

Interpretation: Hellfire and Brimstone Revisited

Literal afterlife of torment or metaphorical present life of refinement

A Workbook

Rev. Mary Lokers

Cover Design: Rachelle Hope

Special Thanks: Sue Collins, Ruth Ann Steele, and Julie Ferwerda

Self Published October 2019

It is with great humility and love, dearly beloved seeker that I invite you to connect deeply with the richness of the goodness and love of God (YHWH), and at the same time, be set free from any unnecessary fear of death and of hell.

Copyright information: My heart's desire is for seekers to connect with the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven through this workbook. Feel free to reprint, distribute or utilize any of my work. Please email any feedback or insights on this topic to: untetheredtransformation@gmail.com.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Examining the concept of "Hell" based on Hebraic Terminology in the Old Testament	3
Chapter 2 Consequence for "Sin": Death, "Hellfire and Brimstone" and/or Anguish of the Soul?	10
Chapter 3 Valley of Hinnom	18
Chapter 4 "Hell" in the New Testament	21
Chapter 5 Fire, Lake of Fire and Brimstone	27
Chapter 6 Rich Man and Lazarus	38
Chapter 7 Justice for Wrongdoers?	45
Chapter 8 What Motivates Righteousness?	51
Chapter 9 Victory over the Fear of Death	56
Chapter 10 Conclusions	60
Endnotes	61

*"Fear is the greatest weapon in God's arsenal.
It's why the church created hell."*

Roman Catholic Cardinal - *Robinhood* (2018) - Directed by Otto Bathurst

*"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts
out fear; because fear has torment; those that
fear are not made perfect in love."*

I John 4:18

Introduction

In September 2011, I sold my home and set out on an *Abrahamic* adventure. After spending time in Texas, Florida and North Carolina, I journeyed to a tiny church in Virginia that spoke of biblical thoughts that resonated with mine. As I was leaving the church, the pastor gave me a copy of a book authored by Glenn L. Hill. As I leafed through the book, I sensed strong urgency to meet with the author. I noticed his address and phone number listed in the book. Lo and behold, he was located on my way to where I was residing. I called him and he agreed to meet that evening.

That night, late fall of 2011, I met this preacher at a restaurant in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Sitting across from him, a welcoming soothing presence enveloped me. About 15 minutes into our stimulating conversation, I blurted out, "I don't think there is a literal everlasting fire burning hell based on my own study of the Scriptures." His eyes grew big and he smiled widely. He stated that he didn't believe in a hell either. My new friend then invited me to stay with him and his wife for a fellowship-filled weekend. My dry and dusty worn out soul had been revived. Their hospitality was such a blessing. I didn't want to leave.

Glenn has written short essays, spoken at various conferences and is currently writing his book, *Christianity's Great Deception, the Church's Doctrine of Hell*, to shed his thoughts on the eternal "hell fire and brimstone" doctrine. He has inspired me with his thoughts and writings. I encourage seekers to be on the lookout for Glenn's writings.

I had planned to write a book exposing the literal hell fire and brimstone doctrine, but I found Julie Ferwerda's book, *Raising Hell, Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire*. Her book proved to be enlightening, deep, and meaningful; I no longer felt the need to write. Since I wanted seekers to interact with the Scriptures, this workbook was born out of my own study.

Unraveling the "eternal hell fire and brimstone" dogma that ruled my thinking was a dynamic and freeing turning point of my life at my age of forty two.

I used the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance with the 1611 King James Bible* (KJV) and the *New American Standard Version* as tools for this study because the metaphoric spiritual connections come alive. Please compare the KJV with your favorite version.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus (Yeshua) our Lord.”

Romans 8:38 & 39

Chapter 1 Examining the concept of "Hell" based on Hebraic Terminology in the Old Testament

Is the eternal "hell fire and brimstone" afterlife torment the consequence for badness and rejection of God? Explain in your own words what you have heard or believe regarding the concept of "hell."

Many Bible believers main reason for believing in an eternal hell fire and brimstone punishment due to rejecting God is that the word "hell" is used in many translations. The *King James Version* (KJV), the *1599 Geneva Bible* and *The Message Bible* use the word "hell" over and over again.

The Old Testament Usage of the word, "Hell"

I am fond of my *1611 King James Bible*¹ as I have faithfully studied it with the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*² for many years. This translation uses the word "hell" thirty one times in the Old Testament, whereas in the *1599 Geneva Bible*, "hell" appears twenty one times in the Old Testament. *The Message Bible* uses the word hell over thirty times. Are the *King James Version*, the *1599 Geneva Bible* and *The Message Bible* correct in their usage of the word, "hell"?

Other Biblical scholars chose not to use the word "hell" in the Old Testament in the following translations: *New International Version* (NIV), *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), *English Standard Version* (ESV), *Amplified Bible*, *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), *LXX Septuagint*, *Concordant Literal*, *Complete Jewish Bible*, *World English Bible*, *The Inclusive Bible*, and *Young's Literal Translation*. Even the *New King James Bible* (NKJV) cut down the number from thirty one uses to eighteen.

¹ *The Holy Bible, King James Version*, a reprint of the edition of 1611, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, August 2005. Public Domain.

² Strong, James S.T.D., LL.D., *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Abingdon Press, 1986 and World Bible Publishers, Inc., Iowa Falls, IA, 1980 and 1986.

Why do the above Bible translations choose not to use the word "hell"? There are numerous translations, which one is the most accurate? Why would translators use the word, "hell" so that "hell fire and brimstone" doctrines are propagated causing fear and trepidation and control? Or should a seeker beware of a literal afterlife of torment?

Does the Bible talk about deception and hardness of hearts which cause confusion and lack of understanding? Read the following passages and comment on each passage:

Isaiah 6:9 & 10

Jeremiah 2:8

Jeremiah 8:7-9

Jeremiah 16:18-21

Matthew 13:14-17

Luke 20:46

Acts 28:23-29

Romans 11:7-10

Record any new observations, concerns or questions you may have regarding the above section.

"Sheol" Versus "Qeber"

The Hebrew word, "sheol" is what the *King James Version*, *1599 Geneva Bible* and *The Message Bible* translate into the word, "hell." Look up and define the Hebrew word, "sheol" (#H7585) in the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.

"Qeber" is the Hebrew word used to describe the grave. Look up "qeber" (#H6913) and define from the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.

Compare and contrast "sheol" and "qeber" in your own words.

"Sheol" is found in the Biblical Hebrew text at least sixty five times. The KJV translators translated the word into English as "hell" thirty one times, "grave" thirty one times and "pit" three times.

Look up and focus on the verses below using several different translations. It is helpful to read the surrounding passage of the noted verse for context in order to determine what you think is the most accurate usage of the following words, "hell," "grave" or "pit" for the Hebrew word "sheol."

