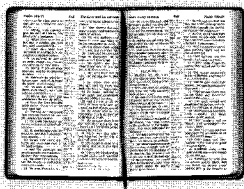


THE INSTRUCTOR



"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 3

PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

Although prayer is an exalted privilege of Christians, it is not a substitute for obedience to the will of God. (See Mt. 7:21-23 & Luke 6:46).

Early Christians prayed often and steadfastly. Acts 2:42 says: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 12:5 says: "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." NOTE: After Peter's release from prison, "he came to the house of Mary the mother of John... where many were gathered together praying." (Verse 12)

To the saints at Rome the apostle Paul said: "...Continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12) and he exhorted those in Thessalonica to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

To the saints at Ephesus he said: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18). NOTE: "Continuing", "without ceasing" and "praying always" suggest the idea of praying often, consistently and persistently.

In Luke 11:1 we read: "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." In verses 2-4 Jesus did teach the disciples how to pray. In verses 5-8 Jesus taught His disciples to be persistent in their praying by saying unto them: "Which of you shall have a

friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." NOTE: The word "importunity" means persistence and is so translated in the NJV and some others. This passage certainly teaches that we should be persistent in praying.

Luke 18:1-8 says: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily..."

NOTE: Here is another passage where Jesus clearly teaches persistence in prayer. Be persistent in prayer! (CRS)

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Editorial...

HELL! IS THERE A PLACE OF ETERNAL TORMENT FOR THE WICKED? (NO. 24)

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. Most of 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:

As we continue our examination of words that appear in a list of 25 or so, that Curtis Dickinson gives in his booklet that he thinks proves that there will be a *total bringing to nothing or non-existence* of the wicked, we are

learning that the desired conclusion is *not proven* by the verses that *Dickinson* lists. (The list is found on pages 20-21 of What the Bible teaches About Immortality and Future Punishment and is taken from Professor L.E. Froom's monumental work, "The Conditionalists Faith of Our Fathers"). Let us continue a study of the words listed and the passages given.

6. The expression "*swallow up*" is given to prove that the wicked will be *annihilated* and will *cease to exist*. 1 Cor. 15:54 and 1 Peter 5:8 are the passages given as "proof". Let us examine them.

1 Cor. 15:54 says: "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." NOTE: The expression "death is swallowed up in victory" does not say *anything* about the wicked *being annihilated* or *going out of existence*. At the resurrection death will no longer hold its prey. All who have died will be resurrected. (See 1 Cor. 15:12-57; John 5:28-29). The context of 1 Cor. 15:54 is that of a *physical* death and a resurrection. After the resurrection of all the dead at the last day, there will be no need for *physical* death any longer. As the last enemy, it shall be destroyed or *swallowed up* in victory. (See 1 Cor. 15:26). According to Rev. 21:4 "...God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; [of the righteous - CRS] and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." FURTHER NOTE: Although *physical* death will have served its purpose for both the wicked and the righteous, the wicked will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, "*which is the second death*." (Rev. 21:8). They will be eternally separated from God and the righteous and they "*shall be tormented day and night forever and ever*." (Rev. 20:10).

1 Peter 5:8 says: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

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NOTE: This passage says absolutely nothing about the wicked being *annihilated* and being *brought to non-existence*. To make assumptions and assertions does not constitute *proof*.

We should be sober and vigilant because the devil is our enemy and is seeking to bring about our *spiritual ruin*. He desires that we sin so we will *die spiritually*. He wants us to be separated from God in this life. He is also endeavoring to so influence us that we will be *lost eternally in hell fire* and experience *the second death*. Obviously he wants us to be *"tormented day and night for ever and ever"* with him and his angels, the beast and false prophet and all of the wicked. (See Matthew 25:41; Revelation 19:20 and Revelation 20:10).

According to Mt. 25:41-46; Rev. 20:10 and 21:8, the wicked will be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone where the beast, the false prophet, the devil and his angels will be and they *"shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."* In view of what these verses say, *the wicked will not be annihilated and will not go into non-existence*.

