

Is It Scriptural?

The Dream

This study is birthed from a recent dream. In the dream I shared some verses with some friends. I could see the light of understanding start to shine in their eyes. Soon they were eager to hear more, and also asked many questions. His Spirit guided me to point out the answers from His Word. The answers were a great encouragement to them. One by one they each came to know the Lord, and with eager anticipation for their new walk.

When I awoke I remembered the verses all shared a common theme. There were many. As I pondered upon the verses, I knew that I was to share them (and those like them), with you as our next writing. So here are just a few of those verses. They are all good news.

“22. For as in Adam ALL die, so in Christ ALL will be made alive.”

1Corinthians 15:22 New International Translation (NIV)

“9. God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure.

10. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring EVERYTHING together under the authority of Christ—EVERYTHING in heaven and on earth.”

Ephesians 1:9-10 New Living Translation (NLT)

“15. Yes, He is the exact likeness of the unseen God, His first-born Son...

...19. It is so because it was the divine choice that all the divine fullness should dwell in Him,

20. and that through Him He might reconcile to himself ALL THINGS on earth or in heaven, making this peace through the blood He shed on His cross.”

Colossians 1: 15-20 Williams New Testament (WNT)

“10. This is why we work hard...for our hope is in the living God, who is the savior of ALL PEOPLE and particularly of all believers.”

1 Timothy 4:10 (NLT)

Now obviously this sounds like all men will at some point be saved because of Jesus Christ, our sacrificial lamb. But such a thought immediately brings questions to mind. Questions such as, “What about Hell?” and “What about people being thrown into the lake of fire FOREVER?”. This leads to a seeming contradiction in the Word. But the Word is truth and not double-minded. So how are the two ideas corroborated?

The Contradiction

Well, this brings forth a recollection to point out a good starting place. I remember discovering this apparent “contradiction” many years ago. I went to a leader (a mentor to me), of the religious group that I attended at the time. His explanation for “...*in Christ all will be made alive.*” was that not all would be in Christ.

That seemed simple enough, but then I asked, what about the following verses that follow in the same chapter?

- “25. For he must reign until he has put ALL his enemies under his feet.
26. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
27. For he “has put EVERYTHING under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put EVERYTHING under Christ.
28. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made SUBJECT TO HIM who put EVERYTHING under him, so that God may be ALL IN ALL.”*
1 Corinthians 15:25-28 (NIV)

The answer to that was that the people would be in both places (heaven & hell), but both under His authority. But there is at least one problem with that answer. The following verse offers more insight.

- “...21. who shall transform the body of our humiliation to its becoming conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working of his power, EVEN TO SUBJECT TO HIMSELF THE ALL THINGS.”*
Philippians 3:21 Young’s Literal Translation (YLT)

The Greek word for “subject” is Strong’s “5293” and is translated as “subdue” in the King James Version for the latter verse. It also is used to define the love relationship between wives to their husbands, slaves to their masters, and the church to Christ. In addition, the context of this verse is very positive. The context of the subduing/subjectation in the verse above is for the purpose of resurrection into the image & likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We seem to have opened a big can of worms now. But please continue to journey along with us to see how it all fits together. First however let’s clarify an important principle.

Is It Scriptural?

We are all on the same page that if an idea is not “scriptural” then it is not to be embraced. This question however is seen in two very different ways.

One way is that “scriptural” speaks of the Word of God as given to anointed prophets who wrote the words down in their language, (2Peter 1:21). (We recognize of course that their language was not English, for the prophets of the Bible wrote the words hundreds of years before English existed as a language.)

Another way is that the question is thought of in terms of, “Does it agree with what my (translation of the) Bible says?” This way however is *NOT* the same question as “Is it scriptural?” English translations vary. They each have strengths & weaknesses. Let’s put it another way. Just because it reads a certain way in the King James Version (or any other version for that matter), does not mean that it is accurate according to the original manuscripts. (See our reviews on Bible translations under “Eric’s Library” on our website.)