Deuteronomy 32:22

2 Samuel 22:6

Job 11:8

Job 26:6

Psalm 9:17

Psalm 16:10

Psalm 18:5

Psalm 55:15

Psalm 86:13

Psalm 116:3

Psalm 139:8

Proverbs 5:5

Proverbs 7:27

Proverbs 9:18

Proverbs 15:11

Proverbs 15:24

Proverbs 23:14

Proverbs 27:20

Isaiah 5:14

Isaiah 14:9

Isaiah 14:15

Isaiah 28:15 & 18

Isaiah 57:9

Ezekiel 31:16 & 17

Ezekiel 32:21 & 27

Amos 9:2

Jonah 2:2

Habakkuk 2:5

Record any new observations, concerns or questions you may have regarding the above section of verses using the Hebrew word "sheol."

Look up the following verses that discuss the righteous experiencing "sheol:"

Job 14:13

Psalm 139:8

Genesis 37:35

Why did translators render the Hebrew word "sheol" as "hell" only when describing the destination of the unruly, yet left "sheol" as is (not translated) when describing the destination of the righteous? Why were they not consistent? Explain your thoughts.

Look up the following verses that use the Hebrew word, "qeber":

Genesis 23:4-20

Genesis 50:5

2 Kings 13:21

Abraham, Sarah and the other revered Hebrew leaders were buried in caves. In wealthy countries, sophisticated cemeteries house the dead. However, in times of war, famine, and disease, places of the dead were mass graves or places of burning. We will discuss places of burning such as, "Valley of Hinnom" and "Gehenna," in upcoming chapters.

For more information regarding the concept of "sheol" and "hell" in the Old Testament, read the informative online article, "*The Truth about Hell*," A Dawn Bible Student Publication.³

Based on our studies, do the *King James Version*, *The Message Bible*, and 1599 *The Geneva Bible* translations have sufficient evidence to translate "hell" for "sheol" to demonstrate the concept of a literal forever-burning "hell" as a punishment for the wicked? Explain your answer.

Based on your Biblical research during this study, explain what you believe is the most accurate definition and translation for the Hebrew word, "sheol."

³ "The Truth about Hell," Chapter 1, the Wages of Sin; A Dawn Bible Student Publication.
<http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/hell.html>.

Chapter 2 Consequence for “Sin”: Death, “Hellfire and Brimstone” and/or Anguish of the Soul?

What does the Bible declare as the penalty for “sin,” unbelief, or missing the mark? Physical death? “Hellfire and brimstone”? Anguish of the soul? Explain in detail what you have been taught and what you believe regarding the punishment of “sin” and the rejection of God.

What is sin? I love the following definition by Jeff Benner in the ancient Hebrew: *“The Hebrew word for ‘sin’ is חטאה (hhatah, Strong's #2403) and literally means ‘miss the mark.’ From my understanding of the Bible, there are two types of sin, accidental and deliberate. I explain it this way. The Hebrew people were a nomadic people and their language and lifestyle is wrapped around this culture. One of the aspects of a nomad is his constant journey from one watering hole to another and one pasture to another. If you are walking on a journey (literal or figurative) and find yourself ‘lost from the path,’ which is the Hebrew word רשע (rasha, Strong's #7563), you correct yourself and get back on the path. This was a ‘mistake’ (accidentally missing the mark), but not deliberate. Once you are back on the right path, all is good. However, if you decide to leave the path and make your own, you are again ‘lost from the path,’ but this time, being a deliberate act, it is a purposeful mistake (missing the mark on purpose). In the Bible, God gives his ‘directions’ (usually translated as ‘commands’) for the journey that his people are to be on. As long as they remain on that journey, they are tsadiq (Strong's #6662, usually translated as “righteous,” but literally means ‘on the correct path’), even if they accidentally leave the path, but return (this is the Hebrew verb shuv, Strong's #7725, usually translated as ‘repentance,’ but literally means ‘to return’) back to the correct path.”⁴*

Let’s examine the Scriptures at the very beginning to determine the consequences of “sin” or being lost from the path.

⁴ “Hebrew Word Definitions -Sin,” Ancient Hebrew Research Center, Jeff A. Benner, 1999-2019; http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/vocabulary_definitions_sin.html

Adam and Eve: For many, Genesis chapter 3 records mankind's "original sin" and the consequences of those "sins."⁵ When "Adam and Eve" hid in shame and evaded blame after eating the "forbidden fruit," explain the consequences mentioned in Genesis 2:17 and in Genesis 3.

Cain and Abel: Read Genesis 4:1-17 to determine the consequence given to Cain for the murder of his brother.

The Flood: Read Genesis 6:1-13 and Genesis 7:21-23 and discuss the wickedness, God's reaction to it, and the consequences of the wickedness of those people.

Sodom and Gomorrah: Read and describe the wickedness, God's reaction to it, and the consequences of the wickedness of those people in Genesis 18:25-33 and Genesis 19:23-25.

⁵ The word "sin" is not found in Genesis 3, but first mentioned in Genesis 4 regarding the behavior of Cain. The Old Testament uses the following Hebrew words for sin: chattah, rasha, avon – "iniquity and used in conjunction with Cain, the Amorites and the violent city of Sodom;" shagah – "go astray, err out of ignorance (Ezekiel 34:6);" and in Greek, hamartia and hamartan (used solely in the New Testament) meaning "loss due to missing the mark, an archer missing the target, to err, self-originated and not faith-generated."
<https://biblehub.com/greek/266.htm>

Based on the above four stories, explain in detail the consequences of wrong doing. Explain if there was any mention of an everlasting eternal hell fire and brimstone punishment waiting for the wrongdoers.

Neither the word "hell" or the concept of an eternal everlasting fire and brimstone afterlife punishment described in any of the above stories, not even in the flood story. Based on how God grieved at the wickedness of the people, if there was a hell, wouldn't those people go straight there after their death?

"Hell" isn't even stated in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. "Fire and brimstone" (the significance of fire and brimstone is explained in an upcoming chapter, "Lake of Fire and Brimstone") rained down on the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. "Destroy" is used to describe their fate, but the word "hell" is not found.

The *King James Version* doesn't use the word "hell" until it is mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy. As a reminder from chapter one, read Deuteronomy 32:22 and describe what it says.

As a reminder from chapter one, look up the Hebrew word "sheol" (#7585) in the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and define its meaning.

Do you think the word "hell" used in Deuteronomy 32:22 is the correct English word used for the Hebrew word "sheol"? Why or why not?

Moses said to choose between "life and death," not "life and hell." Read and comment on Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

The prophets sent to warn the people never mentioned “hell” as a punishment for “sin.” Read the following passages to describe the warnings to the unruly people:

Jeremiah 24:10

Ezekiel 5:12

Habakkuk 3:5 & 6

Zechariah 14:12-15

Describe in your own words the consequences for disobedience and rejection of God (YHVH)⁶ in the Old Testament.

Consequences for “Sin” in the New Testament

If there was a “hell,” wouldn’t the Apostle Paul mention it at least once? Read what Paul says about the consequence of missing the mark in the following verses:

Romans 5:12

⁶ The *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* demonstrates that the word, “LORD” has been substituted for the Hebrew name of God over 6800 times. James Strong’s opinion of the Hebrew name of God is “Yehovah,” and many use the abbreviation YHVH because the actual name is unknown; <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3068.htm>.