The penitent fornicator was to be forgiven and comforted "...lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." (2 Cor. 2:7). NOTE: If he was *"swallowed up with overmuch sorrow"*, he would not be annihilated and go out of existence. He would be *overwhelmed* with much grief.

In Jonah 1:17 when *"the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah"*, he was *not annihilated* nor did he *go out of existence* while he was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Clear enough, isn't it?

No, the words *swallow up* and *devour* do not mean the wicked will be *annihilated* and brought to *non-existence* as claimed by men like Dickinson, Froom, etc.

7. The word *"devour"* is also used by Curtis Dickinson and others in an effort to prove that the wicked will not be eternally punished, but will go out of existence. He lists Hebrews

10:27; Revelation 11:5 & Revelation 20:9. Let us examine these passages.

Hebrews 10:27 says: *"But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."* NOTE: Commenting on this Edward Fudge said: *"We note that this fire consumes or devours God's enemies, an allusion to the fate of Nadab and Abihu, who were similarly devoured by fire from God (Lev. 10:2)."* (The Fire That Consumes by Edward Fudge, page 275).

Lev. 10:2 says: *"And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord."* We can clearly see that the *devouring* of Nadab and Abihu was simply the killing of them by fire. The fire did not annihilate them. They did not cease to exist.

After "there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them", we learn from Lev. 10:4-5 that Moses *"called Mishael and Elzaphan...and said unto them, come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said."* QUESTION: If Nadab and Abihu were *annihilated* by the fire that *devoured* them, how was it possible for their brethren to later carry them out of the camp? Would Fudge, Dickinson, Maxey, or someone answer this question honestly and fairly? Would they explain how such could be done?

CONCLUSIONS: Here is a clear-cut case of the word *devoured* means *killed* which is equivalent to *died* (or *death*) in meaning. There is no way that *devoured* (or *consumed*) as used in these texts could mean *annihilated*! Such a contention is without any Scriptural basis whatsoever.

Revelation 11:5 says: *"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."* NOTE: As in the discussion relative to Heb. 10:27 and Lev. 10:1-4, *devoureth* is used in the sense of *killing* or put to *death*. See the above discussion under number 7. *Devour* (used in different forms) does not mean to *annihilate* OR to *cause to cease*. (Cont'd on page 4)

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Revelation 20: 9 says: "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." NOTE: As we have already seen in our discussion of the previous passages where "devour", "devoured" or "devoureth" was used that it had the meaning of kill, killed, kil-leth or put to death. It did not have the meaning of annihilate or to cause one to cease to exist except in the minds and imaginations of false teachers. Obviously, it has the same meaning in this passage as in the others.

8. *Grind to powder* is used by Dickinson in an effort to justify his false teaching that the wicked will not suffer eternal punishment, but will be annihilated and thus cease to exist. He cites Matthew 21:44 and Luke 20:18.

Matthew 21:44 says: "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it

will grind him to powder." (Also read Luke 20:18). NOTE: Fudge uses *crushed* as used in the NIV (instead of *grind to powder*). The word *crushed* or the expression *grind to powder* does not even suggest *annihilation* or *ceasing to exist*. It does suggest ruin. Fudge says: "Whatever relevance to the individual history of the wicked...They lose all privileges of the kingdom; they are brought to death in a wretched end...We cannot be sure if the judgment is temporal or eschatological, but it is described in these terms". One's position is indeed *weak* if he depends upon these two passages to prove that the wicked will be annihilated and cease to exist.

I continue to be amazed at the unfounded assumptions and groundless assertions that Dickinson, Fudge and others have made in an effort to uphold a doctrine that has no *Scriptural* basis.

(To be continued)

Gospel Meetings changed: Brummett, Corbin, KY, April 18 - 23, 2004 instead of March 7-12, 2004. Carrol R. Sutton, preaching. Come!

SENTENCE SERMONS

Instead of blowing your own horn, you should use that wind for climbing.

* * * * *

We should be more interested in people than in things.

* * * * *

Life is always worthwhile to the person who can laugh, love and live godly.

* * * * *

The successful person is one who does not allow the disappointments of life to cause him to quit.

* * * * *

Many people fail in life because their *wishbone* is where the *backbone* should be.

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