We must be like the Bereans of Acts 17:11 and dig into the Word to see if what we have been taught is so. Our tools include Strong’s Concordance to check the meaning of the Hebrew & Greek words that were the basis for the translation. Next we compare with the George Lamsa Translation to see how the Aramaic likely reads. We should not always stop there either. We should also compare different translations. In the end, all of our research is fruitless unless we are led by His Spirit in all of His leading us into truth. If His Spirit does not quicken the Word to us, then it is probable that the interpretation is of the carnal, natural mind. And if the Word does not confirm the leading of the Spirit, then one must question which spirit is doing the leading. The Word & the Spirit are the two witnesses to the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we do that, then the keys are found to unlock the mystery...the mystery of the dichotomy as to whether the Word says that all men will eventually be restored, or if the vast majority continue to burn in hell forever. Let’s see what the Word really says.

Eternal and Everlasting

These are key words to confirm. Our search in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance reveals that the word translated as "everlasting" from the Greek is the Greek word No. 166, with No. 165 as its root. The root word is defined properly as an "age". An age of course is a finite period of time. An age might be very long or very short, but it is of a limited duration. It is a time span that has a beginning and an end. It is often used to describe the life of a man. This is what Word studies on the New Testament say. This includes Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament's explanation of the following verse:

"9. Who shall be punished with EVERLASTING destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" 2 Thessalonians 1:9 KJV

This is translated as "eternal" in some translations, but a few get it right for accuracy from the Greek. Young's Literal translates it as "age-during", or in other words "for the duration of an age". We did not check all of our translations, but found some also translate this as true to the Greek, even though such renderings are opposed to religious traditions. These other translations include Jonathan Mitchell's Expanded Amplified Translation of the New Testament, The Literal Concordant Version, and the Emphatic Diaglott.

Now looking at the word "eternal", what about these verses?

"29. but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to ETERNAL condemnation"-- Mark 3:29 New King James Version (NKJV)

"1. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2. of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of ETERNAL judgment." Hebrews 6:1-2 (NKJV)

*"7. as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of ETERNAL fire."
Jude 1:7 (NKJV)*

When we look up the word "eternal" in Strong's Concordance, we find that the Greek word from which "eternal" was translated is the same in each of these verses. And in each case it is Strong's number 166, which has its root meaning from 165, which means "age". So it is condemnation to endure for an age or time. It is judgment to endure for an age or time. And it is fire that is to endure for an age or time.

The Wrath of God

So how long is that? As long as it takes to accomplish the purpose of the condemnation, the judgment, & the fire. The purpose is not for punishment, but for cleansing. We remember that water & fire are agents of purification. The fire purifies what the water cannot cleanse, (**Numbers 31:23**). What is it cleansed for? A sacrifice is cleansed by water and then offered upon an altar where it was burnt with fire. We are baptized into water unto His death, and then baptized into fire unto His life. The order is from being immersed in water to being immersed in the Holy Spirit and then to being immersed in fire. Without the Holy Spirit we could not go through the fire. Our faith is tested as gold is tried in fire, (**1Peter 1:7**). What doesn't belong in us is washed away. What is not washed away is burnt away. It is the old Adam nature & carnal mind that are removed.

So the baptism in water is literal water to represent a drowning of the old nature and a coming up from that grave into His new nature. The fire also represents something. It represents a purification process of trials. Life in the fallen Adam existence provides daily opportunities to endure trials! The fire however is not a literal fire since before the fire there is a baptism in His Holy Spirit. That means it is a fire in the spiritual realm. The water also represents the Word. The fire also represents the Spirit. The order is first the natural and then the spiritual. The pattern of water then fire is also seen here:

- “4. Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*
- 5. But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself WRATH in the day of WRATH and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,*
- 6. who “will render to each one according to his deeds”:*
- 7. eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;*
- 8. but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and WRATH,” **Romans 2:4-8 (NKJV)***

We see several things here. First, God deals with us gently to draw us. But when we don't respond to His loving kindness, then He must resort to dealing with us firmly in His severity. It is much the same as how parents deal with their children but always with a motive of love for correction.

But the word “wrath” is used three times here. This tends to leave us with an impression of unbridled rage out to punish with great anger. So we look up the word “wrath” in Strong's Concordance and see that in this English translation it is translated from the Greek word 3709. There are many different Greek words that have been translated as “wrath”. The Greek word 3709 however is our focus here. So we look it up in the Greek Dictionary near the back of Strong's Concordance. Thankfully we do not need to know

Greek to look up it's meaning! This dictionary lists the Greek words by number. It is easy to find number 3709. When we do, we see that it's meaning is properly "desire (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind)". Then this meaning can by implication be used in a positive or a negative way. It can be interpreted as "passion" or "wrath". "Wrath" fit the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and also of King James, who wanted to keep political control over the church. Fear is a handy tool to do that. "Wrath" however does not reflect the true nature of God. His true nature is love. From that basis He may at times act with the passion to do whatever is necessary to correct the obstinate. This is seen as His sternness or severity, (**Romans 11:22**).

