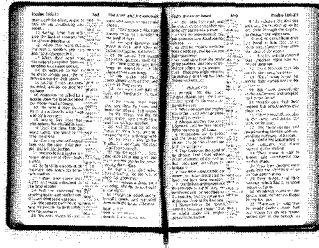


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

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Number 1

"... EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH..."

(Jude 3)

In his letter to saints, Jude exhorted: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." *The faith is the gospel of Christ* which Paul preached. In preaching the gospel, he preached "the faith which once he destroyed." (Gal. 1:23).

Saints have a responsibility to "earnestly contend" for the faith. The idea is that *we should contend as combatants*, and we should do so *earnestly*. To contend for the faith is to defend the faith! Paul said he was "set for the defense of the gospel". (Phil. 1:17) Writing to the church of the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul said: "...we were bold to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention." (1 Thess. 2:2)

In 1 Tim. 6:12 Paul exhorted Timothy to "Fight the good fight of faith..." In Eph. 6:10-18 Paul urges saints to properly equip themselves by putting on "the whole armour of God" and taking "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God". They were not to use carnal weapons in their battle for the faith. (See 2 Cor. 10:3-6). As we contend for the faith we must "strive lawfully". (See 2 Tim. 2:1-5).

At Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas *boldly contended for the faith* although envious Jews "spake against those things spoken by Paul, con-

tradicting and blaspheming." (Acts 13:45-46). In Athens (as recorded in Acts 17) Paul *disputed* "in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him." (Verse 17). Some of the philosophers "encountered him," i.e., debated or argued with him and some others said, "What will this babbler say?"

In Ephesus Paul "went into the synagogue, and spake boldly by the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:8-10).

The reason why saints are told to "earnestly contend for the faith" is because ungodly men creep in unawares. By their teaching they will endeavor to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and deny either by their teaching or by their actions (or both) the true God and His Son Jesus Christ! (See Jude 4).

We learn from Titus 1:9-16 that *there are many deceivers* "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

We must "*contend for the faith*" by exposing false teachings with courage, boldness and love. (CRS)

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Editorial...

HELL! IS THERE A PLACE OF ETERNAL TORMENT FOR THE WICKED? (NO. 22)

In our prior studies of *Hell*, we have been dealing with the *false doctrine* that the wicked will *not* be tormented eternally, but that they will be annihilated and thus will cease to exist. It is also contended by some that the dead are in a state of non-existence and unconsciousness. Those who teach this doctrine also teach that *man* is wholly mortal and thus he does not have an eternal soul or spirit within his physical body.

Let us resume our study of some arguments that are made in an effort to prove that there is not a place of eternal torment for the wicked. At this time we are going to continue our study of *Argument XII* as listed below.

XII. ARGUMENT: "THERE CAN BE NO ETERNAL TORMENT FOR THE WICKED BECAUSE WHEN THEY DIE, ARE CUT OFF, OR ARE DESTROYED, THEY CEASE TO EXIST. THEY BECOME EXTINCT. THEY ARE ANNIHILATED."

REPLY:

5. The expressions "*consume*, *devour utterly*" are used by Dickinson in an effort to prove that the wicked will *not* suffer eternal torment in hell.

He lists Matt. 3:12, 13:30, 40; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 12:29 and Rev. 18:8 for his proof passages. (What the Bible Teaches About Immortality and Future Punishment, page 20). All of these passages (except 2 Thess. 2:8) are also used by Edward Fudge to prove that sinners do not suffer eternal torment. (The Fire That Consumes, pages, 112, 157-158; 191, 283, 41, 157, 182, 254, 248-249, 109, 276, 277-277; 301, 299, etc.)

Matthew 3:12 says: "**Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**"

NOTE: Neither the expression *consume* or *devour utterly* appear in this passage in the King James Version of the Scriptures. Neither does either of them appear in the NKJV or the NASV. Instead, we have the expression "**he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**" (KJV) We have here the gathering of wheat into the garner and the *burning up* of chaff. No doubt, this gives us a glimpse of what will happen to the righteous and the wicked. However, it is not to be taken literally because the righteous will not be gathered into a garner (*granary, storehouse or barn*). Neither will the wicked be "**burned up**" in the sense that the *chaff* would be *burned up*. Here is the reason. Jesus said: "**And fear not which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell**" Luke 12:4-5 shows that the expression "**him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell**" means "**him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell**".