Romans 6:23

Can you think of a verse penned by Peter or by any of the other Biblical writers that mentions the word, "hell"? If so, record here.

Anguish of the Soul and Reaping what one Sows:

What if the consequences for missing the mark, choosing to be lost off the path or willful disobedience are more immediate and can be described as "hell on earth"? Read and focus on Romans 2: 7-9. Based on these Scriptures, what are the consequences for patience and well-doing?

Based on Romans 2: 7-9, what are the consequences of a contentious, hard, and unremorseful heart?

Re-read the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. When Adam and Eve ate the "fruit," they hid, eluded, blamed, and suffered consequences. Explain which Romans 2:7-9 category fits their reaction and their consequence when they disregarded God's instruction and confrontation.

Re-read the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4. Explain which Romans 2:7-9 category best fits Cain's reaction and his consequence when disregarding God's instruction and confrontation.

Read the following verses that tell of the consequences of our wrong choices:

Galatians 6:7 & 8

Proverbs 22:8

Isaiah 57:20 & 21

The brothers of Joseph and King David suffered sorrows and anguish of the soul consequences after wrongdoing. The section below demonstrates their plight.

The Brothers of Joseph

Read Genesis 37:18-28 and explain what happened to Joseph at the hand of his brothers.

Read the following passages and describe the anguish and consequences the brothers went through years after their tragic actions towards Joseph:

Genesis 42:21-22

Genesis 44:16

Genesis 50:15-21

King David

Read 2 Samuel chapter 11 and explain what happened in your own words.

Read 2 Samuel chapter 12 and describe the anguish and consequences that King David went through after he committed adultery and murder.

The prophet Nathan said there would be three consequences for David's sin. The first is found in 2 Samuel 12:10. Name the consequence and list the fulfillment in the following passages: 2 Samuel 13:29, 2 Samuel 18:14, and 1 Kings 2:25.

Name the second consequence that is found in 2 Samuel 12:11 and identify the fulfillment in 2 Samuel 16:22.

Name the third consequence that is found in 2 Samuel 12:14 and identify the fulfillment in 2 Samuel 12:18.

Read and explain the consequences described in Hosea 8:3-8.

After completing this study, explain in detail what you think is the penalty for "sin," unbelief, missing the mark and rejection of God? Physical death? "Hellfire and brimstone"? or Anguish of the soul?

Chapter 3 Valley of Hinnom

Chapter one briefly addressed the validity of the concept of a place of burning as a consequence or a resting place for those who demonstrate willful disobedient behavior. The Old Testament mentions one such place, "The Valley of Hinnom" or "Valley of the sons of Hinnom," eleven times. The New Testament addresses the town of "Gehenna" as a place of burning. More will be discussed regarding "Gehenna" in the next chapter.

Read and comment on these verses in the Old Testament referring to "Valley of Hinnom:"

Joshua 15:8

Joshua 18:16

II Kings 23:10

II Chronicles 28:3; 33:6

Jeremiah 7:31-34

Jeremiah 19:1-8

Jeremiah 32:31-36

Based on the above Scriptures, describe the "Valley of Hinnom" in your own words.

It is important to understand the meaning of this dreadful valley in regards to the Hebraic history. The following commentaries from leading Bible dictionaries explain details about the valley:

"(Lamentation), Valley of, otherwise called "the valley of the son" or "children of Hinnom," a deep and narrow ravine, with steep, rocky sides, to the south and west of Jerusalem, separating Mount Zion to the north from the "hill of evil counsel," and the sloping rocky plateau of the "plain of Rephaim" to the south.... From its ceremonial defilement, and from the detested and abominable fire of Molech, if not from the supposed ever-burning funeral piles, the later Jews applied the name of this valley --Ge Hinnom, ""Gehenna"" (land of Hinnom)--to denote the place of eternal torment. In this sense the word is used by our Lord." Smith's Bible Dictionary⁷

"Hinnon, a deep, narrow ravine separating Mount Zion from the so-called "Hill of Evil Counsel." It took its name from "some ancient hero, the son of Hinnom." It is first mentioned in Joshua 15:8 . It had been the place where the idolatrous Jews burned their children alive to Moloch and Baal. A particular part of the valley was called Tophet, or the "fire-stove," where the children were burned. After the Exile, in order to show their abhorrence of the locality, the Jews made this valley the receptacle of the offal of the city, for the destruction of which a fire was, as is supposed, kept constantly burning there.

The Jews associated with this valley these two ideas, (1) that of the sufferings of the victims that had there been sacrificed; and (2) that of filth and corruption. It became thus to the popular mind a symbol of the abode of the wicked hereafter. It came to signify hell as the place of the wicked. "It might be shown by infinite examples that the Jews expressed hell, or the place of the damned, by this word. The word Gehenna [the Greek contraction of Hinnom] was never used in the time of Christ in any other sense than to denote the place of future punishment." About this fact there can be no question. In this sense the word is

⁷ Smith, William, Dr. "Entry for 'Hinnom.'" "Smith's Bible Dictionary." 1901.
<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/smiths-bible-dictionary/hinnom.html>

*used eleven times in our Lord's discourses (Matthew 23:33 ; Luke 12:5 ; Matthew 5:22 , etc.)." Easton's Bible Dictionary*⁸

In your own words, identify the important points of the commentaries regarding the "Valley of Hinnom."

After reading the above verses and learning from the Bible dictionaries, explain your thoughts regarding the "Valley of Hinnom" information and how this affects your beliefs regarding an "everlasting eternal hellfire and brimstone afterlife."

Notice what Easton writes, *"It had been the place where the idolatrous Jews burned their children alive to Moloch and Baal."* As you read in Jeremiah, God expressed abhorrence over the children of Israel burning their children alive to the fires of Moloch and Baal. If there is a literal hell, wouldn't God be a hypocrite for doing the same for sending His/Her children into an eternal flame? Explain your thoughts.

⁸ Easton, Matthew George. "Entry for Hinnom." "Easton's Bible Dictionary."
<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/hinnom.html>

Chapter 4 Hell in the New Testament

The *King James Version* of the New Testament uses the word, "hell," twenty three times. The usage of "hell" comes from three different Greek words: "Gehenna" (#G1067 in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and used twelve times), "Hades" (#G86 in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and used ten times) and "Tartaroo" or "Tartarus" (#G5020 in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and used one time).

Gehenna

"Gehenna (originally Ge bene Hinnom; i.e., "the valley of the sons of Hinnom") is a deep, narrow glen to the south of Jerusalem, where the idolatrous Jews offered their children in sacrifice to Molech (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:2-6). This valley afterwards became the common receptacle for all the refuse of the city. Here the dead bodies of animals and of criminals, and all kinds of filth, were cast and consumed by fire kept always burning. It thus in process of time became the image of the place of everlasting destruction. In this sense it is used by our Lord in Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5. In these passages, and also in James 3:6, the word is uniformly rendered "hell," the Revised Version placing "Gehenna" in the margin." Easton's Bible Dictionary⁹

Jesus (Yeshua¹⁰) used the Greek word, "Gehenna," eleven times in the gospels, but in almost all translations, "hell" is the word used in its place. The few following translations that rightfully use the literal name of the town, "Gehenna," in these eleven instances are: *Young's Living Translation, Tree of Life, and World English Bible.*

A few other versions are also very accurate. The *Complete Jewish Bible* translates "Gehenna" as "fire of Gei-Hinnom," and the *J. B. Phillips* translation uses the words "the fire of the rubbish heap." The *New Testament Divine Feminine Version* uses the phrase, "Out with the trash and incinerate them."