Background on Translations

Let me interject an interesting side-note to shed more light on mistranslations. The misleading translations found in the King James Version is one reason why the Pilgrims ("Separatists), would not allow a copy of it on the Mayflower. This is not to say that the Pilgrims were free from the religious eternal hell doctrine of it either. Rather, they knew that the King James Version had taken translation liberties to emphasize submission to religious & political authorities. And King James had also taken it upon himself to make himself the head religious authority. Furthermore, he had appointed Richard Bancroft to be the head man on the translation team.

This can be liken to giving the fox the job of guarding the hen house. Bancroft's role was to draw up the rules for the translation team and see that they were followed to the King's liking. He was also the man with a history of persecution of the Separatists, both before and after the translation. That is why King James assigned him to this job, for Bancroft shared the King's sentiments. Bancroft did a good job for the King, so received a hefty religious promotion to the position of Archbishop.

The Pilgrims however strongly preferred the Geneva Bible, which also had side notes from the beginnings of the Reformation. The Geneva Bible clearly pointed to God, not church & state. King James despised the Geneva Bible for this reason. So then why did the King James Version become so popular and widespread?

It was because for decades there were no other English translations allowed to be printed in England. Churches were not allowed to have any other translations either. There were severe punishments for printers, churches, and individuals who violated this rule. It was only a matter of months after this new law of the land that the Pilgrims sailed on the Mayflower to the new world. This law of "King James Version only" may not have been the trigger for their exodus, but it certainly was confirmation that if they were to seek further truth then they must leave. They preferred to struggle alone in the wilderness in freedom than to remain in religious bondage.

My “Stumbling into Truth”

Let me share a rather humorous incident with you. Years ago when I first found a group in Maine that preached with an understanding of “Sonship”, I was eager to learn more. So upon visiting an older man of that group in his home, and noticing all of his books, I asked what books should I read to learn more about this “Sonship”. He gave a couple studies to me that he had been getting in the mail, and said to get on their mailing list. And so I promptly did so.

Little did I know at the time that this older man was considered by many in the group to be “independent”. The authors that he suggested were not ones recommended by the group. Had I known at the time, then I would not have read them. But as I read their studies I was delighted to feed on their spiritual insights in the Word.

One man’s teachings impressed me by how well-researched they were. This led to me writing to him to request a list of the top Bible reference works that he would recommend. Today we have them all, and oh how we appreciate them! They are used regularly and have helped us to sort truth from religious tradition.

So then one day I asked a top leader of our fellowship if he had ever known this writer. He said yes, but that the man was not associated with the group. As the leader went on, he seemed to have a stern disapproval. So I asked if he had ever read any of his writings. To which he replied, “Don’t read them. He’s in error. He believes that all men will be saved.” That was a shock to me! Had I known that, then I never would have read anything by him. Such an idea that all men will become saved rocked against the foundational concept of hell & eternal punishment that I had been taught. The concept of saving all men was contradictory to so much of the religious training that I had received. And the concept of all men being saved did not seem “scriptural” according to the English translations that I was familiar with at the time.

But as God would have it, I had by then already read enough by that author to know that he was one of the very best Bible scholars that I had ever read. I clearly saw his gift of laying out Biblical truth in a way that made it easy to follow. His research in the Word was thorough and he always compared two opposing ideas. He always gave the Hebrew & Greek sources so that the reader could do the research first-hand as well. He had earned my respect.

But this other person...this respected religious leader of our church group had perked my curiosity. If the author mentioned had really thought that all men would eventually be “saved”, then how was that to be verified in the Word? I naturally sought out all of his writings, and quickly obtained them. I wanted to see for myself. Perhaps the author was wrong. I wanted to see for myself what the Word truly said on this matter. Sure enough

this author had a book on the very subject in question. I quickly obtained it, read it & took notes to try to see how he could justify such an idea from scriptures. But it was all there in the Word! The proof was not in all translations, but the proof was in the Hebrew & Greek words from which the translations were supposedly derived. In the end I had to agree with this author-teacher as being the one far more accurately aligned with the Word. Some of his ideas were not scriptural from the frame of reference of the King James Version, however his ideas were very scriptural according to the Hebrew & Greek as the source for many English translations.

