job. Our job is to share with them that truth. God will open people's eyes when he sees fit; we certainly don't have that power.

I teach swimming lessons, and I see it as a nearly perfect metaphor for this situation. When people are first learning to swim, the single most important thing for them to learn is that water will hold them up. This is much easier for children than for adults. Non-swimmers are used to solid ground, and automatically see water as a vacuum, ►

just waiting to suck them under. The longer a person has distrusted water, the harder it is for them to let go: of the walls, the kickboard, the instructor, ANYTHING they perceive as security. Non-swimmers only turn into swimmers through the process of gradually testing the water: putting their face under, letting go of the wall, taking their feet off the bottom ... etc. It cannot be accomplished in a classroom, or by reading a book. Forcing the process only scares the student and builds psychological hurdles, so the best method is enticement, by showing how much fun you are having and making them want to join in. The most rewarding moment is when someone realizes that letting go gives them freedom, not death; they literally exult with excitement.

Believers who've grown up in the religious system are used to the props and the security that it promises. Letting go feels like a vacuum, so they will strongly resist. Forcing the issue only makes them insecure, so they hold more tightly to the system than before. Condemning them for being in the system isn't our job; God has set them free. What then is our job? To enjoy our freedom in Christ, and just keep broadcasting to others that they have it too. Some will slowly begin to think about it, then study up on it, then test it out, but it takes time and God is the one who gives to each the measure of faith.

We are not to beat fellow believers over the head with arguments, but to articulate clearly the emptiness of the system and the fullness of God. Our message is one of joy and freedom, explaining what God has deeded to humanity through Christ. And if we aren't enjoying God's fullness, why would anyone else want to try it?

Keep up the broadcasting! – CA

NOTE: Not all of our mail is favorable. Here is a taste of some of the short notes

we have received lately.

“You are without excuse!”

“You have become a heretic.”

“You stupid idiot.”

“You teach a damnable heresy.”

“What you teach is slick, devilishly clever, and extremely deceitful.”

“What you believe is a FALSE bible and a FALSE gospel.”

“Quit trying to be worshiped. Get the drift snowball, understand rubber band.”

“The *Daily Email Goodies* have become Daily Email *Trash*.”

“Are you that stupid?”

NOTE: God has brought us to a place where we were able to answer each of these with a loving and gracious response from our heart.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (II Timothy 2:24-26).