⁹ Easton, Matthew George. "Entry for Gehenna." "Easton's Bible Dictionary." <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/gehenna/>.

¹⁰ Since Jesus was a Jew, born of the Hebrew race, (see the genealogy of Matthew 1), he had a Hebrew name. Based on the opinion of James Strong of the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, he translated the Hebrew name as (#H3091) "Yehowahshua" or "Jehovah-saved" [or Yehovah-saved]. I have shortened the name due to the uncertainty of the actual name.

Read and comment on the following verses and be sure to mentally change the word "hell" to "Gehenna" or "fiery garbage dump":

Matthew 18:9 and Matthew 23:15 & 33

Mark 9:43-47

Luke 12:5

James 3:6

"Gehenna" is a proper noun, the name of a place and it should never be translated into another name. Jerusalem is Jerusalem. We don't translate it into another name. Bethlehem is Bethlehem. Why is there such a blatant gross translation error here with "Gehenna" and the usage of "hell"? One can see with the following quotes found in *Raising Hell*, by Julie Ferwerda, there was great influence by big powerful movements:

"The first person to write about "eternal hell" was the Latin (West) North African Tertullian (160-220 A.D.), who is considered the Father of the Latin church."

*Vincent continues, "By far, the main person responsible for making hell eternal in the Western Church was St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.). He was made Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. He did not know Greek, had tried to study it, but stated that he hated it. Sadly, it is his misunderstanding of Greek that cemented the concept of eternal hell for the wicked, but also for anyone who wasn't a Christian."*¹¹ Dr. Ken Vincent, retired psychology professor from Houston Community College

"Most of what we believe about hell comes from Catholicism and ignorance of the Old Testament, not from the Bible. I now believe that hell is the invention of Roman Catholicism; and surprisingly, most, if not all, of our popular concepts of hell can be found

¹¹ "The Salvation Conspiracy: How Hell Became Eternal," Dr. Ken R. Vincent, Ed.D., <https://www.christianuniversalist.org/articles/salvationconspiracy.html> (as cited in *Raising Hell*, 2011).

*in the writings of the Roman Catholic writers like the Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265-1321, author of Dante's Inferno. The English poet John Milton (1608-1674), author of Paradise Lost, set forth the same concepts in a fashion highly acceptable to the Roman Catholic faith. Yet none of the concepts of hell can be found in the teaching of Jesus Christ."*¹² Samuel Dawson, author of, *The Teaching of Jesus: From Mount Sinai to "Gehenna"* a Faithful Rabbi Urgently Warns Rebellious Israel

In the 2018 movie, *Robinhood*, directed by Otto Bathurst, the Roman Catholic Cardinal said, *"Fear is the greatest weapon in God's arsenal. It's why the church created hell."*¹³

After your review of the material regarding "Gehenna," explain your thoughts on the subject matter.

Hades

Another Greek word translated as "hell" in the New Testament is the word, "Hades," which means, "unseen, place of departed souls." Read and comment on the following verses that use "hell" instead of "Hades":

Matthew 11:23

Mathew 16:18

¹² Dawson, Samuel G. and Dawson, Patsy Rae, *The Teachings of Jesus from Mount Sinai to "Gehenna": A Faithful Rabbi Urgently Warns Rebellious Israel* (SGD Press, June 26, 2009), (as cited in *Raising Hell*, 2011).

¹³ 12. Chen, Iron, Et al. (Producer), Bathurst, Otto (Director). (2018). *Robinhood* [DVD]. United States: Summit Entertainment, Lionsgate.

Luke 10:15

Luke 16:23

Acts 2:27

Acts 2:31

Revelation 1:18

Revelation 6:8

Revelation 20:13

Revelation 20:14

After reading the above verses, write in your own words what you believe about the Biblical concept of "Hades."

Tartaros/ Tartarus

The last Greek word translated "hell" is "Tartaros." This Greek verb describes being cast down into deepest abyss of "Hades." Read and comment on the following verses that use the Greek verb, "Tartaros":

2 Peter 2:4-9

Jude 6 & 7

Were the judgments of the Noah's flood or Sodom and Gomorrah everlasting punishment? Are the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah still burning? What are your thoughts on what everlasting punishment means.

Notice that the angels were cast into "Hades," but the wicked of Noah's day and the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah were physically destroyed. Compare this concept with Matthew 25:40 & 41. Record your thoughts here.

The *Young's Literal Translation* stated that the *King James Version* mistranslates the Greek word used for the English words "eternal," "everlasting" and "for ever."¹⁴ Young, instead, translates the Greek word, "aionion" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* #G166) as "age-during." Boyd C. Purcell, in his book, *Spiritual Terrorism*, wrote, "In an Evangelical commentary series, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, the general editor and the author of the commentary on Matthew, Tasker, recognized the qualitative aspect of the word, "aeonian." He stated that it was wrongly rendered everlasting by translators.¹⁵

¹⁴ Young, Robert, *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, Benediction Classics, Oxford, 2012, Preface: Explanation of 100 Bible Terms.

¹⁵ Purcell, Boyd C. PH.D, *Spiritual Terrorism, Spiritual Abuse from the Womb to the Tomb*, Author House, Bloomington, IN, 2008, p. 354.

He also stated, 'It would be difficult to exaggerate the harmful effect of this unfortunate mistranslation, particularly when fire is understood in a literal rather than a metaphorical sense.'"¹⁶

We will cover "fire" and the "Lake of Fire" in great detail in the next chapter.

Write down your reflections regarding the English word "hell" translated from the three Greek words discussed.

¹⁶ Tasker, R., *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Grand Rapids, Eerdsmans, 1979, (as cited in Purcell, 2008).

Chapter 5 Fire, Lake of Fire and Brimstone

"Anytime there is a chance for love, deep love, there is standing in front of that love, a wall of fire. That fire might take the form of something burning within you - an inner condition - or it might take the form of an outer circumstance. But there is never love without fire.

*To the mystic, the presence of that fire says,
"Here, if you are strong enough to take it, is love."*

Wall of Fire, author unknown

Fire is mesmerizing. Fire is detoxifying. Forest fires destroy, but out of that destruction comes new life. There are several Hebrew words used for "fire" in the Old Testament. The main Hebrew word used for fire, is "esh," (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* #H784) and is defined as "fire"- figuratively or literally. It is used three hundred and seventy seven times in the Old Testament. The first time this word is used is in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. The other Hebrew words used for fire are as follows:

"berah" (#H1200 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) a burning fire used once in Exodus 22:6;

"lahat" (#H3857 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) to blaze or set on fire, used twelve times;

"uwr" (#H217 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) flame, light of fire, used six times; and

"nuwr" (#H5135 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) Aramaic, used in the book of Daniel seventeen times.