Now when I hear a reproachful word against this man, I ask, "Have you read his writings before coming to that conclusion?" Typically the answer is, "I don't have to. He believes that all men will be saved." The answer betrays a lack of hunger to move on in truth into the full stature of Christ.

"15. Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others."

Proverbs 12:15 New Living Translation (NLT)

Since reading that book, we both have also read similar writings by many others that lay out the same explanation from the Word. One of these teachers has compiled a summary list of *DOZENS* of verses that say or imply as much. The few that I listed at the beginning of this study are just a small sample. Many see this truth, but not many who are still in religious systems. Those in religious groups are confined to the teachings & doctrines related to their group.

But if God truly will eventually save all men, then why would so many English translations get it wrong? Well, many English translations are predominantly based on earlier English translations, most of which are mostly rooted in the Latin Vulgate. That was the Bible translated for and approved by the Catholic Church. The Vulgate was seen to be in harmony with the doctrines of the Catholic Church. A foundational concept in the Catholic Church of course is eternal damnation. History shows us that this concept was contrary to what the early apostles & church leaders believed. The doctrine of eternal hellfire came after a couple hundred years or so, once religious systems had become established. Hellfire was used as a convenient tool for control, especially before the printing press was invented and most people had no Bible to read for themselves. For the most part the people trusted their church leaders. This control by church leaders was used to obtain wealth and also obedience to the religious system and those in power within it.

We will conclude this study in the next section.

The Lake of Fire

We have seen from scriptures that damnation is not an everlasting judgment. But what about the lake of fire? Reading **Revelation 20** we find that certain things are thrown into the lake of fire. They include:

the devil, (Satan)

the beast, (the nature of Adam apart from Christ)

the false prophet, (religious lies)

death

hades (the grave)

and those whose names are not found written in the Book of Life, (those not in Christ)

This throwing of death & hades into the fire is a “second death”. It is a different kind of death. It is the death of death, and the grave associated with it. Christ Jesus the Head has conquered the last enemy, death with its associated hades. He has the keys to control them. They have no power over Him. Now soon Christ Jesus the Body will have death under its feet too. There will be no more death!

So all these things are thrown into the lake of fire to end them. And what is ended in the lives of those whose names (natures) were not found in the Book of Life (Christ)? I am not sure but it seems like their beastly natures of Adam will be destroyed, the story of their life apart from Christ. This will be a time of losing what is in Adam as they are transferred into the Kingdom of Light...the hard way. They will come in smelling of smoke, have lost all, with no treasure stored in heaven. Flesh & blood (the life of Adam), cannot enter the Kingdom. One thing is clear. It is not a literal fire any more than the beast or false prophet are literal. They represent things. And our God is a consuming fire. From His throne flows not only a river of life, but it is also a river of fire to burn up all that is of death so that His life may flourish.

*“9. I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient One sat down to judge. His clothing was as white as snow, his hair like purest wool. He sat on a FIERY THRONE with wheels of blazing fire,
10. and a RIVER OF FIRE was pouring out, flowing from his presence. Millions of angels ministered to him; many millions stood to attend him. Then the court began its session, and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:9,10 NLT*

His nature will be as fire to the stubborn & rebellious. It will therefore be a painful process for them. They will not however be tormented by a literal fire. They will be tormented by this lake of fire all about them that has a river of fire from the throne of God filling it with His life. They will be tormented by the presence of His life in a people taking the reigns of Adam to rule in righteousness. They will be tormented until the

tares are burnt out of them...until they change. It would seem impossible to us, but all things are possible with God. This is a process. Not everyone comes into submission to Christ at the same time. There is an order . This is what the following passage says.

- “21. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.
22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.
23. But EACH ONE IN HIS OWN ORDER: Christ the firstfruits,
afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.
24. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts
an end to all rule and authority and power.”*

1Corinthians 15:21-24 NKJV

It is not for this study to go into detail of the myriad of questions that arise from such a radically different concept from the Word. We have however discovered some new avenues to explore as His Spirit continues to lead us all into greater truth & maturity in Christ.

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