Please consider the fact that man can kill the body, but man *cannot* kill the soul. Man is able to kill the body by burning it up because that would cause the spirit (soul) to depart from the body. (See Gen. 35:18; James 2:26). *Burning up* the body does not cause the soul (spirit) to go out of existence. *Burning up* the body does not necessarily mean a complete annihilation of the body. We often speak of something such as a house (or automobile) *being burned*

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

up when it has been made unlivable as a house or rendered useless as an automobile by being *burned*.

When we take into consideration other passages we can clearly understand the fact that being burned up does not necessarily mean ceasing to exist or being brought to nothingness. We read: "For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone... Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?" (Jeremiah 9:10-12). NOTE: Although the mountains were *burned up* and the land *perisheth* and was *burned up* like a wilderness so that none passeth through both the mountains and the land were still in existence! Being "*burned up*" does not always mean a *ceasing to exist*. The context in which words are used has much to do with determining their meanings.

Matthew 13:30, 40 says: "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn...As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world." Neither *consume* nor *devour utterly* is found in the KJV, NKJV or NASV in this passage.

NOTE: See the comments made above on Matthew 3:12.

Please notice the fact that the next verses (Matthew 13:41-42) say: The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

At the end of the world, God will "cast into hell" the wicked and in so doing He will "destroy both body and soul in hell". (See Luke 12:4-5; Matthew 10:28). They shall go away "into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" where they "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (See Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 20:10).

OBSERVATION: There will be "*wailing and gnashing of teeth*" by those who are cast into the furnace of fire. This indicates suffering, pain or torment. If not, what does it indicate? Can you imagine being there without pain?

2 Thessalonians 2:8 says: "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

NOTE: The word *consume* (like other words) can be (and often are) used in different ways and have different meanings in different contexts. This is a *fact* that any reasonable person can easily observe and will have to admit.

In Jeremiah 44:12 we read that "...they shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine: they shall die..." NOTE: The result of their being consumed would be death. Verse 18 says: "...we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine." Although those whose wives burned incense, etc. to the queen of heaven were *consumed by the sword and by the famine* they still refused to hearken to the word of the Lord.

Jeremiah 5:3 says: "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." Obviously, these people have the ability to make correction and return although they had been *stricken* and *consumed*. To teach that the use of the word *consume* indicates that the wicked will not be eternally tormented, but will

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

be annihilated and cease to exist is to assume far more than the Scriptures bear out. Even men like Dickinson, Fudge, Maxey, the Adventists and the ""Witnessess" should be able to see the erroneous reasoning they employ.

Consider the fact that "that Wicked" whom the Lord "shall consume with the spirit of his mouth" shall be destroyed with the brightness of His coming. It says *consumed* and *destroyed*. Will "that Wicked" go out of existence twice? Be annihilated twice? Surely not? However, if *destroyed* and *consumed* mean annihilated or to ceased to exist that will be the case.

Revelation 18:8 says: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord who judgeth her." NOTE: Neither of the expressions *consume* nor *devour utterly* appear in the KJV, NKJV or the

NASV.

The notes made above under Matthew 3:12; 13:30, 40 about being *burned* or *burned up* should be considered when studying this verse. Of course, any thing physical or material can be *burned up* or *consumed* in the sense that it would no longer exist in the same state as before. The soul (spirit) of man does not fall in this category. Man is not able to *kill* the soul but can kill the body. (Mt. 10:28)

Hebrews 12:29 says: "For our God is a consuming fire." A number of times in the OT God *consumed* (*burned up*, *destroyed*) with fire (and other means) different ones. (See Numbers. 11:1; 16:35; Psalms 78:63; etc.) No, the words *consume* and *devour* utterly do **not** mean that the wicked will be annihilated or be brought to nought or will go into a state of nothingness.

Give diligence to learn, believe and obey **God's Word!** (To be continued)

Please note the change of my E-mail address: <sutton1103@charter.net>.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Self-respect is worth more than all the fame in the world.

* * * *

A smile makes life smoother for other people -- as well as for yourself.

* * * *

Habits can be good servants or bad masters.

* * * *

Life gives us time and space. It is up to us to properly fill it.

* * * *

A friend is one who truly knows us and still loves us.

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