The Greek word, "pur" (#G4442) is defined seventy times by the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* as literal or figuratively "fiery" or "fire." (The *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* states that "esh" and "pur" are both to be used figuratively or literally, but this option is not mentioned for the other Hebrew words for "fire.")

In her book, *Raising Hell, Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire*, Julie Ferwerda states, *"Fire is a fascinating concept in Scripture. It's almost always figurative or symbolic with the purpose of purifying, refining, and for accomplishing general good. The Greek word for fire, 'pur,' is the word from which we get all forms of our English words, such as 'pure' and 'purify.'*¹⁷

¹⁷ Ferwerda, Julie, *Raising Hell, Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire*, VagabondGroup, 2011, p. 64.

BibleHub HELPS Word-studies states that, "In Scripture, "fire" is often used figuratively – like with the 'fire of God' which transforms all it touches into light and likeness with itself. God's Spirit, like a holy fire, enlightens and purifies so that believers can share more and more in His likeness."¹⁸

Read the following verses and comment on the fiery character of God's Spirit:

Exodus 3:2

Deuteronomy 4:20-24

Psalms 12:6

Isaiah 30:27

Ezekiel 1:1-4

Hebrews 12:29

For more information regarding this purifying fire, read and comment on the following verses:

Isaiah 6:1-7

Isaiah 48:10

¹⁸ "Pur," HELPS Word-studies, 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc., <https://biblehub.com/greek/4442.htm>

Malachi 3:3

Matthew 3:10-12

Matthew 13:40-43

Matthew 25:31-46

Mark 9:49 (read this verse in the *Good News Bible, Today's English Version*)

Luke 3:16

I Corinthians 3:13-15

I Peter 4:12 & 13

Write down your thoughts regarding the metaphorical use of "fire" to purify.

Lake of Fire

In the book of Revelation, "fire and brimstone" is used seven times and "lake of fire" is used five times and is only used in this book. The word "hell" is not found. Many associate this book with God's wrath on the wicked during the end times. Let's explore the purpose of Revelation and examine what the "lake of fire and brimstone" is all about.

Read Revelation 1:1,4 & 9. Who is the author of this book?

Read Revelation 1:2 and I John 1:1-3, what qualifies this apostle to write this book?

According to Revelation 1:1,4 and 11, who did this apostle write specifically to?

According to Revelation 1:1, what is the subject of this book?

Read the following verses and comment on the clues demonstrating that much of this book is a vision:

Revelation: 1:10

Revelation 4:2

Revelation 17:3

Revelation 21:10

During the very first chapter of Revelation, John mentions that this is a vision and was used metaphorically to warn the early believers. Many question when the events were to take place that John was referring to. Read the following verses and notice all the references for "soon, quickly, or at hand":

Revelation 1:1

Revelation 1:3

Revelation 3:11

Revelation 22:6

Revelation 22:10

Revelation 22:20

What do you think "soon, at hand, and quickly" meant to the seven churches?

What do you think "soon, at hand, and quickly" means in regards to today's readers of the book of Revelation?

This book of Revelation, the Revelation of Yeshua, was given in Hebraic language so that the Hebrew believers understood what was soon to take place. Was this the same warning that Yeshua gave in the book of Matthew? Read and describe Matthew 23:37-Matthew 24.

Read and describe Luke 21:10-22.

Read and comment on the following verses that discuss the "Lake of Fire:"

Revelation 19:20

Revelation 20:10

Revelation 20:14

Revelation 20:15

Revelation 21:8

Identify who was thrown into the lake of fire.

In your own words, explain what you believe the "lake of fire" means.

Brimstone

What is the meaning of "brimstone?" According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, the Hebrew word for "brimstone" (#H1614) is "gophriyth," which implies flammable cypress (gopher wood) resin or sulfur.

The Greek word "theion" (#2303) is defined by the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* as sulfur or brimstone. Notice the similarity in the following Greek words: "theion," "theios" (#2304 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* defined as "godlike," "divinity") and "Theos," (#2316 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) the Greek word for God and means "supreme Divinity." These 3 Greek words all have the same root, and it would make sense that the process of being like the divine includes sulfur or brimstone. According to the "BlueletterBible" website, "theion," the root word means "flashing," is given a meaningful definition as follows: "*Divine incense [also sulfur reference], because burning brimstone was regarded as having power to purify, and to ward off disease.*"¹⁹

Sulfur was widely known throughout the ancient world for its medicinal value and fumigation properties according to *Douglas' New Bible Dictionary*. Sulfur was a medication taken internally for various ailments. I know many people today who take it (sulfur based MSM or DMSO) for pain, arthritis and other joint concerns. It has been used to cure body sores. It was burned in sulfur pots to disinfect a home after someone died of an infectious disease. It was burned to disinfest a home from lice, mice, and other vermin. They used sulfur to disinfect vegetables and fruits and to preserve them. It was burned in religious rituals (incense) to symbolize prayers of purification. All of these listed uses are beneficial and we know that God does things on a grand scale, not just a sulfur pot, but a lake of burning sulfur.²⁰

¹⁹ "Theion," BlueletterBible, Outline of Biblical Usage;

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=nasb&strongs=g2303>

²⁰ Purcell, Boyd C. PH.D., *Spiritual Terrorism, Spiritual Abuse from the Womb to the Tomb*, Author House, Bloomington, IN, 2008, pp. 336-338.

Keep this idea in mind as you read the following verses that use the Hebrew or Greek word for "brimstone:"

Genesis 19:24

Deuteronomy 29:23

Job 18:15

Psalms 11:6

Isaiah 30:33

Isaiah 34:9

Ezekiel 38:22

Luke 17:29

Revelation 9:17 & 18

Revelation 14:10

Revelation 19:20

Revelation 20:10

Revelation 21:8

In his book, *Yeshua, the Crucified Serpent*, Rowland Stenrud wrote, "To be thrown into the lake of fire is to be baptized into God himself for He is a consuming fire. Jesus Himself seems to connect fire and His own baptism of suffering when He says this, 'I came to cast fire to the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished.'"²¹

Summarize Stenrud's comment and Luke 12:49-50 in your own words.

In your own words, write your thoughts on the Biblical metaphor for brimstone and sulfur, and how this purification applies to your life.

Torment

In Revelation 14:10, John penned that those who worship the beast and his image will be tormented with the "fire and brimstone." The word, "tormented," (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* #G928) comes from the root noun, "basanos," which is defined by *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* #G931 as "a touchstone." Originally, a black silicon-based stone was used as a touchstone to test the purity of precious metals (like gold and silver). In

²¹ Stenrud, Rowland, *Yeshua the Crucified Serpent, How Yahweh Saved Mankind*, Xlibris Corporation, 2012, P. 200; <https://books.google.com>

the papyri (Ancient Greek Koine records used in everyday business of ancient Greece), "basanos" also meant "touchstone, or test." Webster defines touchstone as, "a stone by which metals are examined, a black, smooth, glossy stone; any test or criterion by which the qualities of a thing are tried; as money, the touchstone of common honesty." (I paraphrased this paragraph from the book, *Raising Hell*,²² by Julie Ferwerda).

Record how many times "torment" was written about the rich man in the parable in Luke 16: *"And in hell (Hades) he lift up his eyes, being in 'torments,' and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom... And he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am 'tormented' in this flame.... For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of 'torment.'"*

The Greek word for "torment" in the above parable according to the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* is #G3600 *odynáō*. HELPS Word Studies says, *odynáō* stems "(from 3601 /*odýnē*, "very painful sorrow") – properly, to experience intense emotional pain (WP, 2, 223), i.e. deep, personal *anguish* expressed by great *mourning* (LS). This root (*ody-*) literally means "go down" (as the sun in a sunset) and refers to *consuming* sorrow."²³

The rich man and Lazarus will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

If our Spirit of God YHVH is a consuming fire purifying the people, doesn't this make sense that God's motivation is love and purification is a necessity, just as burning sulfur is necessary to ward off sickness, and help heal? Torment includes anguish, the notion we discussed in chapter 2 regarding Romans 2:7-9. The testing process is never easy, nor pleasant. Read and comment on the following verses:

Daniel 11:35

Daniel 12:10

Zephaniah 3:8 & 9

²² Ferwerda, Julie, *Raising Hell*, VagabondGroup, 2011, p.65-67.

²³ HELPS Word-studies, 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc., <https://biblehub.com/greek/3600.htm>.

Hebrews 12:4-11

Hebrews 12:29

Isn't it interesting that the passage depicting God as a consuming fire is in the same chapter mentioning God disciplining his children out of love for their own good. Explain your thoughts on this comment in your own words.

Write down your thoughts regarding the purpose of purification.

Write down your reflections from this chapter.

Chapter 6 Rich Man and Lazarus

Merriam Webster dictionary defines a “parable” as a usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. Read the following passages and comment on use of parables by Yeshua:

Matthew 13:9-17

Matthew 13:34

Mark 4:33 & 34

Luke 8:10

Luke 10:21

To fully understand the “Rich Man and Lazarus” parable, start reading at Luke 14:7 up until Luke 16:18. Briefly describe the parables and the overall theme that Yeshua is addressing.

To whom is Yeshua speaking?

Taking a closer look, read and comment on the following verses:

Luke 14:1-3

Luke 14:7

Luke 14:12

Luke 14:25

Luke 15:1-3

Luke 16:1

Luke 16:14 & 15

Again, in regards to the "Rich Man and Lazarus" parable, who is Yeshua talking to?

Read and describe in detail Luke 16:15.

What do you think Luke 16:16 means?

For more understanding, read and comment on the following verses:

Matthew 11:11-15

Matthew 1:23-25

Luke 4:14-19

Mark 1:39

Genesis 49:1 and Genesis 10-12

Read and comment on Luke 16:18.

Glenn L. Hill gives good insight regarding this difficult to understand passage. *“With the background of verses 16 and 17, Jesus strangely began talking about Old Covenant marriage rules, but it was spiritual marriage, divorce and adultery that were on His mind. The Jews had been rightly married to the Mosaic Law, but that Law was now, in effect like a spouse that had died, freeing them to embrace and to marry Christ and the Messianic Covenant, without sin. But, if they insisted on still being married to the Law, they would be in spiritual adultery, because the Law was also like a spouse that had been, as it were, “put away” by the coming of Christ.”*²⁴

²⁴ The Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31, Glenn L. Hill, unpublished.

Compare and contrast the two characters of the parable in Luke 16:19-21.

Read and describe John 5:3-5 and Acts 3:2 to describe the life of beggars.

For more information and understanding, read and comment on these passages:

Matthew 7:6

Matthew 15:21-28

Mark 7:24-30

Metaphorically, what do the crumbs represent?

Metaphorically, who do the dogs represent?

Describe in detail the differences in how Lazarus and the rich man were treated after their death in Luke 16:22.

Read and comment on the following passages to gain understanding regarding Abraham's bosom:

John 1:18

I John 4:12

John 13:23

Read Luke 16:23 and explain the significance of the rich man being able to see Lazarus in his bosom.

In Luke 16:23, the Greek word for "hell" is "Hades" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* #86), "the place or state of departed souls." Explain your thoughts regarding the significance of being "buried".

Keep in mind as you look up other of the verses in the Scriptures regarding the flame, it is included with fire. And we know, the root word for fire denotes "purification" and "refinement."

In Luke 16:24 & 25, the word, "tormented" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* #3600 from the root #3601) is to "grieve, dejecting tormenting sorrow." Explain what you think this means in regards to the moral of the parable.

In Luke 16: 23 & 28, it mentions a place of torment. This word is from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* (#931), "*Basanos*," and as we already discussed, is the anguish associated with being tried and tested on a touchstone.

Describe the rich man's change of heart in Luke 16:24.

Read James 3:6-10 and compare with Luke 16:24.

Compare Luke 16:25 with Matthew 5:3-12 and Galatians 6:7-9.

Read and comment on the following verses to gain insight regarding the "great gulf" between God and the rich man:

Matthew 5:20

Matthew 21:31

John 6:44

John 14:6

Who are the two fathers mentioned in Luke 16:27?

Compare Luke 16:30, *"Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent,"* with John 11:1-48, especially verses 45-48.

Could this parable be about the transfer of scepter from Judah to Christ in the "Last Days" of the Old Covenant? Read Genesis 49:1 and Genesis 10-12 and comment on what was to happen during the "last days," or literally speaking, "end of the days."

Here are some clues that this passage could be about the transfer from Judah to Yeshua. The rich man wanted Lazarus to go to his father's house (Jacob) and he has five whole brothers (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun and Levi) birthed from Leah, who represents the Old Covenant. This Hebrew family knows the law and the prophets. Reread Luke 16:16. Explain your thoughts on this concept.

Explain in your own words what you believe is the essence of the "rich man and Lazarus" parable. Is this parable describing a literal afterlife of torment?

Chapter 7 Justice for Wrongdoers?

Most seekers I know have endured very sorrowful life circumstances such as abuse, trauma, rejection, betrayal or loss. I am so sorry for the hurt and trauma you may have suffered, and I pray for loving people to surround you and help you work through your grief and hurt. Healing is a process, and may you know you are loved right where you are. The goal for personal healing freedom is release, letting go, and sometimes it takes a long time, and many tears, to be able to forgive.

Much of the wrong doing of people is due to spiritual blindness. A person can only see from their "stained lens" perspective based on their life experience or belief system. Most aren't intentionally hurting others, but are reacting to their own injuries.

On the other hand, I have watched tragic stories of horrific war fatalities, concentration camp brutality, and barbaric treatment of children, women, slaves and prisoners of war. Some of you may have experienced, or know someone who may have experienced, this horror.

It is human nature to want justice; we want perpetrators, evil dictators, villains, scoundrels, rascals, crooks, offenders, cheaters, and bullies to pay for their transgressions. In some cases, the injured party seeks revenge, wanting that offender to feel the pain that they caused. A belief in "hellfire and brimstone" satisfies a need for revenge; "My abuser, that bully, will get what is coming to them when they burn forever, tormented in hell." Where are you in your healing journey? What is the honest condition of your heart today? Lovingly assess your heart. Do you desire your abusers, accusers or perpetrators to spend an eternity in hell fire torment?

Some people believe that their inappropriate actions and guilt causes them to feel they deserve an afterlife of hell fire. Do you believe in the power of forgiveness for yourself? Comment on this aspect of personal healing.

What are other reasons people want there to be a literal everlasting burning hell?

What does God say about justice for wrongdoings? Read the following verses to see that God holds people accountable for their actions.

Psalms 37:27-29

Proverbs 5:22

Proverbs 21:15

Isaiah 30:18 & 19

Isaiah 61:8-9

Ecclesiastes 3:17

Matthew 18:6

Matthew 25:41-46

Luke 17:2

Luke 18:1-8

Romans 2:5

Romans 12:19 and Hebrews 10:30

Romans 13:4

II Thessalonians 1:9

II Peter 2

Revelation 2:23

Revelation 6:9-11

Revelation 7:9-17

Revelation 11:18

Revelation 17 and 18

Explain your thoughts on the justice of God.

If God holds everyone accountable, including me, does this make it easier to let go and forgive? Explain your answer.

The Heart of God

Even though there are consequences to human behavior, God is full of compassion and ready to forgive. Read and comment on the following verses that give more insight regarding the heart of God:

John 1:29

John 3:17

John 12:32 & 47

Romans 5:10 & 18

Romans 11:32

I Corinthians 15:22

2 Corinthians 5:18 & 19

I Timothy 2:4

I Timothy 4:10

Titus 2:11

2 Peter 3:9

I John 2:2

I John 4:14

After studying the above verses, explain the character of God's heart in your own words.

In a sense, God is looking for those with a similar heart of compassion, understanding, and love. King David was said to be a man after God's own heart. Read and comment on the following verses:

I Samuel 6:7

I Samuel 13:14

Acts 7:46

Acts 13:22

Even after the betrayal and murder, rebuke, loss, anguish, trials and tribulations, David is considered a man after the heart of God. Do you consider yourself a person after the heart of God? Explain your answer.

Write down any additional thoughts regarding this chapter.

Chapter 8 What Motivates Righteousness?

I have heard people ask, "If there is no literal hell fire and brimstone, thus no fear of hell, what will motivate humans to be good righteous people? Is the concept of reaping what one sows adequate enough for change? Record your answer.

Natural consequences come. Sometimes, physical ailments and dis-ease show up in our mind and body as natural consequences hopefully to wake us up and get our attention. Explain if you agree or disagree with these statements.

Reaping What We Sow

Humans are messy. Natural consequences discipline us for our inappropriate thoughts and behaviors. Read and comment on the following passages:

Job 4:8-9

Psalms 103:14

Proverbs 1:31

Proverbs 5:22

Proverbs 22:8

Jeremiah 17:10

Hosea 10:12

Galatians 6:7-9

James 3:18

Summarize the above verses in your own words.

Given over to "Satan"

"Satan" in the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* is the Hebrew word, "satan" (#H7854) meaning "opponent" or "adversary." In the Greek language, "satan" is defined as "satanas" (#G4567) "the accuser." When I think of the characters in a theatrical play, I think of the protagonist and the antagonist. If I am the protagonist in my story, could the concept of "satan" be any antagonist that I face? What does it mean to be given over to "satan" to be tested? What are some examples of people being tested by "satan?" Read and comment on the following verses and as you read, replace the word "satan" with adversary or accuser:

Job 1:1-12

Read Job 1:16, a person claimed that a great fire of God is fallen from heaven. This was the perception of the person, but was this fire actually from God?

Zechariah 3:1 & 2 (Notice the fire reference)

I Chronicles 21:1 and II Samuel 24:1

Job 2:1-7

Matthew 4:1-11

Mark 1:12-13

Luke 22:31

John 13:2

Acts 5:3

I Corinthians 5:5-7

I Corinthians 7:5

II Corinthians 11:3

II Corinthians 12:6 & 7

I Thessalonians 3:5

I Timothy 1:18-20

Explain in your own words if God uses adversaries, other people, in our lives to create situations that test us and mold our character.

Could unresolved painful experiences, unrealistic perceptions, limiting beliefs, causing harm to self or others and unreleased/unhealed negative emotions such as guilt, rage, anger, bitterness and resentment, manifest as symptoms in the physical body? These symptoms may include pain, anxiety, PTSD, eating disorders, weight gain, addiction, exhaustion, and a wide variety of dis-ease. Explain your thoughts on this concept.

Consequences of Living Rightly:

Instead of threatening people with an afterlife of "hell fire and brimstone" to keep them from error, read the following verses that demonstrate positive consequences for right behavior and for overcoming:

Psalms 37:11

Revelation 2:7

Revelation 2:11

Revelation 2:17

Revelation 2:26-28

Revelation 3:5

Revelation 3:12

Revelation 3:21

Summarize the above verses in your own words.

We have free will. We have choices. With the choice comes the responsibility of dealing with the consequences of our choices. This is how we grow, learn and mature.

Write down any reflections regarding this chapter.

Chapter 9 Victory over the Fear of Death

We've heard it said, the two guaranteed things in life are death and taxes. Both topics, taxes and death, are anxiety producing. *"The idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else,"* wrote Earnest Becker in his book, *The Denial of Death*.²⁵

Many fear due to the uncertainty of what follows death. Some fear the pain and suffering associated with death. Write down your personal feelings towards death. What aspect of death are you most afraid?

Read Luke 2:10-14. Describe in your own words what the Good News is that Yeshua came to bring.

Yeshua came so that we would no longer need to fear death. Read the following passages:

Hebrews 2:14 & 15

I Corinthians 15:54-57

²⁵ Becker, Ernest, *Denial of Death*, Free Press; 1 edition (May 8, 1997).

What does the Bible say about what happens at death?

Read and detail completely what Genesis 2:7 and Genesis 3:19 say about breath, spirit and returning to dust.

Explain what happens at our death according to Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Explain what happened when Rachel died as recorded in Genesis 35:16-19.

Explain what Paul says about what happens when we are absent from the body in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

Look up the following verses for more clarification regarding death and dying and living eternally:

Psalms 37:9

Psalms 49:12-14 & 20

Psalms 94:23

Ecclesiastes 3:18-20

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Isaiah 66:24

Obadiah 16

I John 5:11 & 12

Research and come up with other Scripture verses that discuss death, dying, and what happens after death.

If we no longer need to fear death, how shall we then live?

Read the following passages that give encouragement on how to live:

Psalm 16:11

John 15:13

Revelation 12:11

Matthew 16:15

Revelation 2:10

Luke 14:26

John 11:25 & 26

John 16:1-4

After researching the Bible verses of this chapter, how has your concept of death or any fear of death altered? Explain your reflections based on your new observations.

After years of study, I have a much healthier understanding of who I am, who God is and my relationship to ancient words of wisdom in the Bible. Hopefully, exploring what the Bible says about "hell, fire and brimstone" in this workbook has opened up a new way to understand our loving unconditional God and put away fear of death and of a forever place of torment.

Since this workbook is about you interpreting Scripture, use the space below to write your own conclusion to this workbook based on your research and contemplation.

It is strongly encouraged that you read the book, *Raising Hell, Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire*, by Julie Ferweda. She offers a free PDF of the book at her website, www.raisinghellbook.com and it is also available on Amazon.

Endnotes

1. *The Holy Bible, King James Version*, a reprint of the edition of 1611, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, August 2005. Public Domain.
2. Strong, James S.T.D., LL.D , *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Abingdon Press, 1986, and World Bible Publishers, Inc., Iowa Falls, IA, 1980 and 1986.
3. "The Truth about Hell," Chapter 1, The Wages of Sin; A Dawn Bible Student Publication. <http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/hell.html>.
4. "Hebrew Word Definitions -Sin," Ancient Hebrew Research Center, Jeff A. Benner, 1999-2019; http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/vocabulary_definitions_sin.html.
5. The word "sin" is not found in Genesis 3, but first mentioned in Genesis 4 regarding the behavior of Cain. The Old Testament uses the following Hebrew words for sin: *chattah*, *rasha*, *avon* – "iniquity and used in conjunction with Cain, the Amorites and the violent city of Sodom;" *shagah* – "go astray, err out of ignorance (Ezekiel 34:6);" and in Greek, *hamartia* and *hamartan* (used solely in the New Testament) meaning "loss due to missing the mark, an archer missing the target, to err, self-originated and not faith-generated." HELPS Word-studies, by Helps Ministries, Inc., <https://biblehub.com/greek/266.htm>.
6. The *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* demonstrates that the word, "LORD" has been substituted for the Hebrew name of God over 6800 times. James Strong's opinion of the Hebrew name of God is "Yehovah," and many use the abbreviation YHVH because the actual name is unknown; <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3068.htm>.
7. Smith, William, Dr. "Entry for 'Hinnom.'" *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. 1901. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/smiths-bible-dictionary/hinnom.html>.
8. Easton, Matthew George. "Entry for Hinnom." *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/hinnom.html>
9. Easton, Matthew George. "Entry for Gehenna." *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/gehenna/>.

10. Since Jesus was a Jew, born of the Hebrew race, (see the genealogy of Matthew 1), he had a Hebrew name. Based on the opinion of James Strong of the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, he translated the Hebrew name as (#H3091) "Yehowahshua" or "Jehovah-saved" [or Yehovah-saved]. I have shortened the name due to the uncertainty of the correct name, and I have added the Hebrew word for Messiah (#4899 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* Mashiyach) – anointed or messiah.
11. "The Salvation Conspiracy: How Hell Became Eternal," Dr. Ken R. Vincent, Ed.D., <https://www.christianuniversalist.org/articles/salvationconspiracy.html>.
12. Dawson, Samuel G. and Dawson, Patsy Rae, *The Teachings of Jesus from Mount Sinai to "Gehenna": A Faithful Rabbi Urgently Warns Rebellious Israel* (SGD Press, June 26, 2009).
13. Chen, Iron, Et al. (Producer), Bathurst, Otto (Director). (2018). *Robinhood* [DVD]. United States: Summit Entertainment, Lionsgate.
14. Young, Robert, *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, Benediction Classics, Oxford, 2012, Preface: Explanation of 100 Bible Terms.
15. Purcell, Boyd C. PH.D., *Spiritual Terrorism, Spiritual Abuse from the Womb to the Tomb*, Author House, Bloomington, IN, 2008, p. 354.
16. Tasker, R., *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Grand Rapids, Eerdsmans, 1979, (as cited in Purcell, 2008).
17. Ferwerda, Julie, *Raising Hell, Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire*, VagabondGroup, 2011, p.65-67.
18. "Pur," HELPS Word-studies, 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc., <https://biblehub.com/greek/4442.htm>.
19. "Theion," BlueletterBible, Outline of Biblical Usage; <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=nasb&strongs=g2303>.
20. Purcell, Boyd C., PH.D., *Spiritual Terrorism, Spiritual Abuse from the Womb to the Tomb*, Author House, Bloomington, IN, 2008, pp. 336-338.
21. Stenrud, Rowland, *Yehshua the Crucified Serpent, How Yahweh Saved Mankind*, Xlibris Corporation, 2012, p. 200; <https://books.google.com>.

22. Ferwerda, Julie, *Raising Hell, Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire*, VagabondGroup, 2011, p.65-67.
23. HELPS Word-studies, 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc., <https://biblehub.com/greek/3600.htm>.
24. "The Rich Man and Lazarus," Luke 16:19-31, Glenn L. Hill, unpublished.
25. Becker, Ernest, *Denial of Death*, Free Press; 1 edition (May 8, 1997).

Digging Deeper

Other resources to Order:

A Lamb's Exodus: Overcoming Fundamentalism, sexism, racism, fatphobia and Conversion Therapy

Interpretation: Food in the Bible ~ Physical and spiritual nourishment

Interpretation: Found, Restored and Celebrated ~ Renewing the mind, softening the heart, and restoring the soul (Ezekiel 34)

Interpretation: The Genesis Project ~ Contemplating literal and metaphoric views regarding Genesis that span to Revelation

Interpretation: Homosexuality in the Bible Revisited ~ Inclusive Biblical Study for the LGBTQIA Community and Allies (Spanish Version Available)

Interpretation: Matthew 23 & 24 Revisited ~ Contemplating literal and metaphoric views regarding "The Last Days"

For more information regarding her story, "Interpretation" workbooks, or to contact Mary for speaking engagements, workshop presentation, or to schedule a spiritual energy work life coaching session, email: untetheredtransformation@gmail.com.

About Rev. Mary:

In 1989, Rev. Mary graduated magna cum laude with a BA in Psychology and minor in Bible from Bryan College in Dayton, TN. A few years later, she completed Master's level marriage, family and group counseling courses at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. She was ordained by the Church of the Holy Spirit Song in Ft Lauderdale, FL in March 2014. After years of struggle, wrestling with God, personal study and personal healing, she offers various Biblical workbooks and teaching videos to facilitate transformation of old limiting and harmful beliefs by understanding liberating spiritual metaphorical mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Her well rounded extensive professional career as a family systems therapist, licensed social worker, school teacher, national sales manager, wellness consultant, certified life coach, foot reflexologist and Level II EFT practitioner has enabled her to create a warm, welcoming, safe space for clients to discover, heal, grow and make empowering life changes. She founded and facilitated the Indianapolis Religious Recovery group from 2014 to 2017.